

(Download free pdf) Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion

Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion

Michael York

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#402557 in Books NYU Press 2005-04-01 2005-04-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x .63 x 6.13l, .69 #File Name: 0814797083239 pages | File size: 46.Mb

Michael York : Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Very informativeBy RachelI purchased this book initially because as a Solitary Eclectic Wiccan I have found precious little material exploring Wiccan theology and wanted to condense my own ideas with the help of some good reference material.This book does help me in that regard, but not as much as I had hoped. I would say the vast majority of the book deals with what Isaac Bonewits referred to as "Mesopaganisms" and their comparison/contrast with "Paleopaganisms", with Neopaganisms being the extreme minority of the topics

under discussion. There, he uses somewhat odd definitions and lumps all of Witchcraft into the same framework as Wicca, which isn't accurate or fair, but may be a useful enough construct to form sweeping theories with. Basically the most of the text is dedicated to creating definitions. That said, the book gave me lots to ponder that wasn't on my original shopping list so to speak, and the final, shortest, chapter DOES handle theology more directly. The presentation is generalizing and nonspecific but still helpful. I was most taken by his idea that the New Age movement, which he characterizes as Gnostic, is essentially at odds with the Witchcraft religions in their basic worldviews (Paganisms envisioning the world, the Gods, and the human race as codependent, while Gnostic philosophy sets apart the idea of the One from all lesser emanations; in the one, Nature is sacred, while in the other, Nature is illusion). He surmises that these two incompatible philosophies form loose alliances due to the shared experience of Christian condemnation. All in all I recommend this book for advancing Neopagans who are looking to help firm up their definitions of broad terms and identify themselves with the religious movements around the world that share common themes with their own.

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Very far away from any real pagan knowledge

By PaganusMr. York lives in an academical world completely away from any real contact with any pagan tradition. His mind is full of the complexes that afflict the "modern citizen" away from the depth of any pagan cosmivision. The thesis of paganism as a "world religion" comes from a monotheistic background. Paganism is related to the earth, to holy places, to the sacredness of life, to a certain type of people. Diversity and many paths are the beautiful fruits of paganism. If you want to know about paganism, this is not the book for you. If you are looking for intellectual dry speculations, buy it!

26 of 57 people found the following review helpful. Off the mark on paganism

By The Old PhilosopherMichael York includes Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Yoruba, and just about everything else in his definition of "paganism." From reading the text its pretty clear that the working definition of "paganism" is "everything not Jewish, Christian, or Moslem." At one point he's even lumping Mormons and Adventists, non-main-stream Christians into "paganism." Very few practicing Pagans, Hindus, Buddhists or Mormons would accept that definition. I was left wondering if he has a clue what he's talking about. The back cover promises, "audacious redrawing of traditional religious boundaries," and York delivers that. So audacious is his redrawing that very few of the groups about which he writes would recognize or accept his audacity. At one point he says that contemporary western neo-paganism is less polytheistic than the Christian trinity. Who is he to redefine the ancient Hindu religion as "pagan"? Or Buddhism? No, I don't think it's scholarly, its not spiritual, and not much of anything else either. For [\$\$\$] it's way over priced.

In *Pagan Theology*, Michael York situates Paganism one of the fastest-growing spiritual orientations in the West as a world religion. He provides an introduction to, and expansion of, the concept of Paganism and provides an overview of Paganism's theological perspective and practice. He demonstrates it to be a viable and distinguishable spiritual perspective found around the world today in such forms as Chinese folk religion, Shinto, tribal religions, and neo-Paganism in the West. While adherents to many of these traditions do not use the word pagan to describe their beliefs or practices, York contends that there is an identifiable position possessing characteristics and understandings in common for which the label pagan is appropriate. After outlining these characteristics, he examines many of the world's major religions to explore religious behaviors in other religions which are not themselves pagan, but which have pagan elements. In the course of examining such behavior, York provides rich and lively descriptions of religions in action, including Buddhism and Hinduism. *Pagan Theology* claims Paganism's place as a world religion, situating it as a religion, a behavior, and a theology.

Michael York's audacious redrawing of traditional religious boundaries and scholarly categories reaffirms paganism's place both as legitimate spiritual expression and as a field of academic inquiry.

-Chas S. Clifton, Colorado State University-Pueblo

I have little doubt that it will reinvigorate not only the debate over the definition of religion but, perhaps more significantly, the debate over where one religion starts and another ends.

-Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion

Folk religionists and those interested in placing 'pagan phenomena' in the context of worldwide religiosity will find York's book interesting.

-Missiology: An International This work will interest anyone investigating the nexus of science, social policy, and the law in modern America.

-Sociology of Religion

Scholarly, but wholly accessible.

-Terry Gifford, University of Leeds

An ambitious book, one that argues and then demonstrates that paganism is an important religious perspective by tracing specific themes through a surprisingly wide variety of spiritual traditions. This is the first successful attempt to articulate a theology that is based on what paganism is, rather than on what it is not when compared to Judeo/Christian traditions. York's work is an important contribution to the study of religion in general, and foundational for the emerging field of Pagan Studies. It is the beginning of a whole new dialogue.

-Wendy Griffin, editor of *Daughters of the Goddess*

About the Author Michael York is Principal Lecturer, Sophia Centre for the Study of Cultural Astronomy and Astrology, and Director of the Bath Archive for Contemporary Religious Affairs, Bath Spa University College, UK.