

From the editor...

Remember the Kindreds!

We've been insistently beating the drums for tribes here at the AFA. Indeed, one of our stated goals is the retribalization of our people. In all the talk of tribes, however, we don't want to lose sight of that much more familiar Asatru institution, the kindred.

The old AFA - the Asatru Free Assembly, back in the late 1970's - coined the term "kindred" to describe local groups of Asatruar who come together to honor the Gods and to be with each other socially. Ideally, the Asatru kindred should be a kind of artificial extended family, a small clan.

The handful of kindreds in existence in the early 1980's has multiplied many times over, with more coming into being every year. Others, unfortunately, disappear and are lost to the Folk, at least as organized entities. This transience reflects the fact that some kindreds are surprisingly strong, while others are plagued with weaknesses and problems. One of our goals here at the AFA is to focus on what makes for durable and intense kindred bonds, so we can pass that information on to you, our reader.

Kindreds are important. They are not, as some seem to think, the be-all and end-all of organized Asatru, but they are vital. Kindreds are the foundation on which the new tribes will be built. It is in the kindreds that we learn how to be a member of a group, how to cooperate and compromise with our fellows. It is there that we begin to acquire the skills of the tribal member.

If you are in a kindred, give it your support! And if you're not in a kindred - consider joining one. Obviously, we recommend the kindreds affiliated with the AFA. You can find a listing of them elsewhere in this issue. Kindreds wishing to express their support of the AFA by affiliation can contact our Kindred Coordinator, Travis Lilley, at Freyvald@aol.com.

Hail the Kindreds!

*Stephen A. McNallen
Drighthen, AFA*

IN DEFENSE of the Folkish View

by Stephen A. McNallen

Biology, culture, and spirituality are all intimately connected, and any attempt to separate them is doomed to frustration. Who the group *is* in terms of ancestry, what the group *does*, and the spiritual perception of the group are not three different things, but only aspects of a greater whole.

This Folk-centered essence of Asatru often comes under attack from those who are new to our ancestral ways, or who have not shaken off the conditioning of modern culture. The idea that religion, culture, and biology are intertwined runs against the prevailing political ideology, and is sometimes labeled "racist" by those who do not understand the deeper truths involved.

Sometimes, those who consider themselves Asatru are the first to criticize the Folkish view. Their objections are important to counter. Indeed, these are people who, like us, follow the Aesir and Vanir and it is all the more important to respond fully to them.

Their criticisms take several fairly predictable forms. I have summed up some of their arguments in the paragraphs that follow, and provided some possible answers.

1. "The Vikings spread their seed far and wide on an equal opportunity basis, with no regard to race, religion, or culture."

First of all, this is not really true. The Viking colony in Greenland left many skeletons which have been exhaustively studied by scientists who marveled that the Greenlanders seem not to have intermarried with the Eskimos. Back home in Northern Europe, it is true, Nordics and Celts married and intermingled rather freely, and the genetics of Iceland shows very strong Irish intermixture. However, the Scandinavians and the Celts are two very closely related branches of the Indo-European family. Biologically and culturally, they are very much kin.

Secondly, the Vikings are hardly ideal role models for Asatru. The Viking Age is very late in the history of the Germanic people. It was a time when our traditional culture was being eroded by outside forces, a time of change and cosmopolitanism. To judge Asatru by the behavior of a Viking adventurer in Byzantium, for example, makes as much sense as judging Christianity by the actions of an American sailor on port leave in Manila. Neither is likely to epitomize the religious values practiced in Norway or Nebraska, respectively. A fire in the loins should not be mistaken for spiritual enlightenment.

2. "All men and women are descendants from Ask and Embla, the primordial man and woman who were found, as tree trunks on the strand, by Odin, Hoenir and Lodur and given life. Thus, Asatru is the legacy of all humans."

This is one of the creation myths of the Northern people. There are thousands of such stories told by cultures both ancient and modern, from the Old Testament to the interior of the Amazon today. Humans in their tribal state tend to be extremely ethnocentric, and often their various groupings bear names that mean something like "the true people" or "the real human beings" to distinguish themselves from their neighbors. Likewise, their creation myths tend to be ethnocentric and to pertain only to themselves - not to all of humankind, with which they are not particularly concerned.

To argue that all humans are descended of Ask and Embla is to say that the myths of every other native culture are wrong, and that only ours is right. From the Australian Outback to the depths of Africa, groups have their own explanations for how they came to be. It is the height of arrogance to assume that our stories apply to them, and that the sacred tales of their own people are false. Unless we assume that their lore is inferior and inaccurate, we are forced to the logical conclusion that we are *all* right - so long as we are speaking of our own people, and no other.

Indeed, to say that our creation story is the only true one is to deny the existence and validity of other peoples' Gods - for it imposes Odin, Hoenir, and Lodur upon these other folk, shoving their Gods rudely out of the picture and negating their own religious explanations for the nature of things. Most Asatruar would not support such religious imperialism. To say that ours is the "one, true" creation myth smacks not only of religious intolerance but...racism. It is the very opposite of diversity.

3. "The Gods and Goddesses have sex with all sorts of beings - dwarves, giants, and the like. This is more evidence that discrimination, particularly in the realm of relationships, sex, and marriage, has no basis in Norse culture!"

The stories of our Gods and Goddesses are written down in the *Prose Edda* and the *Poetic Edda*. The *Eddas* are valuable resources, but they are symbolic, not historical. Their contents were subject to all sorts of factors that affect the way we use them religiously - human interpretation and bias being the main ones! Nothing in our lore suggests that the *Eddas* are meant to be taken literally, and to do so puts us in the same category as those fundamentalist Christians who take the Bible, word for word, as the exact and infallible word of their God.

To take the tales of our Gods and Goddesses as lessons urging us to mate outside our kind (or outside our species!) is as wrong as the Christian who argues that the Genesis creation story should be taken as scientific truth. Myth is bigger than that.

4. "Asatru is a religion, and joining it is no different than becoming an Episcopalian, a Muslim, or a Wiccan. Asatru is no more 'European' than Islam is 'Arabic' or Buddhism is 'Asian.'"

This is a modern fantasy. No indigenous group really believes that its religion is nothing more than a set of practices and abstract concepts, separate from membership in the community, which can be adopted or set aside at will by outsiders.

People may decide to become a Baptist or a Lutheran, but no one looks in the mirror while brushing their teeth in the morning, and thinks "Hey, I'm tired of being a Catholic. I think I'll become a Lakota Sioux."

Native religion is not something apart from the rest of the life of the tribe. Religion, politics, economics, values and customs are all part of one thing. There is no real separation among them. Taken as a whole, this aggregate is the "Way" of the group; religion becomes one particular fraction of "the way the tribe is in the world, and what the tribe does."

Some religions, in contrast, are not based on the experience of a particular group, but on abstract philosophy or a revelation divorced from any tribal or national group. The monotheistic religions are the best examples of these. One can drift from Methodism to Mormonism, or from Catholicism to Islam, based on abstract reasoning or emotional attachment. It is here that the proposition of our critics is most at home. Those who attack Asatru because of its Folkish basis still carry with them the mental assumptions of Christianity and the other philosophical, universalist sects.

Most of the lore-based arguments against our Folkish worldview are based on the four presented above. In general, they show a common thread - namely, Christian thinking.

The idea that all humans spring from Ask and Embla may be appealing from a simplistic viewpoint, but it implies the non-existence of other peoples' Gods and thus reflects the same religious imperialism we find in historical Christianity. Likewise, to propose that the Aesir and Vanir have sex outside their "race" is to use the Eddic texts in the literal way that fundamentalist Christian uses the Bible. Finally, to suggest that religions can be chosen in the same way one chooses a hat or a new car is to think in terms of the monotheistic religions.

Those who reject the Folkish viewpoint often accuse us of not really being true to the Aesir and Vanir. A closer look, though, reveals their arguments against us to be much more in line with Christianity than with the inherently tribal and ethnocentric nature of indigenous religions. We can hope that as Asatruar learn to internalize the attitudes of our pre-Christian ancestors they will outgrow the cultural prejudices which keep them from connecting solidly with the deepest truths of our ancestral Way.

The Significance of **TRIBALIZATION** in the Modern Era

Hjuki Draughtins Gutane

Within the last few decades of the twentieth century, there took place some rather exciting and profound developments in a true re-emergence of pre-Christian Germanic religion ("Heathenry").

True, attempts at a Heathen re-emergence seem to have taken place earlier, but arguably, these were only Heathen in form, or were adaptations of Heathen forms to fit within Christian or even Theosophical contexts. This latter was the case in the rise of Armanism in the early twentieth century in Germany.

Perhaps, many would argue that any form of "re-emergence" or "revival" is merely a play on words, that the Elder Trow had never really left us, but had instead remained a viable, living entity though "underground," in secret or perhaps simply within rural households quite removed from the watchful eyes of Christian officials and their agents. This does seem to have taken place, as evidenced in Bede's ability to glean Heathen calendar lore (from a Heathen Anglo-Saxon farmer) for his *De Temporum Ratione* - which, however flawed, remains the only example of an authentic Heathen calendar preserved in complete form within a literary context. Be it as it may, the key words here are "in secret" and "underground." At best, the practice may at best have been an open one among sparsely distributed folk (which in context, still constitutes as something "secret," being well removed from inquisitive eyes).

In the end, no real attempts at an open revival of (real) elder Germanic Heathenry had been successfully undertaken until the latter half of the twentieth century - during which not only did it resurface, but was given unshakable, solid foundation from which it could grow and ever remain with us in some tangible and accessible, open form. In North America, the trend towards a true Heathen awakening began to take shape in a small handful of unrelated groups of folk in the late sixties and early seventies. Most notable was the formation of the Viking Brotherhood, which eventually evolved into the Asatru Free Assembly in 1976. The "original AFA" (as it is commonly called today) eventually collapsed, giving rise to the Asatru Folk Assembly, the Ring of Troth and the Asatru Alliance of Independent Kindreds; so it was, that Asatru had become established on the North American continent.

Asatru, a non-tribal specific Heathen expression, is based on predominantly Icelandic form, but incorporating a more "pan-Germanic" attitude and focus. For a sizable and growing number of folk, Asatru provides a direction towards spiritual sustenance, likewise providing a basic communal or cultural identity as a general form of "folk religion." This does bring to mind a glimpse of some underlying hint of basic tribal tendencies or components - providing adherents with a suggestion of social identity with a particular collection of folk through a conceptually indigenous manifestation of folk belief and principles - though hardly a complete tribal model unto itself. Certainly, it would seem that the adherents of Asatru as a collective community fall under the secondary definition of "tribe" (see below), though this would be a loose interpretation at best.

Defining tribe

Miriam-Webster's dictionary defines "tribe" as:

1. A social group comprising numerous families, clans, or generations.
2. A group of persons having a common character or interest.

While simple and straightforward, the above definitions are hardly sufficient in relaying anything significant or illuminating in regards to a more detailed explanation of "tribe" or "tribalization." For a clearer understanding of an inherently complex dynamic such as tribe, we naturally need to expand our focus to allow for considerations that lie beyond the scope of a dictionary definition.

At its root, a tribe is a collection of clans - groups of related individuals from various households who share a common ancestor. These clans are perfectly analogous to "kindreds" in true form and definition as:

1. A group of related individuals
2. One's relatives

Members of individual clans or kindreds are bound in blood in some way, kin in the literal sense. Thus, a kindred is of course, a collection of one's relatives, one's immediate and extended family. This is implicit in the terminology itself. Modern English "kin" is derived from the Old English *cynn*, itself derived from the Germanic root word **kunjān* - all defining individuals of a family or other related group with at least one common ancestor. While the individuals who make up the clans or kindreds contained within a tribe are related by blood in some fashion, sharing at least one common ancestor, the social groups themselves (that is, the clans or kindreds) are not necessarily related in the same way within the greater common classification (tribe). Clearly, not every tribesman would be related to every other tribesman by blood.

Tribes are ethnic units in true essence and form. Socially speaking, ethnicity is characterized and determined according to shared or common traits and customs among a collective populace or folk. These traits and customs include such things as a folk's religious beliefs/ belief system, a common perception or worldview, moral code, and (within a Heathen context) sense or precedent of law - which, in turn, distinguish one tribe from other tribes. Certainly, one can find similarities of customs or traits within any given number of tribal units - though, it must be borne in mind that such similarity does not necessarily imply amalgamation or assimilation into one homogenous tribal or ethnic unit, but rather simply demonstrates natural adaptive tendencies which often arise through pan-tribal contacts - as through trade and migration.

Language is also considered as a factor in determining tribal (or in modern times, national) ethnicity or identity. This is not only natural, but also easily understood on more profound, Heathen levels when we consider the religious importance tribal language plays within a Heathen community (see below). Tribal dialects are unique folkish expressions, providing an intimate linguistic look a particular tribe's deepest attitudes and perceptions, providing oral (or even literary) testimony to that collective folk's unique world and its understanding of place within that world. Tribes comprehend collective experiences within the world according to their own (tribal-specific) understandings. These are deciphered according to that group's particular worldview and socio-religious "take" on any given matter. A tribe's language is a

reflection of these phenomena, and of the knowledge and wisdom collected within tribal parameters...and so, each dialect is as distinctive as each group's collective understanding.

Another consideration in establishing an ethnic/ tribal identity is determined by how an individual is recognized or understood to belong to a certain social grouping. This matter of perception can be applied from within the tribe itself or from without; as a group, or on an individual basis: Does the tribe in question consider the subject as a one of their own? Does the individual consider himself as a member of the tribe to which he was born? If not, then what association does the individual make (that is, what tribe would he then claim to belong to, or strive to assimilate into)? To which tribe does those outside of that particular group ascribe a given individual or group of individuals? Does the individual share inherent traits or habits understood to be common among a given social group? Other questions that may come into play include: what language does the individual speak? What of his religious/worldviews? What of his sense of the and law?

Language

Language is a common denominator often used in grouping individuals or units (such as families or kindreds) into a broader social association of ethnicity, or tribes. In a tribal context, languages are particular to each given tribe - while there may exist those beyond the tribal unit itself who do understand and/ or speak the language, this doesn't automatically infer ethnicity or ethnic association with the particular tribe. After all, those tribes that maintained frequent or extended contact between one another would clearly develop knowledge of the other's dialect, at least among those individuals who did partake in common interaction. Even still, this wouldn't imply that tribal dialects were shared as commonly as national languages are today, and it is safe to say that for the most part, such dialects normally remained within the bounds of the society from which they were sprung.

This is only natural when we consider the deeper roles a tribal dialect plays within the society. As mentioned above, such dialects are a reflection of the specific group's worldview and attitudes. The variations in diction and language structure (however subtle), such as is the case with varying god names for deities accepted as occurring on pan-tribal lines, or for variations in descriptive terminology and perhaps even genderfication of words (which can vary from language to language). Regardless of whether or not anything profound can actually be gleaned from analyzing such subtleties at face value, it does remain true that such differences, however seemingly unimportant, lend tribal-specific attributes to that which they are ascribed, and there is little doubt that these differences (again, however subtle or seemingly unimportant at face value) provide a more tribal-specific perception of that which the terminology describes/ names through expressive oral or literary usage. This is most readily applicable in cases where something is shared on pan-tribal lines, thus allowing for a comparative analytical look into the terminology itself which better demonstrates particular tribal understandings and relationships of those elements. Here, consistent patterns of usage (of terminology) would provide more tangible and significant insights into deeper meanings of certain terminology, and a perspective meaning (of a given term or terms) for the folk who use it.

When we consider tribal dialects from a more thoroughly Heathen perspective, they take on an even greater meaning and overall importance in form and function.

The best illustrative example that comes to mind is the magical art of *galdoring*, in which the use of certain words in specific patterns or formulas is generally regarded as vital to affect the desired result or change. Most importantly, the specific tribal dialect allows one to utilize the *Galdor* in drawing up *maegen* (a form of spiritual might) from the very roots of the tribe's being, to draw from the (collective) tribal power in its entirety by utilizing a language which is part of the very tribe itself. In the case of a contemporary Anglo-Saxon tribe, Old English is used in such context (among others, of course). While it may seem unnecessary for what appears to be an English tribe to use Old English over the modern or contemporary form, it is necessary when we consider:

(1) Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) is virtually unrecognizable to contemporary speakers of new or modern English. Old English is replete with a complex inflectional system and Genderfication. In modern English, inflection is more limited, and serves a more condensed role within the language structure. In the elder form, words fall into one of three genders (feminine, neuter, and masculine). Genderfication of words is nonexistent in the modern form.

(2) In Old English, one can more easily apply the rules which govern Germanic poetry - which rely on specific stress and weakness patterns to implement properly. In the elder form, inflection serves well to condense the verses, and so eliminating the excessive "wordiness" you otherwise would have in modern English (which requires one to use more words to say the same thing). Also, the stress within the elder form naturally falls upon the first syllable in a word, whereas in modern English (which contains many foreign words and elements), the stress may fall at the end or within the word itself. This complicates implication of the metrical rules of Germanic poetry, which depend on a specific stress placement (to determine alliteration).

(3) In utilizing modern English for magical or ritual purposes, one is drawing *maegen* from a very limited source - that which accrued following the 11th century or so. In using the elder form, one is drawing from the boundless store of tribal *maegens* of the entirety of that tribe (rather than limiting one's access to a mere few centuries). In order to draw *maegen* from that immeasurably deep (collective) container of the tribe itself, one must obviously have access to that power - elder tongues such as Gothic and Old English are perfect in this role for the respective tribesmen who use them. The tribal dialect serves in literally a whole capacity in taking the worker beyond a limited scope, and allows him or her to affect the greatest outcome from within a truly (whole) tribal context.

Tribal Thew/ Custom, and Law

Simply put, *thews* are a tribe's observed customs or habits of personal conduct within the (tribal) society. In contemporary thought, *thew* is akin to the concept of "acceptable behavior" within a given community. *Thews* are essential in maintaining the wholeness and well-being of any social collective group (such as a tribe) - the failings of mainstream society's attempt to maintain order through codified laws and mandates are plain enough! *Thews*, the customs which determine appropriate or acceptable behavior for members of the tribal community, make up the very integral weave of the cohesive society itself. Interestingly, not only were *thews* not "passed down from above" (as if from some omnipotent and untouchable God), they were never codified or placed into any form of written mandates - they sprung from the very deeds of the entirety of the tribe. *Thews* further and insure the tribe's cohesiveness and maintenance within naturally holy parameters, rather than existing as some artificial overlay, or inorganic imposition upon the members of the tribe.

Thews, as patterns of behavior, are learned and fostered (ideally) from birth, and are ingrained within the very being of each tribesman, thus forming natural (even genetic) patterns of tendencies, habits, or conduct which instinctively draws the individual to do that which is good for his or her tribe. This is undoubtedly a "norm" rather than a rigid, dogmatic application. Every society is presented with those who would pose a threat to the well-being of its members or the very cohesiveness of the society itself. Such individuals are treated accordingly, by being removed or cast out of the community itself. In Heathen tribal terms, to be cast out is to be made an "outlaw," literally, "one outside the law" - that is, outside the holy bounds of the tribe (see below).

Thews are an age-old organic manifestation within any given Germanic tribal structure. While certain basic precepts are often shared among tribes, each tribe's thews remain peculiar to their own. After all, thews are determined by what is beneficial or good for the society at hand. This, in turn, is determined by that specific tribe's needs, or that which maintains the cohesiveness of that tribe's particular dynamic (which, understandably, will differ at slightly or even radically from tribe to tribe).

Germanic Heathen society was/is based upon thew (and upon its complement, Heathen law). The concept of codified law is completely foreign to the tribal heathen of old, and for good reason: Rigid, dictated, codified law does not fit naturally into a thewful society. A thewful society operates upon organic principles, whereas a society governed by decree or codified law (an inorganic universal legal dogma) does not. Unlike codified law, thew is an inborn and essentially genetic part of Germanic tribal structure. In observing thew in discerning "right or wrong," "good or evil" behavior, the society is using the very essence of that social group as its guide in its determination. Maintaining and applying thew in given situations allows the tribe a more natural and whole approach to what is deemed proper or improper, rather than a dogmatic mandate which may not fit a particular application so well as thew - today's age-based laws are perfect examples of the failures of a blanket application of codified law; some individuals unquestionably more capable of acting in responsible manner at sixteen than others are at twenty-one. Rigid age laws do not allow for such considerations, and are applied on a broad, blind basis.

That codified law is foreign to Germanic social structure is also evidenced in history. When the later Visigothic kings adopted the Roman custom of ruling from written mandates rather than according to thew, they utilized experienced Romans in enacting this practice. The Visigothic kings were unable in doing this themselves. Prior to Romanization/ Christianization, the Gothic kingdom(s) operated strictly on the basis of thew that was borne within the very blood of the Goths since time immemorial. The customs of the Goths and the other Germanic tribes had nothing to do with ruling from mandate or writ, and so implementing such radical departures from the holy ethnic order was immensely difficult (at best) and clearly impossible without the assistance of the people (in this case, Romans) who were intimately familiar with their own established customs.

While thew can be understood as the body of customs or norms of a tribe, law contains the mores or most important customs of that society. All laws were considered as customs, but not all customs were necessarily laws. Thus, it would be safe to say that a breach or violation of law would always render the harshest treatment while a breach or violation of thew may not.

Within a tribal society, good is that which benefits the tribe, that which lends support and furtherance to the collective unit. It is those layers rightfully laid within Wyrð's well that lend foundation to other layers, which subsequently make up the very essence and being of the tribe. Evil, then would be that which would serve to unravel, hinder or otherwise destroy the established body and collective deeds (the tribal law) - that which would prove ultimately detrimental to the well-being and very existence of the tribe itself.

Good, on the other hand, is that which is lawful; right, good actions are maegen-building and strengthening deeds which produce a cycle of positive and beneficial *orlog* ("fate") for the folk itself. To Heathens, law is synonymous with *orlog*. This is also evidenced in the etymology of the term itself: As Eric Wodening points out, all Germanic words denoting law are ultimately derived from the same Indo-European root, **legh* - interpreted as "to lay something down." *Orlog* is a compound word, which literally translates as "the first layer" or "primal law." To the Heathen mind, law is a layer of action, or collective layers of actions - *orlog* - that shapes and determines further layers. Heathen tribal law isn't a written decree, but rather an entirety of actions or deeds of a tribal society. The society in turn is the container of those deeds. Tribe, society and law are unquestionably synonymous in Heathen context.

Living within the law meant not only living within certain acceptable social parameters, but literally within the innangards, within the container of society itself. To dwell within the innangards of the tribe is to be integrally tied to that great store of tribal *orlog* and maegen and thus to be within the law of the tribe itself. To be cast out, to be outlawed was and is to be literally placed "outside of the tribal law" - not only outside of the physical bounds of the society itself, but also outside of the tribal law in a very disjuncting capacity. It meant to be cut off from the *orlog* and maegen of the tribe, to be without any connection to the tribe's goodness, wholeness, prosperity, luck, or *frith* (peace and security). To be outlawed, then, is to be stripped of one's tribal ethnicity in every sense and form.

The term law is also used to denote a tribe's religion. This is plain enough when we remember that to Heathens (elder and contemporary alike) law, *thew*, tribe, and religion were and are all one and the same - inseparably integral parts of life and being (unlike contemporary mainstream society which separates religious from the mundane or secular).

Literary evidence also survives which illustrates a reference to law as religion. One example comes to us from the sixth century kingdom of the Ostrogoths. In a document from that era, the *Lex Gothorum*, the religion of the Ostrogoths, is in no uncertain terms translated as "the law of the Goths."

Arianism, which was the Gothic form of Christianity at that time, is an interesting phenomenon. Generally speaking, the Goths were unaccepting of Catholicism, seeing it as not only foreign, but also a very real threat to established Gothic tribal ethnicity and cohesiveness. Arianism was a result of the application of strong ethnic influence upon an essentially universalist and non-ethnic form, which ultimately created a "folkish" or ethnic form of Christianity. This may seem a bit ironic, but Arian Goths held bitter contempt for the hostility towards tribal identity which they perceived within Catholicism. That Arianism would be recognized as "the law of the Goths" illustrates that even after the tribe was converted to Christianity, the beliefs of the folk were still a significant factor in perceiving a Gothic identity.

In Conclusion

When we think of tribe it is important to steer clear of modern misconceptions of what tribe really is. Tribes aren't some primitive, backward folk roaming the great expanses in search of forage or following the herds. Nor is a tribe a collection of folk huddled together upon some reservation or within the bounds of a narrowly determined space or plot of land (like some form of hippie commune) in which the so-called "tribal" population couldn't possibly grow or thrive. Contrary to all of this, a tribe is an ethnic unit; tribe is ethnicity, tribe is a cultural identity.

Tribalization, or more accurately, re-tribalization is really nothing new. The essence of tribe is borne within us, and (re)tribalization has been evolving since around the mid-1970's with the emergence of Theod and Theodish Belief. (Re) Tribalization is an activist, determined return to (re) establishing ethnicity. As briefly discussed above, each tribe differs from one another in at least minimal ways - each tribe's law/religion/thews are their own, regardless of what may or may not be seen as shared among other tribes. A tribe's language encapsulates the very being of the tribe within an expressive form, giving oral and literary capacity to tribal communicative medium. This, in turn, allows a tribe to share or pass along deep tribal wisdom, thews and history in an expressive form which is part of the deepest roots of the tribe itself.

While it is an ideal situation if tribesmen lived in a more concentrated proximity to one another (It unquestionably lends speed to tribal developments and evolution if members can work closely together in all respects), such isn't completely necessary in determining tribal identity or ethnicity. A good example is implicit in tribal migration. While the concept might bring to mind entire populations moving from one region to another, leaving nothing and no one behind, the fact of the matter is that tribal migrations included a sizable portion of a given tribe or tribal group, but not necessarily the entire tribe. Hence, the wide geographical distribution of tribes such as the Goths and Vandals. Even today, within the (refounded) Gothic tribe, Goths are distributed throughout North America - from the East Coast of the United States to British Columbia in Canada - again, tribe" is ethnicity, not another form of hippie commune or club.

Modern Heathen speak of "the religion of our ancestors," of our "ancestral ways" and other such phrases - without really considering the full scope of their meanings. What are the ways of our ancestors? What is the religion of our forebears? They are nothing less than the tribal ways - the thews/laws/religions of our tribal ancestors. Retribalization then is the most significant development in contemporary Heathenism. It is a true return to our ancestral ways, of living according to thew as our ancestors had done before us, of reclaiming our respective cultural ways, and reestablishing those inherently organic ways in right, good form. Tribalization is a fundamental shedding of the yokes of superficial mainstreamism and imperialistic universalism...a renewed sense of cultural/ethnic and personal identity, a sense of worth and place within a viable, living natural Heathen dynamic. Tribalization is the true return to Germanic ethnicity...a rightful reclamation of our respective folk, and of ourselves...a reclamation of our deepest beings. Tribes, as organic, living units, will outlive any artificial organization however well established, and so ensure the furtherance of our respective individual and collective culture(s). Tribes will carry the essence of their folk long after the era of their reawakening has moved into dim remembrance.

Retribalization is evolution of the collective Germanic folk group.

DR. BRIAN REGAN

An extremely important, though often overlooked, element in Northern religion is its mystical aspect. Traces of this remain even in today's English language; the word "read" originally meant to "take/give counsel" - particularly through the runes. Similarly, "write" meant to "carve (runes) in, incise" - it is cognate with "to tear, rip" in modern German. Gothic runa meant "secret; secret plan(/planning); secret council/consultation/counsel; secret motive, hidden motivation." Related to this word is an archaic British English verb, "to round" meaning "to whisper" (the final "d" resulted from assimilation to the similar-sounding word "round" meaning "circular"). Derived from the same ancient Germanic root is also modern German raunen meaning "to whisper or murmur."

As we know from history and archeology, the runes were anciently used not to convey secular information but to divine the currents of the hidden, deep psychic flux of life. It is this deep psychic flux, and its interpretations throughout history, which we will examine in this article.

The Inframind

Virtually all mankind, before the development of complicated civilizations and correspondingly complexified religions, was in some way shamanic and "animist" or "ancestor-worshipping." Basically, this is to say that the primitive, pre-civilizational world view understood supernatural entities of various sorts - whether ex-human (i.e., the souls of the dead) or purely supernatural - to exist within a universal cosmic intelligence which underlay and suffused all things. Things which we might call "inanimate" were to our ancient forefathers besouled. Even rocks ("dead matter" to us moderns) were alive with it, to say nothing of the earth as a whole. We can see this quite clearly in the European cave paintings of thirty to forty thousand years ago. They show remarkably realistic animals of all kinds merging with, coming out of and going into the rock walls themselves. For what we regard as solid and lifeless (e.g., rock), they saw as pervaded by mind.

This universal intelligence was, and is, what I might call the "inframind." The earth's languages are replete with various designations for it. In ancient Gothic (the earliest recorded Germanic language) the word for it was *wurdis, which in modern English has evolved to "Weird." This word is related to older English "to worth" or "worthe," meaning "to befall or betide"; and German "werden," meaning "to become, come about." Its translation as "fate" or "destiny," or even "luck," is inadequate because in modern English such terms normally mean simply "random life event or course," usually bad. Weird - as portrayed in the ancient Northern myths and practices - was generally considered a transpersonal intelligent power inherent in the evolution of all being - a universal Mind characterized by memory and knowledge, and directing the course of life. Humans could effectively importune it to obtain certain results. Not only our own ancestors but indeed all mankind (before modern atheism) held this belief: hence the universal phenomenon of prayer and ritual for the purpose of achieving results unobtainable through normal means. Those who are true to the old ways still believe it.

The Dynamics of Divination

As the Master of Shamans, Odin, taught us, Weird speaks to us through the runes, as well through the tarot, the i ching and similar extra-Germanic methods of divination. In runecasting, the fullest answer to any query is given in the very first runecast. Further throws usually shed less and less light on the overall question. This is not so much a matter of the runes losing their power due to too much questioning about a given issue as it is a process of diminishing returns. As in the case of any open-minded inquiry by

humans, the big discoveries are made in the beginning; thereafter the essential information divulged by these initial discoveries is refined further and further until it becomes trivial.

One sees this in other areas - certainly in science. In spite of periodic media revelations about "breakthroughs" in our understanding of this or that field, after the primary principles have been uncovered (in most cases, many decades or even centuries ago), truly new visions emerge only at great cost and with a cast of thousands of researchers. This has led to a great deal of fakery in the so-called "social sciences," where most "new" ideas are little more than re-wordings of ancient religious concepts or perennial political wish-dreams. Even in the hardest of the "hard" sciences, such as quantum physics or cosmogony, there is a feeling that we have wrung just about everything we can out of the scientific method, and that now the name of the game is engineering - the application of scientific knowledge to business, economic or political solutions. In these realms, the quest for knowledge is over.

So it is with investigation by means of runes. They give us the main answers to our questions right away. Often these answers are even of the kind that are obvious to impartial observers but that the questioner, because of heavy personal involvement in the question, cannot see - the interfering mechanisms are cognitive dissonance and coloring by emotions, etc. After the primary answers have been rendered, further questions on the same topic produce "refinements" of various aspects of the first response. In many, perhaps most, cases, such elaborations are unnecessary and can even obfuscate.

The Personalization of the Inframind

Originally, the North, like many other cultures, had quite a number of supernatural entities whom they viewed as friendly or unfriendly. The chief among these were portrayed by means of tree trunks, wooden posts or pillars sculpted with the features of the respective entities. The word for "wooden post" was *ansuz, which became the later Norse As (plural Aesir) which is today often translated as "god" although the earliest translator of the word, Jordanes (ca. 600 C.E.), clearly translates it as "demigod" (semideus), i.e., something akin to a Christian "archangel." In the Germanic view, these entities were personal, whereas the divine milieu in which they existed - Weird - was transpersonal. This was also the view of most pre-literate peoples (who are today often called "animist").

With the rise of the Middle Eastern civilizations six thousand years ago, however, a slow process of personalization of the transpersonal Weird began. This process was the natural result of the development of human consciousness, the evolution of the personality, or self-awareness. The self was projected onto the inframind. With the prophet Zarathustra (ca. 1600-1900 B.C.) in ancient Iran, the divine chief sheik, Wise Lord (Ahura Mazda, later Ormazd), became identified with the inframind, which was thereby anthropomorphically personalized. The other gods were demoted to demi-gods or angels, and evil was ascribed to the "Evil Spirit," Angra Mainyu (later Ahriman) and his hosts of ex-gods (now demons), all enemies of Wise Lord.

At the end of, and especially after, the much later "Babylonian Exile" of the Jews, the Jews in Babylon absorbed the chief ideas of the Zoroastrian "liberator," Kurush (biblical Cyrus) the Great's empire; they inflated a local god of the Palestinian soil, Yahweh, into a Jew-choosing divinity conterminous with the inframind. The old polytheistic gods (elohim) were demoted to angels or (as in the case of Satan) demonized. The old Hebrew names of the "angels" still show this transformation (even though other translations are usually given): Dani-el is "God Dani"; Micha-el is "God Micha"; Rafa-el is "God Rafa"; etc.

As the Jewish diaspora and its Christian offshoot spread throughout the Mediterranean world, essentially the same "inflation" of the leading god happened with Greek and Roman religion: Greek Zeus and Latin Jupiter (for Jovis pater, i.e., "Father Jove") provided the human-like faces for Weird. It now acquired the name (in Latin) Deus pater meaning "God, the Father." This developed pari passu with the ongoing reinterpretation of the Jewish religious hero, Jesus, and made it possible for the latter to be viewed as "God the Son" (Dei filius "God's son" -> Deus filius "God the Son"). The free-wheeling paranormal activity of the inframind was reinterpreted as the "Holy Breath" (Spiritus Sanctus, "Holy Ghost"), another stage-mask (literally, a persona) of God. Everything was fused together, and thus evolved the idea of the "one God," which many pro-Judeo-Christian-Muslim types like to call the "discovery" of monotheism. (The Christian variant holds that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three personae of this one God.)

Meanwhile the Zoroastrian habit of calling this new "one God" by the name of "Lord" (Ahura) was also adopted in the daughter religions: The Jews have long written the vowel-less "Tetragrammaton," YHWH (for YaHWeH), with the added Masoretic points of the Hebrew-Phoenician word which they actually pronounced Adonai, meaning "Lord" (which, through convoluted misunderstanding, gave rise to the nonsense name "Jehovah"); while the Christians used Greek Kyrios or Latin Dominus, both meaning "Lord." Thus what was originally a transpersonal universal intelligence underlying and constituting all existence became a very personal Middle Eastern despot who paradoxically also loved you. It was the alpha-male/father raised to infinite magnitude.

All of this personalization accommodated quite well the polytheism of classical antiquity and made the step from adherence to local gods to a universal God a small one. Mithraism was another religion of such conflation ("god-blending," called theocrasis in Greek) of divinities, and had almost as much success as Christianity, thereby evidencing the general imperial mindset of the time. But Mithraism did not incorporate female divinities and was primarily a soldier's religion. The catholic approach taken by Christianity was to rename earth goddesses such as Artemis (Diana) of Ephesus and Isis (originally goddess of the Nile river) to "Mary, the God-bearer" (theotokos). This attracted women (and male homosexuals and castrati) to Christianity, as did also its combination of stoicism (for the upper classes) and mercy (for the 75% of the Empire that was slave). The emphasis on chastity likewise fit in well with the widely revered extreme asceticism emanating from the deserts of Syria and Egypt. In fact, almost any religious idea from the East was accepted enthusiastically in the West, with emperors undergoing initiations into multiple mystery religions to assure their own salvation (another oriental idea).

By the time the Goths impinged on the Roman Empire in the 300s, a lot of the mutual inconsistencies had been ironed out through debate, political power plays, and the workings of history. Since the Goths still believed that Weird was transpersonal (after all, their native religion was shamanic), their beliefs were considered anathema, and titanic efforts were undertaken to convert them. This was part of the beginning of the view that the Germanic peoples did not know the "one, true God" and had to be enlightened, often with the sword. The effect of this kind of evangelization by force is today known to psychiatrists as the Stockholm syndrome. This is the method of converting people to one's own view by subjecting them to severe, life-threatening trauma. The genocidal slaughters perpetrated by the early Muslims or by the Communists of the last century are other examples. The traumatized people become eager devotees and supporters of the new ideology. But for the true believers, it was (and is) all quite justified by the righteousness of their cause.

In its behalf, it must be said that Christianity, with its literacy, civilized self-restraint, promotion of learning and care of the unfortunates of society, did help spread Roman philosophy, science and technology among the Germanic peoples who were in any case magnetically attracted to the wealth and power of Rome. But to say that these peoples were ignorant of the operations of the inframind or that

Christianity or the other Mediterranean religions had some special knowledge of the supernatural which the Germanics did not, is simply incorrect. Christianity had benefited from Greek philosophy and from the religious and secular reflections on history by many in the classical world; these were processes unknown to the Goths and other Germanic peoples. But as regards the *inframind* (or *Weird*), Christianity had mostly only pseudo-knowledge to preach. In fact, it was only the cultural and genetic background of the Germanic and Celtic peoples which made it possible for our ancestors to take what was valuable in Mediterranean religion and create something greater, science, out of it. The rest of the surrounding world - the Middle Eastern realm and the entire North African littoral - relapsed into the barbaric simplism known as Islam.

Gods, Heroes, and Anti-heroes

Today Christianity, a victim of its own success, is self-dissolving into nihilism, as Nietzsche foresaw, through a deep-psychic process most clearly revealed through literature. In a literary work, the "hero" (in the Christian story, Christ) is actually a depiction of the self. He is, hence, to be imitated, a model of social behavior. The development of this model was described by the literary critic Northrop Frye in his now famous "Anatomy of Criticism" of 1957: In the age before civilization (i.e., before the rise of large-scale towns and cities), a people's stories have gods as heroes (i.e., in standard religious folk myths). As civilization itself begins, the age of the epic emerges, in which the heroes are human, although still very much in contact with the gods (e.g., the Homeric poems, *Beowulf*, the *Nibelungenlied*); with further progress comes the "high mimetic," the great age of dramatic tragedy (the Greek tragedies, Shakespeare in our own culture), in which the hero is now purely mortal, although of high nobility, and the religious element has almost vanished; then follows the "low mimetic," the time of "romantic" drama and melodrama, in which the hero is an ordinary human being caught up in emotional turmoil (cf. antiquity's incipient novels, and the full blooming of the novel in the nineteenth century); finally comes the age of irony, where the hero is a flawed creature unable to cope with life because of neurosis, low intelligence or a twisted personality.

In antiquity this last phase was overridden by the re-emergence of the epic mode in the form of Christianity (with Christ as heroic god-man).

We are now in the age of the anti-hero, at the end of our cycle. Since the time of Nietzsche, even the Christian myth has succumbed to the inexorable descent of the civilizational self-image. No truly epic mode of thought - save that of *Asatru* - is on the horizon. The "hero" - that is to say, the self of Western man - is now viewed by the culture-bearing strata as contemptible and unworthy of existence. These strata consist of people who are themselves unaware of the true, unconscious motives behind their contempt.

This explains the vicious, covert suicidism of culture and tradition preached, practiced and enforced by the academic and political "leaders" of the modern West. Taking advantage of this self-hatred, modern American economics has now based itself on the further destabilization of the personality by means of Pavlovian advertising: mass neurosis as an economic stimulus. It is clear, for all who have eyes to see, that the abyss lies yawning ahead.

Our Task

But even now, in the closing century of the West, *Weird* still exists, and awaits our invocation. The investigations of science have unveiled that the world and its history are strange indeed, and can no longer

be explained away by some rationalistic reference to simple mechanics or "random" accidents. There have been so many twists and turns, zigs and zags and seeming impossibilities in the evolution of the universe and of intelligent life on this planet that the "random development" thesis no longer holds water; the rationalists are confronted with the fact, unacceptable to them, that evolution itself - not just of biology, but of the cosmos as a whole - is purposive. Above all there is the titanic question: Why is there a universe (a "Big Bang") at all? And in the end, this whole query can be resolved into a simple, personal choice: to be or not to be.

The rationalists (or, if one prefers, "liberals"), expressing contempt for life itself, choose not to be; they seek to pull down the rest of their own kind into the vortex of nothingness with them. This is in direct contradiction to the purposive, creative will of Weird which brought us into being in the first place. Our commitment as Asatruar must be to fight for that will. The fight begins with introspection - with some form of meditation. All healthy peoples have had some method - usually many methods - for doing this. Shamanic practices were the most powerful expression of this for our ancestors. Indeed, the name "Odin," from earlier Wodan/Wodin - means literally "Master or Lord" (-an/-in) "of the shamanically enraptured" (Wod). As the highest As (Gothic ansus, modern German Ans, modern English Oose) of all the Aesir, his very position expresses the highest value of our ancestors: communion with the depths of Weird. This should be our highest value as well: Odin as Master of Shamans must be our heroic model.

We also need to perform an examination of conscience in the light of Asatruar values and principles. From the depths of the deep self will come the answer to our self-preservation. The runes are an aid to plumbing these depths. Runic answers are often surprising, often initially enigmatic. But intelligently sifting of such readings can help us reconnect with the deepsoul within and beyond us, the source of life itself. Prayer to Weird and the Aesir will assist us in stabilizing our souls in a world gone suicidal.

The chance for our own Asatruar religious truth is at hand, for those interested and willing to listen. It is time to return to the theological depths of our ancestral religion, so to shield ourselves against those who would hinder the purposive, positive evolution of the folk. For they are death, and we are life.

Lawrence A. Starr

OO

Organized religion is a powerful force within society. It binds people together through faith, fellowship, and a body of ideas a citizenry. It also has a unique political value in controlling and directing that citizenry, and as such is one of the establishing pillars of the modern liberal state.

To the ancient Greeks, their mythology or their religion was one that sought to give rational explanation to natural phenomena. It was an attempt by men to escape from a primitive world ruled by the terrifying monsters and demons of irrationality. Later in pagan Rome the multi-theistic religion was one that sanctified glory and action, and thus primarily exalted soldiers and public men. Its Gods and Goddesses were supported and legitimized by awesome public ritual which solidified and validated the power of the state.

It is no coincidence that Rome, the Eternal City and conqueror of much of the known world, should have an outward-looking indigenous religion worshipping strength and glorifying power. Christianity, on the other hand, is a religion honoring simple, lowly men who have fled from the world. It prizes suffering and humility, and attracts as its congregation the meek and the anguished. Its rites are therefore subdued rather than magnificent, its doctrine one of mysticism and the "other-worldly."

It is similarly no coincidence that Christianity, quintessentially a religion of the East, should have presided over the collapse of a Western Empire grown weak through alien-inspired intrigues and decadence. No better proof of Christianity's early political power exists than that of the Emperor Constantine, who was indebted to the Christians who had become a power within the Imperial Roman bureaucracy - literally a state within a state. After the defeat of Maxentius, and later the co-Emperor Licinius, Constantine paid this debt by legitimizing Christianity throughout the Empire, giving it special legal rights and large financial donations.

With the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire, heresy came to be considered a crime against the state, punishable by civil law. Constantine used these sweeping powers to purge the Gnostics and other Christian sects such as those that considered the Old Testament an account of an evil god's efforts to keep humanity immersed in ignorance and the material world and to punish their attempts to acquire knowledge. He finally relocated the Empire's seat from Rome to its more fitting location in the Middle-Eastern city of Byzantium, the city which would later become Constantinople.

Empowered with the trappings of Imperial might, the Christian church of Constantinople closed the Lyceum, the teaching academy established by Aristotle. Like Plato's Academy, the Lyceum had sought to further the pursuit of rationality, nurturing these ideals for some eight hundred years. Yet Christianity's purges were not aimed solely at the destruction of Classical learning; they sought to exterminate all ideas deemed heretical. This sweeping war against other systems of belief emerged from the Roman church as well. Taking action in the North, they warred against the pagan tribes, culminating in the 772 destruction of the Irminsul of the Anglo-Saxons.

Prior to this, throughout much of Northern Europe, a pre-Christian tradition of vibrancy and simple wisdom flourished, independent of the Classical cultures. Both individualistic and particularistic in nature, having no surviving books of worship, and lacking any rigid dogma, this religion was the preferred belief among our Germanic and Nordic forbears. Today we call it Asatru.

The Gods and Goddesses of Greece and Rome are immortal and invincible. The Northern Gods are neither, nor without flaw. Yet it is only in imperfection that we find the true heroic nature; if one is always assured of victory, then there is nothing that must be overcome. Without fear there can be no courage. It is in overcoming the self, in embracing death rather than suffering defeat, that real heroism lies. It was such stern stuff, such unattainably valiant standards, that nourished these robust peoples for untold centuries.

Shared by pagan religions of North and South was a belief that the Gods were "a portion of life itself, as the flowers are a part of the thyrsus." Indeed, the pagans found life and spirit in everything. Rejecting dualism which came to Christianity from Judaism, and which originated in the tenets Zoroastrianism, life for the pagans was in whole neither evil nor good. Just as death is a necessity for life, so too are all things a natural part of ourselves and thus we share a certain kindredness with nature.

Plato, like most early pagans, was quite tolerant of others' internalized beliefs. Unlike him, Christianity and the people that spawned it saw the world in terms of "them" and "us." The "them" were branded as heretical, (from the Greek *haireisis*, "choosing for oneself") and on that account personified as evil.

Correspondingly, the good were those who accepted the official dogma, which thus encompassed only the chosen, the true believers.

Christianity's introduction into the Boreal lands came at a much later date than did its conquest of the Classical civilizations. The occupation was, in addition, much more brutal, with kidnapping, torture and mass execution among the common methods of conversion. Many of the outbreaks of "devil-worship," commonly punished by burning at the stake and other inhuman methods of execution, were in reality the suppression of simple peasants attempting to practice their age-old traditional religious beliefs. Such persecutions were deemed acceptable because the non-believer or heretic was dehumanized as being one of "them" and thus evil incarnate. The philosopher Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel observed that "Christianity has emptied Valhalla, felled the sacred groves, extirpated the national image as a shameful superstition, as a devilish poison, and given us instead the imagery of a nation whose climate, laws, culture and interest are strange to us and whose history has no connection whatever with our own. A David or Solomon lives in our popular imagination, but our country's own heroes slumber in learned history books."

In fact, it is truly astonishing how, throughout Northern Europe, the early records, the traditions, the songs and stories were obliterated by the priests of Christianity. A few fragments survived: *Beowulf* in England, the *Nibelungenlied* in Germany and most importantly the Icelandic *Eddas*. These few fragments were augmented by the persistence of half-forgotten pagan traditions such as Easter - the festival of Ostara, the Goddess of Spring - and Yule, a mid-Winter festival of rebirth. Then there were the days of the week: Tuesday, after the God of War Tiu; Wednesday, after the God Wodan or Odin; Thursday, after the God of thunder, Thor or Donar. Only through these and hundreds of other vaguely remembered but once sacred traditions has the belief that molded the Northern European peoples survived what may well be the greatest cultural holocaust in the history of the human race.

We see many explanatory methods that attempt to legitimize Christianity's evolution from alien infiltrator to native bastion. The usurpation of pagan practices and their alteration into Christian ones was a widely used tactic. Another is found in early Christian art iconography, which sought to teach pre-literate adherents through visual presentation. For example, the representation of the sheep as the "lamb of God" harkens back to the ancient Greco-Roman representation of Philanthropy. The young, vital, and leafed branch representing the Church props up the roof in many manger scenes. It bears the weight of the collapsed pillar of decadence, representing the earlier Temple from which it evolved, yet deceptively pretends to reject.

Other non-colonized communities can look far back into pre-history knowing that their beliefs are the evolutionary product of their own culture; and note with confidence that they worship their own Gods. In the West and in spite of a thousand-plus years of forced integration, we today experience a certain *anomie*, resultant from the profound break in the continuity of our historic, but now largely forgotten, past. Not unlike the dispossessed American Indian or Negro slave, we too have been taught to worship another's God.

The French skeptic Montaigne, always a harsh opponent to all forms of dogmatism, saw Christianity as a deviation from the enlightenment of the Classical civilizations. Other scholars have attempted over the years to explain away its anti-Western foundations. Machiavelli attempts to attribute the anti-life aspects of the religion to those who would define Christianity in terms of ease (*l'ozio*) rather than vital action (*la virt*). Nietzsche goes them all one better and forcefully (but prematurely) states that "*Gott ist Tot*."

Today, Christianity has certainly outlived most of its major critics. In fact, it is arguably the fastest growing religion in the world. Most Westerners would, of course, find this a ludicrous statement. They look around and see the old neighborhood church, with its once vibrant European congregation, gone. The

building's now housing a drug counseling half-way house, a "planned parenthood" abortion advocacy group or, in parts of the world where oligarchic government has sold out to the "one-world" cabal, a Buddhist temple or Islamic mosque.

The church, however, has continued its proselytizing using the same tried-and-true tactics that made its missionary service such an invaluable vanguard for colonialism and capitalism, namely, following demographic trends. It thus seeks its "market share" among the Third World's people. Christianity today continues its conversions, myopically self-assured that it is (as in the past) bringing civilization to the savages. As a result, Christianity has made tremendous inroads into the Third World. These incursions are not widely known to most Western parishioners and laymen, except perhaps by way of the endless TV appeals for more dollars for the little starving children. These children are somehow always "over there" and curiously didn't seem to be starving until the introduction of that very religion which so solicitously seeks their salvation.

Today, in China, there are 40 or 50 million Christians - more than in Great Britain or France. The Philippines contain some 60 million, and in Brazil, with a population of 160 million (1993 estimate), some 88 percent or 140 million are Catholic, with an additional 5 million Protestants. Even in India, whose Malabar Christian community is said to have been founded amongst the Aryan Brahmans by St. Thomas, Christianity is growing most dramatically despite increased Hindu resistance. It is particularly strong amongst the Harijan caste, the so-called Untouchables who were the Dravidians, the aboriginal inhabitants of the sub-continent.

Currently, six countries of the world have populations of 200 million or more. Demographers estimate that in another century there will be fourteen such countries, overwhelmingly in Africa and Asia. Indeed, present projections indicate that by this time Nigeria alone will have over 500 million people. At present, around 40 percent of Nigerians are Christian, with Islam and traditional religions being practiced by the remainder of the population. Even as we speak, in West Africa the people have erected a church, one of the largest in the world, whose size, if not beauty, rivals that of St. Peter's in Rome.

Thus we find that in spite of its decline in Western Europe and North America, Christianity's growth in Africa and Asia has more than compensated for this loss. In this last century the Church has therefore made astonishing advances both in terms of its total numbers and its geographical spread. Catholicism today claims one billion adherents, with the various other Christian sects collectively claiming nearly as many. Clearly, such demographic changes will radically alter the entire concept of Christianity as we now know it.

Traditional thinkers see Christianity as the perennial defender of Western civilization. And since Christianity so effectively crushed its opposition centuries ago, and since we therefore have little in the post-Classical world to contrast it with, its defenders are by default correct. Any analysis of "what might have been" must of necessity be relegated to the world of supposition, or at worst, immerse itself in the realm of fantasy.

In more modern times, philosophers and pundits have seen in Christianity an enduring bastion, a great wall of defense against the secular religion of Communism. It is in one sense difficult not to see all major religions as defenders of their respective civilizations, standing as they have in opposition to a world view whose major tenet is the destruction of all traditional cultures. However, it is well to remember that both Christianity and Communism share major doctrinal similarities. Both are universalistic and, though more pragmatic on the collectivistic-individualistic scale, Christianity is still basically collectivist in nature.

Capitalism, that other system of economic reductionism, has been both the beneficiary and more recently the whipping boy for Christianity. Global Capitalism, like Communism, is rightly seen as undermining national sovereignty, community and family - but it has in the West, more often than not, Capitalism has been irrevocably tied to Christianity, particularly during its era of colonial expansionism. However, during most of the 20th century, Capitalism has been the beneficiary of Christianity's influence more as a reaction to the excesses of Communism than as a natural ally. It may well be that Christianity's opposition to these systems is based less upon the defense of traditional values, and more upon the preservation of its own privilege.

The analogy of Christianity as the palm tree, with orthodoxy the old and withered branches below, and heresy the new growth above is a compelling one - religion evolves. Unfortunately, those who view the world from within the box of their orthodoxy do not see this evolution, but are like the victims of hysterical blindness; they simply can not see the world beyond the confines of their self-imposed spiritual veil.

The reality beyond the veil is that demographic changes are altering the world. From India to Hong Kong to South Africa, Western civilization is in retreat. In opposition, the moral relativism of modern Christian dogma argues that this is desirable. Be that as it may. The unique world view and the civilization that provided a vehicle for Christianity, and upon which our shared moral principles of human rights and freedoms are based, is found in the West, and will not survive the destruction of the societies which gave rise to these principles.

Whether or not the last 2000 years has ultimately been for good or ill is a question that will remain open for debate. There can be little argument that Christianity has been the vehicle for many things, riding on the same tracks as that vibrant thing we call Western civilization. However, as a result of the successes of "liberation theology" advocated by Marxist "theologians" like Herbert Aptheker, and the religion's intrinsically universalistic and collectivistic nature, Christianity generally and Catholicism particularly seems destined to become a religion not of the West, but of the Third World.

The fabulously wealthy but numerically shrinking West is a society not unlike ancient Rome. Although made weak and decadent by internal malignancies, it is still the enviable repository of human values, freedoms, and rights. Some of these ideals have evolved from Christianity; many more were inspired by pagan traditions. Irrespective of their source, our society and its traditions may well find itself confronted and challenged by an envious and resentful Third World proletariat - not waving the red flag of communism, but the banner of Islam and Christianity.

This may finally prove to the remnants of Christian egalitarians the truth of the cliché, "Be careful what you wish for, because it might just come true." The rest of us, the Hyperborean people who are so resented because of our innate ability to think rationally and create scientifically, needn't worry; we will have long since been consigned to the Inquisitional fires of supernatural ignorance and politically-correct dogma.

This appears to be the inevitable, and tragically among many modern Christians, the secretly desired end. Perhaps the Africans and Asians will fare better. It will after all be a journey gone full circle, with Christianity returning as it were to the lands and peoples of its birth.

Many rooms, Many rooms, many words many words

Piparskeggr

18 Lenting 2251 RE

The Hall of Words a hallowed place
For in it lies the Mind of Man.
Its many rooms a sign of depth,
From wisdom fair to darkest slur.

The rooms we ought to visit most,
Are good and clean and bright of wit.
They do contain some sorrow too,
Untempered thus wise words fall flat.

The middling rooms most numerous
Common chatter they do contain,
Everyday words of joy and thought
Mother's greeting to workman's joke.

Dark, noisome nooks, some visit too
Where venom drips and burns the floor.
But hardened hearts find drink of choice
And have no care of hurtful tongue.

The Hall has grown from small, rude cave
From early man's gestures and grunts
This need to talk sets us alone

From other beasts who have no art

And Man has grown since dawn of time
Has spread across Midgarth's full girth
From small first clan to full extent
Of many tribes and tongues of voice

And in these tongues are sacral words
Which tell of Gods and wonder deeds
Of birth and death growth and decay
Life's small joys and Folkway tales

Full rich are we in Mannish tongues
Some word hoards large others compact
But all contain their Tribe's true heart
And with skilled use their Wordsworth give

Some better lend swift wings to thought
And Elder Tongues may seem the best
To gather in our sacral strength
For concepts old which new forget

With loving use and foster words
New Mannish tongues can sacral be
Our minds are large can new rooms build
This is our Gift, This is our Gain

The Hall of Words a hallowed place,
For in it lies the Mind of Man.
Its many rooms a sign of depth,

From wisdom fair to darkest slur



Soon to be Banned in Norway?

The AFA had heard that the runes and other sacred symbols of our belief were being declared illegal in Norway. Seeking more information, we contacted Asatrufoellesskapet Bifrost, one of the main Asatru bodies in that country. Below is the reply we received from Harald Eilertsen:

They've not been made illegal yet, but the Norwegian justice department is suggesting a new law where use of what they call "racist" symbols will be banned. They don't define exactly which symbols this is referring to, but it's clear that any Norse symbolism may be targeted. This is of course due to the abuse of these symbols by Nazis and racists in the past century.

The suggestion is part of a larger report dealing with questions of whether racist/Nazi or other non-democratic organizations should be banned and how they can be fought. As a part of this, the question of banning "racist" symbols also comes up. For the moment this report is out for review by a number of both government and other organizations around Norway, including Åsatrufoellesskapet Bifrost and another pagan organization in Norway. We will send a reply to the report back to the justice department, where we will argue for the religious importance of these symbols for our members, and suggest ways that our interests can be preserved.

The report suggests that the intent behind the use of the symbols should be considered for every case, but this is not written out in the proposed law. While we think the law itself is rather futile, and shoots far off the aim, we will concentrate on making sure our rights are preserved in the event that the law will pass.

Harald Eilertsen

<p>Final Faring of Helge Ingstad Renowned archeologist and author Helge Ingstad died March 29th. It was Dr. Ingstad and his wife Anne who discovered, excavated, and then publicized the Viking settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows, on the coast of Nova Scotia. These three sod structures, along with a number of Viking artifacts, were the first irrefutable proof verifying the saga claim that the Vikings had established a foothold on North America around the year 1000 CE. In effect, the Ingstads wrote</p>	<p><i>A Must-Read about Kennewick Man</i> Ancient Encounters by James Chatters A new Simon & Schuster book by famed anthropologist James Chatters gives the <i>first</i> factual look at this landmark case. Unlike previous publications, Chatters' book does not malign nor distort the views of the Asatru Folk Assembly. In fact, Chatters points out several key points made by the AFA that helped propel the case forward.</p>
--	--

Vinland's birth certificate, for which all modern-day Vinlanders owe them a debt of gratitude. In the last couple of decades, the Vikings have been considerably rehabilitated through the work of Magnus Magnusson and a host of other writers who have shown the positive sides of Norse achievement. The work of Helge and Anne Ingstad paved the way for this fundamental shift in attitudes.
Hail, Helge!

Viking Presence in Eastern Canada Stronger than Believed

Examination of artifacts from Labrador and Baffin Island is revising opinions on the Norse presence in those areas, according to a May 13 article in the *New York Times*.

In December 1999, archeologist Patricia Sutherland announced that she had found a 10-foot strand of ancient yarn in a collection of Dorset artifacts from Northern Baffin Island at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, where she is a curator. The yarn was clearly Norse.

"The materials, the diameter, and the twist are all the same," she remarked.

Since the Dorset, forerunners of today's Inuit inhabitants of northern Canada, at the time dressed only in cut and stitched skins, the yarn implied contact with the Norse.

"I am finding new Norse materials every couple of weeks.

It suggests there was a significant European presence in Eastern Canada in the centuries around 1000 AD," commented Sutherland.

The pioneering work of Helge Ingstad opened the door to the study of the Vikings in Canada, but revealed only the smallest portion of the Norse presence on this side of the Atlantic. Work like that being done by Dr. Sutherland documents ever more extensive areas settled by early Scandinavians.

Codex Regius Commemorative Edition

An Icelandic publisher, in cooperation with the University of Iceland, is publishing a special

In the same vein as the uncirculated video *Homicide in Kennewick*, this book shows the personal concern and dedication by those involved. Quotations by key players corroborate those on our [Kennewick Man webpage](#). The last part describes the continuing conflict over discoveries of other Proto-Americans. [Click here, to order *Ancient Encounters*](#) from Amazon.com. Help support the AFA!

Clinton Role in KM Cover-Up

An article recently published in the *Jewish World Review* goes into further detail about the extent to which the Clinton administration tried to suppress study of the 9,000 year-old, startlingly Caucasoid, remains known as Kennewick Man.

In "**The Last Classic Clinton Cover-up,**" contributor Diana West first repeats a statement we aired in **The Runestone** a couple of years ago - namely, that the decision to drop hundreds of tons of rock and soil on the site of Kennewick Man's discovery was made with "participation and interest at the Executive level." In other words, the cause of truth was sabotaged with the active help of the White House.

But there is more. Ms. West writes "The Associated Press reported that their lawyers filed documents in federal court in Portland last week contending that the Clinton administration improperly tried to prevent their research 'to avoid a debate over North America's first inhabitants,' all the while maintaining what they called 'inexcusable' contacts with the five Indian tribes that included 'coaching the [Indian] coalition on how to plead its case.'"

The publisher of **The Runestone** personally supports the sovereignty of American Indian tribes. He also feels that sovereignty is not well served by this unethical, possibly illegal, and certainly shameful series of actions on the part of the United States government.

[Some things just don't change...The new Bush administration has endorsed the plan to repatriate KM's remains to the Indians. This will be resolved by Federal District Judge Jelderk, June 19, 2001.]

Popular Science on the Settlement of the New World

edition of one of the main compilations of Eddic Poems, the *Codex Regius*.

This commemorative edition contains, for the first time ever, color reproductions of all ninety pages of the *Codex*. It features the exact text of the original pages, with a modern Icelandic version of the poems on the facing pages.

Production of this edition is limited to five hundred copies, lavishly produced and hand-bound in vellum. The price will be in the neighborhood of \$200.

Boksala Studenta, the University Bookstore in Reykjavik, is accepting orders. Inquiries may be made to eysteinn@boksala.is.

Could the Vikings Have Made a Telescope?

A study of glass artifacts, first thought to be only ornaments, has instead revealed fine optical lenses - made hundreds of years before such technology was thought to be available. "It seems that the elliptical lens design was invented much earlier than we thought and then the knowledge was lost," according to Dr. Olaf Schmidt of Aalen University, in Germany.

The lenses were found on the island of Gotland, in the Baltic Sea. When tested by a team of scientists, the carefully shaped pieces of rock crystal - ten in all - gave results almost as good as modern optical devices.

Investigators believe the lenses were made in the Byzantine Empire or in eastern Europe, using a turning lathe. The craftsman clearly knew more than the scientists of his time, and must have worked by trial and error since the mathematics necessary to design lenses was not yet available. Using these lenses, the scientists report, it would have been possible for the Vikings - or the other cultures involved - to have invented the telescope five hundred years before Galileo turned his crude instrument toward the sky. In that case, history might have taken some very different turns!

The May, 2001 issue of *Popular Science* - not under the control of the Clinton regime - discusses alternate theories for the populating of the Americas, and presents the DNA evidence for early links between the Americas and Europe.

Viking Ship to Sail in Vancouver, British Columbia

An authentic 12-meter Viking ship is a highlight of a new exhibit on the seafaring Scandinavians coming to The Maritime Museum. Built by the Scandinavian Cultural Society Center in Burnaby, it is one-half the size of the famous Gokstad ship unearthed in Norway.

The ship will be named and launched on July 7 at the Vancouver Maritime Museum's Heritage Harbour in Vanier Park, at the mouth of False Creek. It is part of the new exhibit "The Vikings: Master Mariners, traders, Colonists and Artisans" to be held June 14 through October 7 at the Museum.

There will be a 'Name the Ship' contest, and the vessel will be moored at Heritage Harbour throughout the summer.

The Museum will also host two five-day camps for youth in July and August, exploring the world of Viking traders, shipbuilders and warriors through archaeology, artifacts and activities.

The exhibit will include historical reenactors, cooking and metalworking demonstrations, and special events.

For information telephone (604) 257-8300, or visit the websites

<http://www.vmm.bc.ca> or <http://www.stroch.org>

European Men Descended from Ten Forefathers

Practically all European men are the descendants of ten genetic forefathers who lived tens of thousands of years ago, according to a research team led by Dr. Ornella Semino of Pavia University, in Italy.

All seem to have come to Europe from the Ural Mountains on the edge of Asia, and from the Middle East. The genes sort into three clusters of geography and culture. The first is made up of the

	Basques and Western Europe, the second is Middle Eastern and the third is composed of Eastern European populations from Croatia, Ukraine, Hungary, and Poland.
--	--

BOOK REVIEWS

The Conspiracy of Pontiac

By Francis Parkman

Reviewed by Richard Wismer

Written in 1851 this is a true account of the only united uprising by the American Indians against European-Americans. This is not a "politically correct" book; rather, it is an honest account of history and of two cultures that were just to different to live together.

The introduction of the book by Michael N McConnell should be ignored. His comments are a perfect example of anti-European bias.

As you read this historical account of the American Indian uprising, you will notice that there was no "good guy" or "bad guy." Both sides demonstrated brutality, loyalty, betrayal, mercy and love for their folk.

So what does this account of America have to do with Asatru and the Folk? You will learn how a proud folk lost everything - their land, families and tribes - through lack of unity, betrayal and mixing with their enemy. Sound familiar? When you finish reading this book you will have an insight into one possible future for our own people. Let's make sure history does not repeat itself!

As Demosthenes said, "The time for extracting a lesson from history is ever at hand for them who are wise."

I give this book three Thor hammers. (One Thor hammer, throw it in the wood stove; to three Thor hammer, cherish it in your library.)

The Rites of Odin

By Ed Fitch

Reviewed by Richard Wismer

Ed Fitch has done an excellent job in trying to develop a standard or at least a starting point for our ceremonies and beliefs. The book is easy to read and has an enormous amount of information. This is not

a book that you read from the front cover to the back. I would suggest to read it 20 minutes a day and select the material instead of starting at page one.

I have heard from some that Ed Fitch has not been historically accurate with some of the lore's and rites. What is historically accurate in Asatru? Our historical records have been lost or destroyed 1000 years ago. All we have are bits and pieces. So we need a reference point, and Mr. Fitch has provided this for us.

I give *The Rites Of Odin* ,as a reference book ,three Thor hammers.

Editor's Note: With this review, Richard has marked himself out as an iconoclast! It takes considerable courage to write a favorable review of **The Rites of Odin**. However, pause a moment - an impartial reading of this volume will show plenty of items which are indeed, not historically accurate. On the other hand, there is a great deal of value here. Fitch promotes our values, familiarizes the reader with the basic lore of the Gods and Goddesses, and gives us countless pages of material which can be adapted for ritual. Fitch wrote relatively early - immediately after Thorsson's *A Book of Troth* and well before Gundarsson's *Teutonic Magic and Teutonic Religion*. It is easy to fault the authenticity of his work today, but we must remember that he was a pioneer, with all the good and bad that implies.



By **HARRY**

Borknagar - *Quintessence*

CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS, 2000

In 1997 Borknagar released *The Olden Domain*, a landmark in the Nordic/Viking Metal genre. Although it's fair to say that Borknagar have always been more rooted in the Nordic Metal vein - relying on majestic, wintry atmospheres as opposed to literal Norwegian folk elements - it would be naive to overlook the Viking influences. The opening track on *The Olden Domain* was even titled "The Eye of Oden," and throughout the rest of the album we also heard tracks such as "A Tale of Pagan Tongue" which boasted the line, "...their random laws, taught by the Gods, are to be redeemed when He sets sail." Although Borknagar were never as blatant in their influences as were, say, Einherjer or Enslaved, the concepts were still there. These threads of continuity were reflected in the feeling of the music, a style simplistic yet emotive, and primitive yet majestic.

Through the years that have followed, Borknagar have progressed in their sound, and now that I'm presented with the current result in the newest release, *Quintessence*, I don't know how to feel about this evolution.

There are a few negative things about this album. What made *The Olden Domain* and *The Archaic Course* (which followed it in 1998) so powerfully atmospheric was the natural flow of the music. Instead of relying on technical precision and excellent musicianship to impress the listener, these albums relied on the soaring power of Garm's (and later on, Simen's) clean singing and the subtle presence underlying the compositions. With *Quintessence*, Borknagar have opted for a more technical, polished style, and while that may sound fresh and exciting for the first few tracks, the result is a cold and mechanical album which contrasts with the previous ones.

A few tracks do recall the more majestic elements of the older works, though. "The Presence is Ominous" has a drifting, synthetic flute melody which brings to mind images (at least to me) of the ocean, while "Colossus" has Simen at his best, vocals soaring with the melodies. Never on this album, though, does Borknagar ever again capture the natural flow it once had. With the addition of technical prowess and complex tempos, Borknagar have sacrificed one of their most important weapons, their ability to conjure up the feelings of raw nature.

Along with that, I feel the keyboard and synth work is overdone on this album. The keyboards are ever-present and sometimes seem inappropriate and awkward, and they detract from the natural flow of the music. I wouldn't go as far as to say that this album is bad, it's just not what I had hoped it would be. While a few tracks work very well (the aforementioned "The Presence is Ominous" and "Colossus," as well as "Ruins of the Future" and "Revolt"), most of the tracks seem like filler. Sure, it's a good metal album - but not much else. In fact, this album is the furthest thing from Viking metal that Borknagar have produced. It would seem that most of the Viking concepts themselves have disappeared along with the atmosphere. It's decent background music if nothing else, but Borknagar have lost the magic they once had. Here's hoping it comes back!

Steve Von Till - *As the Crow Flies*

NEUROT RECORDINGS

For a good while now Neurosis (the band Steve Von Till is in) have been one of my favorite bands, and that was way before I knew that Steve had any connection with Asatru at all. In fact, Steve's Asatru leanings are something that I only found out about a few months ago. It's pretty irrelevant, really, when it comes down to the music. As far as I can tell, Neurosis don't take any blatant influence from Northern concepts and/or ideas. I wouldn't say Steve Von Till's solo work does, either. Instead, like the works of Neurosis, it harnesses a vague, all encompassing spirituality.

On a strictly bare-bones musical level, *As the Crow Flies* does not have too much in common with Neurosis. The album focuses on Von Till's acoustic works, which are complimented throughout the album by his clean singing voice, piano, violin, cello and on the closer, "Shadows in Stone," even a little percussion. In terms of atmosphere, though, *As the Crow Flies* shares some subtle similarities with the works of Neurosis. The music is minimalistic, maybe even more so than Neurosis, and creates the same trance-like effect that the music of Neurosis does.

The main similarity I recognize, though, is that, like Neurosis, Steve Von Till's solo work takes advantage of its own bleakness, its own slimness. There's barely anything in this music, so much so that if you took

something from the music, nothing would remain, but on the other hand if you were to add anything, the whole thing would be ruined. Neurosis and Steve Von Till create such powerful music because they never get ahead of themselves. Instead of piling on sounds and focusing on layers of noise they strip it down and let the silence speak for itself.

From the blissful dreamscape of "Remember" to the Ulver-esque "Twice Born," this album never goes overboard and never has too much to say. Instead of relying on sleek musicianship, *As the Crow Flies* opts for pure atmosphere, beautifully simplified and unspeakably captivating. The music is so sparse that it seems at constant risk of floating out of your grasp, and you can only hope that it will take you with it. To put it as simply as possible, this is not background music; this is contemplation music, and it takes every little bit of your attention to fully appreciate. It may not be as mind-blowingly engrossing as, say, "Times of Grace," but, luckily, it's not trying to be. In fact, it doesn't need to try to be anything. It is what it is, and what it is something remarkable, a captivating listen teetering between brooding suspense and fragile beauty. *As the Crow Flies* is very special release from one of the most original and, consecutively, powerful artists ever to grace the underground music scene.

It would be a little overkill to say that this is highly recommended then, wouldn't it?

A Tip of the Horn



...to Hardy and Thorgrun,
Hof-Builders!

The Gathering of the Tribes, June 22-24, will feature a "hof raising." Each day, we will work at erecting an 18' x 36' wooden structure in which we can honor the Holy Powers and practice the ancient ways of our Folk. When the Gathering is done, the hof will stand high over our assembly!

This hof is happening because the vision of Hardy met the experience and skill of Thorgrun. Hardy really wanted a hof on his land - land which is dedicated to AFA gatherings. He wanted that hof so badly that he was willing to cover the expenses of building it, and to do much of the "leg work" such as permitting, logistics, and the like. Thorgrun, ever-generous to the Folk, helped on concept and design, and is overseeing volunteers who actually pour cement and hammer nails. He is the man who takes resources and converts them to a finished item.

AFAers and their supporters are providing the labor which make *vision* and *supervision* yield...a hof!

When it is done, this structure will be a place of meeting, ritual, and celebration which will serve the Folk for decades to come. It is an outward sign of the spiritual and social edifice which we are erecting, namely, the new tribes of Vinland! AFAers and other

**Asatruar all across this land will visit it and will know it as a place where the Gods and the Folk are strong.
Hail, Hardy and Thorgrun, Hof-Builders!**

...and the other Tip of the Horn



... To the European Union

which has prosecuted an English grocer for selling a pound of bananas, rather than the half-kilo decreed by the bureaucrats in Brussels.

From its inception, the EU has usurped the sovereignty of its member nations, to the point that those nations can hardly be said to exist except as departments within the larger entity. Taking a grocer to trial for daring to use traditional English units of measurement makes it clear that the Roman Empire is alive and well, and based in Belgium!

Globalism is the death of cultures!

Bougainville

by Russ Gardener

"Even though I come from an island that has the world's largest copper mine, it doesn't benefit us. Imagine the mine when it was built in the middle of a remote mountain village in central Bougainville. Landowners were aware of the destruction of their land and felt hopeless, poor and without any security.

They didn't have their land. To us land is our birthright."

Theresa Minitong
Bougainville.

Bougainville is part of the Solomon Islands archipelago, and is home to 160,000 people. The people of Bougainville, in the form of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, fought a war of independence against colonization by Papua New Guinea from 1989 to 1998. Bougainville is presently moving to reclaim its sovereignty. Peace-keeping efforts are being developed towards a choice of political status and the peace process moves shakily forward with both sides trying to prevent sliding back into war.

One of the chief reasons for the uprising in Bougainville and the subsequent war was a revolt against the destruction of the lush, forest habitat by an international mining concern. Bougainville Copper, a company associated with

Rio Tinto Zinc, tore a gash 6km by 4km by half km into the precious forest in order to mine copper. Much of the Bougainvillean's fresh water was spoiled by the mining effluents. To the people of Bougainville, the land provides them a spiritual connection with their ancestors and their identity. The people revolted and the mine was shut down. This act led to the formation of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and the war of independence against the PNG (Papua New Guinea) government.

The nine year's war was largely unreported due to the remote nature of the island, and also due to the total blockade by PNG forces with shoot to kill orders. This blockade meant that the Bougainvillean people had to live without medical supplies throughout the period.

You might wonder why Asatruar should be interested in this conflict taking place half way around the world with few descendants of Northern European peoples involved. This struggle is one of the most genuine eco-struggles in the world. The people of the island rose up and revolted because of the destruction of their habitat. They saw themselves as the guardians of the land and could not live with the destruction of the forests for the sake of international economic greed.

To read more about the Bougainvillean conflict and the attempts of the people to gain independence, go to the following links:

http://www.pasifika.net/pacific_action/national/a_b/bougainville.html

<http://www.caa.org.au/horizons/h11/whelan.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/bougupdates/>

Kindred News and Events

As many of you already know, the Asatru Folk Assembly began its official Kindred Affiliation Program several months ago in Shedding (September). Since that time, fifteen kindreds have applied and been accepted into the AFA's fold.

It is important to know that not every kindred that has applied for affiliation has been accepted. The standards for kindred affiliation are like those of AFA membership - high and true. We have endeavored to keep with the Drighten's vision of standing for something more than mediocre Asatru. Each of these kindreds has proven its worth and has agreed to uphold the AFA's vision, *Declaration of Purpose*, and the *Law of the Hall*.

I have been given the honor and privilege by Steve to serve as the AFA Kindred Coordinator for the affiliation program. In each issue of *The Runestone* I will be reporting on the recent happenings, events, and plans of the AFA kindreds.

If your kindred would like to submit information for the next issue of *The Runestone* report email me at freivald@aol.com

CLICK HERE to contact any of the AFA kindreds below

Calasa Kindred

Things are buzzing in Calasa Kindred. In a recent issue of *Bearclaw*, Steve announced that at the upcoming Gathering of the Tribes this summer the AFA will take the next step toward formation of a reborn Germanic tribe. This tribe will consist of AFA kindreds in California and will no doubt serve as a model for those in other regions. Good luck, Steve and Shelia, as you set to task on this great endeavor! All eyes will be on California.

Cow Creek Kindred

On Horning (February) 12th, Gothi George McNew celebrated the first blot in an Oregon prison. George has been successful in getting the prison to recognize Asatru as a valid religion and not as a "racist gang," as they had previously branded it.

Also on Horning (February) 14th, Jake and Stacey of Cow Creek Kindred were married. Good luck to the new bride and groom!

Recently, 15 year old Jason of Cow Creek Kindred set a new state record for bench pressing. Jason managed to press an amazing 336 pounds! Good luck on at the National High School Championship this Merrymoon (May)!

Lenting (March) 12th was a very special day for Cow Creek Kindred. Kindred member Crystal gave birth to a lovely girl, Sigrith. Congratulations Crystal, and may Frigga watch over your little one!

Eagle Kindred of Idaho

The members of Eagle Kindred of Idaho have been making plans to attend Althing 21 this summer. So far nine kindred members have made plans to be there.

Great Oak Kindred

A good question to ask might be what is Great Oak Kindred *not* doing! Great Oak's efforts are admirable. Kindred member Brian just finished a new website for the kindred at <http://www.greatoakkindred.org>.

Ed has been hard at work on completing the latest *Sleipnir* newsletter for the AFA's Aerospace Technology Guild and plans to have another issue done in time for the Gathering of the Tribes.

Tina has been busy creating some thirty-five Asatru greeting cards including a design for a Yule Card. Tina will soon have a page up with information on ordering these greeting cards for those of you who are interested.

Great Oak Kindred donated a package of children's books to Hammer of Thor Kindred for Hammer of Thor's recent Ostara gathering. Great Oak has also finished the *Asatru for Kids* booklet and will be making it available at the Midyear (June) gathering.

Gullinbursti Kindred

Thorgrun, Gothi of Gullinbursti Kindred, is a building contractor - and he is supervising the construction of the hof which will be finished at the Gathering of the Tribes. Hail, Thorgrun!

Gungnir Kindred

Interest in membership has been picking up in Gungnir Kindred. Members from the kindred are planning to attend the Viking Exhibit that was hosted at the Smithsonian several months ago (the exhibit is on tour). Kevin has been working on getting a couple of new broadcasts up and running on Radio Asatru.

In addition to this Kevin has been working on creating rune sets for World Tree Publications. Kevin and his son are also making plans to attend the AFA's Gathering of the Tribes as well as the Althing 21.

Hammerstede Kindred

Hammerstede Kindred, along with Skidbladnir Kindred of the Asatru Alliance, will be hosted the first-ever East Coast Regional Thing this Merrymoon - (May) 25th to the 28th. The event was an incredible success, drawing more than sixty Asatruar from the region and from across Vinland!

Jim has been working on book on Tribalism called **To Build a Tribe: Understanding and Achieving the Tribal Dynamic in the Modern Era**. We're all looking forward to reading the finished product. An excerpt from Jim's book appears in this issue of *The Runestone*!

Hofbrau Kindred

Hofbrau Kindred made a good showing at the ANA Moot this year with 4 members attending. Members of the kindred are hard at work brewing up a fine batch of mead for this year's Althing.

StormKraga Kindred

Things have been business as usual for StormKraga Kindred. This past Yule, StormKraga accepted a new member into their growing fold.

Teutoburg Kindred

No news to report this issue but you can expect to hear from Teutoburg Kindred in our next issue!

Ulfheim Kindred

Bud tells me that Ulfheim is shaking off its winter slumber this spring and is anxious to renew its activity. Ulfheim will be looking for new members soon.

Varangian Kindred

Weyland has been taking on the Florida Department of Corrections recently. The DOC had listed Asatru as a hate group. DOC made it a policy to deny Asatru-related religious materials to inmates. Weyland has worked hard and has had some success in getting the DOC to change its position on Asatru. Currently the prison chaplain is considering a proposal to furnish copies of the *Eddas* to prison inmates.

Gothi Garrik has been busy hosting classes on Asatru and the runes at local pagan-friendly shops. He has also been performing in the pagan band Dionysus.

Vor Stead Kindred

Vor Stead Kindred was honored to have Steve McNallen as its guest on Lenting (March) 3rd at a blot held in honor of Olvir the Martyr. It was a wonderful opportunity for Asafolk from all over Virginia to come and meet Steve as well as have a good time together.

Vor Stead kindred recently received Joe Harver as its newest member at the recent Ostara blot. Gothi Travis and his wife Anna have been working on producing a newsletter for Folk River Shire.

Vor Stead Kindred, along with Waters of the James Kindred, has been making plans as Folk River Shire to host the first ever Virginia Thing this Harvest 4th and 5th. For information on attending the Virginia Thing check out the

Registration and Information page at

<http://www.geocities.com/folkriver/vathing.html>

Waters of the James Kindred

The good folks in Waters of the James Kindred have been busy helping to plan the Virginia Thing with Vor Stead Kindred. Robert has been busy attending to his bees. GW is working on his gothi training and has been coming over and helping out Travis with the Vor Stead blotar.

Wolfbinder Kindred

Mitch is working with the Brotherhood of the Sacred Hunt to organize a Bison hunt in late October. The hunt will be conducted with spears and will be held in Oregon. For more information about the hunt contact Mitch at mzebrowski2@home.com **The BOSH currently has a total of seven committed hunters from across Vinland.**

Mitch attended the East Coast Thing this summer, and was a major force in helping it happen!



Dear Runestone,

I have happened upon your pages, and think I have been here several years before.

Anyhow, I have always held an interest in the old ways, and do study the religion, times, culture of the Northern Europeans. This is my heritage, and I am quite proud of it.

My question is; "You people do promote your 'race' quite a bit, and seem to be exclusionary; would it be untrue to say that you are in any way 'racist?'"

I cannot see why or how racism could or should be a part of promoting our culture and ways. Albeit, if I hear any more Hip-Hop at the Local "Irish pub" I think I too will lose my mind!

I don't think we can 'blame' the Native Americans for our undermining, nor the Saudis nor the East Indians etc. I don't think they were/are responsible for our troubles.

If you wish, please feel free to correct me...and at least comment on my comments.

Thank you,

Allen

Dear Allen:

No, we are not racist.

Back in the 1980's, the "human resources" industry was abuzz with the idea of "assertiveness." I think this is a valid way of analyzing the stance here at the AFA.

According to the concept at it was explained back then, there were three types of behavior: passive, aggressive, and assertive.

Passive behavior is when you do not demand your rights, but instead let others dominate you. Many men and women of European heritage exhibit this attitude, refusing to defend their legitimate interests when it comes to the whole question of race. Out of guilt, fear, or social programming, they

bow to the demands of other groups with no resistance. These folks have become what I call "ethnomasochistic."

Aggressive behavior is quite the opposite. Aggressive people insist on their own rights, but ride roughshod over the legitimate rights of others. This is the kind of action I associate with racism. Assertive behavior is evidenced when one stands firm for his or her rights - and respects the rights of others, as well. This is the attitude of those of us who are Folkish.

I agree with you that there is no merit in blaming others for the situation in which the sons and daughters of Europe find themselves today. This is not to say that people of other groups have not aggressed against us; they certainly have! But blaming them as a group is neither just, nor accurate, nor helpful. Such an attitude feeds "problem thinking" rather than "solution thinking" and encourages us to think of ourselves as victims. We are better than that.

Hail the Gods and Goddesses!

Stephen A. McNallen

Dear Sir,

...I think you are misguided in having an Aerospace Technology Guild. This focus on technology is harmful to our Mother, the Earth. We need to heal her, not think about polluting the rest of the universe.

**Blessings,
Mandy**

Dear Mandy,

Yes, the AFA is unique among religious organizations in having a space-related guild. But please consider the following:

- In space, there is around-the-clock, pollution-free solar energy at an intensity much stronger than down here at the bottom of the atmosphere. If we can find a way to get that energy to Earth, it will help take a load off other, dirtier ways of producing energy.
- One very small asteroid contains enough of the heavier ores (iron, cobalt, and the like) to meet our needs for centuries. Some of these asteroids pass relatively close to Earth.
- Given the availability of power and minerals in space, some heavy industry can be moved off-planet, reducing the load on our environment.

Ecology doomsayers tell me that the Earth is dying. And yes, I agree she is in pain and travail, with alarming symptoms. But I do not believe she is dying - she is in pain from giving birth to an interplanetary, and ultimately an interstellar, civilization. We are her children, carrying her heritage into the broader universe.

Hence the Aerospace Technology Guild of the AFA!

Hail the Earth!

Stephen A. McNallen

Dear Sirs,

Since I began following the Northern Way about three years ago, your name has come up on email groups many times but no one ever included your website URL. I just looked at the runestone.org site and was pretty impressed. It looks to me like lots of lies are being spread about you on these other newsgroups.

I do have one question. It is said that your organization recruits prisoners and is adding to the number of white supremacists behind bars. I'm curious about your response.

Tom D.

Dear Mr. D.,

This is not true. We do not actively recruit prisoners. However, we respond to those who make inquiries to us and fill orders for materials just as we would for anyone else.

Our main objective in the prisons is to work with prison staff, explaining that Asatru as promoted by the AFA is a non-hateful belief system which can be a valuable tool for rehabilitation. The AFA encourages prisoners to approach Asatru from the standpoint of personal transformation, instead of justifying who and what they presently are.

In fact, that's good advice for all of us!

Hail Odin!

Stephen A. McNallen