

## **13 Principles of Belief by The Council of American Witches**

1. We recognize that our intelligence gives us a unique responsibility toward our environment. We seek to live in harmony with Nature, in ecological balance offering fulfillment to life and consciousness within an evolutionary concept.
2. We acknowledge a depth of power far greater than is apparent to the average person. Because it is far greater than ordinary, it is sometimes called "supernatural," but we see it as lying within that which is naturally potential to all.
3. We conceive of the Creative Power in the Universe as manifesting through polarity - as masculine and feminine - and that this same creative Power lives in all people, and functions through the interaction of the masculine and feminine. We value neither above the other, knowing each to be supportive of the other. We value sexuality as pleasure, as the symbol and embodiment of Life, and as one of the sources of energies used in magical practice and religious worship.
4. We recognize both outer worlds and inner, or psychological worlds - sometimes known as the Spiritual World, the Collective Unconscious, the Inner Planes, etc. - and we see in the interaction of these two dimensions the basis for paranormal phenomena and magical exercises. We neglect neither dimension for the other, seeing both as necessary for our fulfillment.
5. We do not recognize any authoritarian hierarchy, but do honor those who teach, respect those who share their greater knowledge and wisdom, and acknowledge those who have courageously given of themselves in leadership.
6. We see religion, magick, and wisdom-in-living as being united in the way one views the world and lives within it - a world view and philosophy of life, which we identify as Witchcraft or the Wiccan Way.
7. Calling oneself "Witch" does not make a Witch - but neither does heredity itself, or the collecting of titles, degrees, and initiations. A Witch seeks to control the forces within him/herself that make life possible in order to live wisely and well, without harm to others, and in harmony with Nature.
8. We acknowledge that it is the affirmation and fulfillment of life, in a continuation of evolution and development of consciousness that gives meaning to the Universe we know, and to our personal role within it.
9. Our only animosity toward Christianity, or toward any other religion or philosophy-of-life, is to the extent that its institutions have claimed to be "the only true right and only way" and have sought to deny freedom to others and to suppress other ways of religious practices and belief.
10. As American Witches, we are not threatened by debates on the history of the Craft, the origins of various terms, the legitimacy of various aspects of different traditions. We are concerned with our present, and our future.
11. We do not accept the concept of "absolute evil" nor do we worship any entity known as "Satan" or "the Devil" as defined by Christian Tradition. We do not seek power through the suffering of others, nor do we accept the concept that personal benefits can only be derived by denial to another.
12. We work within Nature for that which is contributory to our health and well being.

### **The Wiccan Council of 1974**

This was drawn up in 1974 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As we have no central authority, this "Council" does not speak for all Wicca's. Its thirteen principals have, however, been adopted by a great many Wicca's since 1974 as representative of their beliefs. We practice rites to attune ourselves with the natural rhythm of life forces marked by the phases of the Moon and the seasonal quarters and cross-quarters. There were Seventy-three Witches founded the *Council of American Witches* in 1974. In April of that year, at the Spring *Witchmeet* in Minneapolis, MN, (1974-APR-11 to 14), they adopted the following document. At the time, Wicca and other Neopagan religions were greatly misunderstood in North America. This document helped to set the record straight. The thirteen statements are necessarily vague. They do not precisely and completely match any one Witchcraft tradition. But they do provide an introduction to the full range of belief systems found within "*Wicca*." Its policy of including all persons, regardless of "sexual preference" -- now referred to as sexual orientation -- was almost unheard of back in 1974. The *Council* disbanded later in 1974.