

An Earth-Centered Spirituality Peace Statement

Earth-Centered Spirituality is a descriptive term for resurgent Paganism. The word "pagan" is derived from Latin and means country-dweller. Conventional media images of "witches" or "Satanists" have nothing to do with the beliefs and practices of Neopagans.

Although Neopagan beliefs/practices are extremely diverse and derived from folk religions around the world (e.g., ancient Celts, Wicca, Native Americans), they share certain fundamental beliefs. These include a reverence for the earth and the recognition that humans are interdependent and connected with every part of the natural world. The earth is experienced as sacred and divinity as immanent -residing in all of nature and within ourselves. These values encourage respect for all of humanity and promote the peaceful resolution of conflict among peoples.

Sociologist Danny Jorgensen in his chapter "Neopaganism in America" in *The Religion Factor: An Introduction to How Religion Matters* describes the values of this emerging faith tradition:

"Neopaganism cherishes human freedom, equality, and justice as sacred values. It teaches that human beings should be free to realize their divine potential, that all people are equal to one another, and that people should treat one another respectfully and responsibly as equally sacred beings. When one category or set of people, such as a nation, ethnic group, social caste or class, or gender, dominates another and thus brings about inequality, the sacred order of things becomes unbalanced, and people consequently suffer injustice. Neopagans believe that social inequality and unbalanced human relationships produce crimes of violence — abusive relationships, rape, murder and warfare." ¹ (Jorgensen 1996, 67).

One international Neopagan organization Covenant of the Goddess proclaims the following statement for peace: "As is consistent with the values and beliefs of our religion, the Covenant affirms our belief in the spiritual and social wisdom of peace in the world. We aspire to stand in fellowship with the people of all religions, cultures and ethnicities in our shared desire for peace. We do this for the sake of our shared love of the Earth and all living things that dwell upon it." ¹

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¹ Jorgensen, Danny. 1996. Neopaganism in American. In *The Religion Factor: An Introduction To How Religion Matters*, ed. William Scott Green and Jacob Neusner, 60-83. Westminster: John Knox Press, 1996

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