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<http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/willis_e_elliott/2007/07/america_memory_loyalty_liberty.html>

**America: Memory, Loyalty, Liberty**

*ON FAITH - WASHINGTON POST - WILLLIS ELLIOTT*

Beef tenderloin and sherry were the Wednesday-evening sacred food and drink of a religion which originated in a federal prison. Since the printed constitution of the religion was lofty in spiritual self-definition and lawyerly in tone, and the supporting letter of request was formal and well-written, the warden—wise to the fact that religion is dangerous to touch because it might go off—quickly repressed the impulse to treat this new religion with the disrespect of laughter. He passed the matter off to the chair of the prison’s chaplains, who promptly availed himself of me as a religion consultant.

My advice? The warden loved it! It was to *test the sincerity of the new religion* by reducing the quality of the sacramental elements. Cheap wine instead of sherry. Spare ribs instead of beef tenderloin. The religion failed the test because it revealed that the luxury food and drink, instead of serving the religion, were its purpose. And we taxpayers were saved some expense.

Why was that story first to come to mind when I first read this week’s question? Certainly not because I think that Paganism (actually, Neopaganism) is a pseudo-religion designed with an ulterior motive, as was that prison religion. On the contrary, I have known and read some honest and honorable practitioners of “the Old Religion” whose contributions to public discourse have shown them worthy of a seat at the world’s roundtables of religion. But through decades of experience with the world’s religions, I must say that “Paganism” is not one religion but an umbrella-term for many tiny recent movements with contemporary agendas sanctified by selecting items from ancient mythologies. Involving several hundred thousand Americans, it locates the sacred in Earth and Nature—over against our culture’s traditional competing locations of the sacred in Biblical religion and in reason.

All of these locations of the sacred express truths, support values, and are deserving of **respect**. Government**recognition** is another matter.

America is a heritage, a here-and-now, and a hope. Inheritage, we are “one nation, under God.” As a Christian citizen, I affirm this heritage--both our cultural-political unity and our historic piety. I hope for an America in the good health of sustaining this unity and this piety. And in thehere-and-now, between this heritage and this hope, I try to form judgments which honor “liberty and justice for all” within the limits of my understanding of America as a nation, a civilization, a culture, and a government.

Here, then, are *my judgments* on this week’s two questions.

1. I **vote** on issues and for whichever candidate I think has the highest integrity, competence, and commitment to the public welfare. I hope for candidates who, in addition to those virtues, share my commitment to locating the sacred in Biblical religion: “Our fathers’ God, to thee, Author of liberty, to thee we sing. / Long may our land be bright with freedom’s holy light….” I could vote for an atheist, who locates the sacred in reason. I could more easily vote for a Pagan, who re-enchants the world in correction of the Enlightenment’s disenchantment of the world.

2. **No**, I do not think the military should “add a Pagan chaplain.” A military’s function is to support a nation’s spirit, not only its body. And America’s originating and continuing spirit locates the sacred in Biblical religion coordinate with reason. In that it locates the sacred elsewhere, Paganism is un-American. But un-Biblical religions, at their own rather than at public expense, should have access, for spiritual support, to their adherents in the U.S. military.

**BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT  |  JULY 10, 2007; 8:50 AM ETSAVE & SHARE:
PREVIOUS:**[**ISSUES NOT IDENTITY; NUMBERS NOT VALIDITY**](http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/pamela_k_taylor/2007/07/issues_not_identity_numbers_no.html)**| NEXT:**[**PAGAN CHAPLAINS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS**](http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/starhawk/2007/07/pagan_chaplains_and_public_ser.html)

**Comments**

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Sir,
I find your labeling of Paganism as un-American to be rather pompous. If that is the case, there would be no pagan's in the military and this would not be an issue. As a pagan veteran of the US Army and a proud Army wife I question your understanding of the US constitution,(which ALL service members are sworn to protect and uphold) You say biblically based religions are worthy of government financial support, but others are not? We are good enough to work, be injured and die in the line of duty, but not worthy of representation in the chaplaincy?
The real issue of this arguement is not about the bible, it is the favoritism shown to ONE religious tradition over others. The Constitution of the United States of America is the basis for our government and public policy, not the bible.

**POSTED BY: ELIZABETH BELCH | APRIL 26, 2008 9:43 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c166t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-AL4NkeAydq1ulqu91OaKbQwKUn4-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-AL4NkeAydq1ulqu91OaKbQwKUn4-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: FREE GET PHONE RINGTONES SPRINT | MARCH 17, 2008 5:49 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

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**POSTED BY: MA201ZDA | MARCH 17, 2008 5:35 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c494t [a] [**http://groups.google.com/group/download-ringtonesybw/web/ringtones-realtones**](http://groups.google.com/group/download-ringtonesybw/web/ringtones-realtones) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-czJNuq41YaQDqsLMWCQVEsbqBqM-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-czJNuq41YaQDqsLMWCQVEsbqBqM-?cq=1)

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c13t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-gnNPjbMia6UQk6ceQpAoGyn0bZY-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-gnNPjbMia6UQk6ceQpAoGyn0bZY-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA79ZDA | FEBRUARY 22, 2008 6:07 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

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c618t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-UBW9Njw8drciN2UD\_Gcto9BbEA--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-UBW9Njw8drciN2UD_Gcto9BbEA--?cq=1)

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c596t [a] [**http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Eazy-E-Ringtones-d**](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Eazy-E-Ringtones-d) [/a]

**POSTED BY: EAZY E RINGTONES | FEBRUARY 3, 2008 3:55 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c831t [a][**http://groups.google.com/group/swingcom11/web/australian-swingers**](http://groups.google.com/group/swingcom11/web/australian-swingers) [/a]

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c865t [a] [**http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Free-Motorola-Phone-Ringtones-x**](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Free-Motorola-Phone-Ringtones-x) [/a]

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c447t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-Bde04S00d6\_jhpZt4zkUR5zmZ28B3XA-**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-Bde04S00d6_jhpZt4zkUR5zmZ28B3XA-) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-Bde04S00d6\_jhpZt4zkUR5zmZ28B3XA-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-Bde04S00d6_jhpZt4zkUR5zmZ28B3XA-?cq=1)

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c527t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-Wp36TMkzerTJ3u0KNcuiQx5nFg--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-Wp36TMkzerTJ3u0KNcuiQx5nFg--?cq=1)

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c87t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-ehSHjpslequCDRHkMGPOq5zRnt5Y7Q--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-ehSHjpslequCDRHkMGPOq5zRnt5Y7Q--?cq=1)

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c560t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-xCGtglQ\_frEHrez1k6\_qY7ALOrw-**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-xCGtglQ_frEHrez1k6_qY7ALOrw-) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-xCGtglQ\_frEHrez1k6\_qY7ALOrw-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-xCGtglQ_frEHrez1k6_qY7ALOrw-?cq=1)

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c283t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-yILwXRozfqhE.J.FdwIjHwXuwDlP?p=4**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-yILwXRozfqhE.J.FdwIjHwXuwDlP?p=4) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-z6atxjM0abCL\_T2BTJOL2Id8ycU-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-z6atxjM0abCL_T2BTJOL2Id8ycU-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA857ZDA | JANUARY 18, 2008 7:22 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c629t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-2E6jO7Yib6cXPtHquD5DZhWuakg-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-2E6jO7Yib6cXPtHquD5DZhWuakg-?cq=1)

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**POSTED BY: SPRINT RINGTONE | JANUARY 18, 2008 5:41 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c288t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-1vGP.ZQ0b6702UK3DftZH6tUOTEN**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-1vGP.ZQ0b6702UK3DftZH6tUOTEN) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-GxFqGns7frQbTEy..5DeOfXYvw--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-GxFqGns7frQbTEy..5DeOfXYvw--?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA395ZDA | JANUARY 18, 2008 5:25 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c499t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-0DfeCjI9dKgIurCFiEaR3s68FSE-**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-0DfeCjI9dKgIurCFiEaR3s68FSE-) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-0DfeCjI9dKgIurCFiEaR3s68FSE-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-0DfeCjI9dKgIurCFiEaR3s68FSE-?cq=1)

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c168t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-NOmxzxA8dLQF8C9IiUE6pXK.10GUJw--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-NOmxzxA8dLQF8C9IiUE6pXK.10GUJw--?cq=1)

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c320t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-dCiuq0gib6Nlq7O3FrPOI9GjNWh2mgw-**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-dCiuq0gib6Nlq7O3FrPOI9GjNWh2mgw-) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-17vLdlYhc683JUk78WJyIN6Z28Ek8.c-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-17vLdlYhc683JUk78WJyIN6Z28Ek8.c-?cq=1)

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c150t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-XPYUTXE6YqqKk3S9oHHJw8OZadk-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-XPYUTXE6YqqKk3S9oHHJw8OZadk-?cq=1)

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c584t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-1M.g\_\_chfrJveM.qEEgpIW3rro90Xw--**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-1M.g__chfrJveM.qEEgpIW3rro90Xw--) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-1M.g\_\_chfrJveM.qEEgpIW3rro90Xw--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-1M.g__chfrJveM.qEEgpIW3rro90Xw--?cq=1)

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c713t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-fyLoaPsjdKSQeh2wzOeIdLHS0cZ5Vnk-**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-fyLoaPsjdKSQeh2wzOeIdLHS0cZ5Vnk-) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-fyLoaPsjdKSQeh2wzOeIdLHS0cZ5Vnk-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-fyLoaPsjdKSQeh2wzOeIdLHS0cZ5Vnk-?cq=1)

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c871t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-qehsdSM6YqqN1847hFp6dJCWGg--**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-qehsdSM6YqqN1847hFp6dJCWGg--) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-qehsdSM6YqqN1847hFp6dJCWGg--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-qehsdSM6YqqN1847hFp6dJCWGg--?cq=1)

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c871t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-zWw.jTMyerRSwQeJdc9cPGMY4756ip0-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-zWw.jTMyerRSwQeJdc9cPGMY4756ip0-?cq=1)

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c589t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-Odu823U7dLVeAiKVDeD5KySuOrU-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-Odu823U7dLVeAiKVDeD5KySuOrU-?cq=1)

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c698t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-YR5bVE4yc687\_yN\_BHn2fdzGzkM-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-YR5bVE4yc687_yN_BHn2fdzGzkM-?cq=1)

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**POSTED BY: MA803ZDA | JANUARY 18, 2008 12:29 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c938t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-tqosX6o0d6\_sBpFTP1m1If3PezNlK5U-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-tqosX6o0d6_sBpFTP1m1If3PezNlK5U-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA12ZDA | JANUARY 18, 2008 12:11 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

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c841t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-80cNSAAlaa\_XH2Ov3lA58.E5.Cc-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-80cNSAAlaa_XH2Ov3lA58.E5.Cc-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA219ZDA | JANUARY 17, 2008 10:13 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c611t [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-.vBbkn4wf6faduRf7p6HB7QRmy8R?p=4**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-.vBbkn4wf6faduRf7p6HB7QRmy8R?p=4) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-F6xSvR40d6Jcn\_zC7RTSms7iEQ--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-F6xSvR40d6Jcn_zC7RTSms7iEQ--?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA667ZDA | JANUARY 17, 2008 9:44 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

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**POSTED BY: RINGTONES FOR US CELLULAR | JANUARY 17, 2008 8:38 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c466t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-2T33i5Ywd7BoeFgbvCkaO4\_auiM-**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-2T33i5Ywd7BoeFgbvCkaO4_auiM-) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-2T33i5Ywd7BoeFgbvCkaO4\_auiM-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-2T33i5Ywd7BoeFgbvCkaO4_auiM-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA814ZDA | JANUARY 17, 2008 7:19 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c125t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-vVjDXQozdKSwgUXw\_o.SQtNrSQo-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-vVjDXQozdKSwgUXw_o.SQtNrSQo-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA685ZDA | JANUARY 17, 2008 7:03 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

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**POSTED BY: MA336ZDA | JANUARY 17, 2008 6:35 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c936t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-DtU20lIib6PAw5RHUAROV056j4p3H7T9iQ--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-DtU20lIib6PAw5RHUAROV056j4p3H7T9iQ--?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA353ZDA | JANUARY 17, 2008 6:04 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

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**POSTED BY: FREE MOBILE RINGTONE VIRGIN | JANUARY 17, 2008 5:36 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c370t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-TY34xrkicqotFi.\_zxGugDrDOqYcUw--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-TY34xrkicqotFi._zxGugDrDOqYcUw--?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA613ZDA | JANUARY 17, 2008 5:22 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c767t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-tF9Drso4dqMGBk0mmNXFzxSL7BlTYQ--**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-tF9Drso4dqMGBk0mmNXFzxSL7BlTYQ--) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-tF9Drso4dqMGBk0mmNXFzxSL7BlTYQ--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-tF9Drso4dqMGBk0mmNXFzxSL7BlTYQ--?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA357ZDA | JANUARY 17, 2008 5:06 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c212t [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-.N3FpTgjdLVzR.qTpda3kY.iItybFdGnSOo-**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-.N3FpTgjdLVzR.qTpda3kY.iItybFdGnSOo-) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-.N3FpTgjdLVzR.qTpda3kY.iItybFdGnSOo-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-.N3FpTgjdLVzR.qTpda3kY.iItybFdGnSOo-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: RINGTONES MIDI | JANUARY 17, 2008 4:52 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c218t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-oiwbdu0hfqEhD1r142PornINu6\_P3nU-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-oiwbdu0hfqEhD1r142PornINu6_P3nU-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: RINGTONES MIDI | JANUARY 17, 2008 4:36 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c540t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-ri5WWEEmeqrlDyc1dx57vfPGQgbW1w--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-ri5WWEEmeqrlDyc1dx57vfPGQgbW1w--?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: MA83ZDA | JANUARY 17, 2008 4:08 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c903t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-ri5WWEEmeqrlDyc1dx57vfPGQgbW1w--**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-ri5WWEEmeqrlDyc1dx57vfPGQgbW1w--) [/a] [a][**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-ri5WWEEmeqrlDyc1dx57vfPGQgbW1w--?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-ri5WWEEmeqrlDyc1dx57vfPGQgbW1w--?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: SPRINT RINGTONES | JANUARY 17, 2008 3:52 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c838t [a] [**http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-wVm9nHswd68OJqeGbLz427KHM68fQi4-?cq=1**](http://blog.360.yahoo.com/blog-wVm9nHswd68OJqeGbLz427KHM68fQi4-?cq=1)

**POSTED BY: WIRELESS LAN | JANUARY 17, 2008 3:36 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

refound rebuke heromonger leporiform tiemannite ox mistressless ammonia
[**http://cnn.com/2001/WORLD/meast/04/01/israel..new.ideas.ap/**](http://cnn.com/2001/WORLD/meast/04/01/israel..new.ideas.ap/) >More Israelis favoring 'separation' -- regrouping behind new borders
[**http://www.sunshineestates.net/**](http://www.sunshineestates.net/)

**POSTED BY: MARGARET PATRICK | DECEMBER 18, 2007 1:32 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

c989t

**POSTED BY: MA921ZDA | DECEMBER 10, 2007 9:55 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

I am very disturbed by the assertion that Paganism is unAmerican. Religious intolerance in any form is actually the most unAmerican thing I can think of. There is nothing whatsoever in the constitution (and oh, there's that little thing called the establishment clause) that says explicitly or implicitly that this is a Christian nation. This is a secular country- and if you don't want to live in a secular country that promotes freedom of all religions is a requirement. And military servicemen should be allowed to have access to their own chaplains of their own faith. It is the government's job to SERVE its soldiers- and when there are enough soldiers to warrant a minister- then the government should hire one of that faith. It is incomprehensible to me that we are having this conversation- or perhaps you, sir, still think that Pagan means "godless" as translated by the apostly Paul. Please go back and check the definition and its current use in the field of sociology of religion.

**POSTED BY: STACEY SIMMONS, PHD | SEPTEMBER 4, 2007 7:29 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Like most others, I'm puzzled by the comment that "paganism is unAmerican". I'm Celtic ecletic Wiccan, but some of my ancestors are Cherokee and many of my friends' ancestors are from various Native American tribes. There we have the shamanic influence. A great number of the early immigrants were from Ireland and Scotland...don't tell me they didn't bring a Celtic influence (Irish and leprechauns, just as an example).
But more than that, how much more American can you get than the basic concepts of freedom of expression, freedom of speech and the Wiccan Rede? The whole Bill of Rights and the Preamble to the Constitution could have been written by a pagan.

**POSTED BY: STEPHANIE | JULY 24, 2007 12:44 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Enough! I have spent the last two hours reading this blog. Let's just get down to the facts folks, I realize this is two weeks too late but I just have to say something here. This is about nothing more than spirituality. Yes we do need Chaplains for ALL religions in our military. These Chaplains must be trained to adhere to spirituality not a specific religion. I was raised Christian, Methodist to be exact, but my father a born Baptist was the best teacher I ever had. He refused to let the prejudges of his upbringing interfere with the raising of his children. I am now pagan and proud but I did not get here by accident. When I was small and had friends that were of different faiths he did not prevent me from going to their services. He told me when I was of age I could choose for myself. I never told him I converted to paganism. When he was ill with Parkinson's disease and fading, I was visiting him one day, he was on one of what I would call a dream walk, I was wearing my cape it was cold and went out on the porch where he was smoking a cigarette. He came out of his dream walk long enough to look me straight in the eye and say "So, you finally came out of the broom closet." He smiled at me and nodded his approval. In that brief moment he told me by his actions it is not what or who you believe in but that you believe. He died a Christian and well loved by all different people of different faiths. My point here is it does not matter what you believe in you just have to have faith that all humans will do the best they can to make this world a better place for future generations. If we don't we still have to have faith that we passed this on to others to pick up the pieces. Faith no matter what it is is what breeds hope, hope breeds love, love breeds action. So as long as we all can hold hands pass wisdom that our ancestors have given us and teach our youngsters freedom to believe nothing else matters. It is not about your denomination just your right to choose.

**POSTED BY:**[**SINGEN**](http://sbcglobal.net/)**| JULY 22, 2007 4:36 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

fdrhmnq qexytzjg jvnhbgck mjvupfi taexcyld ykqvlhmij ziwvukb

**POSTED BY:**[**XPYIWFJK ROBSA**](http://www.gziratvl.mnkeac.com/)**| JULY 12, 2007 7:04 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

fdrhmnq qexytzjg jvnhbgck mjvupfi taexcyld ykqvlhmij ziwvukb

**POSTED BY:**[**XPYIWFJK ROBSA**](http://www.gziratvl.mnkeac.com/)**| JULY 12, 2007 7:03 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

fdrhmnq qexytzjg jvnhbgck mjvupfi taexcyld ykqvlhmij ziwvukb

**POSTED BY:**[**XPYIWFJK ROBSA**](http://www.gziratvl.mnkeac.com/)**| JULY 12, 2007 7:02 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

I have to return to my original reaction to this column.

Un-American?

For wanting our rights as Americans?

Frankly, this Christian clergyman's excuse for saying that is \*awful thin for a well-nigh-accusation of treason,\* never mind as a justification for unequal treatment in the name of a 'state' religion.

Unamerican?

My Pagan soft parts we're Unamerican.

This \*is\* America, that you're trying to usurp for your King.

Reverend.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 11, 2007 2:54 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Your sactimonious disrespect for others and their religion is un-American.

**POSTED BY: ROY | JULY 11, 2007 7:13 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

BGone,
Why do Pagans have a ministery?
I think I need your definition of ministery.

I serve because I was called to it. No bugle, no angels...just a string of happenings that led me where I am.

We believe that if people listen with an open mind and spirit they will be led where they need to be. It has nothing to do with money...even if we were paid, it would not be enough to make it worth while for the time and effort expended. I charge for transportation when I have to fly anywhere, for a handfasting or initiation. I charge a small fee from each member for group incidentals...there is no profit at all.

It is not money...It is the Gods. PP was right, it is coming home.

terra

**POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | JULY 10, 2007 11:33 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

ANONYMOUS, Me thinks you're beating a dead horse. No one has listened to reason yet. Print it and you can't give it away while "Mein Kampft" was an "award winning" best seller, financed Nazism, gave Hitler the time and personal finances "to be all he could be." Today, illegal drugs and oil money finance terrorism. Take the money away and it will go away, a rule that applies to everything,, except a certain web site.

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 10, 2007 8:28 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Sinclair Lewis once wrote: "When Fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the flag and carrying a cross." Rev. Elliott is grievously mistaken if he believes that the Founders framed our nation "under God" or literalist religion.

Thomas Jefferson wrote: "History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government. This marks the lowest grade of ignorance of which their civil as well as religious leaders will always avail themselves for their own purposes" (Letter to von Humboldt, 1813).

"In every country and in every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own" (Letter to H. Spafford, 1814).

The Treaty of Tripoli, unanimously ratified by the Senate and signed by President John Adams, said ( Art. 11): "As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquillity, of Mussulmen; and, as the said States never entered into any war, or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions, shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries".

Jefferson opined, "And the day will come, when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the Supreme Being as His Father, in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva, in the brain of Jupiter."

Such Enlightenment men like the Framers would be destroyed by right-wing GOP talk radio and fundamentalist zealots if they ever voiced these views in our days.

**POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JULY 10, 2007 8:00 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

"One nation under God was a phrase that was typical of the time and it reflected the solemnity and commom beliefs that were associated with forming a new nation."

Actually, the "under God" part was added in the 1950's to separate the United States from those godless commies in the USSR and China.

**POSTED BY: ATHENA | JULY 10, 2007 2:28 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Bgone,

You are a loser. Get out of my house....NOW!!

**POSTED BY: YOUR MOTHER | JULY 10, 2007 1:42 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Aren't DRUIDS fictional people like Santa Claus, the tooth fairy and Tinker Bell? I thought so. DRUID IN NJ, you do not exist. Give me a better reason to deny you a license.

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 10, 2007 1:27 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Enlighten me.

Why are religions petitioning the government when the first amendment clearly says the government shall MAKE NO LAWS concerning the ESTABLISHMENT of RELIGION?

If the tax laws don't violate the constitution it can't be violated.

((((((((((TAX PAT ROBERTSON))))))))

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 10, 2007 1:01 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

To A DRUID IN NJ:

[**http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul**](http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul) says Moses was motivated by money, wealth, power, you name it, the things Ros Perot's money can buy even the presidency. Awaiting your reply. That web site is the misinterpretation of sacred scriptures? Say it isn't so. Moses wasn't just a cheap crook, mafia type killing to get what he wanted.

In the mean time you can give us a MOTIVE, WHY do Pagans WANT to start ministries, become chaplains, get the tax breaks, all those MONEY based MOTIVES that you must see as NOT THE REASON.

FYI, only religions actually own real estate in the USA. The rest of us, families and businesses alike only RENT from the government. Reals estate taxes are RENTS imposed on all but GOVERNMENT APPROVED ministries. I cannot blame Pagans for wanting the same thing for themselves.

No one can prove that anyone else believes of disbelieves anything. Let that rule guide you in your enlightened response to WHY they want to do it,, unless of course you agree with me, money is their motive.

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 10, 2007 12:54 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Paganplace,

Nice try, but you are still "blog hogging" promoting Pagan cults with no references to back your statements.

**POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | JULY 10, 2007 10:01 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

I mean, heck. Think about it half a minute.

If we were really trying to 'deceive' you about how many 'cult' members were in the military, ...exactly what do you think a Pagan chaplain would expect to \*find\* when they got there?

Heck, a previously-and-afterward-well-respected chaplain \*lost his billet\* because \*people said he suddenly was unfit for the duty cause he became Pagan,\* ...much to the sadness of the \*Pagans he served in Iraq.\*

Who's being honest, here?

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 10, 2007 1:40 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Find the 'cult' I'm 'promoting.'

How bout \*you\* pony up with some 'proof' of something?

Funny you call me the 'blog hog' for trying to address things individually, while you crosspost the same defamatory stuff \*to every thread\* over and over again, ignoring replies, Concerned.

Enough.

Look it up.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 10, 2007 1:33 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Paganplace,

I am still looking for the references you supposedly have cited. "Me thinks" you don't have any and are simply continuing to "blog hog" the discussion to promote pagan cults.

**POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | JULY 10, 2007 12:07 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Don't get me wrong, here, Bgone.

You think I'm out here to 'convert you to some worship to delude you into giving me money,'

Who am I?

Name my Gods.

Have I said who to worship?

Where to send the check?

Even if you thought I was just the most together being on this Lady's green mantle?

No.

There are other ways to go about this, but my way of honoring the part of the Charge that says, 'if you find it not within yourself, you will not find it with us,'

Is ...a bit o anonymity. ;)

We don't work that way.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 9, 2007 7:44 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

" BGone:

"PAGANPLACE, I'm happy for you. I was worried I needed to send you a buck or two to prevent scurvy or something."

There's been times it would have been nice, thanks very much. But I wouldn't want to seem to be 'going for the easy faith dollar.' Phhht. :)

"Now about my question: What motivates you to start, continue if you must, a religion?"

Umm, the problem here is, that's not the motivation.

Actually, to be honest, if I still thought I were the only Pagan in the world, it wouldn't have occurred to me to try and change that.

We're \*here,\* though.

Maybe you don't understand something, here.

Someone comes up to us and says, 'Convert me to Paganism,' we say, "What makes you think I can do that?"

We don't really have a concept of 'conversion,' never mind expansion in that way.

Lots of us like to call it 'Coming Home.'

We don't tell people what to believe, in that way 'One True Religions' do.

We just sorta filter in.

Common thing that's said: "I had no idea others believed this. I feel like I've come home."

Homecoming. If I've tried to start anything, it's actually just calling it that.

It's not a 'revealed and followed' tradition in that way.

The things I say, aren't some \*thing\* someone had me learn and follow, (not to give short shrift to my teachers,) or something I "teach" others for later repetition in that way you seem to presume.

This is just me being someone who sees stuff and \*editorializes\* about \*what Pagans do.\*

Yeah, I participate, too, but this isn't an \*artifact,\* it's more like a communal garden.

To be honest, your question there just doesn't make sense, cause it's not how this happens.

" I'm only using Reverend Mr Elliott as an example of motivation, a career that puts bread on the table. I know some preachers have to work too but we know the pope slops at the big slop bucket of religion. What do you have in mind? Note that I worry about people doing things without proper motivation. There's always a catch that leads to trouble."

Problem is, you can't control it like that.

That's why we do not have these kinds of ready-made authorities. Frankly, I only sought getting 'accredited' so I could get in places like hospitals where you have to be.

People freak out about the fact that some paperback books say you can be your own High Priestess.

You can also find out that that's not going to confer instant 'status' in the real Pagan community.

Meeting any reasonable military standards is not the problem for our clergy.

Our communities are much more demanding. :)

"Tell me true, you're not just out for the easy "faith" dollar? Some preachers having to work for a living is bad enough without additional competition.
"

'Easy faith dollar?'

Again this accusation, as though the work were 'easy,' or there were a lot of 'dollars' in it.

You got a lot of nerve, Bgone. On one hand you're throwing a virtual 'dollar' at my feet for a mendicant self to fight off 'scurvy' with, and on the other hand, you're calling me a profiteer out for easy money.

\*throwing dollar back.\*

Not from you. Trust me. I've got standards.

I've had to worry about scurvy for real.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 9, 2007 7:36 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

These facts are not in dispute Concerned. Frankly, it would have saved a lot of keystrokes if they were cited when they raised this topic. It's a \*presumption\* that Pagans are an isolated and tiny fringe group who don't 'really' serve in the military.

I've cited links before. You look it up this time.

And stop with the crossposting, will you? I'm not here to chase you around correcting you all day.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 9, 2007 7:11 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Paganplace,

References???????? as to the number of Pagans being more than the number of Muslims in the US military.

**POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | JULY 9, 2007 6:54 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Paganplace,

References???????? as to the number of Pagans be more than the number of Muslims in the US military.

**POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | JULY 9, 2007 6:52 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Concerned:

"Well there are more Pagans than Jews and Muslims combined and both Jews and Muslims have chaplains. Again their right is paid in blood."

What are the sources of your information to verify this statement???????"

I haven't seen the figures on Jews in the military, myself, but Pagans (just the openly serving ones) vastly outnumber Muslims, and yes, Muslims do have chaplains, ...plenty of them. In fact, they were rather conspicuously investigated last year after an incident regarding Guantanamo.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 9, 2007 6:04 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Sorry,

.....Harry Theriault and Jerry M. Durrough.....

**POSTED BY: GABY | JULY 9, 2007 5:35 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

While I was appalled at Mr. Elliot's comments, I do have to tell you that the prison religion actually did (maybe even does) exist. I was established by Harry Theriault Jerry M.
Durrough.

Please see the following links:

[**http://lists.ucla.edu/pipermail/religionlaw/2004-December/017534.html**](http://lists.ucla.edu/pipermail/religionlaw/2004-December/017534.html)

[**http://law.wustl.edu/Courses/Schlanger/Prisons2006/Reading/NYT\_1972.pdf**](http://law.wustl.edu/Courses/Schlanger/Prisons2006/Reading/NYT_1972.pdf)

**POSTED BY: GABY | JULY 9, 2007 5:01 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

To the Author:

I am a proud member of Our Own Druidry, which was founded by Americans. Your religion was founded by Romans. I rest my case.

To Concerned:

Actually, I rather doubt that there are more Pagans working for Wal-Mart than in the military. Many Pagans who follow a warrior tradition are drawn to military service -- how else are you going to be a real warrior? I would think that there would be a disproportionate number of Pagans there just through that. Conversely, I really doubt, between low wages, poor benefits, and questionable business ethics, that many Pagans would prefer to work at Wal-Mart.

To BGone:

You believe that money rules the world, so only irrational people (or "oddballs") don't chase after it. But money is only a means to an end, and that end is some form of positive emotion. Even people who act logically rather than emotionally (as you probably like to think of yourself doing) do so because it brings them some sort of pleasure -- for example, perhaps the ability to gloat over less-rational people makes them happy, or perhaps they enjoy being able to respect their own rationality. People want money in order to spend it on things that make them happy; people who seek power do so because having power makes them happy; people seek stability because instability makes them unhappy.

And just as these things are means to happiness, so is religion. Religion brings happiness through fostering different types of love and devotion between different people/entities/concepts, including with one's fellow worshipers. Love and devotion are probably among the strongest positive emotions for most people, and they are very hard to buy. And for many of us, banding together to do things in the name of shared love and belief is its own reward, because love is stronger than mere self-satisfaction or the passing pleasures that money can buy.

One of those things we band together to do, charity, you dismiss as doing "good for no good reason." But most people do it for the very good reason that it makes them happy, whether through relief that they'll have a good afterlife, through enjoying being appreciated by someone, through enjoying being able to gloat about how selfless they are to other people, or through being happy when they can respect the face in the mirror in front of them.

I am glad for those who do not need religious devotion to be happy, because their lives are so much simpler than ours, but I would thank them to remember one of the following sayings: "different strokes for different folks," "one man's trash is another man's treasure," or "whatever floats your boat."

**POSTED BY: A DRUID IN NJ | JULY 9, 2007 4:10 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

What a gloriously ignorant post.

Theank you Mr. Elliot for lowering the standards of debate here in the US.

You are truly a miracle!!

**POSTED BY: REASONABLE THOUGHT | JULY 9, 2007 1:02 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Anon,

Your leap into the meaning of: "They give a chart on page 25 showing that 11 out of every 100 military members choose either "other religions, refused or unknown". (this does NOT include
Buddhism, Muslim, etc)

If only one out of these 11 are Pagan or Wiccan, that would mean a very large number. One out of every 100 servicemembers would be 14,000 (out of 1.4 million active duty service members.)"

Sorry this wishful thinking is not going to convince any court of law. And again, considering the number of US military bases (6702) you still end up with on average of two "might be" Pagans per base. And what Pagan cults' chaplain would you want to serve these two?
Buddhism, Shintoism, Native American Religions, Hinduism, Taoism, Wicca, Druidism, Asatru, Shamanism, Neo-Paganism and Eclectic Paganism????

**POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | JULY 9, 2007 11:58 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Mr. Blackwell,

You stated:

"Well there are more Pagans than Jews and Muslims combined and both Jews and Muslims have chaplains. Again their right is paid in blood."

What are the sources of your information to verify this statement?????????

**POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | JULY 9, 2007 11:44 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

This is one of the most unintellectual articles that I have read in a long time. Your definition or explantion of paganism is not one shared by me because it is too simplistic and it locks all pagans together. How do you regard someone from New Guinea who believes in something that is spiritual but is not akin to Christianity? If I understand you well you invalidate their position. I do not.

I believe in a secular state. I do not want any reference to the bible because there are so many bible bashing fundamentalists whom I think are emptyheaded.

One nation under God was a phrase that was typical of the time and it reflected the solemnity and commom beliefs that were associated with forming a new nation.

Liberty and justice for all are more relevant today. They refer to fairness, respect and decency. Of course, these things only exist in fairy tales. Just ask Mr Nifong or those people who have been wrongly treated by the law.

I vote for a party because individuals caucus together and give a party strength when they adhere to a common set of policies. Most individuals in Congress carry little weight. What matters are numbers because they alone control outcomes good or bad. I like dealing with realities and not fanciful assessments of one person.

I do not care if the military appoints a Pagan Pastor. If there are enough pagans in the military then let them have somebody who looks after their sdpiritual welfare.

**POSTED BY: ROBERT JAMES | JULY 9, 2007 8:16 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Concerned,

Well there are more Pagans than Jews and Muslims combined and both Jews and Muslims have chaplains. Again their right is paid in blood

In the Vietnam War I was a atheist, but I have never hated Religion. fundamentalist Atheists can be as bad as those of any Religion.

Meanwhile i decided I just wasn't comfortable with a certain religion, tried out Buddhism for five years an then waited until I found some Wiccans 17 years later before I tried religion again and that was 23 years ago. Wiccan had been in all the wars since World War II though they may have joined the religion later. We are represented in Arlington Cemetery and there are thousands of us, not only active members of the military but even more now as vets.

Wiccans just got done with a ten year fight with the VA and won, we will win full rights in the military as well. Some of our people my have to go back and pick up a few more courses required but we will do that. We have been establishing seminaries for several years and now working on getting the accredited. So soon we will have our chaplains. We do use both magic and mundane work to get what we want.

Meanwhile we continue the fight for our other Pagan religions and their rights as well.

As there is now an Atheist symbol at the VA for gravestones, perhaps Atheist chaplains are not far behind. Again you will have to pick up sme credits in counseling and take military chaplan training just as Pagans will. But who knows what is possible in the future. Remember when helping religious people, you are not allowed to try to convert them. We will have to get that idea across tothe evangelicals as well. Atheists have theri right to stick with their non belief. Nice thing about being Wiccan is I have no need or desire to convert anyone.

As to the number of Atheists well you have to get the branches to count them, probably hidden away under "Other". I have seen people lose their religion under war.

**POSTED BY: CHRISTOPHER BLACKWELL | JULY 9, 2007 12:19 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Concerned, since you seem to enjoy spamming every blog , here's some new information. Chew on this.

America's Military Population" by David R. Segal and MadyWechsler Segal from
the Population Reference Bureau states that there is a lower rate of affiliation
with mainstream religion within the US Military as compared to the civilian
sector.

They give a chart on page 25 showing that 11 out of every 100 military members
choose either "other religions, refused or unknown". (this does NOT include
Buddhism, Muslim, etc)

If only one out of these 11 are Pagan or Wiccan, that would mean a very large
number. One out of every 100 servicemembers would be 14,000 (out of 1.4 million
active duty service members.)

One out of every 100 veterans would be 264,000 out of 26.4 million vets. Numbers
came from www.census.gov.

Using their research, the number of persons who could ask for a Pentacle
Headstone over the next 30 years is quite large and growing. If only 1/4 of
these persons requested a Pentacle Headstone instead of a civilian one, that
would be near 70,000.

Rev. Russell
IIMM/MPN

THe numbers in the US civiilian and military populations are growing all the time.
These stats don't even consider those who identified as some sort of Abrahamic religion solely to avoid repercussions and retaliation, some of which can be quite harsh.

We're here, willing to fight and die for what America stands for, and you don't think we're worthy of being represented in a time of need. Nice. Very 'Christian' of you.

By your same logic, if there were only a few thousand 'identified' Christians, they wouldn't warrant a Chaplain to talk to?

All we are asking for is for what is taken for granted by everyone else.

**POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JULY 8, 2007 11:57 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

[**http://www.milpagan.org/media/statistics.html**](http://www.milpagan.org/media/statistics.html) is the cited source of the # of Pagans in the US military. A Defense Department reference would be the only real source of accurate information.

But let us do the math anyway: 4300 Pagans/6702 military bases (http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/intervention/2004/01bases.htm) or less than one Pagan per base on average.

There are probably more Pagans working for Wallmart. Maybe they should add a few Pagan chaplins to the "welcomers".

And there are probably a heck of a lot more atheists in the military. Another positive for atheism. No chaplins required!!

And with so few Pagans in the military, why are we discussing this issue?????

**POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | JULY 8, 2007 11:35 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

I am not really that funny.

Just thought you should know.

**POSTED BY: DANE COOK | JULY 8, 2007 8:24 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Viejita, we at least agree that they are oddballs. Puritan, Pilgrim, seekers of fortune, all three different breeds of cats.

The Mormons made the trek to Utah seeking religious freedom. That's strange. The first amendment was included in the constitution at the time?

Beware of those who do good for no good reason. They shall be known as UN-reasonable. When they do as Jesus demanded, "sell all your[their] earthly possessions and give to the poor" I'll say they're reasonable.

[**http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul**](http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul) the lot of them are going to hell on the "road of righteousness paved with good intentions."

((((((NO STRANGE GODS)))))

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 8, 2007 7:17 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

This is the WP, right? Not The NYT?

This is too incoherent to be printed in English anywhere but New York or San Francisco.

**POSTED BY: ON THE PLANTATION | JULY 8, 2007 6:19 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Bgone, on the question of economics and immigration you are fundamentally correct. Actually, the puritans (some of whom we call pilgrims) were seeking not just religious freedom but religious hegemony -- in addition to the usual quest for money and land. In this, Elliott is their legitimate successor. What he does not represent is the attitude of most present-day UCC congregations, which is overwhelmingly tolerant of religious dissent. Then again, Elliot appears to be more Baptist than Congregational.

**POSTED BY: VIEJITA DEL OESTE | JULY 8, 2007 5:16 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

TERRA, the question is not what you do or how it relates to what others do. The question is WHY???

VIEJITA, Is is true that the Pilgrims came to America to escape religious oppression?

How to answer the question:
1. Make a list of all who came and still come to America.
2. Put a check mark by those that came/are coming for religious freedom.

It's a NO BRAINER !!!

All issues are economic. The Pilgrims came for economic freedom, greed to be exact, free land, etc and not religious freedom as advertised. The story of the Pilgrims coming for religious freedom has the same merit as boy George Washington chopping down the cherry tree and then declaring, "I cannot tell a lie." Take a close look at those who wrote the history books and especially the history of ODDBALLS that act without normal motivation.

The Pagans hereabouts are trying to sell me they are not motivated by money, (career, occupation, means of support, power, position, respectability...). I think they found it a bit difficult with a Bible and bull horn on the street corner so they're going where "nobody's home."

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 8, 2007 4:57 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

OOOPS! Sorry the previous post by me was to BGone, not Frank....sorry Frank.

terra

**POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | JULY 8, 2007 4:27 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Frank,
I will speak on the question you asked Paganplace, if he will forgive me.

You need to understand that most of us were not led to any Pagan religion by anyone that said "We have the truth." We do not believe we have the Truth for all people...only for each of us that managed to discover a name for our own truth.

In my search I had no books, no mentor, no name for what I was. It was years before I found a group that would teach me. I was different. I was a skinny, quiet kid with a spiritual outlook on life. We have to seek. It's work...it is not handed to us...it is a love of the Gods, it is a connection to Nature. But more...it is a deep respect, an honoring of creation.

We give our talents to the gods and the Pagan community as offerings. I teach as a way to fulfill my oath to aid the seeker..I lead because I was called to by those who look to me.

I believe that the Gods lead us where we need to be. I do not charge for what is good for my growth and spiritual progression, or to aid my community.

We are not Christian, stop useing their premeters...we do not have Thou shalt Nots..we do have blessed be's.

We do not force our children to follow our religion...but teach them to learn about many faiths. We do not own their spirits. They will be given the knowledge to choose rightly for them.

There is no Carrot V. Stick... there is no force to be Wiccan. No billboards, no knocking on your door on Saturday morning to tell you The Good News. No huge churches that needs millions to keep up in a years time. No paid staff...No paid clergy, almost no paid teachers...

Frank, we are not organized in the way that the Big Three are. There is no dependence on gov. handouts, there is no dependance on passing the plate. In our worship circles, there might be a shareing of bringing wine and the potluck.

We usually take turns in hosting Rituals in our homes. Most do not have the buildings that other religions have. Many Wiccan greoups are trending that way though....most Pagan groups choose to buy land then build walls.

Frank, please understand that we are not Christian, if we have faults they are unique to us, not the same as Christianity.

terra

**POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | JULY 8, 2007 4:05 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Omigod, I just read this column and it is worse than I thought. This guy is unrelated to any spirit that I remember from my UCC childhood. I thought our forebears came here to get away from state sponsored religion.

**POSTED BY: VIEJITA DEL OESTE | JULY 8, 2007 2:58 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Mr. Elliott-
I believe that your title says it all.
"America: Memory, Loyalty, Liberty"
--Memory -- let us remember the origins of our nation, and that it was founded in the spirit of individual liberties.
--Loyalty -- let us see clearly the loyalty of those members of our military who serve this nation while also practicing Paganism, in any of its many forms.
--Liberty -- our freedom to practice religion as we please, or not to practice, is our first freedom.[**http://www.firstfreedomfirst.org/**](http://www.firstfreedomfirst.org/)

I am an atheist. However I scathe at any mention that any American, particularly any American who has served, is Un-American. No religion is "American" or "Un-American." And I disagree with Deb above. Mr. Elliott knew perfectly well what he was saying when he said that "Paganism is Un-American."

**POSTED BY: CINDY | JULY 8, 2007 2:00 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

PAGANPLACE, I'm happy for you. I was worried I needed to send you a buck or two to prevent scurvy or something.

Now about my question: What motivates you to start, continue if you must, a religion? I'm only using Reverend Mr Elliott as an example of motivation, a career that puts bread on the table. I know some preachers have to work too but we know the pope slops at the big slop bucket of religion. What do you have in mind? Note that I worry about people doing things without proper motivation. There's always a catch that leads to trouble.

Tell me true, you're not just out for the easy "faith" dollar? Some preachers having to work for a living is bad enough without additional competition.

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 8, 2007 12:54 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

"“Paganism” is not one religion but an umbrella-term for many tiny recent movements with contemporary agendas sanctified by selecting items from ancient mythologies."

I would make the same argument for Christianity. If we humans have been around for two million years, then Christianity, compared with 'paganism', is the new kid on the block, and frankly, its track record is one of intolerance and violence.

**POSTED BY: MH | JULY 8, 2007 12:36 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Oh, Bgone. I'm not 'impoverished.' I'm not even 'poor in spirit.' Don't have much, don't need much. Could probably use a bit more medicine, but hey.

If you want 'facts,' \*read.\* Instead of insisting things must be in accord with your darkest imaginings.

You could have stayed 'hell' bound for \*that,\* really.

I didn't 'shout 'shut up,' ' 'loudly.'

I just said it. After a lot of patience.

If you heard 'shout,' that was in \*your\* mind.

"I have the devastating, unbearable but undeniable truth about religion. It's a con. I know it. You know it and I understand the lie is absolutely necessary to pull it off."

Actually, the devastating, unbearable but undeniable truth is, \*people do each other wrong sometimes.\* Sometimes the people we're supposed to be able to trust the most are told by 'religion' that 'hurt' is 'love' and this is all about ...the only way, in fact, ...the only that we can have spirits. Be fully human. Be accepted and loved, and not tortured now or in the future.

The lie is not 'Religion,' the lie is that whatever \*hole\* 'Religion' left in you can only be filled by things that hurt you.

The lie, in the end, is that I or someone 'like' me has anything to give you that is not already your birthright.

I also don't \*owe\* you anything, Bgone.

Not on your terms, anyway.

It's a lie to say you must kneel to me or anything I believe in.

It's also a lie of yours to insist that that's what I'm doing.

Lies aren't good. They distort our reality.

What we do comes back threefold, I say, and, ... I think what you fear is that if anything you don't understand cannot be made to 'Begone,' that you will suffer.

You seek power over this demon you call 'Religion.'

This isn't truth or clear sight.

People do wrong, and say it's 'religion'

I say 'Religion don't have to be that.'

" I just wondered what modern Pagans threatened people with. Ancient ones threatened to dismember people's bodies and did too."

This might make more sense if you understood that societies of the time had neither means nor motivation to \*imprison\* people.

You assumed ...and accused, we religiously threaten our children, because, likely, that's the only experience you ever \*had.\*

You say all kinds of things in an attempt to 'strike' at something.

You hit nothing cause that's not where we are.

Illusion?

You accept nothing but.

What you're afraid of is that \*anything\* you can't control might turn out to \*not\* be "Illusion."

It's just life.

Really. Rich, poor, hardly matters, ...except that you attempted to defame me and several other people as profiteers.

""I'm just a spectator at this here faith event,"

There's a part of the human brain that can't tell the difference between what we see and what we experience.

This is why we talk, and how we learn.

You're not a spectator. You troll a lot, frankly, but you can do something else, too.

But that's up to you.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 7, 2007 11:43 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

PAGANPLACE, I missed your post to me above until just now.

I see you are self sacrificing. That's good.

You're obviously impoverished. And intend to stay that way. Must be a Christian, "Sell all your earthly possessions and,, oops, don't have any to sell.

I believe you. What I'm having difficulty with is motive. Why are you saving the world or, if not all that good, doing whatever it is you do? Hobby?

It's not a hobby for Mr Elliott or his holiness the pope. They're professionals.

Those who shot "shut up" the loudest are the most fun to talk to.

I have the devastating, unbearable but undeniable truth about religion. It's a con. I know it. You know it and I understand the lie is absolutely necessary to pull it off.

Hell is a gold mine. I just wondered what modern Pagans threatened people with. Ancient ones threatened to dismember people's bodies and did too.

I'm just a spectator at this here faith event, (choose knowledge to faith myself). I'm pulling for your bunch to win if that helps patch things up a little. It's hard for me to be diplomatic enough to tell the truth and not get hated. Hate is one of your sins or virtues? Just as long as I can be an inspiration...

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 7, 2007 11:22 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Actually, as a footnote, though, one of our most academically-respected Druid leaders got his start in a college prank.

Personally, I say, ask the Gods, you might get, and, 'I was only kidding!' gets you, 'I like the sense of humor, kid, you're gonna need it.' :)

But I like to say things like that. :)

I mean, really. If it's not somehow \*funny\* can it \*possibly\* be true? :)

Greyfaces don't like the laughter.

Gods do. :)

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 7, 2007 11:14 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

The people with the 'wine and spare ribs' were apparently some guys who \*actually decided to use the religious privilege Christians enjoyed to get themselves some wine and spare ribs.\*

This has nothing to do with Paganism, except, of course, that Christians seem to have this idea we're having some completely undeserved fun for no good reason.

What they fail to realize is, that, actually, empty hedonists who look to Paganism for an excuse for something quickly find that actually no one ever cared how much wine and spare ribs they had, and Paganism involves work.

He was just trying to imply we're equally as fake as whoever those guys were.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 7, 2007 11:04 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

BTW,

I simply do not believe your story about the prisoners and the beef tenderloin.

I do not believe that prisoners would choose to not eat spare ribs and cheap wine if given the opportunity.

The story stinks of flat out BS!

**POSTED BY: DAN W. | JULY 7, 2007 10:24 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Wow, I would normally never respond to this level of "thought", but I could not resist.

While I hold no opinions one way or another about Pagans and their desire for a military chaplain, Mr. Elliot's reason and rationale for his position was beyond ignorant.

In fact this was simply some of the most ill-informed, idiotic tripe that I have ever been expected to take seriously in Newsweek (and that is saying something considering Cal Thomas is on the payroll).

The editor who chose this creep should simply be ashamed.

**POSTED BY: DAN W. | JULY 7, 2007 10:18 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Deb K-

The pagans definitely had a seminal impact on the founding of this country. Would you have us believe that the good reverend (and self-proclaimed expert) has not read "The Maypole of MerryMount"?

Even if youre right. I'm not sure I follow how he uses that for a justification of any of his positions anyway. In fact, what was the point of his Sherry/Beef example if not to simply hype his own "wisdom"? He immediately conceded right after it that the Pagans were largely sincere practitioners.

**POSTED BY: JOE | JULY 7, 2007 9:25 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Anyway, that aside, I kind of wonder how this columnist can say that people who follow and believe in and uphold \*American constitutional law\* ...are more 'Unamerican' than those who say that the \*foundations of America\* "Really" meant, "Whatever I in my holy wisdom see fit to believe, impose, or include."

People call me a 'serpent' for saying, 'Stop being unjust.'

I remind you of our first flag.

Don't tread on me.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 7, 2007 5:15 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

"The Captain:

Hey Pagans, welcome to the club! You know, the club where the Washington Post’s “on Faith” section ask questions like, are they American, are they dangerous, are they even human? Previously it had just been us Atheist, and occasionally Muslims, but welcome anyway. Now there is another group of no-Christian for the Post to spit on."

Did anyone brief you on the fact that the media aren't reality? :)

Seriously. We can't open an herb store in most of this country without getting firebombed, or, in fact, keep our kids from getting ripped away from us the first time a Christian 'believes' what they're told in Church that Paganism is 'really' Satanic child abuse, so why not call the cops and say you 'know' Satanic child abuse is going on at your local Maypole? ...so, don't compare martyrdoms.

I do actually defend the atheists against defamation: unfortunately, most of them, well, they seem to return the service by insisting I worship piskies as Gods and sacrifice animals while accumulating vast stores of wealth all with my scurrilous, yet unaccountably-powerful 'Magical powers.'

I mean, umm. It'd really be simpler to call us 'tree-huggers.' Not that that's actually a central thing to Pagans, but, if you're gonna shriek about it, try it.

At least then I could say, 'How bout you actually just hug a tree for five minutes, if you're that fussed.'

If you're capable of shutting off the mental noise of our society long enough to actually do it.

Takes practice, sometimes.

I think people are usually too busy screaming about how 'irrational' we are, that they never realize they \*totally fabricated and imagined\* us divining by squirming entrails, (Christian or atheist) ...and that if you shut up for twenty minutes, you might see it's just people. Maybe also trees.

But shut up for twenty minutes.

Do something.

Then tell me how I don't know the human equipment.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 7, 2007 4:50 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Funny isn't it that only when Pagans want full rights...including having our soldiers recieve their own spiritual counseling , then having Chaplains at all is decried.

Our men and woman can fight and die with the love of their gods...but their loved ones had to fight for 10 long years to have their spiritual emplem on their head stones.

Now it's chaplains... Is it that there are not enough Pagans in the service? must not be, there are more of them then Muslims...and they have Chaplains. Must be something else. Maybe the same reason that the VA kept loseing the paperwork on the Pentacle?

Rev. Elliot, I was very surprised by you, I thought you looked rather nice and kind. I discovered that age does not always mean sage.

terra

**POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JULY 7, 2007 3:46 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

"In that it locates the sacred elsewhere, Paganism is un-American."

Elsewhere? As a person deeply affected by "pagan" Native American traditional beliefs, as well as by Pagan elements derived from European traditions (like, Christmas [look it up], Easter [likewise], and a few others), I fail to see how this person's post is anything but small-minded.

Un-American? America is a place for all religions. I suggest this "authority" Mr. Elliot should keep his closed mind linked to a closed mouth.

God Bless America-- and May All Gods Bless America. I think we need all the help we can get!

**POSTED BY: THOMPST | JULY 7, 2007 2:24 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Hey Pagans, welcome to the club! You know, the club where the Washington Post’s “on Faith” section ask questions like, are they American, are they dangerous, are they even human? Previously it had just been us Atheist, and occasionally Muslims, but welcome anyway. Now there is another group of no-Christian for the Post to spit on.

**POSTED BY: THE CAPTAIN | JULY 7, 2007 2:06 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

(Was that American enough for ya? :) )

This speech he uses to try and justify inequality, and unfair treatment, and exclusion, and while he's at it, throwing on some inflammatory defamation...

Well, \*That's\* Unamerican.

In America, we live in a nation that asserts that our rights are \*unalienable.\* They are not conferred by priests, or even majorities.

Unalienable.

They cannot be taken away.

Not even if you claim to speak for some 'Only God.'

Period.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 7, 2007 1:40 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

And, I, for one, would like this man to come say I'm Unamerican to my \*face.\*

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 7, 2007 1:31 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

"As one who knows something of Willis Eliot, he has probably done more for religious freedom and civil rights"

Umm, if he wants to exclude some from these 'rights,' it's not 'rights' he's standing up for, ...it's the position of privilege over others he wants.

He wants to say 'Unbiblical people' are not only inferior, but 'Unamerican.'

That's not rights.

That's a rationalization of Dominionist ambitions.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 7, 2007 1:28 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

As one who knows something of Willis Eliot, he has probably done more for religious freedom and civil rights and sound theological and inter-faith discussion in this country than all of us put together. How interesting in this "free" society so many of you are judging the individual on his comments in the article. Very few of you are able to stay within the bounds of the premise of the article and argue from your own position without going off on him and a whole bunch of others you lump together one side or the other (or however many sides there seem to be to this discussion.)

I would suggest that a paid chaplaincy within the command structure of the US military is an oxymoron for many religious traditions that are part of our culture. Ironically I know an Army Reserve Muslim chaplain who was in the Pentagon at the time of the plane crash into it on 9/11. Yet, can any of us outside of Islam judge who was the "true" Muslim at that time? If we all were more true to our religious traditions we would be doing a lot less judging and condemning that seems to be flying around this conversation.

**POSTED BY: SWIMCANOEHIKE | JULY 7, 2007 1:00 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Where did this "under God" stuff get started? Many of us still living were brought up as kids to pledge allegiance to the Flag without those two words, and we weren't the worse for it. The "under God" thing was stuck in the Pledge in 1953, as I recall, when Eisenhower thought it would be politically smart to throw the right-wing piety crowd a bone and make us all look more God-fearing in comparison with those Commie Russians, our enemies at that time. Who says we are located "under God"? Maybe we are "over God" or "sideways to God". And if God is the guy who is advising Bush and persuading him that he is the messenger of His will, we are all in big trouble.

**POSTED BY: CALIFORNIA CONDOR | JULY 7, 2007 11:48 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

There is nothing more anti-American than the immoral majority claiming dominion over out country.

**POSTED BY: DJ | JULY 7, 2007 11:33 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

There is nothing more anti-American than the immoral majority claiming dominion over out country.

**POSTED BY: DJ | JULY 7, 2007 11:33 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

As a nonbeliever, I find most of the discussion amusing. The most "American" religion I can think of is Mormonism, whose founder,somewhat like Moses, found "sacred" tablets in a New York forest---how appropriate!

**POSTED BY: JOHN DAVID BURKITT | JULY 7, 2007 10:59 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Thank you Willis E Elliott, you have managed to prove in a very short time, exactly why this country needs a stronger separation between YOUR church and OUR state. YOUR church is not my problem, YOUR spirituality is not my country's problem, it's YOURS. If ANYONE has to 'pay' for their own religious leaders in the military, then EVERYONE should. Why -I- should be forced to support your religion is beyond me, especially when you think your religion is more 'important' or 'real' than anyone else's. Particularly when it regularly fails the smell test itself, or anything having to do with the Scientific Method.

Mr. Elliott, your 'logic' is an echo of the thinking that drove the pilgrims to this country, your attempted suppression of what you consider an undesirable belief is misguided and Un-American, while Paganism is merely misguided (but no more so than your own ludicrous belief structure).

**POSTED BY: FRED EVIL | JULY 7, 2007 10:34 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

I have lost respect for the Washington Post for publishing such ignorant tripe.

Paganism is un-American? I'm an American and a pagan, and I am a damn PROUD patriot. My faith also shares many of the morals and values this country was founded on---equality, liberty, brotherhood, and honor.

And is the author unaware of the many influences that pagan Rome, the pagan Anglo-Saxons, the pagan Germans, pagan Greece, and pagan Celts have had on our government and society? There is just as much pagan influence, perhaps more than the Abrahamic influence.

**POSTED BY: THOMAS J. FLANNERY | JULY 7, 2007 7:59 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

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**POSTED BY: THOMAS J. FLANNERY | JULY 7, 2007 7:59 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Actually, our justice system is more like that of the Pagan Vikings than that of the ancient Israelites. Notice there is no "eye for an eye".

**POSTED BY: LUKE | JULY 7, 2007 7:32 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Minister Elliott,

You're also forgetting a very important part of the American heritage which is of such great concern to you. The ancestry of today's Earth-based Paganism reaches back to Walden Pond and \*Leaves of Grass\*--America's \*Aeneid\*--through the Hudson River School of painters and the photography of Ansel Adams. The same Universalist Unitarian church that nursed Transcendentalism now nurses a large part of Wicca.

There's nothing strange or foreign about this.

Be not afraid.

**POSTED BY:**[**TODD**](http://kyklosapollon.org/)**| JULY 7, 2007 2:42 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

How can anyone deny that our culture has not been heavily influenced by PAGANISM?

Do people forget that Western culture and our system of government are strongly derived not only from the JudeoChristian, but ALSO and AS MUCH from the ancient, advanced, and long lived civilizations of Greece and Rome?

WHen we war now, we don't go in and KILL every man, woman, and child as the ancient Isrealites did - no, we are much more likely to rebuild and fortify their civilizations and governments (or try to)...more in the PAGAN sons of old - Alexander the Great and Caesar!

This man is clearly a fascist.

**POSTED BY: HADRIANA | JULY 7, 2007 1:06 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Heh, Todd. They're the ones all about the 'market.'

Personally, I note it doesn't make me any less Pagan if there are more or fewer of us.

Hardly want to 'take over,' we've already got more seekers than we thought we could handle a few years ago, as it is. :)

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 6, 2007 9:22 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Minister Elliott,

Christianity is on the verge of a beautiful spiritual blossoming, and we Pagans, along with atheists and others, are going to cause it-by freeing you of the \*expectation of power\*, and with it, power's corrupting influence.

Christian leaders from Pope Benedict to Paul Weyrich already glimpse this; that a minority Christianity might be a purified Christianity.

Be not afraid.

**POSTED BY:**[**TODD**](http://kyklosapollon.org/)**| JULY 6, 2007 9:15 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Hrm, found something interesting there from Bgone:

"PAGANPLACE, do you folks threaten children with anything more severe than Santa Claus?"

Umm, nope. We don't threaten our children: not even with alienation of materially-represented affection in the name of a supernatural Father Christmas figure as punishment for not 'believing.'

Frankly, the only ones terrorizing our kids are Christian proselytizers and the like.

You ever \*seen\* a non-terrorized child?

Something to see. Really.

" You're not terrorists like the three great faiths?"

No, we're not terrorists, especially not 'like those great faiths,' ...if you paused in your ravings to read what we say, here, you might realize that we do not use fear of Gods for social control.

"You're so obvious I can't bring myself to believe that you actually believe what you say you believe."

I'm not sure what's obvious to you, you can't even seem to get the more mainstream religions right on what they believe. Why should I think you have anything to say about mine, when you're so clearly \*wrong on very basic points?\*

" There is money in it? Well, not as much money as getting on the government payroll, I suppose."

Money?

Gods, he thinks there's 'money' in it.

I get my clothes from the Goodwill and Sally Ann, spud. Never had a piece of jewelry that cost more than twenty eight bucks, except for my engagement ring, which cost maybe a hundred fifty, \*in my whole declared-Pagan life.\*

I buy everything \*possible\* used.

If I can't make it or restore it.

And you know what?

Shut up, Bgone.

You know nothing about us.

Nothing.

Shut up.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 6, 2007 9:13 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Not sure what BeGone's getting at exactly.

All the teachers that I know of in Paganism have not charged one thin dime for their services. All they require is your sincerity and dedication.

Please do some research or ask questions about what we actually believe. You really might be surprised.. and it has nothing to do with your 'hoaxbuster' site you're so proud of espousing.

Astrology has nothing to say about real Pagan beliefs.

I'd like for this panelist to stand in front of the grave of a fallen Pagan soldier with his family and tell them he's 'Un-American'. See how quickly that tune would change.

**POSTED BY: PRIVER | JULY 6, 2007 8:49 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

BGone

What are you talking about,you make no sense at all?

May the PixiePox be upon ye heathen hide.and three times ring-around-the-rosies all fall down!
Hail Tinkerbell Holy Fairy of the Night.
Now you're for it.

**POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JULY 6, 2007 8:28 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Paganism is not un-American. It's a historical fact that the founding fathers of this country were from a diverse religious background. Many were Deists, not Christians. Also, this country is a country with Freedom of Religion. The idea that America stands for one religion is absolutely asinine.

There are already chaplains in place for many other non-Christian religions. Pagans, becoming more prominent (or at least more vocal) in the Military have earned their right to have a religious representative to meet their spiritual needs in military life.

Military life is about supporting the not just the soldiers physical needs, but his/her family needs, emotional needs and spiritual needs. To deny that to Pagans in the military or to accuse them of being un-American because they disagree with your faith is wholly un-American. Thankfully, we do not live in a theocracy. If we did. I'd surely be un-American.

Sincerely,
Rev. Anastasia Keech ULC
Wiccan High Priestess in Chicago, IL

**POSTED BY:**[**BLUEFIREWITCH**](http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=BlueFireWitch)**| JULY 6, 2007 8:13 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Well, Deb, I'm not quite sure what Bgone's been on about lately, but, these discussions do tend to degenerate.

The columnist here was probably pretty well answered in the first few posts. :)

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 6, 2007 6:32 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

ANONYMOUS

I wouldn't dream of making fun of the pixie faith or any faith for that matter, hehehehe. I heard about the big potato famine but suspect pixies live in the minds of the superstitious. Now that suggests a cure for the demon on the nebol bridge, starvation.

There's a big market for astrological charts, jeweled ones for folks like Miss Nancy Regan. As for pixies, there are certified pictures of them taken in England and published in the newspaper too. Maybe you should try a different brand of camera. Pixies are certified to be real. Sins against pixie commandments may be why they avoid you. Done anything really interesting lately?

Don't try to tell me there's no such thing as luck. It's so real people make it for themselves.

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 6, 2007 6:30 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Luke, you'll have to ask him what he thinks about that- as I said, I don't necessarily agree with his conclusions, but am trying to shed some more light on what he was saying verses how people were understanding/reacting to it. As for saying that paganism because of the Indians slaughter shaped America, that argument flies in the face of logic. If anything, the mis-use of Christianity to demonize and diminish others shaped America more by the slaughter, than the Indians own practice of paganism. Amd I don't say that as proud or wonderful thing, just as reality. Paganism did't shape America through the Indians with their slaughter; it would be like saying that Judiasm shaped Germany through the Jewish people in the Holocoust. What has shaped Germany isn't Judaism, but the Germans reaction to Judaism and their prejudice and bigotry toward Jews, as well as gays, the mentally ill and physically disabled.

Bgone, as a minister, I can tell you that most congregants do not have "faith" in their ministers. Trust, respect, yes; faith as you are implying as a form of worship, no. Otherwise we'd be paid much more! And criticized much less! I'm not sure what you mean by the Scriptures they cannot read - that just flies in the face of logic unless you insist on the ability to read in the original language not the translation. In that case Pagan texts that are relied on to prove it's own history would also be unreliable, since I doubt few of you read Hitite, Babylonian or other languages many were written in. And the last, well we just disagree.

As for what you conclude about the daily horoscopes and reading of tea leaves etc.: I'd argue that reading these by most people in America (the plurality if not majority) is no more indicative of their level of faith in Paganism then saying that because a family has a Christmas Tree and exchanges Christmas present is indicative of their level of faith in Christ.

Finally, this is no more a "pagan" nation than it is a "Christian" or "Judeo-Christian" one. Those are the religious practices of it's citizens, not the state religion or even the religion that is the influencer of our development.

I do find it interesting that you felt compelled to tear down my faith in response to my post, where I did nothing of the kind to yours.

Grace and peace,
Deb K.

**POSTED BY: DEB K | JULY 6, 2007 4:37 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

BGone

Are you making fun of me? It certainly sounds like!
Everybody knows that there are no pixies in Ireland anymore.Most starved to death in the potato famine,just a few escaped to America and the Caribbean where they currently thrive.
I'm forbidden to discuss Tinkerbell of course,with anyone other than proven true believers,who know the signs and omens and appropriate language to be used when discussing Her Holiness.
And that obviously does not include you.

**POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JULY 6, 2007 4:34 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Luke, you'll have to ask him what he thinks about that- as I said, I don't necessarily agree with his conclusions, but am trying to shed some more light on what he was saying verses how people were understanding/reacting to it. As for saying that paganism because of the Indians slaughter shaped America, that argument flies in the face of logic. If anything, the mis-use of Christianity to demonize and diminish others shaped America more by the slaughter, than the Indians own practice of paganism. Amd I don't say that as proud or wonderful thing, just as reality. Paganism did't shape America through the Indians with their slaughter; it would be like saying that Judiasm shaped Germany through the Jewish people in the Holocoust. What has shaped Germany isn't Judaism, but the Germans reaction to Judaism and their prejudice and bigotry toward Jews, as well as gays, the mentally ill and physically disabled.

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I do find it interesting that you felt compelled to tear down my faith in response to my post, where I did nothing of the kind to yours.

Grace and peace,
Deb K.

**POSTED BY: DEB K | JULY 6, 2007 4:34 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

An interesting test, poll.

Which would you allow the government to outlaw, the Baptist religion or astrology?

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 6, 2007 3:28 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Wow, Paganism is Un-American . . . . Note to Pres. Bush/VP Cheney: Though I know you are quite busy shredding the Constitution as it pertains to habeas corpus, freedom of speech and assembly, to say nothing of accountability, could you please take time out to shred that whole freedom of religion thing. Reverend Elliot thinks its Un-American. I know you'll agree.

**POSTED BY: ESL | JULY 6, 2007 3:25 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

DEB K, I'm sure you're correct in what Rev Elliott is thinking or trying to say. Paganism is the original religion and the religion of nearly all if not all human beings. Astrology is Paganism and the most popular, most read part of every newspaper, just to mention one form of Paganism.

Fortune telling, reading tea leaves, all sorts of Pagan practices are done by people of great faith,, in ministers like Rev Elliott. I personally wonder if they understand that the "faith" they are so quick to use as a weapon is diametrically opposed to what they actually believe and practice and really Paganism, faith in gods.

This is, has been and will continue to be a Pagan nation. All faith is in ministers who are no doubt seen in their minds eyes as representing the gods they actually worship, at least rely on to guide their every move. Nancy Regan is a stellar example. We know she has great faith.

Hell, and heaven as well are confusion factors that tend to emotionally disturb. Some people who come to understand themselves, what the source of their "faith" really is can be cured.

1. Faith is in ministers.
2. Faith is in the sacred scriptures they cannot read.
3. Faith is in God that is one of the gods and changes from time to time to meet the demands of the moment.

The "usual god" of the three great faiths is the sun of course. See "monstrance" (next to monstrous in the dictionary). It's a "sun burst" folks. Jesus is of "one being with her father the sun." You had better believe it or you'll have 7 years bad luck. What? An eternity of bad luck you say?

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 6, 2007 3:22 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Sorry Deb K.,

There is no context in which Senor Elliot is correct.

His argument would be considered ignorant and substandard in any Beginner's Logic, History or Debate class in any Jr. College anywhere in the United States. Heck most High Schools would find his argument to be lame, unfounded and thoroughly unconvincing.

His is an embarrasment to WP/Newsweek.

**POSTED BY: CS | JULY 6, 2007 2:49 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

I guess I deserve to be blown up then. I think you should be blown up for spelling existence wrong.

**POSTED BY: LUKE | JULY 6, 2007 2:26 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Yikes! Our befuddled writer says that paganism is un-American.

The last I looked, America was a democracy. Democracy is a system where the people have a voice in the government, and where their leaders are elected by the people to represent them.

The last I looked, the major religions are all based not on the model of democracy, but on the model of a kingdom. A kingdom by definition is run by a king. The people have no voice in the running of that kingdom and are, in effect, serfs who must do the bidding of the king or face the consequences which include death. The king rules by fiat, and the masses suffer the consequences.

The truth of the matter is that the system of kingdom is in direct opposition to the system of democracy. If anything is "un-American" at it's core, it is the system of kingdom, which is fully and eagerly embraced by almost all religionists.

I'm sorry, Rev Willis, but the couple of columns you've posted at On Faith show you to be a bigotted old fuddy duddy. This latest effort is no exception.

**POSTED BY: MR. MARK | JULY 6, 2007 2:13 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Muslims should stop blowing us up.
We are NOT infidels.
Atheists and agnostics and others who deny
the existancs of gods are the true infidels,
and deserve to be blown up.
But please leave the rest of us alone.

**POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JULY 6, 2007 2:01 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Actually, Deb, I think that Paganism has plenty to do with the shaping of America, considering that Christians slaughtered Native Americans when they arrived here. Is he saying that Native Americans played no part in America's development, or did he conveniently forget about them?

**POSTED BY: LUKE | JULY 6, 2007 1:50 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Bgone, Annonymous, Don Ho and others:

Having conversed with Dr. Elliot in many forums, I know that he chooses his words carefully, with explicit meanings in his mind, well based both in linguist and context of the comments.

Now I don't agree with Dr. Elliot on this particular issue, beleiving that chaplains of the Pagan religions should be recognized and supplied in the same way any other chaplains in the military are (a chaplain must minister to all religions in their battalion withibn that religions belief/rituals, no matter if their's or not unless).

However, when Dr. Elliot states in this context that Paganism (not Pagans) are Un-American, I think it has to be read in the context of his earlier remarks. He is not refering to the patriotism of practicing pagans, nor that they are dis-loyal or less than American because of the religion they practice- he isn't purporting something similar to the current administration's stance that to dissent is unpatriotic or un-American. What Dr. Elliot is arguing is that in terms of our heritage as a nation - as our history and background- that paganism has not be a founding or moving force in American history - it hasn't had the shaping affect that the other religions have had based on the Bible, nor as a traditional Monotheistic nation, does Paganism fit into that tradition. Again I disagree with his conclusion, but understand what he means by Paganism is un-American. In terms of who we are as a nation and our shared national history/heritage, it is in that sense Paganism is "Un-American" in his eyes; the same way one might say that the United Church of Christ is "Un-English" or "Un-Arab" in that we are not a shaping or even presense in those nations.

As I said, I don't agree with Dr. Elliot's judgements. But I am confident that he is not in any way intending to demonize or discount Pagans as un-American, or threaten children as Bgone stated. His tendency may be to argue on a more academic style than in a public discourse style - and that can come across much differently in a public forum. I would suggest that perhpas it would be more productive then for you to argue with Dr. Elliot based on your disagreement with his judgements, not by assigning nefarious and devious motives to what he says.

God's grace and peace,
Deb K

**POSTED BY: DEB K | JULY 6, 2007 1:42 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

The Irish killed their pixies? That's news. The Irish must have stopped drinking, sobered up. Don't think so. What's this world coming to? Do dead pixies today mean dead Tinker Bell tomorrow?

If angels can't be shot why do they have shields? Before you decide to shoot Tinker Bell remember that those with shields also have lethal weapons. Why is it always a matter of who will send who to hell?

At [**http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul**](http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul) there's an authenticated picture of angels fighting and they clearly have lethal weapons and shields. And!!!! They're sending each other to hell. "Of course you know, this means war."

The question is, which side is Rev Elliott on? Methinks he's in favor of shooting Tinker Bell. Does that mean Lucifer's bad angels won? The history books were all written by the winners so the bad angels never win. Know ye that God is on the side of the winners. God justifies the killing and without the killing there can be no winners.

Is Tinker Bell God? A word to the wise...

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 6, 2007 1:10 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

As a young lady I was raised to believe in Tinkerbell.
Though me friends laughed at me when
I wore my T.B.and star at school,the realization
that they thought I was a little crazy actually helped strengthen my faith.
It also helped that my religion had no church,because as mother said the whole world is our church,especially the bottom of our garden where pixies often gather at midnight.
I've tried many times to observe the midnight frolics in our garden,but the pixies were always ahead of me,and never appeared when I was spying on them.
But of course,common sense tells me that pixies
have good reason to remain unseen.People would
destroy them,just as they did in Ireland hundreds of years ago.
So,out of respect I stopped bothering them.
I don't need to see them,or Tinkerbell.
I mean I know they are there,and that's the main thing.And I know they hear my prayers.

Posted July 6, 2007 12:35 PM

**POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JULY 6, 2007 12:44 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

It is Mr. Elliot who is being Un-American here. Just ask James Madison (famously known as the "Father of the American Constitution"):

"The establishment of the chaplainship to Congs is a palpable violation of equal rights, as well as of Constitutional principles: The tenets of the chaplains elected by the majority shut the door of worship agst the members whose creeds & consciences forbid a participation in that of the majority. To say nothing of other sects, this is the case with that of Roman Catholics & Quakers who have always had members in one or both of the Legislative branches. Could a Catholic clergyman ever hope to be appointed a Chaplain!

TO SAY THAT HIS RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES ARE OBNOXIOUS OR THAT HIS SECT IS SMALL, IS TO LIFT THE VEIL AT ONCE AND EXHIBIT IN ITS NAKED DEFORMITY THE DOCTRINE THAT RELIGIOUS TRUTH IS TO BE TESTED BY NUMBERS OR THAT THE MAJOR SECTS HAVE A RIGHT TO GOVERN THE MINOR." (emphasis added by me)

You are wrong about the founding fathers, you are wrong about American precedent, you are wrong about the principles of liberty.

Regards

A Hermit

**POSTED BY: A HERMIT | JULY 6, 2007 12:25 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Take the money away and religion will go away. Can't do that else how will Elliott live. You don't expect him to work do you? What's he qualified to do besides threaten children with the greatest terror possible, the fires of hell. Maybe he can consult as an expert on terrorism with the Bush gang. They seem to need a little help getting it, terrorism, where it comes from and how to counteract it.

PAGANPLACE, do you folks threaten children with anything more severe than Santa Claus? You're not terrorists like the three great faiths? You're so obvious I can't bring myself to believe that you actually believe what you say you believe. There is money in it? Well, not as much money as getting on the government payroll, I suppose.

**POSTED BY: BGONE | JULY 6, 2007 12:23 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

This is, by the far, the largest piece of bullcrap I have ever read - I worship as I please; it is my Constitutional right - but now, it appears, I am un-american. I agree with the "PHD" in teletubby anatomy!
Religion is a very personal choice; I choose to be Wiccan... our soldiers over-seas, with the huge sacrafice they make on a daily basis, SHOULD NOT be denied a pastor/priest/priestess/etc., of their choosing. So let it be written! So let it be done!

**POSTED BY: KAT | JULY 6, 2007 11:10 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

More proof that a doctorate in theology is like a phd in teletubby anatomy.

**POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | JULY 6, 2007 8:24 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Let me add my own voice here.

I am an active pagan and a former service member (honorably discharged). I have served this country (and still do with my current employer, a DoD contractor) with honor and patriotism for the last 20+ years. Admittedly I did have some issues being a pagan in the service (but never to the point of actual discrimination as I always worked hard to be the best) but to say that paganism is un-American is a slap in the face to all who serve no matter what their religious affiliation may be.

When I took the oath of enlistment, I swore to uphold and defend the Constitution of this country against all enemies foreign AND DOMESTIC. And yes, I also took that oath knowing that I would be upholding the rights of such ignornant individuals such as the Rev. Elliott. However, if he attempted to impose his way of life on me, I would also uphold MY right to the freedom of religion by viewing him as an enemy of the Constitution.

I am proud of my service, and proud of my religion. But I am sad for our country, for there are far too many Rev. Elliott's (and Cal Thomas's /Chuck Coulsons) that wish to destroy the very basis for our country. We are a secular country, and we need to constantly be on guard against those who would turn us into a Christian version of Iran or the Taliban... and whose methods are no different.

**POSTED BY: TAL GREYWOLF | JULY 6, 2007 7:50 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

To Happy Pagan,

This AMERICAN PAGAN is PROUD AND APPRECIATIVE of you to put yourself on the line for my freedom. My husband fought in both of the Iraq wars and although he claims no religious preference he did the same for his fellow AMERICANS. ALL Vets are AMERICAN HEROES because they are fighting, some dying, for all of our freedoms, including the right to practice any Religion.

So Happy Pagan, pay the so called Reverend no attention, he is just ignorant.

**POSTED BY: DEB | JULY 6, 2007 7:18 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

\*I\* am un-american?! i beg to differ. i proudly served my country, would have died for my country had the need arose, and every single person in my company knew i was a Wiccan! did they look down at me? a few select did that had been brainwashed their entire lives, but for the vast majority, NO! they did not! i'm only 20 years old, and still, everyday, i fly my flag proudly outside. and you call me un-american... i scoff at you, reverand.

**POSTED BY: HAPPY PAGAN | JULY 6, 2007 6:59 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Reverend Elliot,
That has to be the best display of close mindedness I've ever read. Thank you, now I can teach my children how important tolerance,history and research are at one time. And you're how old?
Sheesh!!

**POSTED BY: DEB | JULY 6, 2007 4:37 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

So "Reverend" Elliot,

I guess you believe that Christmas trees and Easter eggs are also un-American.

You sir, are a dolt!

**POSTED BY: DON HO | JULY 6, 2007 12:29 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Mr. Elliot,

You have no idea what you are writing about on many, many, many levels. You are obviously wildly ignorant or flat out dishonest about the very basics of civics and American History.

And Dear Editors of the Washington Post and Newsweek......What the Hell is wrong with you?

You should be ashamed for allowing this pathetic drivel be included on your website. Do you have ANY standards?

**POSTED BY: CWS | JULY 6, 2007 12:09 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

"A better question is why should the government pay for ministers for ANY religion? "

Cause it's real work.

I don't want religious commandments in my courthouse, but our soldiers shouldn't lose access to their religion by joining the military.

Whatever that religion.

"Reasonable accomodation."

That's why.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 6, 2007 12:06 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

I resent very much the tax breaks that Christians and other snake oil salesmen get, even as pastors like Rick Warren and Joel Osteen ride around in private jets. A better question is why should the government pay for ministers for ANY religion? And if they should, shouldn't they provide a chaplain for every sub-sect of weird Protestantism that you find in this country (of which there are thousands). Maybe the Army chaplain corps doesn't want to have to pay for the snakes that some of them need.

Call me un-American, but people like the sanctimonious windbag who wrote this essay are very bad for the country. Then again, abstract thinking was never a strong point for people with his world view.

**POSTED BY: BA'AL | JULY 6, 2007 12:02 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

David and all of the other UCCs on this list: gotcha. He's only speaking for himself, not your denomination. My apologies.

**POSTED BY: ATHENA | JULY 5, 2007 10:44 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Mr. Elliot wrote:

"I must say that “Paganism” is not one religion but an umbrella-term for many tiny recent movements with contemporary agendas sanctified by selecting items from ancient mythologies. Involving several hundred thousand Americans, it locates the sacred in Earth and Nature—over against our culture’s traditional competing locations of the sacred in Biblical religion and in reason."

Christopher responds:

Mr. Elliot's description of Paganism contains a small grain of truth, but it also perfectly fits the dizzying array of Protestant Christian denominations in the United States--all recent, with their own agendas emphasizing and reinterpreting portions of ancient myth and ritual. So it is hardly a definitive explanation or distinction that he has made. But the hidden pivot his argument turns on is his assumption that the U.S. culture is HIS religious culture.

It was never true. Muslims were here long before the UCC or Baptists ever were. Since the early days of colonialism under the Spanish, French, and British, they and the Amerindians each had a radically pluralistic field of religions at play. With the advent of the Awakenings, the Mormon/Gentile distinction came to be the operative division west of the 100th meridian, and still is today. Chinese Buddhists and Taoists came in the mid-19th century, Sikhs a few decades later, to build the railroad, mining, and lumber infrastructure that built much of the industrial U.S. Not to mention the Afro-Polytheist and Muslim slave-labor arriving in North America starting in the 1500's. It has never been \*only\* Biblical religion at work in the Americas. Only by eradicating the contributions of non-Biblical peoples from the earliest days can Mr. Elliot argue for his "imaginary nation." Radical religious pluralism is the most \*American\* fact of all, and...always has been.

**POSTED BY:**[**CHRISTOPHER W. CHASE**](http://www.msu.edu/~chasech5)**| JULY 5, 2007 10:40 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

" David:

As a very active member of the UCC I feel I should explain some things to the non-UCC crowd reading this entry. Rev. Elliott is not a spokesperson for the UCC -- in fact, there is no "spokesperson" for the UCC other than Jesus Christ. "

Don't worry, I just see a dude with a keyboard, anyway.

"Peace and grace to ALL God's people!!!"

So say we all. You're gonna need it.

Guess the rest of us take what we can get. :)

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 5, 2007 10:29 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Athena,

Just so you know, this entry by Rev. Elliott is creating quite the stir within the UCC blogosphere. In fact, even the "conservative" UCC blogs are being very critical of this entry. His thinking here is not within the accepted mainstream in the UCC. However, because of our polity and adherence to religious liberty Rev. Elliott is free to make these statements. He is not, however, speaking for the UCC in ANY way.

**POSTED BY:**[**MIKE**](http://www.ucc.org/)**| JULY 5, 2007 9:33 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

As a very active member of the UCC I feel I should explain some things to the non-UCC crowd reading this entry. Rev. Elliott is not a spokesperson for the UCC -- in fact, there is no "spokesperson" for the UCC other than Jesus Christ. We follow a congregational polity whereby individual congregations can select their own pastors, theology, and worship style without any interference from the larger denomination. Rev. Elliott represents views that are generally well outside the mainstream within the UCC. Yet, he is certainly free to them and the rest of the UCC will support him in every appropriate way. My own congregation would never deride, critique, or defame any other faith tradition, including paganism. The UCC is the oldest protestant tradition in the United States and many of our early members were instrumental in the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. As a denomination, we strongly value religious liberty, pluralism, and the separation of church and state.

If you'd like more information about our denomination please visit the website at [**http://www.ucc.org**](http://www.ucc.org/)

Peace and grace to ALL God's people!!!

**POSTED BY:**[**DAVID**](http://www.ucc.org/)**| JULY 5, 2007 9:22 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Mr. Willis stated : "Paganism is un-American. But un-Biblical religions, at their own rather than at public expense, should have access, for spiritual support, to their adherents in the U.S. military."

Oy vey. It is un-American to be a Pagan, but American for Pagans to join the army and die for their country.

Pagans pay taxes as Americans. So, don't use a single cent of taxes Pagans paid to hire chaplains of other faiths in the military.

No taxation without representation.

**POSTED BY: JIHADIST | JULY 5, 2007 8:32 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

This is one of the most insulting and dangerous panelist responses because it disguises fear and hatred with nationalism. The little story at the beginning is not relevant to the discussion and only serves to illustrate a detest for Paganism as fabricated religions with political agendas. The only agenda Paganism has is attaining the same rights and responsibilities that nearly every other religion in America enjoys.

Paganism is not un-American; denying diversity is. Dr. Elliot's understanding of America, as well as Paganism, is limited indeed. America's heritage is beautiful, but is also full of ugly episodes that are part of our rich tapestry. Many such episodes were historically defended as being rooted in Biblical tradition. Thankfully, the Bible is not our supreme legal document, the Constitution is. And that's a social contract for ALL of the people, not just some.

**POSTED BY:**[**CP**](http://pandorasbazaar.blogspot.com/)**| JULY 5, 2007 8:27 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Hmmm. What about all the non-Christian Native American religions? Are they Un-american too. What a ridiculous notion. There are probably more than a few hundred thousand right there alone.

**POSTED BY: M.AVINA | JULY 5, 2007 7:55 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

See, Reverend, ...and others. Yes, some sincere Christians, as well as many Masons and Deists got together and decided that our religious liberty is innately an unalienable good.

Not even religion can take it away.

Unalienable. Period.

Yes, some Christians were involved in that, and surely, have seen the fruits of it.

Those of us who are not of the majority religions, though: We're the pig, and you're the chicken.

How?

It's like a ham and egg breakfast.

The chicken is involved.

The pig is \*committed.\*

Don't insult our patriotism. We know where we are.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 5, 2007 5:56 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Kind of silly, isn't it. These are the ones trying to use the system to get people to give up their liberty as Americans in favor of some 'Kingdom,' and they call \*us\* 'Unamerican.'

Phhhhbt.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 5, 2007 5:38 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

"America is a heritage, a here-and-now, and a hope. In heritage, we are “one nation, under God.” As a Christian citizen, I affirm this heritage--both our cultural-political unity and our historic piety \* \* \* America’s originating and continuing spirit locates the sacred in Biblical religion coordinate with reason."

Nope, you're dead wrong. America was founded as a secular republic. People like you are a threat to our Republic, by trying to effectively repeal the Constitution and impose a theocracy. That you warp and misrepresent American history is proof enough of your malignant intentions.

Strong language? Yes, but we face a strong threat here. The implications of accepting the preposterous idea that we a "Christian" nation (you really mean evangelical Protestant, don't you) are immense. Freedom of religion, of speech, of association, all are incompatible with a religiously-based gov't. Just look around th world at this sort of gov't. Iran, Saudi Arabia. In the past, Cromwellian England--the whole of Reformation European history. Repression, oppression, internecine fights among between all the "true" sects. We don't need that here.

**POSTED BY: GARAK | JULY 5, 2007 5:01 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

I'll admit that it makes regrets you have but one life to give for your country a bit of a wrench, but all the more reason to get it right, I should think.

But, author.

Do \*not\* accuse my people of less patriotism than you.

Don't you \*dare.\*

We believe in the promise of America as few who expect to be beamed out of their SUV's and paste bumperstickers on them gloating about the resulting carnage ever could.

We don't have to try and twist the wisdom of the Founding Fathers to suit 'religious tests for office' which they expressly prohibited.

We're in it.

And expect we may be back.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 5, 2007 4:51 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

"The fact that they are un-American is going to come as a big shock to the thousands of Pagan veterans. It's going to come as a bigger shock to the families of those Pagans who died in the line of military duty."

\*ghostly whistles of 'When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again.\*

We're down with reincarnation, remember.

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 5, 2007 4:44 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

\*\*I must say that “Paganism” is not one religion but an umbrella-term for many tiny recent movements with contemporary agendas sanctified by selecting items from ancient mythologies.\*\*

One could say the same regarding the many different sects and sub-sects of Christianity.

\*\*Involving several hundred thousand Americans, it locates the sacred in Earth and Nature—over against our culture’s traditional competing locations of the sacred in Biblical religion and in reason.
All of these locations of the sacred express truths, support values, and are deserving of respect. Government recognition is another matter.\*\*

Whose culture is this "our"? Christians'? So we don't deserve recognition because we're not Christian?

\*\* In heritage, we are “one nation, under God.”\*\*

Only since the 1950's.

\*\*A military’s function is to support a nation’s spirit, not only its body. And America’s originating and continuing spirit locates the sacred in Biblical religion coordinate with reason. In that it locates the sacred elsewhere, Paganism is un-American.\*\*

The fact that they are un-American is going to come as a big shock to the thousands of Pagan veterans. It's going to come as a bigger shock to the families of those Pagans who died in the line of military duty.

\*\*But un-Biblical religions, at their own rather than at public expense, should have access, for spiritual support, to their adherents in the U.S. military.\*\*

So it's ok for my taxes to pay for Christian chaplains for Christian soldiers, but not for Christians' taxes to pay for non-Christian chaplains for non-Christian soldiers? Do I hear the sound of the First Amendment being shredded?

**POSTED BY: LEPIDOPTERYX | JULY 5, 2007 4:04 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Sorry, I can’t agree that Paganism is un-American. The Buddhists, Hindu’s and atheists are un-American?

Using the described meaning of ‘One nation under God’ should then mean for any theist religion we can consider it American. It did not say “one God under the Bible”.

Mr. Elliot you are assuming your definition of God is correct and that the fore fathers of America meant to say Christian God.

**POSTED BY: ROB ADAMS | JULY 5, 2007 2:55 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Rev. Mr. Elliott,

You wrote:

"America is a heritage, a here-and-now, and a hope. In heritage, we are “one nation, under God.” As a Christian citizen, I affirm this heritage--both our cultural-political unity and our historic piety."

I'm afraid that "One nation under God" is not much of a heritage and is an hysterical and discredited one at that.

Congress added the phrase "One nation under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance at the behest of the Knights of Columbus (warriors for Christ?) and the American Legion (warriors for war?) in the 1950's, as part of the Cold War McCarthyite anti-Communist madness.

No intelligent, tolerant person today wants anything to do with that bit of baloney.

On the issue of Pagan chaplains you wrote:

" No, I do not think the military should add a Pagan chaplain.... Paganism is un-American."

Pastor Elliott, you really should read the Constitution.

If there are a sufficient number of Pagans in the armed services, the government is required to provide them with chaplains.

The same is true for believers in The Grand High Turtle or The Flying Spaghetti Monster (or Jesus Christ).

**POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | JULY 5, 2007 2:43 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Actually, I should note that there's as much from other world religions as any in the Matrix.

Cookies from the Morrigan and all. ;)

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 5, 2007 2:03 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

There is no spoon. :)

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 5, 2007 2:01 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

I would be interested to here what he makes of the Abrahamic traditions that come after Christianity namely Islam, The Baha'i Faith and Matrixism. They are after all based on the Bible as much as the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints is.

I suppose he might just as well write up a hiearchy so we can know just how all the religions rank. I imagine that the United Church of Christ and Baptists come out on top.

The tone of this article is interesting. It seems he is trying to use atheist and Buddhist language to paint his position as more open, reason based, and environmentally friendly than it actually is. If he wants all that and the Bible I think maybe he should look deeper into Matrixism.

**POSTED BY:**[**ABRAHAMSON**](http://www.geocities.com/matrixism2069)**| JULY 5, 2007 1:39 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Well, Athena, to be fair, the UCC seems to have a system where they accept a certain diversity among their clergy: he'd seem to be part of this, if not a pretty one like all those commercials might seem to indicate. :)

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 5, 2007 1:29 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Are you seriously trying to claim that prison inmates turned down wine, even cheap wine, and spare ribs? Was this some country-club prison for disgraced Wall Street execs? Frankly, I doubt the veracity of your story.

Here's an idea: Try testing the sincerity of your congregation by insisting, as Jesus commanded, that they give up all of their material wealth to the poor. When your flock deserts you, will you admit that you've wasted your life serving a bogus religion?

**POSTED BY: WADE | JULY 5, 2007 1:27 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Paganism is Un-American??? I beg your pardon? Since when has there been a test to see which religions are "American" enough? I guess the followers of this "un-American" religion who are defending YOUR rights deserve to be treated like second-class citizens? How DARE you call into question another person's patriotism based on their religious preferences?

In another thread, I commented that the UCC was one of the more tolerant sects of Christianity. I see now that I was wrong. Rev. Elliot is a representative of the UCC. I suppose that their official doctrine is that of questioning people's patriotism. The lessons of Salem have been lost on Rev. Elliot.

**POSTED BY: ATHENA | JULY 5, 2007 1:24 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

Holy Mother of \*Punk,\* is he calling us \*Unamerican\* for not following his \*state-affiliated religion?\*

\*blink.\*

**POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | JULY 5, 2007 12:55 PM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

So, to paraphrase Animal Farm, we have religious equality in the US, but some religions are more equal than others. How conveeeeeenient.

**POSTED BY:**[**BRIAN WESTLEY**](http://www.firesigntheatre.com/)**| JULY 5, 2007 11:49 AM****REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**

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