

## Dimensions of Heathenism: NOTES

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*[Ancient Heathens would not have had this conversation!]*

**“Religion” = “a set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man [*sic*] to the ultimate conditions of his existence.” – Robert N. Bellah**

**Heathenry: who is part of the *innangarth*?**

<b>Folkish</b>	<b>Universalist</b>
<b>Reconstructionist</b>	<b>Eclectic</b>
<b>Individual (Self-Reliance)</b>	<b>Community (Hospitality)</b>
<b>Lore</b>	<b>UPG</b>

**Some concepts to get us started:**

**World-rejecting\*   World-accepting\*   World-affirming**

<b>Orthodoxy</b>	<b>Orthopraxy</b>	<b>Orthempeiria</b>
<b>(Faith)</b>	<b>(<i>Siðr</i>)</b>	<b>(UPG, possession)</b>

\*The idea that some religious traditions are “world-rejecting” and others “world-accepting” originates in the work of Max Weber, founder of the modern study of religion. The distinction was applied to historical Christianity vs. Heathenism by James C. Russell.

Robert N. Bellah: “Religious Evolution”

Social complexity, individualism

Lower → Higher

<b>Stages:</b>	<b>“Primitive”</b>	<b>Archaic</b>	<b>Historic: the “Great Religions”</b>	<b>(Post-)Modern</b>
<i>Technological stage</i>	Hunter-gatherer	Agriculture	Urbanization	Mass literacy/communication
<i>Conception of the divine</i>	Animism; heroes, spirits, ancestors	Polytheism	Monotheism; transcendentalism	Multiple to none
<i>Cosmos</i>	Single, integrated	Single, integrated	Dual, this world vs. “higher reality”	Uncertain or materialistic
<i>Worldview</i>	World-affirming	World-affirming	World-rejecting	World-accepting
<i>Religious goal</i>	Identification, re-enactment	Communication, reconciliation	Mediated salvation	Personal salvation
<i>Religious organization</i>	Everyone	Specialist priests, divine kings	Monasticism, church/state division	Fragmentation. “My mind is my church” - Paine

We:

- *aspire to return to the primitive or archaic stages – we yearn for what we’ve lost*
- *have baggage from the dominance of historic religion*
- *are conditioned by living in a postmodern world; all of us have as individuals rejected the overculture (both Christianity and materialism)*

## Ninian Smart: *Dimensions of the Sacred*

**\*\*The importance of each dimension varies from paramount to negligible\*\***

	<u>Christianity</u>	<u>Heathenism</u>
1. Ritual	<i>Baptism, marriage,...</i>	<i>Sumble, blóts</i>
2. Doctrinal/Philosophical	<i>THEOLOGY #1!!!</i>	<i>Wyrd, nature of deity</i>
3. Mythic/Narrative (stories)	<i>Adam &amp; Eve, Moses,...</i>	<i>Lore</i>
4. Experiential/Emotional	<i>"Born Again," mystics</i>	<i>UPG</i>
5. Ethical/Legal	<i>Ten Commandments etc.</i>	<i>NNV, thews</i>
6. Organizational/Institutional	<i>Ministers, church orgs.</i>	<i>ECT!</i>
7. Material/Artistic ("stuff")	<i>Buildings, crosses,...</i>	<i>Hammers, horns...</i>

- *Christian legacy – overemphasis on belief.*
- *Lack of quality control/reality check for UPG in fragmented society.*
- *Yearning for community but experience of alienation.*

*What is/are our religion(s) FOR?*

- *Personal development?*
- *Contact with the sacred?*
- *Community & belonging?*
- *Worldly prosperity (luck)?*

*We will weight the dimensions differently depending on our answers.*

## Stephen Prothero: *God Is Not One*

### “Something is wrong...” Religions identify:

- **A problem**
- **A solution/answer**
- **A method**

	<u>Problem</u>	<u>Solution</u>	<u>Method</u>
<b>Christianity:</b>	<b>Sin</b>	<b>Salvation</b>	<b>Faith, works</b>
<b>Islam:</b>	<b>Hubris</b>	<b>Submission</b>	<b>The Five Pillars</b> <i>“god is god,” prayer, charity, fasting, pilgrimage</i>
<b>Judaism</b>	<b>Exile</b>	<b>Return</b>	<b><i>Torah and mitzvot</i></b> <i>tell the story and follow the law – remember and obey</i>
<b>Buddhism:</b>	<b>Suffering</b>	<b>Liberation</b>	<b>The Middle Way, the Eight-Fold Path</b> <i>Right: view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration</i>
<b>Confucianism:</b>	<b>Disharmony</b>	<b><i>Li</i></b>	<b>Five Relationships and Five Virtues</b> <i>Ruler/subject, parent/child, husband/wife, elder brother/younger, friend/friend</i> <i>Human-heartedness (ren), justice, propriety (li), wisdom, faithfulness</i>
<b>Daoism:</b>	<b>Alienation</b>	<b>Nature</b>	<b>Cultivation, spontaneity</b>
<b>Yoruba Religion:</b>	<b>Disconnection</b>	<b>Reconnection</b>	<b>Divination, sacrifice, reciprocity</b>
<b>Us...???</b>			

### Works Cited

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