

Heilsan!

Where is the AFA Headed?

Since we reorganized the AFA half a year ago, people have asked us just where we are going with it. This is a reasonable question, since I have been a little enigmatic about the course we've taken. In this Bearclaw, then, I'll reveal some of the cards I've been holding close to my chest.

Boiled down to essentials, the AFA's main areas of activity include promoting tribes, and legitimizing Asatru to the larger culture.

Staying the Course: Tribes and the AFA

The AFA has pushed tribes for several years - indeed, this has been our biggest single focus since the late 1990's. At first, there was a lot of resistance to the concept. Any new idea take time go gather steam, and this was no exception.

In recent months, I have seen a growing discussion of the tribal idea. From one end of Traditional European Religion to the other, men and women have begun considering tribes and finding them - in one form or another - to be attractive. The notion has succeeded to the extent that many of us are thinking about Asatru not just as an individual choice, not just as something for kindreds, but as a more comprehensive approach to *living the way of our ancestors*...and that means building bonds of trust and kinship with a community, not just with a handful of other people. The tribal seed has been planted, and it will continue to grow. The AFA can take a great deal of the credit for making that happen.

Our commitment to tribes as an option for our Folk remains undimmed. It was a good idea three years ago, and it is a good idea today. One of the AFA's roles is to encourage retribalization by serve as a clearinghouse for information on tribes - both the new ones being built in this century, and the ancient ones which serve as our models.

In addition to passing out information, we will continue to network Asatruar. After all, if tribes are to come into being we must first provide the essential agreement of human interaction and the organic growth of Asatru kindreds, proto-tribes, and associations of all sorts!

Details will become clearer by the end of summer. For now, suffice to say that the AFA will be right there, in the middle of the action.

## Legitimizing Asatru as an Indigenous/Native Way

The second thrust of the AFA's activism is to advance recognition for Asatru as a legitimate indigenous belief. This is of course a huge task, as it means influencing the policy of literally hundreds of institutions and organizations across the country and around the world. I know this will take time - in fact, it is a pretty open-ended project - but the result will be of great service to all Asatruar, everywhere.

Asatru is an indigenous or native Way of our people. It is not a cult, not a recent invention, not a New Age phenomenon. We have more in common with the American Indians than we do with generic Paganism or Wicca. Asatru is worthy of respect by the outside world, and the AFA intends to do its part to earn that respect.

This campaign must be carried out on several different fronts. Religious councils and assemblies of all sorts must have our input. Every online listing of world religions needs to include Asatru. Military chaplains and commanders at all levels have to be persuaded to accept us. Prison chaplains and administration are a group we must reach, and law enforcement officers are still another very important category to be approached.

Because of the different kinds of institutions which must be approached, we will no doubt end up breaking this effort into a number of related but specialized projects - one for the military, one for prisons, another for religious bodies, and so on.

An endeavor of this magnitude is essentially endless. There is enough here to keep us busy for years to come. It is also a job for which we can use some volunteers. Let us know if you want to help!

I hope this makes it clearer just where the AFA is heading. Just because we are no longer a membership organization does not mean we are sitting on our thumbs. Far from it!

Of course, in addition to all this, I still have some surprises in the wings. I wouldn't be true to my one-eyed patron otherwise. Suffice to say that I am seldom idle. More to come as the weeks and months roll by!

### West Coast Asatru List

In an effort to improve cooperation and networking among Asatruar, Sheila has created a Yahoo group devoted (mainly) to those of us on the west coast, from California to Washington. Interested folks can find out more about it by going to [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/west\\_coast\\_asatru](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/west_coast_asatru) . This group is not limited to AFA supporters or those of us who are Folkish.

The most prominent thread to date has been on sacred places in our part of Vinland - special spots of power and might.

## Prison Visit

The AFA has not spent much of its resources on prison outreach, but we have nevertheless established a relationship with a prison kindred about an hour and a half away from us, here in northern California. The experience has been quite rewarding.

About thirty men regularly attend blot in this institution. Their level of sincerity is high and they are appreciative of efforts on their behalf.

On May 29, I visited them and gave blot. We talked for a long while - the history of Asatru in modern times, how to keep a positive approach, fixing lives and avoiding recidivism. My presence not only helps the men, it further legitimizes Asatru in the eyes of the prison administration, and that is no small thing!

More to come in weeks ahead!

Hail the Gods and Goddesses!  
Hail the AFA!

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