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Reviewer: Rev. Robert Henderson

ADF Structure, Customs and Policy

December 23, 2014

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1. Explain why public, inclusive ritual is important to ADF (200 words min.)

We believe that the ancient druids had duties that included leading their people in ritual activities, both magical and religious. ("ADF Constitution") While ritual was important to the ancient societies, it is also important to our modern society as without these rituals, we lose touch with our world and "we become temporally disoriented." (Grimes 3) Without our ritual, we can lose touch with ourselves and with the world around us. In addition to keeping us in touch with the world around us, public rituals help us to connect with society as a whole – giving solitary and non-solitary Druids a place, and a ritual, to connect with each other.

Our founders believed that we are moving towards a time when Neopaganism will become more accepted, and individuals will begin looking for places to worship and train. Thus is it important that ADF provide a place for worship and learning. (Bonewits, "The Vision of ADF | ADF") To facilitate this outreach, Gold discusses the need to have public ADF rituals at festivals – both as an outreach or recruiting tactic as well as offering a place for Druidic solitaires to worship. (Gold)

In my opinion, it is important that we continue to reach out to other neopagans as well as to society as a whole so that they can learn who we are and accept us as individuals. In order to grow ADF, we need to bring in new people to our groves and solitary practitioners. To do this, we need to advertise what we do, and offering public rituals is a large part of that advertising.

2. Describe the duties and function of clergy in ADF (100 words min.)

Bonewits, in his Vision of ADF, describes the clergy as taking part in interfaith conferences as well as leading the neopagan community in magical and mundane actions to support the earth and our society. Our current leadership also believes that ADF Clergy have an obligation to use their training to support ADF members as well as to help to train other individuals. (Dangler, "Clergy Training and Initiate Training in ADF")

In my experience with ADF Clergy, the clergy members act as ritual organizers and leaders; as leaders in ADF community as well as in the pagan community as a whole; personal counselors in cases of faith; facilitators of conversations between individuals; advisors to ADF groups and support personnel for ADF.

The key focus is on assisting, training and interacting with the community.

3. Explain why ADF has an Indo-European focus, and why we use the term

"Druid" in our name (200 words min.)

To understand why ADF has the particular focus that it does, we need to look back to our founder, Isaac Bonewits. In an article in the first issue of "The Druid's Progress," Bonewits defines Paleopaganism as "the original tribal faiths of Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas, Oceania and Australia, where and when they were (or are) still practiced as intact belief systems." He compares this Paleopagan approach to the approach that other Druidic groups at the time of ADF's creation took when they based their practice on the Mesopagan creations that were heavily influenced by the monotheistic & duotheistic cultures so prevalent at the time. (Bonewits, "Indo-European Paleopaganism and Its Clergy")

In his letter announcing the formation of ADF, Bonewits talks about how he's forming this group because he keeps coming back to the practice of Druidry in his own spirituality, and there were no groups that were based on the Paleopagan Druids. Bonewits wanted a group that was based on the Paleopagan druids and not a group that was based on the amalgamation of Mesopagan, monotheistic and duotheistic cultures that already existed. (Bonewits, "The Origins of ADF")

When deciding to focus ADF on the Indo-European set of cultures, Bonewits took into account that the different clergy groups of the Indo-European cultures had a number of practices and beliefs in common. Our focus on Indo-European cultures specifically also allows us to keep a more unified focus while allowing some freedom of practice between our different groups. By supporting all of the Indo-European cultures, our members can participate in, as well as learn from, a number of different cultures and sub-groups in the pagan realm. (Dangler, "Commonly Asked Questions")

4. Describe the Guilds, SIGS, and Kins of ADF in general, their function within the organization, and the goal of the Guild, SIG, and Kin systems. (150 words min. for each type of subgroup)

Guilds, SIGs, and Kins are all created to provide networking and support to the members of ADF who wish to focus on specific areas of their practice. Any member is welcome to join any of the subgroups as long as they meet any requires that that subgroup has. To ensure that the subgroups all follow the regulations defined by ADF, the Council of Lore governs all of the subgroups.

Guilds are groups that are created to support ADF's members and provide training in one specific non-initiatory area. In addition to providing support to their members in the area of focus, Guilds are expected to have a training program to assist members of ADF who which to do further study in those areas. The guild study programs require completion of the Dedicant's Program prior to enrolling, but participation in the guild itself is open to all ADF members. The study programs are designed to bring an individual from being a generalist in the topic to being an expert on the subject. Many of the programs have three different tiers to allow students to progress through the study program in a logical fashion, with their skills and knowledge increasing with each degree or circle. In some cases, guilds may also provide services to ADF if it's appropriate to their training. Members of the Bardic Guild, for instance, may create songs, poetry and stories to share with ADF so that all members may enjoy them.

The Kins are focused on support and training for members of individual cultural sub groups. Kins are focused on a specific Indo-European culture or group of cultures. For example, the Norse Kin includes both Anglo-Saxon and Northern European variations of the

Norse cultures. While the Kins don't have study programs, members are encouraged to discuss their specific interpretations of their cultures and how that impacts their practices. Members will often discuss which deities to call for different aspects of the ritual or what specific offerings to use. I've also seen conversations on how to interact with the different kindred and members sharing information on the languages that are specific to the kin cultures. In keeping with the focus on different Indo-European cultures, many of the Kins also have language specific names. For example, the Welsh Kin is called Tylwyth Y Ddraig Goch, meaning "The Red Dragon" referring to the dragon that is often the symbol of Wales. The focus on specific cultures helps the members of each Kin to understand their hearth culture or cultures, more closely; and have access to support and answers from other, like-minded, individuals.

SIGs are special interest groups that are primarily focused on networking and support of its members. SIG groups do not require a significant level of approval to create, and are often created for interests that are not focused around cultures or study programs. Some of our SIGs include groups for solitary druids, techopagans, people interested in trance work, and people interested in hospitality and the impact of the Sacred Feast on our lives and our Work. Members of each SIG can use the resources provided by the SIG as well as getting information on adapting their practices in the context of the specific areas of interest of the SIG. For example, members of the technopagan SIG have been doing online rituals utilizing Google Hangout technology to perform, and record, the ritual for other ADF members to see. For a while, the Solitary SIG was presenting solitary rituals for its members – and other members of ADF – to perform on High Days.

In addition, we now have Orders within ADF. These subgroups are initiatory groups focusing on providing spiritual and magical training and leadership for groups with a specific focus such as Bardic Alchemy or service to the Ancestors.

These different groups, along with the less focused avenues of interaction, provide support for individual ADF members and our variety of interests.

5. Describe ADF's official ceremonial calendar, and discuss why it was designed in this way. (200 words min.)

ADF's ceremonial calendar consists of eight days called High Days. The high days that we celebrate mirror the Wiccan and Traditional Witchcraft Sabbats. In the Traditional Witchcraft calendar, the equinoxes and solstices change slightly based on the timing of the sun moving into specific positions. To help the different ADF groups to celebrate together, we have a standard calendar for all members and groves to follow. The ceremonial year starts on Nov 1 and the year alternates between Cross-quarter days and Solstices/Equinoxes. The names of the cross quarter days are not defined in ADF documentation, and ADF Druids often use the Neopagan names for those days or the appropriate names from their hearth culture. The High days, in order, are: November 1st, December 21st (Solstice), February 1st, March 21st (Equinox), May 1st, June 21st (Solstice), August 1st, and September 21st (Equinox). ("ADF Constitution")

This calendar was adopted because it mirrors the most commonly known calendar in the modern neo-pagan movement. The specific terms and dates used by many neopagans and the dates used by ADF, are most commonly associated with modern Irish or Celtic

worship. ADF members who do not follow these hearth cultures are encouraged to reframe the High Days to fit within their hearth. For instance, Norse hearth ADF members will often celebrate the feast of Sunna during the Summer Solstice. (Maurice)

Sharing a common calendar makes it easier for the different groups to plan their rituals, and it makes it easy for members who travel between different groups to plan their worship.

6. Compare Isaac's original "Law, Policy, Tradition, and Customs in ADF" article with how you see ADF today. Describe what is still true and what is no longer accurate in that document. <https://www.adf.org/articles/organization/isaaclaw.html> (300 words min.)

A lot of the sentiment expressed in the original "Law, Policy, Tradition and Customs in ADF" article still applies to ADF today.

The initial part of the document talks about adapting the Paleopagan Druidic practices to our modern world. Our modern world has much more of a focus on individual expression of religion and belief than the Paleopagan peoples. As such, the practices of the Paleopagan druids need to be adapted to work with our current society.

We continue to maintain traditions, customs, policies and laws that support an orthopraxic religion that has just enough structure to allow us to worship in ways that are recognizable to each other while still allowing us to adapt our worship to our own preferences. We have updated ADF to modern Druidry while maintaining a lot of the same goals that Bonewits outlined in his article, but we don't usually use those terms in the same context as Bonewits.

In today's general ADF Druidry, there isn't much of a differentiation between traditions and customs. We do still quantify the Laws of ADF – the Laws that are outlined in Bonewits' are still in effect and will result in severe consequences. The items listed as "Policies" in the Bonewits article are still considered forbidden to ADF, but we don't define them with the word "Policies."

In most cases, the items listed as traditions and customs Bonewits' article continue to be supported. While most of our members are polytheistic, we have become more accepting of duotheistic, monotheistic and agnostic/atheist members.

One of the "main traditions" also includes references to the study programs being required for becoming Clergy. While we do maintain a study program for clergy members, there are additional study programs for members that are not required to become clergy.

Some of the 'Customs' listed in Bonewits' article are also often not followed today – for instance there has been a trend to wear colors other than white for rituals. Vigils, the use of ADF Sigil and the local gatherings are often still followed as traditions within ADF, but they are not strictly adhered to.

7. Describe ADF's utilization of Dumézil's "tripartition" and its affect on ADF's structure, study programs, and the religion of ADF members in general. (200 words min.)

Dumézil postulated that there are three castes of individuals in prehistoric Proto-Indo-European society – priests, warriors, and herder-cultivators. The "priest" category included Druids, judicial functions, and sacred leadership. The Warriors were individuals who

were in charge of the physical defense of the tribes, and the herder-cultivators were the producers of the tribe and responsible for sustenance. (Littleton 148) Although there is little archeological evidence for Dumézil's theory, it persists as an ideology that is believed to have been part of the Indo-European culture. (Mallory 219) In our modern society, the differentiation is not present to the same level as it may have existed in prehistoric times, however there is still some level of tripartition in ADF today.

The way that I see tripartition in ADF today divides the members into three main categories: Priests/Spiritual Leadership, Organizational Leadership, and General Membership. Within the different groups, we have the Clergy and Initiates as the Priests and Spiritual Leadership. Their role is to provide educational and spiritual guidance to both of the other groups in ADF. The next group, the Organizational Leadership, consists of the leaders of each of the groves, sub groups, committees and the members of the various Councils. These men and women are the leaders who help to define the direction of ADF as well as our rules and regulations. They also protect the tribe of ADF by taking action against, and for, members in response to the laws of ADF and society in general. The third group, the General Membership, is everyone else. These are members who participate in ADF but who do not take any particular leadership roles.

The lines between these three groups are rather fluid. We have Spiritual Leaders who are also Organization Leaders, and members of the general membership who occasionally step up into the role of organizational leader. This flexibility is key in our modern society, as individuals need to be able to express their individual beliefs and skills.

8. Explain the difference between "orthopraxy" religions and "orthodoxy". Where do you feel ADF falls? (200 words min.)

The difference between the two approaches is in the focus. In an orthopraxy religion, the focus is on the practice - the forms of the rituals and worship - and less on what the individual believes. In a religion that follows orthodoxy, then the belief of the individual is more important, and the exact forms of worship are less important.

Some religious groups, such as Roman Catholics, follow orthodoxy. They have religious structure, but you don't have to follow the specific forms of Mass to consider yourself a Roman Catholic. On the other side, there are groups like ADF where it doesn't really matter what your belief is, as long as you do the public practices in the form that ADF outlines. This differentiation allows for some interesting combinations for individuals. For example, in my experience, Wiccan is much closer to orthodoxy than orthopraxy and there are a number of individuals in ADF, as well as other Druidic organizations, that follow the Wiccan religion while following Druidic practices. In my experience there are Wiccan-Druids, Christian-Druids, Humanist-Druids, and everything in-between. The fact that ADF focuses on orthopraxy does require that members be willing to accept that other members of the group do not believe the same thing that they do, and this helps to promote an environment of tolerance within the groups.

9. Describe why we make Praise Offerings, how they are made, when they are made, and who they are made to. Be sure to describe this in both solitary practice and in two or more Groves' practices. (300 words min.)

Praise offerings are the offerings that we make as part of an ADF ritual to honor the Kindred, and to offer them something in return for the blessings that they have, or we hope will, bestow upon us. In a traditional ADF ritual, we are replacing the sacrifice that was made in Indo-European religions with praise offerings. (Serith) These offerings are our way of offering gifts to the Kindred that we have invited into our rite. It is the hope that these gifts are found sufficient, and the Kindred will bless us in return.

Praise Offerings are appropriately given to the Beings of the Occasion – these being the specific Kindred who are called to the rite. It is also acceptable to give Praise Offerings to other Kindred with whom you have a specific connection. However, we should take care to ensure that the Being of the Occasion is not slighted or overshadowed by our individual offerings. (Newberg)

The types of offerings can also vary. In the “COoRTutorial,” Newberg points out that Praise Offerings can be either material such as alcohol, food, crafts; or immaterial, such as songs, poetry or dance. In most cases, material objects given as Offerings are not taken back. The exception to this is food that is blessed and consumed as a Sacred Meal. (Newberg) Personally, I have offered a wide range of things including incense, alcohol, grain, bread, a mini-blanket as a promise of a larger one donated to charity, and a poem. I have seen other people offer similar things as well as stories, dances, and songs.

There’s a couple of different ways that we can make Praise Offerings depending on the size of the group at the rite and the traditions of the group or individual involved. If someone wants to present a story, dance, song or poem, they need to be given the space and time to do so. In my experience, these types of offerings are usually, but not always, focused on the

Being of the Occasion. Pre-planning is essential for performance type Offerings, as they allow the ritual organizers to plan for the additional time needed.

For solitary rituals, you may have a very simple Praise Offering that consists of a performance, or offering up something material. Because you are the only attendee to the ritual, you can take as long as you would like for the Offering. For many groups, such as Sierra Madrone Grove, the offerings are first made to the Being of the Occasion and then individuals are invited to come to the fire and make their individual offerings while the group performs a chant or song. (Harbaugh) Most of the grove rituals are small enough to allow people to give their offerings one at a time, or in small groups, but for larger rituals, multiple people are encouraged to come to the fire at the same time. For large rituals done by Sierra Madrone Grove, such as at the ADF Ritual at the Sacramento Pagan Pride Festival, Praise Offerings are giving to the Beings of the Occasion by the priests and individual Praise Offerings are not allowed. In a conversation on Facebook, William Ashton of Mountain Ancestors Protogrove mentioned that his Protogrove is small enough that they will invite people to come up to give their Praise Offerings in small groups.

Praise Offerings allow us to engage in gnosti with our gods, and the method of Praise Offerings must be tailored with each ritual.

10. Describe ADF's administrative structure. (150 words min.)

While there is a formal administrative structure for ADF, the reality seems to be that ADF is governed by the consensus of a number of committees. The first, and most legally binding committee is The Mother Grove. This committee is roughly equivalent to the Board of

Directors in other non-profit organizations. (“ADF Organizational Structure”). To ensure a balanced viewpoint, The Mother Grove contains both voting (Director level) and nonvoting (non-Director level) positions in the Mother Grove. Non-voting members have the right to speak on votes taken, but cannot directly affect the outcome of the vote itself.

In addition to the Archdruid, Vice Archdruid, Secretary and leaders of some Councils, the Mother’s Grove also includes the Member’s Advocate. The Member’s Advocate is a non-voting Mother Grove member who can be contacted by any member if they have an item to be brought up to the Mother Grove. The Member’s Advocate is especially given the ability to represent the minority members of ADF.

In addition to the members of The Mother Grove, are three non-voting, non-Director level positions that are key to the functioning of ADF and are key for our status as a Non-Profit entity. These members are the Administrator, the Preceptor, and the Treasurer. (“ADF Bylaws”). In addition, a number of supporting offices are key to the operations of ADF – including the Chronicler, Webmaster, Listmaster, Office Manager and Regalia Manager. Along with the Administrator and the Treasurer, these offices comprise the Administrative Board that handles much of the day-to day functioning of ADF.

The Council of Senior Druids consists of Senior Druids and Grove Organizers, both past and present. Senior Druids and Organizers for full Groves are the voting members. This Council acts as a source for members of the Grove Organizing Committee, which reviews and approves applications for new Protogroves and Groves. (“ADF Organizational Structure“) The Chief of the Council of Senior Druids is a voting member of The Mother Grove.

The Council of Regional Druids consists of all of the elected Regional Druids, both past and present, the current Deputy Regional Druids and the Archdruid. Only the current Regional

Druids have normal voting privileges, but the Archdruid may vote in the case of a tie. (“CoRD Bylaws”) Regional Druids are representatives for The Mother Grove in each of their regions. They help the Grove leaders, mediate conflict and help to organize regional events. The Council of Regional Druids acts as support for the current Regional and Deputy Regional Druids as well as acting as advisors to The Mother Grove for the current status of ADF in their regions. The Chief of the Council of Regional Druids is a voting member on The Mother Grove.

The Council of Lore’s primary focus is on the study programs of the ADF and the specific groups within the ADF. The Council of Lore is made up of the elected preceptors of each of the Guilds as well as the ADF Preceptor. When any subgroup wishes to add or change a study program, it is up to the Council of Lore to review that change or addition and then present it to the Mother Grove for approval. (“ADF Organizational Structure“) The Council of Lore is also responsible for managing the non-grove ADF subgroups of Kins, Guilds and SIGs.

The Clergy Council consists of members of the Clergy, who have at least completed the First Circle of the Clergy Training Program. Clergy members are required to continue ongoing training and work in order to maintain their Clergy status. The members of the Clergy Council advise The Mother Grove in spiritual matters, as well as provide training and leadership to members of ADF who wish to lead rituals or become Clergy. The Clergy Council must approve of any entry into the Clergy Training Program as well as determining who can be elevated to the rank of ADF Priest or Senior Priest. The ArchDruid performs the elevation ceremony with approval from the Clergy Council. (“Clergy Council Standard Operating Procedures Manual”) In addition to managing the Clergy, the Clergy Council is also responsible for approving new Orders. The Chief of the Clergy Council is also a voting member of The Mother Grove.

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