

variety of different group sizes, structures, and ritual styles. To lose any of the currently existing approaches risks impoverishing our spiritual "gene pool." So we're not out to "replace" other Neopagan traditions, even though we think that we have something unique and wonderful to share with the world.

Doing that sharing requires "going public," something that many Neopagan traditions have been reluctant to do. Granted, it may remain necessary for another decade or two for some Neopagans to remain in hiding wherever fundamentalist hate is rampant. Even for those of us in publicly oriented Neopagan groups, it will take courage and caution for us to safely reveal our beliefs publicly. Yet if we can follow the lessons learned by the civil rights movements of our generation, we can eventually have full freedom to practice our beliefs. Accepting and encouraging our community's growth while avoiding missionary fever will be a vital tool in achieving that task.

We believe that ADF has an important role to play in the future of Neopaganism and the survival of the Earth. Already, other Neopagan traditions are imitating our training program, our liturgical techniques, and our emphasis on the arts. If we can attract enough people who are willing to dedicate their time, energy, and money to achieving these goals, the vision can be manifested. We can save the Earth Mother, create a global culture of prosperity and freedom, and usher in a genuine "New Age."

Membership in ADF means supporting and working towards the vision. We believe that together we can do it. But we're going to need as many co-conspirators as possible. If this vision excites you, share it with your

friends and family. Then become part of our future.

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For more information about ADF, contact:

ADF
P.O. Box 17874
Tucson, AZ 85731-7874

Or visit our website at: <http://www.adf.org>.

Locally:

CedarLight Grove, ADF
5918 Edna Avenue, Apt A
Baltimore, Maryland 21214

Website: www.cedarlightgrove.org
Contact: clg@cedarlightgrove.org



The Vision of ADF

What makes ADF different from other Neopagan traditions? Here is how we see it.

In ADF we believe that excellence in scholarship is vitally important. The Goddesses and Gods do not need us to tell lies on their behalf, nor can we understand the ways of our Paleopagan predecessors by indulging in romantic fantasies, no matter how politically correct or emotionally satisfying they might be. So we promote no tall tales of universal matriarchies, of Stonehenge being built by Druid magic, or of the ancient Druids originally having been shamanic crystal-masters from Atlantis. We do not whitewash the occasional barbarism of our predecessors, nor exaggerate it. We use real archeology, real history and real comparative mythology - and we're willing to change our opinions when new information becomes available, even if it destroys our pet theories. This approach is rare in the history of Druidic revivals and the Neopagan community.

In ADF we also believe that artistic excellence is important, both in ritual and outside of it. The Gods and Goddesses deserve the very best that we can give them, so we encourage our members to develop their creative skills to the highest levels that each can attain. Our bards, painters, woodcarvers, needle-workers, and liturgists are among the best in the Neopagan community.

The ADF we believe that excellence in clergy training and practice is vital for any healthy, growing religion. To that end we are attempting to create a professional

clergy-training program equal to anything done by the world's other religions. Unlike many alternative religions, we will never have "instant initiations" into our clergy. Nor do we assume that every member of our religion will have a genuine vocation to the clergy, though it's likely that for the first couple of decades a high proportion will. Instead we expect that eventually the vast majority of our people will be laity.

Nonetheless, everyone is expected to communicate with the Goddesses and Gods in her or his own way - spiritual growth is not a monopoly of the clergy. Every human being needs to learn how to contact the divine fire within, how to talk with trees, and how to unleash the power of magic to save the Earth. If there is such a thing as "spiritual excellence," we need to be striving to express that as well.

Naturally, we believe that liturgical excellence is rooted in these other forms of excellence. Sound scholarship (especially historical and mythological), beautiful art, genuinely competent clergy, and people who are ready, willing, and able to channel divine energies are all crucial to creating the powerful religious and magical ceremonies that we and the Earth so desperately need.

We have two pet mottos so far, the first based on the ideas just described: "Why not excellence?" This emphasis on excellence as a goal makes us both unique and controversial within the Neopagan community. Although some folks think that such an emphasis "isn't democratic," we feel that divine immanence implies that everyone has something they are good at (you just need to contact the deities within you and channel Their creative power).

However, our second motto - "As fast as a speeding oak tree!" - serves to remind us all that the achievement of excellence takes time.

We've already officially declared that first and only Druidic dogma: the Doctrine of Archdruidic Fallibility. No one in ADF, not even the Archdruid, has all the answers. We make no claims of handing down an "authentic" unbroken tradition from the past, and have very strong doubts about any other group that makes such claims.

Thus we are free to evolve our systems within the organic structures already created, adapting them as necessary to suit the needs of coming generations. We're also free to make a lot of mistakes in the process (a freedom we've already taken advantage of). Every member of ADF has both the opportunity and the obligation to contribute her or his time, money, energy and talents to the adventure.

We believe that Neopaganism is eventually going to become a mainstream religious movement, with hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of members, and that this will be A Good Thing, both for the individuals involved and for the survival of the Earth Mother. Neopaganism is riding the crest of the "baby boom." Many people who grew up in the 60's and 70's are discovering us at about the same time that they are realizing both the desperate state of our planet and the eternal relevance of our youthful ideals. Membership in the Neopagan community is quietly growing at a geometric rate, both through word of mouth and the many do-it-yourself books now available, giving us an ever-greater impact on the mainstream culture as a whole.

All these Neopagans are going to need publicly accessible worship, teaching, counseling, and healing. Within thirty years we expect to see indoor temples and/or sacred groves throughout North America and Europe, staffed by full-time paid professional clergy. They'll provide the full range of needed services to the Neopagan community, with no more "corruption" than the Unitarians, the Buddhists, or the Quakers experience. We see globally televised Samhain rites at Stonehenge, and Beltane ceremonies attended by thousands in every major city. We see Neopagan clergy taking part as equals in international religious conferences with clergy from other faiths. We see our children wearing pentacles, Druid Sigils, and Thor Hammers to school as easily as others now wear crosses, Stars of David, or Hands of Fatima.

We see talented and well-trained Neopagan clergy leading thousands of people in effective magical and mundane actions to save endangered species, stop polluters, and preserve wilderness. We see our healers saving thousands of lives and our bards inspiring millions through music and video concerts and dramas. We see Neopaganism as a mass religion, changing social, political, and environmental attitudes around the world and stopping the death-mongers in their tracks.

This vision is very different from that of most current Neopagans, who are focused on small groups as their ideal. Those small groups will always be an essential part of the Neopagan religious community, operating both within and apart from larger organizations, just as their equivalents have throughout human history. As we see it, the future of Neopaganism will require a wide