

## **NROOGD (New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn)**

The NROOGD was initially a group of San Franciscans interested in the occult who banded together to perform an archetypal Witches Sabbath for a class at a San Francisco university in 1968-69. Using published sources from Robert Graves, Margaret Murray and Gerald Gardner, a ritual was composed that has served as the basis of NROOGD practice ever since. After repeat performances of this rite yielded results on a number of occasions, a decision was made to create a group identity and train others in its performance. The name New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn was coined since it was a wholly new tradition, it was Orthodox since it took its beliefs from the ancients, and it was a Magical Order as was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. They considered themselves their spiritual and magical successors.

In 1976, the governing body of the NROOGD called the Red Cord Council was dissolved, and a consensus decision to call the Order a Tradition was made. Since that time, those groups tracing their lines of initiation back to a member of the original group and who share certain forms of liturgy consider themselves part of the NROOGD tradition.

Esbats in NROOGD covens usually focus on the working of magic, or on celebration of the divinity of each participant, recognizing and greeting the force of a usually triply-aspected Goddess and God. The magical workings vary in form and content, but often include charms and simple poetry. Poetic ritual writing is much encouraged by the tradition. Mythic enactments corresponding to a needed transformation may also be performed. Sharing food and drink (called a Love Feast) usually wraps up the agenda, as all prepare themselves to reenter their daily reality. Names of the Gods tend to be idiosyncratic to each group and some covens keep them secret nowadays. The identities of initiates is held in strictest confidence. Gods, demigods, or other spirits at each of the cardinal directions serve as Guardians of the Circle and of the Elements, and are usually different for each coven.

There are also a number of ritual forms that distinguish NROOGD practice. NROOGD circles begin each meeting with a line dance in the form of a spiral inwards and then outwards, singing a chant "Tout, tout, tout, throughout and about!" Thereafter, conjurations of elements which go into a central "Charging Bowl" beginning "I conjure salt for savor..." follows. Although initially the performance of the ritual required three priestesses and one priest, this form is now usually reserved for large public rituals, and the smaller coven meetings require only one of each. NROOGD continues to hold large public ritual celebrations at each of the eight Sabbats for the benefit of the greater Pagan community, and periodic meetings of area covens are held to decide responsibilities for the coming year. Perhaps the most unique of these celebrations is the re-enactment of the Eleusinian Mysteries in the fall.

Three initiations distinguish the practice of NROOGD. The first initiation, called the White Cord, marks the entrance either into the NROOGD community, or into a particular coven's instruction. The second initiation, called the Red Cord, is considered a full initiation into the Mysteries of Witchcraft. Red Cord initiates are elders of the tradition, and are empowered to lead their own covens and train and initiate. The third initiation is not bestowed by human hand, but rather by the Gods themselves, and is alternately called a Black Cord, or Taking the Garter. This last is the most intensely personal of the three.

NROOGD member covens are primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area, yet elders are found all over the State of California, the Pacific Northwest, and on the East Coast. There is no central authority nor spokesperson for the tradition.