

AFA UPDATE

A PROJECT OF THE ASATRU FOLK ASSEMBLY

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LEADERS

From time to time we get queries from folks who want to know how they can be gothar or gythjur - priests and priestesses, in other words.

Sometimes the inquirers need certification for some legal reason, such as the ability to perform weddings or to work in the prisons. Other times, they just want a good course of study to allow them to develop spiritually.

Several organizations over the years have offered training courses for gothar and gythjur, to include our own AFA. We no longer have such a program and others have gone by the wayside, but at any given time you can find one or several such courses on the Internet.

But just what is it that makes a person a gothi or a gythja? The ability to perform powerful rituals is important, but certainly not the only consideration. Knowledge of the Eddas and sagas is expected, but in itself such knowledge is not particularly useful.

To me, the essence of the gothi's or gythja's role can be summed up in one word - leadership. If you are leader of a group that follows the Way of the Germanic peoples, they you ARE a gothi or gythja and you don't need a piece of paper to prove it. Conversely, if no one follows your lead, you're not a gothi or gythja and the fact that you have memorized the Voluspa is irrelevant.

My advice is - learn to lead. Learn how to motivate others, set the example, delegate tasks, plan, give direction where there is none, correct mistakes, take the initiative. A lot of that comes by trial and error, but there are sources that can help. One of the best, strange as it may seem, is the US Army's manual on leadership (I don't remember the number of it off hand, but it can be purchased from various outlets by ordinary civilians - please don't join the Army to get a copy!). It is general enough to be mostly applicable to non-military situations and there's not much danger that it will make a drill sergeant

out of you. There are other good books on leadership written for the corporate world, too - check out the local library and you won't be disappointed.

Sure, learn the lore. Definitely, practice your ritual technique and learn how to let the might from Asgard flow among humanfolk. But in addition to these sacred duties, learn to lead those who depend on you.

Asatru needs to develop competent, dedicated leaders for the decades to come. Some of them will emerge by innate talent, but we need the best leaders we can get to help us face the challenges of the future. And that starts at the local level.

KENNEWICK MAN SAVED AGAIN!

It's been about 9,300 years since he died by the Columbia River in what is now Washington State, and almost eight years since he became the center of a modern controversy, but this week the human skeleton belonging to "Kennewick Man" came a little closer to receiving the study he deserves.

Recently, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court had ruled that four Indian tribes did not have a right to rebury Kennewick Man, since there is no way he can be traced to any living tribe (More to the point - though the judge did not say so - is that he does not seem to be an Indian at all!). Scientists would now be allowed to study the remains and determine just who this individual was.

The tribes appealed, requesting the full court to hear the case rather than just the three-judge panel. This week, the court declined to do so.

The Indians have ninety days to appeal to the US Supreme Court.

While the AFA has often been supportive of American Indian rights, we had to part company with them on this issue because Kennewick Man is almost certainly not an Indian. Tentative study indicates he may be related to the Ainu, but there remains evidence suggesting a European origin. Our stand was, and is, that the remains must be studied to determine the truth, whatever that may turn out to be.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2001908884_webkennewick21.html

MONOTHEIST MADNESS THREATENS US ALL

(Warning: This is a personal opinion piece by Steve McNallen)

We all know that there are sane, decent people who follow the monotheist religions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Sometimes, however, the lunatics seem to be in control

- as witnessed by the current situation in the Middle East. Wacko fundamentalist Christians blindly support Israel because the Jews are “God’s Chosen People.” Wacko Jews oppress their neighbors because they think God gave all that land to them thousands of years ago, and the contract is still valid. Wacko Muslims want to convert, subdue, or kill infidels (including those of us following native religions). The voice of non-wacko Christians, Jews, and Muslims gets drowned out in the clamor.

I found the following links of interests because they describe the religious agenda driving us to a larger war in the Middle East. None of this needs to happen, though the momentum of this orlog may be too great to undo.

http://www.monbiot.com/dsp_article.cfm?article_id=648

<http://www.antiwar.com/roberts/?articleid=2365>

Why does it matter to us? Because it’s this nation’s economy that is being wrecked, and our sons and daughters who will pay the bloody price.

You all know I’m an ex-soldier. I don’t have a general problem with the use of violence. But I do have a problem with young soldiers getting killed and maimed without good cause. And The Rapture, or Greater Israel, are not good enough causes.

For Asaturar, there are two points of religious interest here. One is that monotheism is susceptible to being intolerant - after all, if there’s only one God, there can only be one way, right? Native religions, on the other hand, understand that there is no one way that is right for all of humanity; each person is encouraged find and follow the path of their forebears.

The other point is the danger of reducing mythology to history. By cramming their mythic lore into the narrow confines of time and space (history), some Christians feel compelled to act out the mythology by bringing on the end of the world! This, needless to say, is a major inconvenience for the rest of us.

To paraphrase the saying from the Sixties...What if they held an Apocalypse and nobody came? (You youngsters out there may not grok that one...)

UPDATE ON “ODIN LIVES!” RADIO

Chris and Dave are coming up with more good ideas, and you’re going to see a lot of action with this project in the weeks and months to come. Give ‘em a listen!

For information on programs, times, and how to tune in, go to <http://www.odinlives.org/index.html>.

THE ODIN BROTHERHOOD IS NOW AVAILABLE!

We have a stock of Dr. Mark Mirabello's book, *The Odin Brotherhood*. They're available for \$20 plus \$3.95 postage and handling (California residents, add 7.25% sales tax). Information on this and other new products will be up on the web site shortly.

IMPORTANT DATES

April 30 - Walburg. This Germanic Goddess safeguards the dead heroes who sleep in the burial mound, and harbors deeds yet to bear fruit. Pour a libation to the bold ones awaiting rebirth, and think on how your own acts will live after you.

May 1 - From the gloom of Walburg we enter the sunshine of May Day. Think on Freya, take a walk in the forest or send flowers to a friend. Make love outdoors!

May 9 - Day of Remembrance for Guthroth. This Norwegian martyr spoke out against the tyranny of the Christian fanatic Tryggvason, and urged others to resist him. For this, the king had his tongue cut out. Call up a friend who follows our native Way - use your own tongue to participate in the bond that ties us to the Gods!

Hail the Holy Ones!

Hail the AFA!

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Next update May 5th!