

Beyond the Vé-Stead

Addressing the Heathen Problem of Isolation
and the Work Toward Positive Visibility

By Ethan Stark

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Lecture Brief

Prothero, Stephen R. *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World*. HarperOne, 2011.

Presents his “problem/solution” theory. The theological theory that religion presents a problem affecting humanity and answers with a potential solution for human flourishing.

My application of the theological “problem/solution” theory to Heathenry

Problem = **Isolation (from past, from people)**

Solution = **Community (and through it, connection and visibility)**

The 4 Heathen concepts concerned with our problem/solution

- Trust/Troth - The yardstick by which we measure Frith.
- Frith - The status of peace between people.
- Gard - The enclosure that expands/contracts based upon level of Frith.
 - Innangarð - The fence interior (our friends, family, trusted and honorable people).
 - Utgarðr - The fence exterior (outliers, oathbreakers, the mistrusted and dishonorable people).
- Wyrð/Urswebb - Personal fate which is woven into the Primal universal layer of Örlög.

Isolation Problems & Solutions

- Subjectivity Problem:
 - Relationships are subjective; based upon personal experience.
 - Wyrð (Urðswebb) may make us breed self-interest and self-preservation.

Subjectivity Solution:

 - ***Adoption of Urglaawe perspective on Frith. Extend it initially to all people.***
 - ***Understand that our Wyrð is woven into the fabric of the world; whereby good Wyrð = good actions = actions of hospitality and inclusion.***
- Apostasy Problem:
 - Renunciation of faith.
 - Sometimes due to trauma from previous religion (most notably from Christianity).
 - Hubris caused by pride-fueled denigration of previous/other religions.

Apostasy Solution:

 - ***Acknowledge traumatic experience.***
 - ***View larger religious picture, as opposed to single composite.***
 - ***Take pride without subjugation or superiority.***
- Internalization Problem:
 - Since 1970's until today, focus remained inward on reconstruction of Heathenry.
 - Little attention thereafter toward Heathenry as part of World Religion and society.

Internalization Solution:

 - ***Interfaith (below) and community outreach for Heathen visibility.***

The Work

- Interreligious Dialogue
 - *The Dialogue Decalogue by Dr. Leonard Swidler* (brief reference below)
 - Use in the Pagan community
 - Attending Pagan Pride, set a table up for Heathenry
 - Attend CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)
 - Use in larger religious community
 - Attend an interfaith functions
 - Attend church, synagogue, mosque, or temple
 - Avoid proselytization; attend for experience and understanding.
- Greater Social Community & Contribution
 - Civic Volunteering
 - Soup Kitchens/Homeless programs
 - Alcohol & Drug Rehabilitation
 - Elderly Hospice
 - After-School & Youth programs
 - Environmental Volunteering
 - Clean streets/parks/beaches
 - Work community gardens

The Dialogue Decalogue

by Dr. Leonard Swidler

1. Primary purpose of dialog is **to learn** (i.e. change and grow the perception of reality)
2. **Must** be a two-sided conversation.
3. Participants must come together with honesty.
4. Compare ideals with ideals; practice with practice.
5. Define oneself so that the other may recognize themselves.
6. Come without assumptions as to points of disagreement.
7. Dialogue of equals.
8. Dialogue upon mutual trust.
9. Be self-critical of oneself and own religious traditions.
10. Attempt to experience others' religion from within.

Five Types of Interreligious Dialogue

Informational

Acquiring knowledge of faith history, founding, basic beliefs, scripture, etc.

Confessional

Allowing another to define life as an adherent.

Experiential

Dialogue within another's tradition; allowing their symbols and stories to guide.

Relational

Develop friendships beyond the "business" of dialogue.

Practical

Collaboration toward a goal (i.e. peace, harmony, justice, equality)

Dialogue vs. Debate

Dialogue	Debate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand oneself and another. ● Listens and understands openly. ● Listen for strength ● Speaks for oneself using experience and examines own assumptions. ● Asks questions to increase understanding. ● Allow others to fully communicate. ● Focus on others words & feelings. ● Respects others' experience as true. ● Respects feeling in self and the other. ● Honor silence. ● Find ways to keep the conversation going; even in conflict. ● Collaborative. ● Finding common ground. ● Open-Ended Conversation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Successful argument of position. ● Listens to counter. ● Listens for weakness. ● Speak based on assumptions and others' experience in effort to be right. ● Asks questions to control the conversation. ● Interrupts or changes subject. ● Focus on one's next point. ● Critique others' experience as invalid. ● Distrust feelings as manipulative. ● Anxious in silence. ● Find ways to end conversation when uncomfortable. ● Oppositional. ● Winning. ● Conclusion.