

Churchgoing Parents Seem to Think It's OK Son Practices Witchcraft

A witch says his churchgoing parents deem his Wicca practice acceptable because "at least you have a faith," he says in a recent interview.

Ashley Mortimer is a director of The Centre For Pagan Studies, a trustee of the Doreen Valiente Foundation and a prominent member of the local and national pagan community, including Nottingham Pagan Network, Pagan Pride and Nottingham Empyrean as well as a frequent representative of the Pagan Federation, according to his website.

But he was raised with parents who are part of the Church of England.

"I knew it wouldn't be popular; teenagers have a feel for such things with parents, I think," he told *The Independent*. "And I can remember being told: 'We don't want pagan rites in this house!'"

After Mortimer's sister came out as an atheist, though, his parents readjusted their view of his practice.

"I think my mother gained some perspective when my sister declared herself an atheist. She told me 'At least you have a faith, even if it's a bit misguided!' She is very pragmatic about faith; she sees it very much as manifesting in one's daily life and this notion of it as personal, individual and very much a daily matter is the same style of religiosity with which I approach mine—so we have commonality in approach at least," Mortimer says.

Resources such as ThoughtCo encourage parents not to worry if

a child starts experimenting with pagan rituals or dabbling in Wicca.

They write:

First, understand that some teens come to paganism because it sounds like a really fun way to rebel against Mom and Dad.

After all, what could possibly be more irritating to parents than to have little Susie show up at Grandma's house wearing a giant pentacle and announcing, "I'm a witch, and I do spells, you know." For the kids who make their way to paganism as part of a rebellion, chances are good that they'll grow out of it.

Pagan religions aren't fashion statements; they're spiritual paths. When someone comes to them looking for attention or a way to shock their parents, they're usually a bit startled when they learn that some effort, work and study is required.

But Christian parents disagree.

Beth Eckert, who practiced witchcraft before embracing Jesus, says that while Wicca and paganism are spiritual, they offer a false sense of security.

"When you practice Wicca and paganism, you are focusing your energy on the power of self, giving yourself the sense that you control life circumstances and people around you. When that doesn't work, you begin to look into tapping into a bigger power, which is actually the power of dark spiritual forces," Eckert says. "Once you tap into the power of dark spiritual forces, you are aligning your soul with them and giving them complete access into your being, to do whatever they like. Wicca and paganism is the practice of searching for power and meaning in life for those who are lost and hurting,

and it is the devil's way of deceiving them into partnering with his forces instead."

William G. Wells of the Southern Baptist Convention says parents should have a three-fold response.

Why are teenagers drawn to Wicca? The appeal of "magick" is "inside information" on how the world works behind the scenes, and getting power that others don't have. Some teens feel powerless and alone and seek to gain some kind of advantage over their peers. For others, Wicca is simply a fad, a fun secret shared with close friends. Regardless of the motivation, Wicca continues to be effective in drawing in new recruits.

Encourage your children to reach out to the lonely before they are even drawn to the occult in the first place. Wicca has become the ideal haven for "Goths," loners, drug users and those struggling with homosexuality or depression. So, if you believe your child is dabbling in witchcraft or hanging out with Wiccans, enlist the help of your church's youth minister, pastor or counselor. Christian parents have a threefold duty where witchcraft is concerned: to understand the nature of the threat, protect their families from its influence and, most important, reach out to Wiccan teens to prevent the loss of a whole generation. {eoa}