

## Church of All Worlds

The Church of All Worlds (CAW) is a Pagan religion founded on 7 April 1962 by Tim Zell (b. 1942, now Oberon Zell-Ravenheart) and Richard Lance Christie (1944-2010), who met as students at Westminster College, Fulton Missouri. They both read Robert A. Heinlein's science fiction novel *Stranger In A Strange Land* (1961), in which the Martian-raised Valentine Michael (Mike) Smith founds the Church of All Worlds, preaches sexual liberation and the unity of all religions, and is martyred by bigots, finally attaining the status of archangel (Cusack 2009, 75-77). Both wished to create the CAW in the real world: Zell became Primate of the religion, which he registered formally in 1968; Christie headed up the secular arm, Atl (a water-brotherhood dedicated to environmentalism). CAW began with a water-sharing ceremony described by Heinlein, and in the twenty-first century four of its five core practices originate in the novel: sharing water, organisation of Waterkin in "Nests", using the greetings "Thou Art God/dess" and "Never Thirst", and sexual freedom (Cusack 2010, 79).

The final core CAW value, reverence for the earth as Goddess, Gaia, is a natural progression from Zell and Christie's 1960s environmentalism. In the late 1960s Zell met Frederick McLaren Adams (1928–2008), the founder of Feraferia, and integrated elements from revived Paganism, including the Wiccan Wheel of the Year and ceremonial magic. CAW produced the pioneering Pagan newsletter *Green Egg*, intended for ordinary members or "Seekers". Around 1970 CAW had more advanced members called Scions, and an ordained priesthood (Barrett 2001, 402). On 6 September 1970 Zell had a vision of the living Earth as the Goddess of Paganism, which he published as "TheaGenesis: The Birth of the Goddess" (Zell-Ravenheart 2009, 90-95). This ecological spiritual orientation is now dominant in CAW.

In 1973 Oberon Zell met Morning Glory (b. Diana Moore, 1948-2014), and they married the following year. Morning Glory became the key theorist of polyamory in CAW, and an important artist and curator; her Goddess Collection is now housed in the Academy of Arcana in Santa Cruz, a CAW foundation that opened in 2016. In the twenty-first century Zell-Ravenheart has founded the Grey School of Wizardry, an online magical education system; overseen the print and online publication of vast amounts of historic CAW materials; and continues to actively promote CAW's Pagan vision via lecture tours and media appearances. His nominated successor is Primate Elect Dr Luke MoonOak (b. 1960). CAW has never been numerically large, but is influential and significant because of Zell-Ravenheart's entrepreneurial and intellectual force.

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