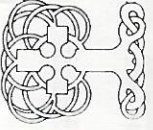


# Celtic World-view



## Overview of the Basic Themes of Celtic Spirituality with Comparison of Celtic Church, Roman Church, Creation Spirituality, and Celtic "Paganism"

Celtic spirituality presents a subjective world-view that is whole and sensitive: psychology, ecologically, anthropologically, and historically.  
World-view = Subjective Logic — Informing and reforming the whole of life  
Wholeness = Holiness = Consistency = Liminality

### Psychological

- subjective logic that allows for ...**
1. making sense of the world
  2. the unanswerable question, i.e., "Why do you suffer?"
  3. our understanding our participation in the question

### **subjective not objective ...**

Human memory is story-based (1 part memory draws facts out of events, 1 part memory is episodic), hence myth.

### **wholeness ...**

1. no dualities
2. no Jungian shadow opposites -- "light" is objective creation ("using tools"), "dark" is subjective creation ("creating tools")
3. differentiation between "bad" and "evil": "bad" things happen to all, while "evil" is that unholiness, i.e., profanity, that we give life to while living unholy.

### **liminal ...**

1. simultaneous living, 100% in natural and supernatural worlds
2. pragmatic mysticalness
3. spiral time = Sabbath
4. borderland living without binding boundaries
5. place-less in the sense of being bound to place
6. continuous process: not becoming more holy, but learning to recognize our inherent holiness and living within/according to it
7. affirms the healthy core found in all people  
*holiness = wholeness*
8. it is the tension of living liminally that creates the strength of the whole > each charges the other

### Ecological

#### **holiness based ...**

1. Creation is intrinsically holy (sacramental)
2. holiness of Creation is a divine gift
3. holiness of Creation is a holy trust
4. if all is holy there can be dualities
5. Creation is divinely *en-fused* with the numinous "to rape Creation is to rape God"
6. All of Creation are "cousins" via a common creation/Creator — "to rape creation is incest"

#### **holy trust ...**

1. stewards not "takers"
2. co-creators not "rulers"
3. "Why do you suffer?" to ask the question is more important than knowing the answer. In asking, we take the first step in relieving. Note that it is "you", not "I".

#### **intrinsic holiness = intrinsic liminality**

1. all Creation can commune with the Creator
2. all Creation can commune with one another

#### **holiness = wholeness**

1. gifts of Creation = blessing
2. all of Creation shares in giving and receiving this blessing
3. blessing = *both* wholeness and holiness
4. living in blessing = wholeness

### Anthropological

#### **holy trust ...**

1. life = "ministry"
2. life = a gift to be shared
3. work = a gift to be given not primarily for the making of money
4. co-creative role = giving blessing

#### **relational ...**

1. friendship based, i.e., brothers, sisters & "cousins"
2. if all "little gods", i.e., divinely *en-fuse*, then all equal
3. as gods have tasks, so do "little gods"

### Histological

#### **web like ...**

1. not trapping
2. but woven

#### **therefore ...**

1. timeless
2. placeless
3. borderless
4. "we can know without knowing"
5. spiritually accumulative, i.e., we are the collective wisdom of our ancestors



	CELTIC CHURCH	ROMAN CHURCH REFORMED PROTESTANT TRADITIONS	CREATION SPIRITUALITY	CELTIC "PAGANISM"
Description:	A unique fusion of Christian theology, contemplatively-based, from the Desert Tradition of North Africa & the Coptic Church with the aboriginal Celtic tradition, and its strong sense of kinship with the earth and all Creation.	A world-view modeled after the imperial Roman Empire; a world-view which flourished in the Roman Catholic Church and even more strongly in the denominations generated by the Reformation.	A world-view modeled after the ancient creation/blessing spiritualities of the eastern traditions. Has a strong sense of kinship with Creation and emphasizes the four spiritual paths to growth: Via Positiva, Via Negativa, Via Creativa, Via Transformativa (Fox)	A world-view rooted in the understanding, via myth, that the numinous created the universe with the Great Melody (Oran Mór) which is in itself numinous energy, and as such is en-fused in all of Creation. Creation therefore is holy and one.
Mental modality:	Right brain (experiential, intuitive, creative)	Left Brain (intellectual, cerebral, analytical)	Right brain (experiential, intuitive, creative)	Right brain (experiential, intuitive, creative)
Theologian:	Pelagius, John Scotus Erigenus John of Salisbury (Celtic Christian philosopher)	Augustine [The tradition of St. Francis is much closer to that of the Celtic tradition.]	Matthew Fox	Myth and legend
Theology	Non-dogmatic, subjective Begins with original blessing and friendship with God.	Dogmatic, objective Begins with original sin and enmity with God.	Non-dogmatic, subjective Begins with God's creative energy which bestows the original blessing.	Non-dogmatic, highly subjective, rooted in myth Begins with the Oran Mór
God::	Theistic (Monotheistic) Strongly Trinitarian No interior process in the Trinity God is neither male or female, but is expressed in both feminine and masculine terms, i.e., father & mother.	Monotheistic Primary emphasis on the individual Persons of the Trinity Interior process in the Trinity, Son, proceeds from Father, Spirit proceeds from Son. God is Father, i.e., masculine	Pan-en-theistic Leans toward the feminine aspects of divinity.	Totemistic All of the gods and goddesses can be reduced to three: mother-goddess, father-god and child-god. All can appear as male or female and as child, parent and elder.
Christ:	Equal emphasis on the immanence (presence) and transcendence of God God is present in Creation. "It is more proper to say that God re-created himself in his Creation than he created it (Erigenus)." Christ Jesus is the model liberator, perfecter, prophet, and story-teller	Emphasis on the transcendent (unknowable) aspect of God Jesus Christ is redeemer. Emphasis on Jesus as Son of God, but not Jesus as prophet.	God is both knowable and unknowable. that is sufficient. Christ as "witness" to the eternity of the Gospel. Emphasis on Jesus as Son of God, prophet, and story-teller who calls others to their divinity.	Divinity is present in all Creation, and is simultaneously knowable and unknowable. "The Creator sang <i>themselves</i> into Creation." Christ-figure in the Child-Advocate myths as one who unites This-World and the Other-World into the One-World of Original Creation
Logos:	The WORD is pre-existent Equal emphasis on pre-existent WORD and Incarnate Word, Christ Jesus. The WORD is God's creative energy.	THE WORD is pre-existent, but proceeds from the Father. Emphasis on the Incarnate Word	The WORD is pre-existent in God. The WORD is God's creative energy.	The WORD is that which gives meaning to Creation and is equivalent to divinity. Creation was sung (WORD) into existence. The WORD bears its own meaning in its sound. The Creative Song is divine Grace, and thus found in all Creation.
Grace:	Intrinsic to God. God's uncreated energies Intrinsic to humankind and Creation	External to God External to humankind and Creation	Intrinsic in all Creation	



	CELTIC CHURCH	ROMAN CHURCH REFORMED PROTESTANT TRADITIONS	CREATION SPIRITUALITY	CELTIC "PAGANISM"
Creation:	Original Blessing: Creation is intrinsically holy. Humankind is made in the image and likeness of God. Creation "en-fused" with the likeness of God Creation is holy and sacramental Creation continues, with humankind as co-creators with God God needs humankind (and Creation) to be fulfilled. Humankind exists as God's friend.	Original Sin: Creation after the "Fall" became intrinsically sinful. "Total Depravity of Humankind" Men (only) are made in God's image, not women. Creation "tells about" God. Creation is sinful. Creation has ceased. God is self-sufficient. Humankind exists to bless/serve God.	Original Blessing Humankind is made in the image and likeness of God. Creation "en-fused" with the likeness of God Creation is holy and sacramental Creation continues with humankind as co-creator with God. God needs Creation to be fulfilled. Humankind exists as God's friends	Creation was sung into existence, this is the Original Blessing. Humankind is made in the image and likeness of the gods. Creation "en-fused" with the likeness of gods. Creation serves as a totem. Creation is holy and sacramental Creation is continuous. Humankind has the role of being a co-creator The gods need interaction with humans and creation
Mysticism:	Mysticism and experience of God is as important as creed & theology. Nature can provide a vehicle for mystical experience. Mysticism is an essential part of the spiritual pilgrimage.	Doctrine and dogma emphasized. Mystical experience is generally not to be trusted and has only secondary value. Mysticism = mortify the senses	Mystical experience of God is to be desired. Nature can provide a vehicle for mystical experience. Mysticism is an essential part of the spiritual pilgrimage.	Mystical experience plays an essential role in the understanding of Celtic myth and paganism.
Pilgrimage:	Spiral -- A pilgrimage that is taken for the sake of spiritual growth, to discover one's mystical place of resurrection on earth. As such it involves all the senses and aspects of living, both objective and subjective.	Linear -- A journey with the view of reaching a predetermined end. Primarily follows a logical, objective path of purification/sanctification, ultimately our glorification in heaven.	Spiral -- Follows the four paths of Via Positiva, via Negativa, Via Creativa, via Transformativa (Fox)	Spiral -- Taken to discover one's place of resurrection, i.e., which is mystically identical to the Blest Isle.
Liturgy:	People-centered (priest serves prophetic role) Valued intimacy & experiential liturgy, symbolism, and being in nature.	Priest-centered Doctrine and dogma emphasized. Cerebral	People-centered No formal liturgy, experiential	People-centered (Druid serves in prophetic role.) Sacramental ritual which spoke to the meaning of the myths
Polity:	Non-hierarchical, de-centralized, tribal, relatively collegial, rural Power derived from bottom up via community. Both men and women in leadership	Hierarchical, highly centralized in the papacy, urban Power derived from top down. Patriarchal	Non-hierarchical Power derived from community. Both men and women in leadership	Non-hierarchical, tribal, rural Druids are not priests, more akin to the Hebrew prophets Power derived from bottom up via the tribe. Both men and women in leadership
Perception of Evil	An active force in the world, but a force already defeated by Christ. Given live by the profanation of God and Creation. Not intrinsic in human nature.	Intrinsic in the nature of humans (Augustine)	An active force in the world, but not intrinsic in human nature.	An active force in the world that is given life by the profanation of Creation. Not intrinsic in human nature



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<p>Suffering</p> <p>Suffering is the birth pangs of creation.</p> <p>Suffering, as "bad" pain exists because evil exists, but is not the "wages" of sin.</p> <p>Suffering enables growth</p>	<p>Suffering is the birth pangs of creation.</p> <p>Suffering, as "bad" pain exists because evil exists, but is not the "wages" of sin.</p> <p>Suffering enables growth</p>	<p>Although suffering leads to growth, it is still ultimately the "wages" of sin.</p>	<p>Suffering is the birth pangs of creation.</p>	<p>Suffering exists because of the cosmic struggle between blessing and profanity (evil).</p> <p>Suffering enables growth</p>
<p>Death:</p>	<p>Death is natural, part of the cycle of life and a prelude to eternal rebirth.</p>	<p>Death is the result ("wage") of sin.</p>	<p>Death is a natural event, a prelude to recycling and rebirth (Fox)</p>	<p>Death is a natural part of life's cycle and a prelude to rebirth.</p>
<p>Penitential Practice:</p>	<p>Embraced as remedial, corrective</p> <p><i>surrender vs. submission</i></p>	<p>Reparation, "vindictive"</p>		<p>Ritual based on myth</p>
<p>Salvation:</p>	<p>Available to all, Christ redeemed everyone (Pelagius)</p> <p>Salvation is community based, and includes Creation.</p> <p>A unconditional blessing, a "gift"</p> <p>It is better to say that one has a choice to <i>reject</i> God, than to say one has to choose God, as God has chosen all.</p> <p>Salvation is about the <i>present</i> and is a <i>process</i> and <i>transformation</i> in the present.</p> <p>The emphasis is on the process of learning to recognize and practice, via God's Grace, one's own inherent holiness and friendship with God.</p>	<p>Predestined elect (Augustine)</p> <p>Salvation is individual.</p> <p>Conditional, we have to do something for it. We make God love us, by showing our love for Him.</p> <p>One needs to accept God.</p> <p>Salvation is about <i>repentance</i> and the <i>future</i> and in Reformed Theology is a one-time <i>experience</i>.</p> <p>The emphasis is on <i>falling</i> to live holy</p>	<p>Salvation is universal</p> <p>Salvation is the "healing" of the people and the cosmos.</p> <p>One needs to accept one's own emptiness and recognize that God shares in it with us.</p> <p>Salvation is about <i>transformation</i>.</p>	<p>All will eventually find their way to the Blest Isle.</p> <p>Salvation is the re-joining of This-World and the Other-World into the One-world of original creation. The actual re-joining of the worlds, as well as the ability to fully live in the presence of both worlds as One-World is a <i>process</i>.</p>
<p>Cross:</p>	<p>Cross significant, but emphasis is on the empty cross, i.e., resurrection. Note that there are not any early Celtic crucifixes.</p>	<p>Emphasis is on the cross and the death of Christ.</p>	<p>Considers the cross significant to the Via Negativa, but there is also emphasis on the resurrection which is viewed as the <i>coming of the spirit and creator in a co-creative role</i> (Fox).</p>	<p>Cruciform is found in pre-Christian Celtic expression such as the "solar-wheels" of Celtic Belgium and France. The form symbolizes the tension between (1) the lunar and solar cycles and (2) This-World and the Other-World waiting to be made one.</p>
<p>Gospel:</p>	<p>The WORD or Logos has finds its meaning within.</p> <p>The Four Gospels held prominence, as they were the words of Christ.</p>	<p>The WORD finds its meaning in the dogma and tradition of the Church.</p>	<p>The WORD is eternal and in all.</p>	<p>Although not the Gospel, the creative song is the pre-existent eternal WORD.</p>



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Heaven/Hell/Purgatory:	Heaven is potentially present in the here and now for all. It is not "out there" somewhere waiting for us to enter upon our death. Eternity begins in the present. Hell is that separation from God that we create in the present. No concept of purgatory Some indication of a belief in a place where one is re-created as "blessed".	Heaven is "out there" and is reserved for the "saved"  Eternity is in the future. Hell is that place reserved for the "damned" Purgatory is where, upon death, the Christian must do penitence for sin, i.e., punishment.	Eternity is in the present	One can live in both the Other-World and This-World simultaneously and fully,  This liminal existence is timeless and placeless. No concept of Hell. The Under-World of Irish vernacular is not a place of retribution. It is, however, a place where humankind is able to finish unfinished business in This-World, thus a place of being made whole.
Evangelistic Style:	Acculturation: adaptation to the local culture and mores. Evangelism was more a matter of liberating and releasing the divine spark already present in each person, rather than imposing a new external creed.	Traditionally confrontational: Intended to replace the local culture and creed. Sometimes found evangelization by the sword justifiable.	No need, other than to help people recognize the divinity within.	None
Ecological Sense:	Very aware of their interdependent mutual relationship with earth. Saw God's presence in all creation, saw it as a gift of God to humankind. clearly experienced the universe as friendly.	Saw wilderness as adversary and a force to be overcome. At best, the earth was a stage on which human history was played out; there to be used. Saw the universe as basically unfriendly and in need of "taming".	Acute awareness of the interdependent mutual relationship between Creation and humankind.	Saw the well-being of Creation as essential to humankind's well-being.
Time	Time is spiral. The past and future are present now.	Time is linear. The past is past, and the future is yet to be. We have the now to live in.	Rooted in a time-less awareness of God in Creation. Past & future are now present.	Time is spiral, and falls back on itself, i.e., the past and future may be experienced now.
Sabbath:	Sabbath is timeless presence with God.	Sabbath is the cessation of work.		The four festivals, Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane, and Lughnasad are "between time". Samhain, the Celtic new year, is both the last day of the old year and the first day of the new, and as such timelessly stands between the two.

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