



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Church of England cleric encouraged by bishop to study witchcraft



Witches from a coven in England have been performing rites under the watchful eye of a guest who has been invited to observe their rituals. The guest is a Church of England “priest” who believes a knowledge of witchcraft can be useful. Richard Thomas, a member of the Anglican Bishop of Oxford’s staff, says that witchcraft is not to be feared or hated but to be understood as “an emerging faith community”. Thomas, who is the Oxford diocese’s director of communication, has spent three months meeting practitioners of Wicca, or modern pagan witchcraft, and attending their gatherings.

He was given the blessing of his bishop to attend these pagan rituals and to meet witches to research a thesis on Wicca modern pagan witchcraft. The cleric, who has taken a three-month sabbatical from his job as director of communications in the Oxford diocese, has described his work as “something that God has called me to do.” He added: “If Christianity is going to interact with people who are interested in witchcraft, druidry or shamanism then we are going to have to sit down and talk with people in humility and hear what they have to say about our faith.” Mr Thomas said he would make no direct attempts to “convert” pagans to Christianity. But he added: “I am more than happy to answer people’s questions about the Christian faith.”

COMMENT — One would shudder to think of the answers this man would give to anyone who did question him about Christianity, for it is plain that while he may be ready to listen to pagans and their views on Christianity, he has never listened to what the Lord has to say on this matter. Had he done so, he would know that what he is planning to do is contrary to the will of the God he supposedly worships!

Under the law of God which governed the society of Israel in the Old Testament, witchcraft was a capital offence. “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,” Exodus 22: 18. Such a penalty indicates what an offence to God and threat to good order the activities of those, who give the honour and obedience that is due to God to devils, are.

New Testament

In the New Testament, according to which statutes we as Christians live today, witchcraft is deemed an evil thing. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” Galatians 5: 19-21. Let it be noted that a more severe sentence is here passed upon those who engage in such practices than that referred to in Exodus 22: 18. There the sentence was physical death. Here it is the eternal death of the soul. “They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” What a fool Richard Thomas is and more fool they who attend the church which nurtures and elevates his like!