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Samhain 1983

# Children of the Earth

Vol. 3, No. 10

*Rowan Tree Church Periodicals Collection*

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## CHILDREN OF THE EARTH

P.O. Box 417  
Keyser, WV 26726  
(304) 788-0470

Number 10  
c. CotE 1983  
Samhain

First a few announcements.

CIRCLE has changed its address to: CIRCLE, Box 219, Mt. Horeb, WI 53572. Please send all their mail to the new address. Also, their new rates for a one-year subscription are as follows: \$9/via bulk mail to USA; \$13/via first class mail to USA and Canada; \$17/via air mail elsewhere. USA funds only, please. Sample copy is \$3/sent by air anywhere. Also they have a new expanded catalogue which you will get if you're on their mailing list. If not, request it.

The Wiccan Way has evidently been around for a while, but I had not seen it until they sent me their Lughnasadh issue. They are at P.O. Box 347, Selden, N.Y. 11784.

SHAMAN'S NOTES #1, PERSONAL POWER is an excellent and interesting book about - well, getting things done: the things YOU want to get done. It's available for \$5 from Church of Seven Arrows, 4385 Hoyt St, Apt. 201, Wheatridge, CO 80033

-Hestia

## BOOK REVIEW

\*\*\*\* LETTERS FROM THE EARTH by Mark Twain  
Edited by Bernard DeVoto, Perennial Library/Harper  
& Row, New York, 1974

This is a collection of mostly unpublished writings of Mark Twain. The title section, which presents a series of letters from Satan to Gabriel and Michael, reporting on the "Human Race Experiment", is a cold-water-shower for anyone suffering overexposure to christianity - a dousing delivered with Twain's wonderful sense of humor.

## SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you! to those of you who took time to answer the survey questions in #9. Here are some of the results:

### Like Most:

- \* The anecdotal information and the clear, practical thinking shown by most of the authors, particularly in Parenting the Child Within.
- \* Family oriented (Notes from the Broom Closet, Morag's Transmission Problems)
- \* Loved the Placenta thing. Think I'll share it with my women's health collective.
- \* Issues with lots of letters & discussion; the kid's poetry; all material that recognizes even pagan parents live in the Normal world.
- \* Congratulaations on your new format.

### Like Least:

- \* The long time between issues. (me too. -ed)
- \* People who insist that we can insulate our children from all outside influence by shielding alone and insist that we try that before, e.g., education.
- \* The computer format. I find the letters made out of dots ugly and hard to read and I would prefer it cut into pages and bound. If that's all you can afford, ok, (it is. -ed) but I certainly wouldn't choose it.

### Want to see:

- \* Articles on unusual family situations, wisdom & support to other pagan families w/ odd circumstances.
- \* Articles on raising children in a Pagan household in a non-pagan society, preferably as practically oriented as possible.
- \* More letters.
- \* I hope more Pagans contribute their writings ... forum-in-print

### Suggestions:

- \* Commission articles
- \* Dana should concentrate on the psychic "child" of adults.

So: PLEASE send letters, send articles, discussion, children's poetry, discussion - the more you send, the more often we print!

## CHILDREN IN PAGAN COMMUNITIES

by Morag na Bienne

The original idea was to write an article on the function of children in traditional Pagan communities. However, I quickly discovered that bald statements of how things were done led to article-length commentary on what was NOT implied.

No single aspect of a community can be understood in the absence of some understanding of the whole community.

This article, then, is about the context of Pagan communities and about the context of current urban America.

FIRST OFF, in this series, traditional Pagan communities are assumed to range in size from a minimum of 15 or 20 (small nomadic bands that would form gatherings of up to a couple of thousand people once or twice a year) to a maximum of about 1,000 villagers.

(Look up the derivation of the suffix "-wich" sometime, as in Greenwich. It means "village", and I regard it as THE origin of the term "witch". This derivation is also consistent with the histories of "pagan" and "heathen".)

SECONDLY, in current urban America, old people and children are usually invisible. This often leads to the assumptions that segregation by age AND our definitions of "children" and "old people" AND the valuations we place on people in these categories are typical of all places and times.

a) The segregation by age which we've begun to think of as normal didn't really get widespread until the 1960s.

b) Given that people were usually regarded as "adults" upon reaching puberty, and as "old" when white hair, feebleness, and weak eyesight had been reached, the working definition for "adult" was then (in years) 13-16 at the younger end and late 60s-early 70s at the older. Thus, the categories of "children" and "old people" were quite a bit smaller by THEIR count than current usage would have.

c) We have reached a state in which value is generally regarded as a measure of money-flow generated. Thus, old people are worth 1/3 to 1/10 of a working adult, and children have sentimental value to their parents and not much else (except as they can be conned into generating purchases). Needless to say, this is NOT traditional to Pagans or Christians.

FINALLY, the context of traditional Pagan communities is alien to current America (95% urban) in ways that are mind-wrenching to think on. Actions done, reasons for doing them, expectations of the future, assumptions about others' reasoning and values and actions, diet, the terms of self-definition, significance of relationships -- all are alien and moreso where subtle rather than obvious.

It follows, then, that if we are to rear our children in Pagan religions and in Pagan Ways, we must also give them means of understanding and dealing with the larger community in which we live. At worst, they will be exiles in their own land, citizens of nowhere. At best, they will grow up with a dual citizenship, respected by all -- most importantly, by themselves.

We, as parents, must then understand thoroughly BOTH cultures and how to deal with the outer while maintaining the inner.

## LETTERS

Dear Hestia,

First, to Robin's article on breastfeeding, I would like to say "Right On!" We who try to live according to Nature's ways should indeed all know these basic facts about breastfeeding. Too long has the bottle reigned as the symbol of infant nourishment. In less "civilized" societies, the right of an infant to it's mother's breast is never questioned. The demands of a baby are looked upon as an indication of it's needs. Needs that, of course, must be simply met.

One of these needs, the desperate need of a baby to be in it's mother's arms, should, I feel, have been mentioned in the article. The mother and child are indeed a "couple" as La Leche League terms it. Many people, even in Craft, are unaware of this fact. The ignorance and interference of some of the people with whom I practiced caused me and my infant much pain. I have since left that organization, but other Craft mothers may be in the same, or similar, situations. To violate that mother-child bond by demanding that they be separated for the convenience of others is wrong.

This brings me to the second article, "Kids in and out of Circles," by Hilary. Again I say "Right ON!" The first two sentences sum up the point neatly: "Should children be allowed to take part in rituals? We may as well ask whether we should allow the Earth or the sky a place in our rituals." Thank you, Hilary.

-Aurora

## **PETS AND PESTS...AND WAR TOYS**

by Cloud

I aroused some comment recently (elsewhere) when I said that if I were bringing up Arne and Herne elsewhere there would be no war-toy ban in this house; au contraire, they'd be learning to use the real thing.

Given our present environment, (urban, and with neighbors who tend to reinforce the suicidal notion that guns are for playing with), thanks anyway I'll stick to a no-guns policy. In the appropriate environment they'd get "as if" training with sticks or some such, and eventually the real thing. And I'd take them hunting, I think.

No, really. Not just because who knows they might someday need it for survival, but because I know no better way to get inside the god/dess that is both life AND death than to be in a position to take a life for food, in the microcosm of growth and decay that is a midwestern forest. Well, whatever, hunting and real-gun training are out, between environment and the fact that they're not really old enough yet for all that, and the same lessons are in the more gentle hands of the cycles of the garden, the park, and the grove.

And critters: the ones at school, pets (ours and others'), and, well, a true inner-city case of acute cockroaches. They come and go, but there are always some around, and a kid understands, sometimes better than us grownup Pagans (positive practitioners that we are) that to kill in self-defense is not only permissible but part of the Plan. Herne was an out-and-out Jain about the cockroaches for a while, watched where he stepped and everything, but came to understand them as invaders, and now - aside from the odd one he keeps as a pet 'til it gets away - swings his newspaper with as much elan as the rest of us.

I don't think my kids are learning to kill for fun. Their compassion for wild and tame critters certainly seems intact; they know enough to let a tiny treetoad go once they've had a look at it ("He's like E.T. He wants to go home"), and not enough to remember sick pigeons aren't to be picked up and taken care of. They are learning that invasion is intolerable and to be, er, squashed, and reinforcing their knowing that death is part of life and killing in self-defense is eminently defensible.

Pets' department in all this life-and-death learning is grace. Animals know better than most of us that they are part of it All, and their acceptance of birthing and death is, if not imitable, instructive. None of our critters (two cats, one dog) is fertile, but there was a litter down the street a while back and the kids got to watch part of the delivery. Arne was especially surprised that the cat didn't yowl all the time; at five he'd already learned somewhere that all mothers scream when they're having babies.

Let's please consider finding pet deliveries for our kids to watch, especially if we intend them to watch ours but anyway; it's an unmaatched experience and even contains a lesson au naturel if you want to explain to them why placentas aren't "ew, gross". Let's also consider letting our animals die at home if it won't be too much pain for them. If not, let's talk about the putting-down with our kids. After all, it's the one remaining reason - after use and self-defense - for taking a life. One of the Normal religion's great difficulties in teaching themselves to children is that they teach them the sweet stuff and nothing else. One of the reasons our world-view is good for people to grow in is that we include everything. When I was a kid, I thought that if god were truly good he wouldn't allow Fall; let's spare our kids the illusion that the All is painless. It's not, for it includes everything, and that's not "too bad", it is a wonderful diversity within the Law of Change.

If we help them to know all that about life and death, maybe it won't matter if the kids they play with have gungames or not.

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