



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on November 2, 2017

Millennial Madness: Paganism on Rise in Colleges and Among Young

“Have you sacrificed a virgin on your altar today?” While this question isn’t being uttered (yet), the query “What’s your sign?” is, we’re told, more common now, with Millennials glomming onto astrology as part of a larger embrace of “paganism.”

It’s ironic that Millennials, a hipster group eschewing the old, would dial back religion more than two millennia (how very Roman!). But it makes sense: As belief in Christianity in the West wanes, a spirituality vacuum is created. In this case it’s sucking in old beliefs long ago discarded as old mistakes.



As *Market Watch* [writes](#), “More than half of young adults in the U.S. [believe astrology is a science](#), compared to less than 8% of the Chinese public. The psychic services industry — which includes astrology, aura reading, mediumship, tarot-card reading and palmistry, among other metaphysical services — grew 2% between 2011 and 2016. It is now worth \$2 billion annually, according to industry analysis firm IBIS World.”

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(One could wonder if some young adults who consider astrology a science are confusing it with astronomy. Is China’s number far lower because the two words don’t sound similar in Chinese?)

Providing more details, the *College Fix* [writes](#), “Pagan or Wiccan student groups are present on a number of college campuses — both secular and religious — across the nation. The growing normalization of such practices, albeit still a minority, corresponds with the decline in Christian believers, some observers note.”

And that decline is striking. According to [Pew Research Center](#), the “percentage of adults who describe themselves as Christians has dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just seven years, from 78.4%...in 2007 to 70.6% in 2014.” Moreover, in the six years between 2011 and 2017, the share of people affiliated with no religion [rose](#) from 18 percent to 25 percent.

(Note: This reflects not the death of religion, but the death of the West. A 2015 Gallup/WI [survey](#) found that, worldwide, people younger than 34 tend to be *more religious* than their elders; in the same vein, the world is poised to become [more religious](#) during the next four decades, not less so. The West is the irreligious outlier.)

But none of this explains why, in this purported “age of reason,” paganism is being resurrected. The simplest answer, however, was found in something else the *College Fix* related: “I think one of the things that really helped solidify for me that Paganism was the path for me was the almost complete freedom I had,” the vice president of the Pagan Student Union at the University of Baltimore told *Inverse*. “There is no one holy text we all must read, there is no organized church service which is



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mandatory to attend, there is no concept of original sin or any pressure to be perfect people. Paganism is exactly what you want it to be.”

In other words, as a person close to me once put it, it’s “designer religion.” Some may now quip that this just reflects the Millennial generation: People who were coddled and catered to and never told no by their parents don’t want a religion that says no. Of course, and in fairness, young people didn’t originate the “If it feels good, do it” creed and aren’t its only adherents. Whatever the age group, though, these untrue believers are merely putting a pseudo-intellectual veneer on hedonism. Out-and-out hedonism would be more honest.

And more intelligent. Note that the old pagans didn’t call themselves “pagans”; they might have been Mithraists, Jains, adherents of the Berber religion, or something else. But “pagan” was a *pejorative applied to them by others*. It’s much as if people had forgotten the meaning of “pervert” and started proudly branding themselves such as they opposed Christian sexual morality.

Yet, in fairness again, there’s a logic to designer religion’s embrace. It’s an outgrowth of our age’s characteristic philosophical error, moral relativism, which translates into moral nihilism. I will explain.

Moral relativism is the notion that what we call “morality” changes with time, place, and people. It’s contrary to the belief in Truth (absolute by definition), stating that Truth exists apart from man, implies God, and is that from which true morality (unchanging and eternal by definition) is discerned. What is rarely understood, however, is that moral relativism, logically translated, states that there is no right and wrong. To present [my standard explanation](#):

After all, imagine we learned that 90 percent of the world loved vanilla but hated chocolate. Would this make chocolate “bad” or “wrong”? It would just be a matter of whatever flavor works for you. But then how does it make any more sense to say that murder is “bad” or “wrong” *if the only reason we do so* is that the vast majority of the world prefers that we not kill other humans in a manner the vast majority considers “unjust”? If consensus preference is all it is, it then falls into the same category as flavors: taste. This explains why it’s no surprise that “whatever works for you” is now often applied to behavior as well.

And how prevalent is relativism today? The Barna Group research company [found](#) in 2002 that only *six percent* of teenagers believed in “an absolute standard of right and wrong” — and it hasn’t gotten any better since then.

Why is this relevant? Because if you believe in Truth, you quite naturally use it as a yardstick for making serious life decisions. For example, since you understand it’s of divine origin and infallible, you will likely seek to conform your life to it. It also clarifies religious matters, for since different religions espouse different *conceptions* of Truth, they cannot all be equally close to it. You then will likely seek the faith that most reflects Truth.

If you considered “morality” relative, however, why would you constrain your urges and desires with it? In fact (and as I’ve long pointed out), without Truth to use as a yardstick, the best one you have left for decision-making is your feelings. And, sure enough, what did Barna also find?

That “Americans are most likely to base truth on feelings,” as they put it.

Why not? If everything is relative, my emotions’ dictates can’t be any more wrong or right than anything else. So I might as well just be a hedonist — à la today’s neo-pagans.

Why not just be straightforward about this hedonism? Well, most people don’t think their doctrines



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through thoroughly. Besides, the implications of these beliefs aren't pleasant or flattering — i.e., "I'm little more than a pleasure-seeker, there's no right or wrong, all is vanity!" So man naturally looks for a meaning that gives him a reason to rise in the morning; more often than not today, this results in designer faith, the contradiction of claiming everything is relative and then turning around and railing against some politically incorrect ism, and the proud proclamation "I'm not religious; I'm spiritual!" (hint: so are Satanists — they follow the spirit known as the Devil).

So paganism? C'mon. Will the first honest hedonist please stand up?



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