

What the Covenant of the Goddess Already Does for You!

The first question a coven is likely to ask when invited to join an organization is "What will we get out of joining this organization?"

But the Covenant of the Goddess (CoG) is a different kind of organization.

As a Witch who is not yet a member, you should know what the Covenant of the Goddess is already doing for you, and why you should support its efforts on your behalf.

HISTORY

The Covenant of the Goddess (CoG) was founded in 1975 by representatives of many Craft traditions who felt a need for a national organization that could work to secure for Witches the same legal rights as those enjoyed by followers of other religions.

It has grown to become one of the oldest and largest Wiccan organizations in the world, with members all over the United States and contacts with similar organizations around the world.

STRUCTURE

The Covenant is an umbrella organization of cooperating autonomous Witchcraft covens of all traditions, with the power to confer credentials on its qualified clergy. It fosters cooperation and mutual support among Witches. CoG is non-hierarchical and governed by consensus. Two-thirds of its clergy are women. Many of the Covenant's activities are conducted at the regional level by Local Councils. There are 13 such Local Councils around the country. CoG holds an annual national conference – open to the Wiccan community – as well as occasional regional conferences, and publishes a newsletter. CoG is coordinated by a national board of directors, elected at the annual meeting to carry out the will of the members.

WORK ON BEHALF OF THE CRAFT

The Covenant works on behalf of the Craft as a whole, and its actions benefit all Witches, whether or not they are CoG members.

NETWORKING

Through its network of member covens organized into Local Councils, the Covenant aids Witches and seekers in making connections with others around the US.

LEGAL RECOGNITION

The Covenant has been at the forefront of the fight to establish Wicca as a legitimate, legally-recognized religion in the United States. CoG members have testified in legal trials and advised government agencies, resulting in the legal protections we enjoy today.

CLERGY CREDENTIALS

The Covenant grants legally recognized Clergy credentials to qualified members, allowing them to exercise the same legal rights as clergy of other religions, including hospital access for pastoral counseling and performing marriages. This has helped establish the legitimacy of Wiccan clergy everywhere.

MILITARY CHAPLAINCY & ADVOCACY

CoG members wrote early versions of the entries on Wicca in the various military chaplains' manuals. The Covenant was also very active in the recent and successful "Pentacle Quest" fight for the right of Wiccan military dead to have a pentacle displayed on their headstone.

The Covenant participates in the Order of the Pentacle, honoring those who have served in this countries armed forces.

PRISON CHAPLAINCY & ADVOCACY

The Covenant has members who work in the prisons as chaplains, aiding Wiccan & Pagan inmates. Our Public Information Officers also advise inmates & prison chaplains on matters relating to the religious needs and rights of Wiccan inmates.

LAW ENFORCEMENT EDUCATION

During the "Satanic panic" of the 1980s and 90s, Covenant members worked with experts at the FBI and in the Justice Department to educate law enforcement about commonly-believed misconceptions about Witchcraft, Satanism, and violent crime, resulting in the first rational, skeptical, and professional guide to this subject: Satanism in America. CoG members continue to consult for the police on alleged "occult" crimes and lecture at police academies.

MEDIA EDUCATION

The Covenant, through its National and many Local Public Information Officers, has worked tirelessly to educate the news and entertainment media about the truth about Wicca, correcting misinformation and misrepresentations.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVISM

The Covenant has often led political action in the Craft's interest, as when it organized national opposition to the Helms Amendment, a bill that would have prohibited tax deductions for contributions to organizations that promoted "the occult".

EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS WITH CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS

Covenant members have established working relationships with authors & experts in the conservative Christian community. While we may never agree on spiritual truth, our educational efforts have vastly improved the understanding of Wicca among conservative Christians, allaying fears and building a foundation for cooperative effort.

INTERFAITH RELATIONS & EDUCATION

The Covenant has been actively engaged in interfaith work since the year of its founding. CoG members serve, or have served, on the boards of numerous local interfaith councils around the country, as well as on the Board of Directors of the regional **Interfaith Center at the Presidio** (interfaith-presidio.org), on the Board of the **North American Interfaith Network** (of which CoG is a member - nain.org), on the Global Council of the **United Religions Initiative** (the largest interfaith organization on Earth - uri.org), and in the Assembly and on the Board of Trustees of the **Parliament of the World's Religions** (cpwr.org).

Through these efforts, religious groups all over the US and the world are educated about Wicca. Also, interfaith cooperation allows us to put our principles into action in the world in ways never before open to us. Through its interfaith work, CoG helps sponsor reforestation efforts, literacy programs, orphanages, micro-credit banks for women, and more in over 70 countries around the globe.

In 2004, CoG held an essay contest for Wiccan youth, with the winner receiving a scholarship to attend the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona. More such essay contests are planned.

INTRAFaITH WORK – PEOPLE OF THE EARTH

National, regional, and global interfaith organizing has allowed Covenant representatives to pursue networking efforts bringing together Neopagans, immigrant Pagans, and Indigenous practitioners. CoG members are once again at the forefront of this new wave of networking among all of the people of the Earth, to learn about each other, recognize our common cause, and work together to bring the wisdom of the Earth spiritualities to bear on the pressing issues of the modern world. CoG sponsors an annual **People of the Earth** conference in San Francisco CA.

HART & CRESCENT AWARD

The Covenant of the Goddess sponsors three award programs offered to any young person or adult who is a member of any nature-oriented religion (Wicca, Druid, Asatru, Native American, etc.). Members of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other youth organizations may earn the award, but they are not limited to Scouts. The Over the Moon program is for youth ages 8-11. The Hart & Crescent program has more rigorous requirements for youth ages 12 to 18. Additionally, CoG offers The Distinguished Youth Service Award for Adults. This award is for any adult who has rendered excellent service to youth - including (but not limited to) religious, civic, instructional or rehabilitative capacities.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

During the decades when the mere survival of the Craft was our highest priority, we had to live our Wiccan lives in secret. Now, we can work together with our fellow Witches and with those of other faiths on projects that benefit our communities. Around the Covenant, Local Councils participate in food banks, homeless shelters, environmental clean-ups, and other opportunities to be of service to our communities in visible ways as Witches.

All these activities – and more – benefit you as a Witch. It isn't about what you "get" by joining CoG; it's about what the Covenant of the Goddess is already doing on your behalf, what it has been doing for you for over 35 years, and what more it could do with your support, so...

Come, join the Covenant of the Goddess to:

- meet fellow Witches from around the country!
- work together to improve our communities!
- contribute to making a better, safer world for generations of Witches to come!

For more information, go to: www.cog.org