

# Worldviews Through History – Compared to a Christian View

*Kerby Anderson provides a summary of how mankind has viewed the world from the Romans until today. This summary provides us a perspective against which to compare and contrast a Christian, biblical worldview based on New Testament principles.*

## Roman Worldview

On the Probe Web site we often talk about [worldviews](#). I want to explain how the worldviews we talk about developed through history. We will be using as our foundation an excellent book written by Professor Glenn Sunshine whom I have met and also had the privilege of interviewing. His book is *Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home*. [\[1\]](#)

Glenn Sunshine is a member of the church that Jonathan Edwards attended when he was at Yale. Professor Sunshine gave a lecture about Jonathan Edward's worldview at a conference they held, and Chuck Colson invited him to teach with the Centurions program. He gave a talk about "How We Got Here" and then later turned it into *Why You Think the Way You Do*.



Since we will be talking about worldview, it would be good to begin with Glenn Sunshine's definition. "A worldview is the framework you use to interpret the world and your place in it." [\[2\]](#) You do not need to be a philosopher to have a worldview. All of us have a worldview.

Although Glenn Sunshine begins with the worldview of the Roman world, he quickly takes us back to neo-Platonism. It was the religion and philosophy based upon Plato's ideas. Neo-

Platonism was the belief that the fundamental ground of reality is non-physical. Instead it is found in the world of ideas (and is known as *idealism*). These ideas cast shadows that cast other shadows until they arrive at the physical world.

According to this worldview, the whole universe exists as a hierarchy. The spiritual is superior to the physical. This provides a scale of values for the world, but also provides a scale for humanity. In other words, those who are superior should rule over those who are inferior because they have demonstrated their ability to rule or conquer.

This view of hierarchy led to the idea of the father having superiority over all members of the family. It led to the idea that men are superior to women. It led to the idea that the emperor should rule and be worshipped. And it led to the idea that slaves are inferior to free people and nothing more than "living tools."[{3}](#)

This explains not only the success of Rome but also its ugly underside. Essentially there are two pictures of Rome: "the glittering empire and the rotten core."[{4}](#)

In Rome, human life did not have much value. While it is true that Romans abandoned human sacrifice, they engaged in other practices equally abhorrent. "They picked up the Etruscan practice of having people fight to the death in games in honor of the dead."[{5}](#)

Slavery provided the economic foundation for the empire. Abortion and infanticide were regularly practiced. "Roman families would usually keep as many healthy sons as they had and only one daughter; the rest were simply discarded."[{6}](#) And Roman law required that a father kill any visibly deformed child.

# Transformation of the Pagan World

How did Christianity transform the pagan world? In AD 303, the Roman emperor Diocletian began a severe persecution of Christians. But because Christians were faithful and even willing to go to their deaths for their beliefs, their credibility increased. Eventually they were accepted and allowed to exercise their faith. Constantine even legalized the Christian faith by AD 313.

Once that took place, Christian ideas were allowed to percolate through society. One of the most important ideas was that human beings are created in the image of God. This idea has a profound impact. First, it meant that people are fundamentally equal to each other. No longer were there grounds for saying that some people are superior to others. In fact, "Christians were the first people in history to oppose slavery systematically." [\[7\]](#)

Christians (who believed that all are created in the image of God) treated the sick differently. They believed that even those who were deathly ill still deserved care. Dionysius of Alexandria reported that Christians (often at great risk to their own lives) "visited the sick fearlessly and ministered to them continually." [\[8\]](#) They would rescue babies abandoned in an act of infanticide. They would oppose abortion.

In economics, we can also see the influence of Christianity. The idea that God created the universe and then rested showed that God worked. That would mean that human beings (made in the image of God) are expected to work as well. God gave Adam and Eve intellectual work (in naming the animals) and physical work (in tending the Garden). Contrast this with the Roman world where physical work was seen as something that only slaves would do. Christians saw labor as something that was intrinsically valuable.

Labor is good; drudgery is bad. Drudgery is a result of the

Fall (Genesis 3). So Christians were the first to develop technology to remove drudgery from work. Other civilizations had technology, but the West uniquely applied such things as water power to make work more valuable and worthwhile by eliminating the drudgery and repetitive nature of certain tasks.

Property rights were also well-developed during this period. "The medieval world under the influence of Christianity has a much stronger emphasis on property rights than other cultures had." [\[9\]](#)

These ideas come from a biblical worldview and began to be developed during the Middle Ages. This led to a complete transformation of western society and set it on a trajectory to our modern world.

## **Christianity and Politics**

Glenn Sunshine points out that in the West, the dynamic between church and state is unique. Christianity was originally a persecuted minority religion. Even when Christianity was declared a legal religion, the church did not depend upon the state. So the question of the relationship between church and state has been an open question.

During the Middle Ages, two men helped shape political thinking. The first was Augustine, who described two realms: the City of God and the City of Man. He argued that human government is the result of sin. He believed that it is based upon selfishness. Government itself is corruption. In the absence of government, anarchy reigns. So government is a necessary evil.

The City of God is different in that it is not based upon force or coercion. It is based upon love, charity, and repentance. That doesn't mean that the City of Man and the City of God cannot work together. But overall, Augustine had a

more pessimistic view of government.

Aristotle had a different view of government. As people in the Middle Ages began to rediscover Aristotle, they began to develop a different view of government. They saw government as a necessary institution that God has placed in the world. It had positive and legitimate functions.

Aristotle believed that government had a more positive role in society. But the Christian theologians had to also deal with the problem of original sin. They wanted to find a way to prevent original sin from corrupting the government. The tension between these two views is what drives the discussion of western political theory.

Sunshine notes that “another check on civil government involved the idea of rights.”<sup>{10}</sup> We normally associate the idea of rights, especially inalienable rights, with eighteenth century political theorists. However, John Locke’s idea that we have inalienable right to life, liberty, and property is already found in the writings of medieval theologians. The basis for this is a belief that all are created in the image of God. Therefore, all of us have a number of natural rights that the state cannot remove. Natural law was the idea that God wove moral laws into the fabric of the universe.

There also was the belief that there should be limitations on the jurisdiction of civil government and church government. One example is the Magna Carta, that stated that the English church was to be free and its liberties unimpaired by the crown.

## **The Renaissance and Enlightenment**

What about the transformation into the modern world? In the early modern period, starting with the Renaissance in the fifteenth century to the seventeenth century, there are a whole series of events that shook the worldview consensus that

developed in the Middle Ages.

Previously there were certain beliefs about truth: (1) that truth was absolute, (2) that truth is knowable to the human mind, and (3) that truth is necessary for society (a society could not be based upon a lie). The best good guide for truth would be the great civilizations of the past that lasted for so long and thus must have been based upon truth.

The idea was to go to the past to find truth. During the Renaissance scholars were very successful in collecting manuscripts and finding ancient sources. Unfortunately, they found so many sources that they discovered there was not a coherent perspective. The ancient writers disagreed with each other. In a sense, the Renaissance was a victim of its own success. There was too much information. The more ancient sources they found, the less likely they would find agreement in the perspectives. Once it became obvious that this grand synthesis was not possible, the entire purpose of intellectual activity was thrown into question.

Then there were the wars of the Reformation in which various factions fought over who was the true follower of the prince of peace. The devastation of the religious wars left many people wondering if there really was religious certainty. No longer was the question "is Christianity true" but rather "which Christianity is true?" Now you had a multiplicity of options that left people confused. This also generated questions about the role of religion in society.

Then you also had the discovery of the New World and whole people groups that had never heard the gospel. Some began to ask questions like: Is it fair of God to send them all to hell because they had never heard of Christianity? Or, in light of biblical history, where did they come from? How do these people fit with the story of Noah? These discoveries called into question biblical morality and biblical history.

Also, people started using a new way of looking at knowledge. They began to use the scientific method to evaluate everything. This begins a significant shift in how we understand the world. There is a movement away from certainty toward probability. There is also a movement away from studying ancient authors toward scientific experimentation.

In the modern world, therefore, truth is not found in the past but in the present and future. With this is also questioning of biblical authority.

## **The Modern World and Christianity**

Let me conclude by talking about our modern world and how Christians should respond. Sunshine concludes his book with chapters on “Modernity and Its Discontents” and “The Decay of Modernity.” Essentially the modern world has left humans with a loss of truth, certainty, and meaning in life. “Materialism provides a ready answer to the question of the meaning and purpose of life: there is none.”[{11}](#) From a Darwinian perspective, our only purpose is to pass our genes on to the next generation.

This rejection of spirituality and meaning has ushered in various other worldviews as alternatives. These would be such worldviews as postmodernism, neo-paganism, and the New Age Movement. Sunshine argues that in many ways we have been catapulted back to Rome.

Like Rome we value toleration as the supreme virtue. Rome believed that toleration was important because it kept the empire together. If you go beyond the lines of toleration, you are persecuted. This is similar to the mindset today. The highest value in a postmodern world is toleration. Toleration so defined means that we will embrace any and all lifestyles people may choose.

The Romans lived in an oversexed society.[{12}](#) So do we. Rome

practiced abortion. So does our society. Rome was antinatal and made a deliberate attempt to prevent pregnancy. They focused on sexual enjoyment and did not want to bother with kids. In our modern world, birthrates in most of the western democracies are plummeting.

Western civilization is a product of ancient Roman civilization plus Christianity. Sunshine argues that once you removed Christianity, modern society reverted back to Roman society and a recovery of the ancient pagan worldview.

So how should Christians live in this world? Of course, we should live out a biblical worldview. Every generation is called to live faithfully to the gospel, and our generation is no exception.

This is especially important today since we are facing a society that is not willing to accept biblical ideas. In many ways, we face a challenge similar to the early church, though not as daunting. From history we can see that the early church did live faithfully and transformed the Roman world. Christians produced a totally new civilization: western culture. By living faithfully before the watching world, we will increase our credibility and earn the respect from those who are around us by living in accordance with biblical principles.

## **Notes**

1. Glenn Sunshine, *Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009).
2. Ibid., 13.
3. Ibid., 31
4. Ibid., 20
5. Ibid., 30
6. Ibid., 33-34
7. Ibid., 43

8. Ibid., 44
9. Ibid., 76
10. Ibid., 91
11. Ibid., 177
12. Ibid., 33

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## **“Wicca is Not a False Religion!”**

You sound like a very knowledgeable person but when I was searching the web and came upon your website I was not angry but I wanted to email you and explain something about [the young girl someone took in](#). Well when you said that Wicca is a false religion you are quite mistaken. Wicca is another word or newer version of Paganism which is actually a very old and sacred religion. Paganism was even hundreds of years before Christianity. I am not sending this to you as hate mail but as a young pagan teen who is very tired of religious people saying that we need help. I would very much appreciate if you refrain from speaking about or making false accusations about other religions who do not agree with you.

Thank you for the respectful, gentle way in which you disagreed. I appreciate that so very much!! That says something lovely about you.

My statement about Wicca being a false religion is from a perspective that believes it is opposed to the one true religion. I do realize that may sound arrogant and foolish, and it absolutely would be if Christianity (with its roots in Judaism) were a man-made religion. But it is the one way of

connecting with God that originates with Him. All man-made religions, including paganism and Wicca, are the result of man trying to find his way to God, or to various kinds of spirituality. The Judeo-Christian story is God reaching down to and communicating with us, and actually becoming one of us. I do know that Wiccans and pagans worship the creation. But how did that creation get here? It makes sense to worship the one who created it! (And us.)

I do understand that this is a time for you to search out what you believe and how you want to live your life. You are obviously a smart, thoughtful young lady; I hope you are wise enough to receive this piece of wisdom. As you work your way through this very important part of growing up, don't merely look for *what works*; look for *what is true*.

Blessings to you,

Sue Bohlin

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## **Goddess Worship – A Christian View**

*Pagan, Wiccan, and practitioners of New Age religion are turning to belief in a Goddess to express their God-created desire to worship. Russ Wise examines goddess worship from a Christian perspective.*

“The goddess, or Great Mother, has existed since the beginning of time . . . it is out of the primordial depths of her womb that the Universe and all life is born.” –Morwyn, *Secrets of a Witch's Coven*

Reverence for the goddess is becoming prevalent in our day. The goddess is embraced by witchcraft, radical feminism, the occult, and the liberal church. The New Age that is about to dawn upon us will be, according to the occult world, a feminine age. Likewise, those who hold this view believe that this current, masculine age has been an age of destruction and broken relationships among humanity. The New Age with its feminine energies will bring balance to the destructive aspects of the Piscean Age.

Rosemary Radford Ruether, in her book *Womanguides: Readings Toward a Feminist Theology*, states that

It is to the women that we look for salvation in the healing and restorative waters of Aquarius. It is to such a New Age that we look now with hope as the present age of masculism succeeds in destroying itself.

According to Starhawk, a feminist and a practicing witch,

The symbolism of the Goddess is not a parallel structure to the symbolism of God the Father. The goddess does not rule the world; She is the world.(1)

In order for this feminine age to come into full fruition, a shift in consciousness must take place in the world. This shift in thinking and perception of reality will bring forth the goddess.(2)

According to those who believe in the Great Goddess, Europe was once inhabited by a matriarchal, egalitarian society. Europeans, they claim, worshipped a matrifocal, sedentary, peaceful, art-loving goddess 5,000 to 25,000 years before the rise of the first male-oriented religion. They maintain that this egalitarian culture was overrun and destroyed by a semi-nomadic, horse-riding, Indo-European group of invaders who were patrifocal, mobile, warlike, and indifferent to art.(3)

These Indo-European invaders considered themselves to be

superior to the peaceful and art-loving goddess worshippers because of their superior military ability. The matriarchal religion of these early settlers was eventually assimilated into the patriarchal religion of the invaders. As these invaders imposed their patriarchal culture on the conquered peoples, rapes(4) and myths about male warriors killing serpents (symbols of the goddess worshippers) appeared for the first time. As the assimilation of cultures continued, the Great Goddess fragmented into many lesser goddesses.

According to Merlin Stone, author of *When God Was a Woman*, the disenthronement of the Great Goddess, begun by the Indo-European invaders, was finally accomplished by the Hebrew, Christian, and Moslem religions that arose later.(5) The male deity took the prominent place. The female goddesses faded into the background, and women in society followed suit.(6)

## **The Goddess and Witchcraft**

In the world of witchcraft the goddess is the giver of life. Jean Shinoda Bolen, M.D., in her book *Goddesses in Everywoman*, has this to say about the goddess:

The Great Goddess was worshipped as the feminine life force deeply connected to nature and fertility, responsible both for creating life and for destroying life.(7)

Bolen goes on to say that "the Great Goddess was regarded as immortal, changeless, and omnipotent" prior to the coming of Christianity. For witches, the goddess is the earth itself. Mother Earth, or Gaia, as the goddess is known in occult circles, is an evolving being, as is all of nature. Starhawk, in her best-selling book *The Spiral Dance*, says that "the model of the Goddess, who is immanent in nature, fosters respect for the sacredness of all living things. Witchcraft can be seen as a religion of ecology. Its goal is harmony with nature, so that life may not just survive, but thrive."(8)

The witch views Gaia, or Mother Earth, as a biosystem. She attributes consciousness to the earth and believes it to be spiritual as well. In other words, Gaia is a living and evolving being that has a spiritual destiny.

The environmental movement of our day is greatly influenced by those who practice witchcraft or hold neo-pagan beliefs. Witchcraft is an attempt to reintroduce the sacred aspect of the earth that was, according to its practitioners, destroyed by the Christian world. The goddess is, therefore, a direct affront against the male-dominated religion of the Hebrew God.

Christianity teaches that God is transcendent, is separate from nature, and is represented to humankind through masculine imagery. Witchcraft holds a pantheistic view of God. God is nature, therefore God is in all things and all things are a part of God. However, this God is in actuality a goddess.

A fundamental belief in witchcraft is the idea that the goddess predates the male God. The goddess is the giver of all life and is found in all of creation. "The importance of the Goddess symbol for women cannot be overstressed. The image of the Goddess inspires women to see ourselves as divine, our bodies as sacred, the changing phases of our lives as holy, our aggression as healthy, and our anger as purifying. Through the Goddess, we can discover our strength, enlighten our minds, own our bodies, and celebrate our emotions."(9)

For Betty Sue Flowers, a University of Texas English professor, the women's spirituality movement is the answer to the male-oriented religion of Christianity. At the International Conference on Women's Spirituality in Austin, Texas, Flowers stated that

The goddess is a metaphor that reminds us of the female side of spirituality. Metaphors are important. You can't know God directly. You can only know images of God, and each image or metaphor is a door. Some doors are open and others are

closed. A door that is only male is only half open.(10)

## **The Goddess and Feminism**

For many in the feminist world, the goddess is an object of worship. Those in the women's spirituality movement "reject what they call the patriarchal Judeo-Christian tradition, deploring sexist language, predominantly masculine imagery and largely male leadership."(11)

According to a *Wall Street Journal* article by Sonia L. Nazario, "women first wanted to apply feminism to political and economic realms, then to their families. Now, they want it in their spiritual lives."(12)

To understand fully the implications of the women's spirituality movement, one only needs to read the current literature on the subject. The editors of the book *Radical Feminism* state that "political institutions such as religion, because they are based on philosophies of hierarchical orders and reinforce male oppression of females, must be destroyed."

The radical feminist believes that the traditional church must be dismantled. Naomi Goldenberg, in her book *Changing of the Gods*, states that "the feminist movement in Western culture is engaged in the slow execution of Christ and Yahweh. . . . It is likely that as we watch Christ and Yahweh tumble to the ground, we will completely outgrow the need for an external God."(13) The deity that many in the feminist camp are searching for takes on the form of a goddess. Some in the goddess movement, according to a *Wall Street Journal* article, "pray for the time when science will make men unnecessary for procreation."(14) The radical feminist sees the goddess movement as a spiritual outlet for her long-held beliefs. Mark Muesse, an assistant professor of religious studies at Rhodes College, agrees that "some feminist Christians push for changes ranging from the ordination of women and the generic, non-sexual terms for God and humanity to overhauling the very

theology.”(15)

Perhaps the most descriptive word for the feminist movement is “transformation.” Catherine Keller, associate professor of theology at Xavier University says in her essay “Feminism and the New Paradigm” that “the global feminist movement is bringing about the end of patriarchy, the eclipse of the politics of separation, and the beginning of a new era modeled on the dynamic, holistic paradigm. Radical feminists envision that era, and the long process leading toward it, as a comprehensive transformation.”

Another aspect of this transformation is the blending of the sexes. The feminist movement seeks a common mold for all of humanity. Jungian psychotherapist John Weir Perry believes that we must find our individuality by discovering androgyny. He states, “To reach a new consensus, we have to avoid falling back into stereotypes, and that requires truly developing our individuality. It is an ongoing work of self-realization and self-actualization. For men it means growing into their native maleness and balancing it with their femaleness. For women, it’s the same—growing into their full womanhood, and that includes their masculine side.”(16)

This process sounds more like androgyny or sameness than it does individuality.

This paradigm-shift is nothing less than the reordering of man’s understanding of God, a shift in thinking of God through predominantly masculine imagery to seeing and experiencing God as a goddess, the mother of life.

## **The Goddess and the Occult**

In the world of the occult, also known as the New Age, the goddess is believed to be resident within the individual and simply needs to be awakened. In other words, the individual is inherently divine. Starhawk, a witch who works with the

Catholic priest Matthew Fox at his Institute of Creation Spirituality, says that an individual can awaken the goddess by invoking or inviting her presence. Starhawk tells us that "to invoke the Goddess is to awaken the Goddess within, to become . . . that aspect we invoke. An invocation channels power through a visualized image of Divinity."

Starhawk continues, "We are already one with the Goddess—she has been with us from the beginning, so fulfillment becomes . . . a matter of self-awareness. For women, the Goddess is the symbol of the inmost self. She awakens the mind and spirit and emotions."(17)

Jean Shinoda Bolen, a Jungian analyst and clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California, answered the question, What ails our society? by saying, "we suffer from the absence of one half of our spiritual potential—the Goddess."(18) Individuals who follow New Age teaching believe that the male-dominated religion of this present age has done an injustice to humanity and the ecosystem. Therefore there must be a balancing of energies. The male energies must diminish and the feminine energies must increase in order for the goddess to empower the individual.

The New Age of occultism promises to be an age of peace, harmony, and tranquility, whereas the present dark age of brokenness and separation continues to bring war, conflict, and disharmony. So it is the goddess with her feminine aspects of unity, love, and peace that will offer a solution for mankind and circumvent his destruction. For many in our society, this appears to be the answer to man's dilemma. However, an occult solution that denies Christ's atonement for sin cannot fully meet a Holy God's requirement for wholeness.

For the pagan, the goddess represents life and all it has to offer. "The Goddess religion is a conscious attempt to reshape culture."(19) This reshaping is nothing less than viewing man and his understanding of reality from a female-centered

perspective, the focus of which is on the Divine as female. Therefore considerable emphasis is placed on feminine attributes, ultimately focusing on eroticism and sexuality. "Women are clearly the catalyst for the formation of the new spirituality. It is women above all who are in the process of reversing Genesis . . . by validating and freeing their sexuality."(20)

A major part of this transformative process is the empowerment of women. The rise of the goddess is a direct assault on the foundation of Christianity. This new spirituality affirms bisexuality, lesbianism, homosexuality, and androgyny through the expression of transvestitism.

As this revival of the goddess continues, a growing lack of distinction between male and female will become the norm. Jungian psychotherapist John Weir Perry believes that "both current psychology and ancient history point to an emerging transformation in our sense of both society and self, a transformation that includes redefining the notion of what it means to be men and women."(21)

The Bible clearly indicates that men and women were created as distinctive beings, male and female. The rising occult influence in our society seeks to undermine the biblical absolute that gives our culture stability. Once again the Bible rings true as it states, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."(22)

## **The Goddess and the Liberal Church**

The message of the goddess has gained a hearing in the church as well. The philosophy of the goddess is currently being taught in the classrooms of many seminaries. Mary Daly, who considers herself to be a Christian feminist, says this about

traditional Christianity: "To put it bluntly, I propose that Christianity itself should be castrated." (23) The primary aim of this kind of "Christian" feminist is to bring an end to what she perceives as male-dominated religion by castrating the male influence from the religion.

Daly continues by saying, "I am suggesting that the idea of salvation uniquely by a male savior perpetuates the problem of patriarchal oppression." (24)

Rev. Susan Cady, co-author of *Sophia: the Future of Feminist Spirituality* and pastor of Emmanuel United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, is one example of the direction that Daly and others are taking the church. The authors of *Sophia* state that "Sophia is a female, goddess-like figure appearing clearly in the Scriptures of the Hebrew tradition." *Wisdom Feast*, the authors' latest book, clearly identifies Jesus with Sophia. Sophiology presents Sophia as a separate goddess and Jesus as her prophet. The book takes liberty with Jesus by replacing Him with the feminine deity Sophia.

Another example of how goddess theology (feminist spelling for theology) is making its way into the liberal church is through seminars held on seminary campuses. One such seminar, "Wisdomweaving: Woman Embodied in Faiths," was held at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in February of 1990. Linda Finnell, a wiccan and one of the speakers, spoke on the subject of "Returning to the Goddess Through Dianic Witchcraft." Two of the keynote speakers were of a New Age persuasion. In fact, one speaker, Sr. Jose Hobday, works with Matthew Fox and Starhawk at the Institute for Creation Spirituality.

A growing number of churches in the United States and around the world are embracing the New Age lie. Many churches have introduced A Course in Miracles, Yoga, Silva Mind Control, Unity teachings, and metaphysics into their teaching material. Some churches have taken a further step into the New Age by

hiring individuals who hold a metaphysical world view.

Whether the individual seeks the goddess through witchcraft, the feminist movement, the New Age, or the liberal church, he or she is beginning a quest to understand and discover the "higher self." The higher self, often referred to as the "god self," is believed to be pure truth, deep wisdom. This truth or wisdom embodies the basic lie of deification. As Christians we must learn to discern every spirit lest we become deceived.

## Notes

1. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance* (New York: Harper & Row 1989), 23.
2. Elinor W. Gadon, *The Once and Future Goddess* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989), xiv.
3. Ibid., xii-xiii. See also Linnie Levy, *Of a Like Mind* (Madison, Wis.: OALM, 1991), vol. viii, no. 3, pp. 2-3.
4. See also Zsuzsanna Emese Budapest, *The Holy Book of Womwn's Mysteries* (Oakland, Calif.: Susan B. Anthony Coven No. 1, 1986), 12.
5. See also Gadon, *The Once and Future Goddess*, xiii.
6. Jean Shinoda Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 21.
7. Ibid., 20.
8. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, 25.
9. Ibid., 24.
10. Carlos Vidal Greth, "The Spirit of Women," *The Austin-American Statesman*, 5 Mar. 1991, sec. D.
11. Ibid.

12. Sonia L. Nazario, "Is Goddess Worship Finally Going to Put Men in Their Place?" *The Wall Street Journal*, 7 June 1990, sec. A.
  13. Naomi Goldenberg, *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 4, 25.
  14. Nazario, "Goddess Worship."
  15. Deirdre Donahue, "Dawn of the Goddesses," *USA Today*, 26 Sept. 1990, sec. D.
  16. John Weir Perry, "Myth, Ritual, and the Decline of Patriarchy," *Magical Blend* 33 (January 1992): 103.
  17. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, 99.
  18. Jean Shinoda Bolen, "The Women's Movement in Transition: The Goddess and the Grail," *Magical Blend* 33 (January 1992): 8.
  19. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, 11.
  20. Donna Steichen, "The Goddess Goes to Washington," *Fidelity Magazine* (December 1986): 42.
  21. Perry, *Decline of Patriarchy*, 62.
  22. 2 Tim. 4:3.
  23. Alice Hageman, *Theology after the Demise of God the Father: a Call for the Castration of Sexist Religion* (New York: Association Press, 1974), 132.
  24. Hageman, *Theology*, 138.
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# The Muses

Picture yourself back at the university in a graduate comparative literature class.

Your humanities professor enters the room and announces, "You know, as we begin this course unit on 'ritual,' I believe we would do well to invoke the gods." He continues, "You may not be aware of this, but when we call upon the Muses, they really answer . . . *they come to us.*"

"All of our human rituals can be traced back to our evolutionary heritage and the mating dances of birds and mammals. It is part of nature's survival machinery. For example, the male bird who best performed the mating dance was obviously more likely to attract a mate to assure its own survival and pass on its genes to its progeny."

The professor elaborates, "All of what we call our aesthetic and religious aspirations can actually be traced to, and are deeply imbedded in, these biological imperatives of our ancestors. Through evolution they are part of the deep lexicon which we inherited from our first parents."

"And so," says the professor, "I would like first to invoke the goat-footed god named Pan, who assures us of fertility and thus, the perpetuation of our species, *homo-sapiens.*"

"Secondly, I would like to invoke the Islamic-Judaic-Christian God of Silence, who reminds us that He cannot be touched, but by invoking Him we confirm the reality of our own existence in the universe *as compared to His silence*" (italics mine).

"Let us read this poetry in a spirit of prayer," says the prof. He then reads the invocations, and the majority of the students smile their approval, seeming to enjoy the exercise.

In a later session of the same class, one of the students

chose as a project the reenactment of a pagan Greek sacrificial rite, with the class participating on a voluntary basis. With a processional, songs, imaginary bull and meal offerings, the student "priest" clothed in some strange garments was able to create an atmosphere in that class that literally sent chills up and down my back!

Yes, these things actually occurred in one of my own graduate classes at a university right here in Dallas some time ago!

We call this "Higher Education."

These mystical, new age ideas that espouse the reality of some transcendent "something," like "The Force" in Star Wars, are capturing the hearts and minds of our children and grandchildren as we speak.

University student minds are increasingly inclined to believe that "Something" does exist out there beyond their own physical existence; and they also in increasing numbers believe it is personally beneficial to *make contact* with that "Something":

*to give them strength;*

*to show them right and wrong;*

*to help them solve their problems and make decisions.*

Those of us who are Christians know better. Some indefinable force is not what they need, but rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who claimed to be the Truth and gave us His Word so that we might understand and live that truth. He is the only God who can help these young men and women choose the right path as they stand at the threshold of their adult lives.

That is why I have now given forty years of my life to find ways to impact university students, to give them biblical perspectives on life and to strengthen their discernment in evaluating ideas. The corridors of "higher learning" are

filled with many gullible, media-brainwashed youngsters who stand for nothing and fall for anything that sounds good to them.

Frankly, there are easier places to minister. We often are met with hostility and contempt when we go to the campus to represent a reasoned, Christian point of view.

But we at Probe Ministries are compelled to persevere. And we continue to go there, because we know that the university world is as much a fountainhead for error as it is for truth. And it is definitely strategic as we look to the future. Abraham Lincoln perhaps captured this best when he said, "The philosophy of the classroom in one generation will become the philosophy of the government in the next."

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