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Midsummer 1983

# Children of the Earth

Vol. 3, No. 9

*Rowan Tree Church Periodicals Collection*

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Paul -  
Welcome Back!  
The Unicorn's lookin'  
great! BB.  
N

CHILDREN OF THE EARTH

P.O. Box 417  
Keyser, WV 26726  
Midsummer 1983 c.e.  
\$5/4 issues  
c. 1883 COTE

As you can see, this issue of COTE is produced by computer. It's publication was delayed somewhat (as usual) this time because the company I bought the printer from sent the wrong one and it had to go back. Meanwhile, although I no longer live in the town where COTE had been being printed, we do still have friends there. West Virginia is, in some respects, an exercise in paranoia: these folks were being hassled because they knew us and there was a wierd rumor going around that we were "into the occult!". Imagine that! Anyway, knowing the printer was coming, we decided to wait and do the newsletter on the computer, rather than contribute to these rumors by continuing to print COTE there.

As usual, my standard plea is SEND COPY! The use of the computer does eliminate illustrations - which is unfortunate because I have some nice pix on file done by some of the kids. Also - In this issue is a small questionnaire. Now that I've solved the printing problem, I want to find out what sort of thing YOU want to read. Won't you please take a moment to answer the questions and send those answers to me?

PLEASE NOTE: Anyone giving a gift subscription will have their own subscription extended by an issue.

Blessed Be!  
Hestia

CHANGES

\* Annwn Temple of Gwynfyd, who publish THE BARD, has moved to 5012 N. 16th Dr., #3, Phoenix, AZ 85015 USA

\* Magical Unicorn Messenger has suspended publication for a year-and-a-day sabbatical. We'll miss it.

TRANSMISSION PROBLEMS  
by Morag na Bienne  
Church of Seven Arrows

My impression is that many neo-Pagan parents attempt to hide their religion from their children (or simply avoid teaching them) for the following reasons:

- 1) Fear of the children being ostracized.
- 2) Not understanding their own religion well enough to explain it.
- 3) Fear of somehow infringing on the children's right to choose.

As to #1 -- As things stand now, any child who is intelligent and well-educated will be regarded as somewhat wierd by her contemporaries. Lessons in tact and in willingness to be unpopular and in some form of martial art seem to me to be a good idea for ANY healthy, bright child -- regardless of religious orientation.

While a fixation on "being popular" is one of the commonest aberrations in this culture, it is also antithetical to virtually EVERY religious tradition.

As an extreme example of this, I offer the Wiccan lady who sends her children to a fundamentalist christian private school so as to get the 3 R's and "fit in" with the neighborhood. THERE are some confused kids!

As to #2 -- If you don't understand it well enough to teach your kids, you'd best not be taking neophytes on either.

Translating into another's framework can be very tedious and difficult; it is still a skill necessary to ANY communication.

Also, children are VERY quick to spot glitches. ("But, Daddy, if we're supposed to love our enemies, why are you working in a bomb factory?") Any discrepancies between stated belief and practice will be VERY difficult to "explain away" to a kid.

If you, as a parent, are not certain as to whether or not there are glitches in your understanding or application of your religion, teaching the religion to your children can be a very daunting thing to contemplate.

As to the last (#3) -- This seems to me to be based on a misunderstanding of both children and religion. Implied is the idea that children can best be prepared to choose a religion by keeping them in ignorance about the reality of LIVING a religion. Also, if ALL religions are presented as having equal validity and equal significance, then your OWN choice seems to be random.

In my opinion, this falls under the "lying to children" bracket -- unless you really did make a purely random choice and hold your religion primarily out of inertia.

To state the obvious: If religion is presented thus "We (the parents) believe this, and the community believes that, and you may choose what you wish.", the child is left in an outsider position.

While I realize that many neo-Pagans converted in reaction against THEIR parents' attempts at enforcing christianity with no consideration of children as human beings, the we/they (parents/children) approach simply undermines the children's self-confidence and relationship to family much faster than enforcement does.

A basic item is this: Parents rearing children do NOT have the option of NOT teaching about religion. Willy-nilly, children WILL learn about religion. What parents CAN do is control WHAT the children learn at home.

Our BASICS OF RELIGION class explores what seem to us to be the five basic components of ANY religion: Cosmogony, Ritual, Mythos, Dogma & Doctrine, and Transmission of Tradition.

Unless the 5th Part of Religion (Transmission of Tradition) is carried through, the "Neo-Pagan Movement" will be a one-generation phenomenon.

That, I think, would be a real crime against our children.

#### BOOK REVIEWS

McGUFFEY'S ECLECTIC READERS are available by mail-order from Publishers Clearing House and Smithsonian for about \$25. That's for the Primer and 1st through 6th Readers.

They are marvellous! I'm reading them to Ilse, substituting "Goddess" for "God" where appropriate. Ilse and I will discuss that when she gets old enough to read them for herself.

The values taught -- honesty, steadfastness, perseverance, kindness to animals and smaller children, and hard work -- are to me far preferable to the value-less, sense-less "Run, Spot, Run" stuff.

The lessons often display a great sense of humor, and by the 6th Reader are dealing with topics and vocabulary the public schools generally don't hit till university level.

Or, as George put it, "So THAT'S why people like my father could drop out of school at the 8th grade, and still be well-educated!"

-Linda

Linda also wrote to recommend RIDE THE RIVER, by Louis L'Amour. Her letter arrived an hour after I'd finished the book. We both really enjoyed this book. The heroine is a 16-year-old girl who encounters - and capably deals with - the sort of adventures usually reserved for male western characters.

Speaking of female leads - WOMAN CHIEF is based on the real adventures of an adopted Crow woman who did not fit in with the traditional female role. Unfortunately, I don't remember the author's name.

Clytemnestra sent us a copy of THE FAIRIES' ALPHABET BOOK, by Beverlie Manson, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y., c. 1982. From Apple Fairies through Zoo Fairies, it is a lovely book with beautiful pictures. Thanks, C.

-Hestia

#### SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Enclosed please find \$5.00 for four issues of Children of the Earth, P.O. Box 417, Keyser, WV 26726

Name.....  
Address.....  
.....

I KNOW I have the ONE TRUE WAY! Now, If I can just figure out which one it is....

-Rosemary the sage who said it on Thyme.

WANTED: Solutions to mundane household problems particularly afflicting Witches (i.e. wax removal from rugs etc.). We are compiling a book and credit will be given for each problem solved. Send your ideas to: STONE CREED COVEN c/o Dorothy A Mannix, 1905 Fulton Rd., #4, Cleveland OH 44113

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NOTES FROM THE BROOM CLOSET  
So What Can I Teach My Kids?  
by Cloud

Again...I have seen this title before. Last time I used it, the subject was visibility. This time, it seems more complicated.

I've about given up on invisibility these days, in terms of "cover". My kids are legal, my lifestyle is rather apparent to my neighbors, a lot of the fear is gone. It doesn't seem necessary to hide. But I find myself leaning as much as ever to not going with religious instruction per se.

The reasons are complex. But a lot of the "why" seems to be centered around this:

1. Any religion, to be conveyed to a Five, has to be simplified too much to convey a meaningful interpretation of Goddess spirituality, in whatever vein we practice it. If I try to explain the Goddess to Arne, he's going to think of a great big lady in the sky; he's likely, in fact, to develop a variation of Marian Catholicism, which is frankly something I wouldn't mind sparing him.

2. I'm inconsistent. Most days I'm a bit of an agnostic. I don't always believe in reincarnation (and so far, deaths in the family notwithstanding, neither of the kids has asked about an afterlife - probably because they have successfully remained unafraid of death). My religion is mostly "worldview", and my theology minimal. There's a fair bit there to teach a student, but precious little to teach a kid. And I frankly have no interest in inventing a religion ("") for my kids that I don't believe all the time in order to satisfy some notion that they ought to be taught;

y the hell with it and send them to Sunday school, which would be every bit as honest and valid as telling them the God lives in the Sun (sometimes? all the time? only on Sundays?)

3. There is no line between anything and anything else (not even life and death) that makes it possible to make clean and consistent categories for anything, even religion. The essence of "religion" that I want to get across to my kids fits no Sunday boxes- you need a transcendent divinity for that, and we haven't got one. So religious instruction is picking up litter, planting a seed, composting everything, talking to trees, singing at bedtimes... and Sabbat circles, and Seders, and big Christmas parties, because all of these reinforce a sense of COMMUNITY with the larger creation of soil, trees, pets, and people.

4. All of #3 is included in my positive ambition to start taking the kids to demonstrations now and then. Because this wonderful world is being mismanaged in ways they can see (back to litter) and seeing that people are trying to change that is also important. More sense of community, and every bit as important as feeling at one with nature.

I'm glad there's no line between politics and religion. I could wish for a chance to be bringing up my kids in Starhawk's visionary future (the one in which every ritual begins with the vestigial litter hunt, though there is no litter anymore);

it's quite as good to be living in the time that plants the seeds for a future like that to come to be. I can teach my kids that beauty comes in a creation worth of diverse packages, black earth, people, whales, oak trees AND gila monsters included. I can teach them the highly useful magick of expecting what you deserve to come back to you, and hopefully a little about how to act to make what you deserve be good stuff. I can teach them that "God" lives in each of them, and everything else besides. Or rather, hopefully, I can help them to continue to know all of that, as they were born knowing it. If it works, it will spread like ripples, and if we get the chance to come back it will be into a whole different kind of world.

If we don't (this is one of my agnostic days), we'll at least have helped to make it better for their grandchildren. So mote it be.

MAKE BELIEVE  
by Filisis

When robins fly fast through the air, you may not see them flying there.  
A chirp or two you might just hear: A shadow might just pass you near.  
So if you're turned the other way and sense they're frolicking in play  
Just day-dream you're a robin too, that plays in skies of white and blue  
And though your feet are on the ground, you'll hear the sky-winds highest sound  
And though you close your eyes real tight, you'll see your robin friends in flight.  
You won't need feathers, beak, or wings;

THE PLACENTA: A LINK BETWEEN TWO WORLDS  
by Robin

One aspect of the birth process which few people take into consideration is the birth of the placenta, that marvelous organ which has nourished the fetus for its life in the womb. Technically, the birth of the placenta is called "third stage labor", the time after the child is born when this organ separates from the uterine wall and is expelled from the mother's body.

This is also considered the most dangerous time for the mother, since the few complications that arise during the unmedicated, uninterfered-with, birth process generally do not endanger the life of the mother unless a massive problem arises during the delivery of the placenta.

It is normal for the mother to lose about two cups of blood when the placenta separates. Realize that this is an amazing process in itself. This organ has been a connecting link between the mother's and child's systems via the uterine wall, and it must relinquish its hold to be expelled.

There are two sides to the placenta. The maternal side somewhat resembles red cauliflower (the clumps are called cotyledons), while the fetal side is smooth. One can clearly see the network of blood vessels and so on which brought the vital substances to the baby. The fetal side of the placenta strongly resembles a tree, the trunk of which extends out from its surface as the umbilical cord.

The placenta is a very special organ. By the time the fetus is twelve weeks old, it is completely formed. It brings food to the fetus via the uterine blood vessels, provides oxygen from the uterine arteries, prevents bacilli from passing through the chorionic membrane to the fetus, secretes and stores hormones which regulate the length of pregnancy and help milk production, and can store glycogen and other nutritive substances.

The placenta is indeed a messenger between two worlds. It performs a myriad of functions and yet, the maternal and fetal blood do not mix. It is both a work of art and a highly complex machine, which deserves a more reverent burial than being tossed in the trash.

In the customs of many cultures, the placenta is wrapped and buried beneath a special tree, or a special plant or tree is planted over the site where the placenta is buried. In other cultures, it is thrown in the sea; in others, portions of it are dried and saved as protective amulets; and still in others it is eaten by the mother.

It is wise, I think, to look to Nature for guidance in all things. One thing which is frequently overlooked, even by home birth participants, is the importance of the placenta AFTER it has been expelled.

If you've ever watched an animal give birth, you know that every Mom eats this marvelous organ. What better way to return vital iron and nutrients to a tired system? Now, while I'm not suggesting that you snatch the placenta from your midwife's hands and consume it raw before her very eyes, I AM suggesting that you consider the beneficial effects of, say, placenta stew, before you dispose of it otherwise.

Nature obviously has Her reasons for programming that somewhat cannibalistic instinct into mammals. Some midwives say that eating the placenta (particularly raw) prevents hemorrhage and helps to re-establish the iron level. I know of some midwives who insist that the mother eat the placenta if there has been excessive bleeding. Even in the case of a hospital delivery, it is a simple matter to reequest that the placenta be placed in a sterile container without being covered with any sort of preservative or disinfectant.

I had a home birth but bled considerably afterwards and was asked by my midwife to go to the hospital for manual removal of the placenta. Although the hospital wanted to give me three units of blood and admit me for several days, I said "I'll take the placenta, thank you." and returned home to my newborn. After several placenta cocktails and some rest, my hematocrit soared from 9 to 16 in literally half the time the doctors said it would take without their drugs and blood.

(Ed. note: Robin sent recipes - available for SASE)

READER SURVEY

What do you like best about COTE?  
What do you like least about COTE?  
What kinds of things would you like to see more of?  
What kinds of things would you like to see less of?

Dana would like feedback on her Parenting the Child Within column (not in this issue). Please let us know if it has been helpful to you.

CONCEPTION  
by Robin

the night was so black  
it was as though  
thousands upon thousands of ravens wings  
covered the sky  
and through the iridescent blue-black shimmer of their wings  
i could see the glitter of bright eyes turned to inspect me  
in my solitary walk through the mist.

then the moon  
raised her horns over the hills  
and thousand upon thousands of images  
danced a satyrs dance through my awareness  
filling me with awe  
as if the Goddess turned in Her sleep  
and sent a handful of universes  
spinning into reality  
and I sensed their motion

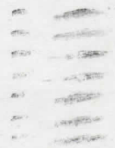
as i pondered this birth of dreams  
a voice spoke from the hills  
...you know me yet you know me not  
and my birth is yours as yours is mine  
and we shall charge the hills with our power  
and join in the dance of the fairies  
as you have dreamed in your deepest longings...

then i saw  
in the space behind my eyes  
that in my distant tomorrows my yesterdays were formed  
in preparation for this precise moment  
and i slipped out along the paths  
of a thousand probable tomorrows  
to select a dream and vision so vast  
that words have no place in its expression

and i saw a cup  
filled with the red energy of mans highest hopes  
filled with the blood, the power, the yearning  
to know and be All That Is.  
i drank of it  
and felt a Self spring into being  
from the depths of that glittering night  
while the Isis moon smiled her Cheshire smile  
and Horus dropped a black feather into my lap for luck.

NC

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