

Web-Based Ministry Helps Pagans And Witches Find Christ

Though many of the visitors have pledged themselves to false gods, at the conversations center around Jesus

Kathi Sharpe once offered incantations as a witch and her soul to false deities. Now she offers Jesus to many of her former cohorts of the occult through her Internet-based ministry, .

The ministry's site is comprised of a series of public and private message board forums. Since its March 2002 inception, ExWitch has processed more than 100,000 postings, Sharpe said.

"It's amazing to me that witches come on and talk all day long about Jesus," said Sharpe, 34, of Greensboro, N.C. "It's just phenomenal."

Mark Bishop of Denton, Texas, one of five site administrators, said what is different about ExWitch is that people listen to the visitors. "We don't throw them out," said Bishop, a former pagan. "We don't water down the gospel. But we present it in truth and love. ... I don't know of many ministries trying to reach [witches]. There are many out there that have written them off."

Sharpe's evangelism efforts go beyond the Internet. She also has invited witches and pagans to her church, Calvary Church, an Assemblies of God congregation in Greensboro. Her pastor, David Crabtree, said he usually counsels a new Christian not to have any contact with his or her occult past because that has caused many to be lured back into it.

But Sharpe has been the exception, he said. "Kathi had an absolute break," Crabtree said. "She didn't hold on to the old life. She was so radicalized."

Sharpe said some of the witches and pagans that attend services try to go unnoticed, showing no problem talking about Christ and reading a Bible. Those individuals, according to another former occultist known simply as Lottie, are strong-willed and are not seeking Christ.

Then there are some who can't sit through a service, leaving frantically when they encounter the reality of God. "Most people do not cope well when their view of the world is tipped over," said Lottie, another of ExWitch's site administrators.

She went on to describe a personal experience that occurred in England, where she lives. She said the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation was so strong in Coventry Cathedral—out of which an international reconciliation ministry is based—that it repelled her from the place.

"I got only 100 yards into the place before I felt I would be crushed to the floor if I did not leave," she said. "Me, the occultist, found myself forced right back out of that building by the presence of God. ... It was one of the unnerving experiences of my life, and [it] took a lot of coffee to recover from."

Sharpe, a former Web designer, said her conversion to Christianity was initiated by a dream she had of Jesus, but she remained hesitant to acknowledge it.

Curious, she asked God to prove to her that she wasn't hallucinating. One week, she asked God to work out a software problem for her. She posted a question on a Web site, and the next day she received an e-mail with the answer. The sender was "rich@."

Sharpe said she sent "Rich" an e-mail expressing her gratitude. Early on, she told him that she was a witch, and that she had questions about Christianity. By the end of that week, Sharpe was convinced that Christianity was for real, and she prayed the sinner's prayer at her desk.

"The transformation was like God flipped a light switch in my personality," she said. "It was incredible. My husband noticed. My kids noticed it."

Sharpe went on to say her departure from the occult came with some resistance. As a witch, Sharpe said, she invoked many deities within her. She thought they were her gods and that they were benevolent. She quickly realized just how much she had been deceived.

"I ended up extremely ill [and] hallucinating. I was being told I needed to throw myself into the ocean. ... [The deities] were not the loving, benevolent beings I had come to know," she said. "I felt betrayed."

Although she did not have much Bible knowledge, Sharpe said Someone even more powerful than the deities intervened. "I asked them, I begged them, and then something spoke to me again, the Holy Spirit, telling me if [I] have a problem and [I] can't get rid of it in another way, tell [them] in the name of Jesus they have to leave," she said.

“They couldn’t stay in spite of my having given my life to them. This isn’t the kind of thing that happens on your church pew on any Sunday morning. I have absolutely no doubt that I was delivered that day.”

Cedric Harmon