A Writing

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"As I Walk With The Goddess Diana: The Plight of a Pagan Heart."

BY: William E. Morehouse

A Narrative About Ancient Ways and Modern Times.

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WRITER'S PERSONAL NOTE

Too often people are dissuaded from the writings by prisoners about their experiences in prison; about the prison itself; or, about what takes place inside, or behind the closed doors of, a prison simply because they are by a prisoner. Not all writings by prisoners are "jaded", biased, prejudicial, emotionalistic, or "one-sided". There is that segment of those writings by prisoners that are set apart, and stand alone, from all of the others which often tell a very special and personal story, sometimes hurtful, painful, heart-felt, and which can pull heavily on the heart-strings of the reader, oftentimes not intentionally but simply by an honest sharing of what has been experienced by the writer and through the "voice" of the writer's heart speaking about it's "history" and what lies within it. People must also not be dissuaded from the writings of a person, prisoner or not, who isn't in the "mainstream", whether it is in the political, racial, social, economic, or religious "senses". Should we allow this for any of these "reasons" we will "short-change" ourselves and lose out on an opportunity to learn about the life experiences of another person; enhance our own personal growth; and, expand our "world-view" to include other truths and "going-ons" in the world around us. We simply must never allow those kinds of "blinders" to be put upon us or place them on ourselves by our "selves". It is just best for us to approach unconventional writings, philosophies, belief systems, and even religions with an open mind and an open heart. So should it be with this writing.

This writing delves into "areas", topics, and subjects that may be uncomfortable, uninteresting, or even "offensive" to potential readers, but there is one part of it that should reach, and stand, out to all: the abuse, mistreatment, brutality, and cruelty imposed on a human being by other human beings because of major differences in beliefs, religions, and "status in life". The representative countries in the United Nations, as well as other civilized countries, have condemned the various forms of mental, emotional, and physical inflictions of abuse, mistreatment, cruelty, brutality, and torture of their citizens by governmental officials and/or "actors", in any capacity, for political, religious, cultural, racial, ethnic, and matters of conscience reasons. The United States is one such country condemning, and protecting against, these kinds of practices and violations of the general consensus that each person has basic, inalienable civil and human rights to life, free of persecution, inequality, and unjust treatment on the basis of their politics, religion, race, ethnicity, culture, and conscience. These rights are embodied in most States' and Countries' Constitutions, Laws, and Declarations, usuallly at the very beginning of them due to their importance, to establish fair, just, and equal treatment of all members of their respective societies. This isn't limited to only free members of their societies but also to those who are incarcerated in those Countries and "States" for whatever reason. The United Nations saw fit to address this particular situation and set of circumstances by convening a "Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment" and creating and establishing the "Body

of Principles for the Protection of All Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment", that has been signed off on by most, if not all, Country Members of the United Nations and other civilized countries. This specific "issue" had to eventually be addressed at the highest level due to the fact that many incarcerated persons throughout the world were being subjected to all manner of abuse, cruelty, brutality, mistreatment, and torture in prisons simply on the basis of their religion, race, cultural identity, ethnicity, politics, and their following the dictates of their own conscience. Matters of religion in a prison setting have been one of the main catalysts for persecution, mistreatment, abuse, and even torture in prisons by prison officials and prison employees for decades. The basic "premise" was: "Believe our way, not your way, or you will pay a grave and heavy price". This writing is about an individual paying that "grave and heavy price" for being different; having different beliefs; and, for standing up for them against all of the odds he faced that were, at the time, overwhelming. It is an account of an attempt by prison officials to break his mind; break his body; break his heart; break his spirit; and, rend his very soul. It is an individual's "story" about where he has been; what he has experienced; and, where he is now..... with hopefulness in his heart. It is my story.

As My Heart Embraces and Holds Me.

"..... I wonder how long it will last this time..... I wonder how bad it will be this time..... I wonder if I'll be able to make it through it this time.. .... I wonder if I'll be really hurt, like all of the other times, and not be able to make it back to my cell..... I wonder if people hear me sobbing into my pillow at night from the hurt and pain after I get back to my cell..... I wonder if my Lady will spare me from any more of this..... I wonder if the Dancer will come to touch my heart and sooth my hurting soul..... I wonder about many things as I undergo these terrible, terrible things....."

"..... I am in that place inside of myself that is far, far away and beyond this place and what is being done to me here..... I am at that place far, far away and beyond this place outside of myself where I am safe, at peace, and comforted by all of the love, compassion, and understanding that I know exists there. There is no hurt, pain, or anguish and I am not beaten, abused, or mistreated there. I walk the Path before me and just around the bend is the place I always went to when I was very young..... hurting, hopeless, and in pain. I was always comforted and safe there. I am grown now and I wonder if it is still the same..... I hope the love, warmth, and caring is still there, given by the Lady I have come to know and love. I hope so..... I really need Her now. I see Her with Her arms raised to embrace me and She is smiling. I walk towards Her and..... "Morehouse, you Satanic, Devil-Worshipping S.O.B. Let's prod you some and get your mind right and all of the rest of you will fall into place. (I am being beaten with a club and the end of it is being rammed into my stomach and kidneys as I hang from the pipe.) You know how you can stop this, Morehouse. Just give up. It sure the Hell ain't worth it to me and it sure as Hell shouldn't be worth it to you. What's your f--king problem anyway? Let's get on with this....."

As I Begin My Walk With Her.

I have always been "drawn" to the strange, unusual, mysterious, and "other-worldly". As a child, I lived and grew up in a village in Ohio called Thornville. I had few friends and never participated in the social activities that boys growing up seemed to always participate in..... in a small town. Instead, I haunted

the Public Library, reading all I could find on the Paranormal, Ghosts, Hauntings, Parapsychology, "Strange Occurences", Legends, Folklore, Ancient History, and the Mythologies of the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians. A number of the ancient myths, "stories", and legends explaining how "things" came to be in the world was much more believable and made more sense to me than any other similar explanations that came later in the sacred writings of the more "Mainstream" religions and Faiths in the more "Modern Times". The "legend" of Demeter's daughter Persephone descending into the Underworld, ruled by Hades, and becoming bound there for six (6) months out of the year by eatting six (6) Pomegranate seeds was the ancient explanation of how the Changing of the Seasons came to be "spoke" more loudly, clearly, and true to me than anything else. In 1963 I was in the 6th grade at Thornville Elementary School in Thornville, Ohio and every year the 6th grade would have an annual school play. The "production" for that year was..... of all things..... the "Legend" of Persephone's descent into the Underworld and I was given the role of Hades, Ruler of the Underworld. As I now understand, and believe, this was no mere "coincidence". Even in my most early years as a child, I had a number of other "experiences" that could not easily be explained and that were "supernaturally oriented". I spent a number of my childhood and "pre-teen" years engaged in many solitary pursuits and activities. I thought about, and "meditated" on, alot of the places and peoples that I read about in both ancient and modern times. I would often visualize, and "see", myself being in/at those places and being amongst the people(s) of either times and it wasn't long before I began experiencing other things and "sensations" while I was at the place(s) and amongst the people(s). One of my most memorable solitary activities was paying regular visits to the two (2) village cemetaries. One was very, very old. The other was newer and more "modernized". I never felt scared or afraid. I felt very comfortable amongst those who had passed on to the world beyond this one. I have never been a morbid or morose kind of person..... only a person who has always been drawn to the "things" that are, and have always been, "out of the norm" and a part of the world beyond this one. While I "visited" the cemetaries, I remember standing before the headstones, reading them, and wondering who the person was in life. I would close my eyes and try to "see" the person in my mind's "eye" and think about what their appearance may have been; what kind of person they were; what they liked and disliked; what made them happy or sad; what they enjoyed; what they did in their lives; what they believed in; and, what the cause of their passing was. I did this many, many times and never talked to anyone about it. Spending time in these places prepared me for helping relatives perform maintenance work in a number of the cemetaries that were in the township area where they lived. I always pulled the weeds away from around the headstones as a way of showing respect and reverence for the person beneath them. Other times I would go to a nearby creek to just enjoy the peace, quiet, and solitude of the place and do some "exploring". At some point, I would begin thinking about the Ancient Goddesses and Gods I read so much about and how I could do "something" to acknowledge and honor Them. I would bring to mind a picture of Them from the pictures of Them in the books I read and simply give Them thanks for life and all of the "good" which came my way. It was all that a young boy could offer and give. I would not talk to anyone about my interests and "developing beliefs". How could I? I didn't want to be ridiculed, verbally attacked, harassed, and "put down". I just kept it all to myself and continued reading, learning, growing, and having experiences.

As I was growing up, I spent alot of time at/on relatives' farms and homes in the country helping them do farm-work and work in the woods clearing felled trees and cutting fire-wood, pulp-wood, and logs. I learned a great deal about the out-of-doors, hunting, trapping, and fishing. There was also a "learning" of the family "lore" and traditions and about the fruits and cycles of Nature. I learned about digging for, and gathering, specific roots and herbs for various uses. I learned about what wild mushrooms were safe to eat. I learned about what nuts, wild fruits, and berries that were safe to gather and be consumed. I learned about the Moon

Phases and what to do and not do in each one of them. What Phase to plant certain crops and vegetables in and what Phase of the Moon and "Season" to work with farm animals in and observe the ways and "patterns" of wild animals and their habits and behavior(s) in as well. I never thought that these early life learnings and experiences would be a sort of "preparation" of me for what was to come in the future..... many years later. And, I never thought that all of it would later help to guide me to the "religion" and Spiritual Path that I would be able to more fully identify with and that would speak the most and clearest truth to my heart..... and even my soul.

Even as I went through Junior High School and then into High School, I continued to keep it all within, and to, myself, but all the time hoping and wishing that I would "cross paths" with someone who was "like me" or "somewhat" like me. I even became a part of the Peace and Anti-War Movement(s) and participated in a number of Anti-War Demonstrations and Protests on some university and college campuses here in Ohio so I could possibly meet anyone like me. Instead, I met alot of "hippies", "Yippies", SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) people, Black Panthers, and "Weathermen" (Weather Underground Radicals). It was, after all, the Vietnam "War" era and the "political climate" was such that all sorts of radical and "unconventional" groups sprang up and "made their calls to action". This came after my family relocated from the small village we lived in to the city of Heath, Ohio midway through my freshman year in High School. Even during this time, I never did encounter who I was looking for and my "situation" remained the same. It was a lonely "time and place" in my life during all of those years not having anyone I could share the "things" of my heart with. I did not know that I would eventually find others who were "like" me and who believed in, and cherished, the same things I did.

After going out on my own, I made it a point of maintaining a strong "connection" to my reading and learning by obtaining a library card from the local library in the city I lived in: Newark, Ohio. I still hadn't encountered anyone who believed and had the same "interests" as I did, but it wasn't until some time later that I would..... and it was in a "place" where I would least expect it: a prison. At age 21 I committed a very serious crime and was sent away to prison for a very long time. I was eventually sent to Ohio's maximum security prison-SOCF (The Southern Ohio Correctional Facility)- in Southern Ohio to begin serving my sentence. It was while I was there that I met some fellow prisoners who were interested in, and studied, a variety of "esoteric" topics and subjects and who shared a number of beliefs with me. I went on to purchase a number of books from all over the United States from booksellers who specialized in all of the "topics/subjects" I was interested in so I could continue my learning and "personal growth". After 2½ years of maximum security incarceration, my "security level" was reduced and I was transfered to the Marion Correctional Institution in Marion, Ohio, in September of 1976, which was a medium security institution. I continued my learning, growth, and pursuit of my interests after arriving there, but without the benefit of anyone else there having any of the same beliefs, or interests, as I had. I was alone in this "way" again. Eventually I was "led" to reach out to others in the "free-world" to find someone, anyone, that I could establish contact with. I subsequently placed an ad in a magazine reaching out to those who shared beliefs and interests with me and the response was overwhelming. I quickly found that I was not as alone as I thought I was. One response was from a young lady who lived in Fostoria, Ohio who was a member of the Wiccan Faith and a "Coven" in Findlay, Ohio. I didn't know at the time that she was a member of this Faith, but as time passed she eventually began sharing more and more of her personal life with me and began talking about her involvement in the Wiccan Faith and the "Coven" she was a member of. This was to be a major turning point in my life. I had no idea about the "Path" I would be stepping on; where it would lead; and, the growth and accomplishments I would experience along it's way. And, I never in the least bit thought that I

would be put to the "tests" I was for what I believed in. She eventually asked me if it was "okay" for her to talk to her High Priestess and High Priest about me and my beliefs and interests, to which I said an emphatic "YES"! It wasn't long before I received a response from them and was extended an "invitation" to study the Wiccan Faith under their guidance and direction. I was sent a "questionaire", of sorts, for me to complete containing specific questions about my beliefs; my lifestyle; my religious "history", if any; my "social thinking"; and, my knowledge of the Wiccan Faith, if any. I was also sent some basic information about the Wiccan Faith and it's history. I quickly saw how close to it's teachings, beliefs, practices, and "traditions" I had already been living my life up to that point in time. I simply responded by requesting that I be "accepted" as a student into the "Coven" to begin my "formal" learning and training in the Wiccan Faith. After I was "accepted" into the Coven I did not hesitate to contact the Religious Services Department at the Marion Correctional Institution, headed by a Protestant Chaplain, to have my religious "preference" in my record changed from what it was to Wicca so I would not have any "problems" receiving and possessing Wiccan Faith learning material such as books, printed materials, and cassette tapes. The Chaplain did not hesitate to grant my request and from that point forward I was a "recognized" member of the Wiccan Faith according to my prison record(s). This was in the Spring of 1979. I was the only Wiccan Faith Group member in the Marion Correctional Institution at the time and would remain so for quite some time.

The "Public Name" of the Coven was "The Temple of Wicca", headed by Lady Samantha (High Priestess) and Lord Pan (High Priest), which was located in Findlay, Ohio. It had been in existence, and functioning as a Faith Group, for a number of years prior to my "finding", and becoming a member of, it. The Temple's teachings and practices were based upon the teachings, practices, and "Traditions" of Traditional Wicca (Witchcraft) as set forth by the "Traditions" (Denominations) of Alexandrian and Gardnerian Witchcraft. The Temple's "course of study" included many other esoteric, or "Occult", subjects and delved <u>very</u> deeply into the "areas" of Parapsychology and the Paranormal.

My learning and training was <u>very</u> extensive and I advanced through various "Levels", or "Degrees". I had finally reached a point in my learning, training, and practice where I needed "in person instruction" in certain areas of my religious training by my Religious/Spiritual Leaders and I began making written requests to the Marion Correctional Institution's Religious Services Department and to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's Head Office of Religious Services at it's Central Office in Columbus, Ohio. These requests were for specific religious articles; a religiously based grooming code exemption; a quiet, private place for individual religious services/devotionals; and, services and instruction conducted by the "Ministers" of my Faith. My High Priestess and High Priest also made a number of similar, written requests on my behalf in order to "minister" to me as ministers of other Faith Groups within the prison were permitted and able to do for their respective Faith Groups, yet <u>all</u> of our requests were denied at <u>all</u> levels. For approximately four (4) years I was denied any and all opportunity to practice my Faith as members of other Faith Groups were permitted to do and the time had come for a decision to be made, the decision being to allow the "Status Quo" to remain "as is" or pursue a course of action that would force prison officials at all levels to acknowledge my First Amendment Freedom of Religion Rights and allow me to practice my Faith as members of other Faiths were permitted to do. After conferring with my High Priestess, High Priest, and other members of my Coven on a number of face-to-face visits, it was decided that I would prepare, file, and pursue a Religious Discrimination Civil Rights Violation Complaint against prison officials in Federal Court to force prison officials to allow me to exercise, and enjoy, my First Amendment Rights to Freedom of Religion. I was assured the full support of not only my Religious/Spiritual Leaders and fellow Coven Members, but the Wiccan Faith Community in the "outside world" as well once the

lawsuit was filed and the media became involved. The "fight"/battle to come was not only about my being enabled to practice my Religion/Faith as other members of other Religions/Faiths were permitted, but also whether or not the Wiccan Religion/Faith was a "bona-fide" Religion entitled to the protection of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. State of Ohio officials and State Prison Officials said that it wasn't and stood firm on that "position", but that was yet to be determined by a United States District Court Judge. Prior to the actual filing of the legal action and during the time frame of the Summer of 1979 until early 1983 when I and my Religious/Spiritual Leaders were making all of the requests on my behalf, it became well known amongst the prison guards and other staff members that I was Wiccan and practicing "Witchcraft". It was also during this time frame that the lesser forms of harassment, mistreatment, and abuse began on a regular basis.

It began with "patdown" searches of my person in the main hallway and other areas of the institution, usually by the same guards on the same work shifts. These same guards on these same work shifts would sometimes come to the cell I occupied and conduct thorough searches of the cell and my personal property. And, sometimes a search, or "shakedown", of the cell I was in would be conducted by different guards on third shift at about 2:00 A.M. or 3:00 A.M. in the early morning hours. Whenever this was done the cell would be left in total disarray. Some of my personal property and the few religious articles I possessed would be thrown in the toilet and the guards would walk away laughing about it. When I had visits from my High Priestess and High Priest and other Coven members, various upper level administrative staff would either observe us through the visiting room windows or do "walk throughs" of the visiting room and linger close to where my visitors and I were sitting so they could overhear us. My outgoing mail, especially to my High Priestess, High Priest, and other Coven members, was being closely "monitored" and/or opened before it was sent on it's way. I was informed by my mail's recepiants that it looked like the envelopes they received from me had been tampered with. These forms of harassment, mistreatment, abuse, and "scrutiny" continued throughout the Summer of 1979 to early 1983 time frame until such time that the planned legal action was initiated.

As I Defend My Walk With Her.

At age 30 I filed a Religious Discrimination Civil Rights Violation Complaint in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Eastern Division, in Columbus, Ohio on March 16, 1983. The case's "caption"/title was: WILLIAM E. MOREHOUSE v. OHIO DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION AND CORRECTIONS, et al., and the Case Number was: C-2-83-0490. I was the only "Plaintiff" and there were a number of Named Defendants including the Director of the Ohio Prison System, the Head of all Religious Services in the Ohio Prison System, and the Chaplain at the Marion Correctional Institution. As the case progressed in the Court other Prison Officials were added as Named Defendants, but the suit, as captioned, "covered" every employee of the Ohio Prison System. The filing of the lawsuit set a number of "things" into motion. First, the "networking" and rallying of support began in earnest throughout the United States and the response was beyond anything my High Priestess, my High Priest, my fellow Coven Members, and I could ever hope for. Wiccan and other Pagan publications in the "outside world" began doing articles about the lawsuit and calling for letters of support to be written to Ohio's Governor, Ohio's Director of Prisons, and the Federal Judge who had had my case assigned to him. During the course of the case, hundreds and hundreds of these letters from Wiccans and Pagans all across the United States were sent to these individuals. I personally saw stacks and stacks of them. Then, the news media picked up on the story and it became national

news and "headlines". There came a number of news media interviews. First, a reporter from the Columbus Dispatch, a major newspaper in Columbus, Ohio, came to interview me about the Federal lawsuit and my being a member of the Wiccan Faith. Next, television news "teams" began coming to the Marion Correctional Institution to interview me for news stories to be aired on News Programs on local television stations. Then, a television news "team" got in touch with my High Priestess and High Priest so a story could be done on a "Coven" and the Wiccan Faith as a whole. And, the second major "thing" that was set into motion was that the "lesser forms" of abuse, harassment, and mistreatment quickly became harsher, crueler, and more brutal. I never thought that I would ever be subjected to such things because I sought to exercise my rights as a human being.

As I Am "Tested" For My Walk With Her.

Shortly after the filing of the Federal Lawsuit against prison officials, the harassment, mistreatment, and abuse was "stepped up" and began in other more drastic, crueler, and brutal forms. The individual most responsible for this was a Deputy Warden of Custody who had been a former Warden of the old Ohio Penitentiary and who had a reputation for being one of the most cruel, brutal, and vicious prison officials that was employed by the Prison System at that time. This particular Deputy Warden was known to create small groups of prison guards, known as "Goon Squads" at the time, who would literally do his bidding without question so they could receive promotions and be given "choice" job posts/assignments on any job shift they wanted. This Deputy Warden of Custody would use his hand picked group of guards to harass, intimidate, abuse, mistreat, and brutalize specific inmates with. Not long after the filing of the Federal Lawsuit I became one of the "specific inmates" that he "targetted" and focused his attention and efforts on.

The previous "pat-down" searches of my person became "strip searches" with the "squat and cough" process included. I would be taken to the clothes closets at the end of the short hallways of the downstairs dormitories; made to strip; told to interlace my fingers and put my hands behind my head; and then ordered/forced to "squat and cough" until I was told to stop. I was forced to do this until I fell on the floor and then the guard would kick me in the stomach, backside, back, and sides. He would sometimes yell and curse at me while he was kicking me. Sometimes he would leave me locked in the closet until he thought I could move again. Then he would tell me to dress and "get going". Sometimes I could barely walk down the hall to get back to my cell and I would often pass blood for days afterwards.

The worse forms of the abuse I was subjected to were the beatings and the rat "therapy". I would be taken by the guards to a secluded area beneath the institution called "the tunnel"; made to step up on an old wooden crate; told to wrap my arms around a sometimes hot pipe so they could handcuff my hands together above my head; and, then the crate would be kicked out from under me and I would be dangling in the air with the handcuffs cutting into my wrists. Sometimes I would be blindfolded and sometimes not. It depended on who was going to be present at, or participate in, the beating. I remember recognizing some of the voices when I was blindfolded. The guards would hit me on the back and sides with a "billy-club" and then ram the end of it into my stomach and kidneys. They would yell and scream things at me like: "You f--king devil worshipping, Satanistic S.O.B! We aren't going to have you or "your kind" running around here praising or worshipping Satan! You don't need Satan. You need Jesus more than you know. You know how to make this stop. You can end all of this by dropping that lawsuit. We'll kill you down here before we let Satan and Witchcraft into this prison. You know we can do it and get away with it. Just give it up. You'll get more tired of this long before we will. Do you think that you'll ever make it out of here alive, Morehouse? Think about it. Think about your family".

The beatings seemed to last forever, but they only lasted about an hour or so. One would beat me for a while, stop for a while, and then start again. They would take turns with the "billy-club". When they got tired or felt that I had had enough, they would unlock one side of the handcuffs and I would fall to the floor and just lay there. When I could finally stand up, they would take me back upstairs and send me back to my cell hobbling and limping. Along with the hurt and pain I was experiencing, I would pass blood for days after the beatings. I have a permanent reminder of all of the beatings I was subjected to. During one of the beatings the handcuffs were starting to cut deep into my wrists and I grabbed the pipe with my hands to try to pull myself up so the handcuffs wouldn't cut so deep into my wrists. When I did that the guard with the "billy-club" slammed the club down on my hands and caught my right thumb with it. The blow shattered the thumb joint and the pain was so great that I almost passed out. They stopped after that happened and told me to stay away from the Infirmary if I knew what was good for me. They told me that <u>if</u> I went to the Informary about it they would break the "other 9". They told me to "treat" myself the best that I could and laughed about it. I took alot of aspirins and used black plastic tape and wooden sticks to "splint" my thumb. I put ice on it as often as I could. The joint of my right thumb is now very large and the thumb itself is crooked. My hands were often burned and blistered from the hot pipe I grabbed to pull myself up with. People saw my burnt and blistered hands and wondered how the palms of my hands stayed so burnt and blistered so often. They wondered but never asked about it. There were times that the palms of my hands were so burnt, blistered, and dry that they would split open and begin bleeding. I used whatever ointments and lotions I could find to help make my hands "bearable" to use. As I underwent the beatings I never cried out from the pain and I never begged or pleaded for them to stop, though I wanted <u>very</u> badly to. I never asked them for "mercy", or anything else for that matter. When the beatings started I would turn inward or focus on a "place" outside of myself where "I" could go and be safe and removed from what was taking place where I was and in "the here and now". It always seemed to anger them when I would go limp and not respond to any of what they were doing or saying to me. I had only hoped that I would live through it all until it all finally stopped. I seemed to always make it through it all. It seemed that I was never subjected to more than what I could take or endure. I never knew that the beatings and the physical effects they had on me would, in time, create other problems for, and have other effects on, me. It was a progression of effects on me that I never knew was taking place until a much, much later time. And it was only through other people pointing out things about myself to me that I came to realize that there was "something different" about me that was not for the better and was affecting major parts of my "self", my everyday life, and my relationships with my family and friends. I came to find out exactly what it was many years later.

I wasn't just taken to the "tunnel" to be beaten. There were other "things" they had in store for me. There was a secluded area just off of the main "tunnel" that was a sort of "basement" beneath the Food Services Department I would be taken to by the guards. In that area lived a large colony of rats that had been there for a long, long time. They would take me to a specific place in this area; make me strip naked; and, then force me to stand spread-eagled against a concrete wall in the dark with rats running all around me. Sometimes the guards would go there early and scatter garbage around the area to draw as many rats as they could to the area before they made me stand naked and spread-eagled against the concrete wall. There was alot of rats running around my feet and brushing up against me. All I could do was stand still and hope that the rats wouldn't start biting, or chewing on, me. The guards would make comments like: "How do you like your new furry friends? Keep going with that lawsuit and it will get a hundred times worse. Drop that lawsuit and it will all stop". They would laugh when a rat tried to climb up my leg. I almost began believing that it all would never stop until just the right person saw what was being done to me and decided to do something about it.

My "experiences" in Marion Correctional Institution's "tunnel" lasted approximately nine (9) months, from June of 1983 until March of 1984. It came to an end when a newly hired guard took it upon himself to ask me what he could do to help me. This was after he was doing a security check of the tunnel area and came across me being beaten by the other guards. I remember him seeing what they were doing to me as he was walking by. One of the other guards told him that it was none of his business and that he didn't see anything if he knew what was good for him. I saw this new guard a few days later and he asked me what was going on. I told him what I believed the reasons were and why and then he asked me if there was anything he could do to help me and I just told him that it might help if someone would call the Federal Judge who was assigned to my lawsuit and tell him what was being done to me and why. I told him who the Federal Judge was and what Federal Court my lawsuit was in and that was all. The guard did help me. In more ways than he could ever imagine. He told me later what he had said and done. On his next days off, he took his family on an out-of-town "shopping trip" to Cleveland, Ohio and while he was there he made an anonymous call to the Federal Judge. He told the Federal Judge what was going on and that he had witnessed me being beaten by guards in the tunnel beneath the prison and that he had good reason to believe that the beatings were related to my Religious Faith and the lawsuit that I had filed. He stressed to the Federal Judge that the abuse had been going on for some time in a number of ways/forms and something had to be done as quickly as possible before I was seriously injured or beaten to death. The Federal Judge assured him that he would take immediate action. The Federal Judge personally called the Warden at the time. Within a few days I was called before the Marion Correctional Institution's "Honor Placement Committee" and automatically "approved" to be sent to the Honor Dormitory, which is separate and away from the Main Stockade. Very soon after that the Warden called me into an office to talk to me about going to the Honor Dormitory. I told him that I would like very much to go there and he told me point blank that he had already "approved" me for placement there. He also told me about the call he received from the Federal Judge. The Warden told me that if he had known much sooner about what was being done to me he would have taken immediate action himself and brought in Law Enforcement to prosecute those responsible and insure that they paid for everything that they had done to me. He told me that I had more than "earned" my way to the Honor Dormitory and that if I had any further problems of any kind have him contacted and he would immediately take care of it. As I was getting ready to leave, the Warden walked over to me, put his hand on my shoulder, shook my hand with his other hand, and apologized to me for everything that the guards had subjected me to. His very last words to me were simply: "Go for the Win". I was moved to the Honor Dormitory shortly after that. The most terrible forms of the abuse and mistreatment were over, but a different kind of harassment and mistreatment began after I arrived at the Honor Dormitory.

As soon as I arrived at the Honor Dormitory, a Captain, who was in charge of the operations of the Honor Dormitory, began his own "kind"/form of Harassment of me per the "orders" of the Deputy Warden of Custody who had originally initiated all of the other abuse and mistreatment of me while I was in the Main Stockade. It focused on my hair length which was one of the major issues in the lawsuit. He simply gave me a Direct Order to comply with the hair length policy and I told him that I couldn't because of my religious beliefs and convictions. He had me placed in Disciplinary Control and wrote me a Conduct Report. I appeared before the Rules Infraction Board the very next day; was found guilty; and, given a five (5) day "sentence" of "isolation time" which was "suspended" providing that I complied with the hair length policy. After "compliance", I was returned to the Honor Dormitory. For approximately the next year or so, this particular Captain closely "monitored" my hair length by having me report to his office and "presenting myself" in the standard State Prison "uniform of the day" with the top shirt button fastened for his inspection. If I wasn't "in compliance" with the hair length policy he would give me a Direct Order to get a haircut. On one occasion he had an officer "secretly"

write me a Conduct Report for a grooming code violation. I was the only prisoner he harassed about his hair length. He regularly threatened me with "consequences" if I didn't stay "in compliance" with the grooming code regulation. After about a year of this I prepared a "Special Motion" asking the Federal Court to remove me from State Custody and place me under Federal Protection so the harassment and intimidation would stop. The Federal Court hurriedly contacted a firm of private attorneys and sent them to Marion's Honor Dormitory to see if I would accept them as my legal representation. After a lengthy meeting with them I accepted them as my legal counsel from that point onward. Up to this point, I was representing myself and preparing all of the pleadings, motions, and responses to the opposition's pleadings for filing in the Court. I was also paying my own way in regards to the postage and copying that needed to be done. I never asked anyone for any kind of funds or contributions to help with all of the "costs". I think this is one of the main reasons why I had so much outside support behind me because it was quickly "seen" that I was very sincere and serious about my Faith and being able to "practice" it. Once I had "Attorneys of Record" I thought that all of the adverse treatment would stop, but it didn't. The Captain began his harassment of me again, threatening to place me in isolation permanently, if I didn't stay in compliance with the hair length policy. He even told my work supervisor to tell me to get a haircut. I sent a second request to the Federal Court literally begging the Court to remove me from State custody and place me under the protection of the Federal Court so the harassment would stop once and for all. The U.S. Magistrate assigned to my case called an immediate meeting of all of the parties including the Director of Corrections; the Ohio Attorney General; the "new" Warden of the Marion Correctional Institution; and, my attorney. The U.S. Magistrate told them that she was inclined to schedule a hearing for the following week and grant me a Temporary Restraining Order and/or a Preliminary/Permanent Injunction to prevent them from inflicting any further punishment or mistreatment on/of me because of my refusal to go against my religious beliefs. She also "suggested" that in leiu of that, the parties could enter into an "out-of-Court" Agreement that would stop further imposition of punishment on me for refusing to go against my religious and spiritual beliefs, which is what they did. They did not like the third "alternative" that the U.S. Magistrate gave, which was that she would send armed U.S. Marshals to the Marion Correctional Institution and forcibly remove me from State custody and place me under Federal Protection through the duration of the lawsuit. And, she added that she would issue arrest warrants for anyone who stood in their way. Within a very short time, an order was issued from the Warden's Office that all efforts by staff to order and/or force me to go against my religious beliefs or comply with the grooming code was to immediately cease. And, it did. After over two (2) years of being demeaned, degraded, harassed, mistreated, intimidated, abused, and what some would say even "tortured", I was finally able to no longer be afraid of what I might suffer at the minds and hands of prison officials. The mental, emotional, physical, and "spiritual" abuse was finally over and I thought that that would be it and I would be "okay" from that point onward. At least that is what I believed. I just didn't know at the time the "other kinds" of effects and suffering I would be subject to as time passed and the case progressed. Once it started it never let up..... and still hasn't.

For well over a year I was not subject to any kind, or form, of harassment, mistreatment, or abuse by prison staff, officials, or employees. In conjunction with the two (2) "requests"/Motions I submitted to the Court for Federal Protection, there were also a number of "requests"/Motions pending for Temporary Restraining Orders and Preliminary/Permanent Injunctions against prison officials that I had filed with the Court since the very beginning of the lawsuit to stop them from doing a number of things to me. It all finally resulted in an Evidentiary Hearing being scheduled by the Federal Court for April 6, 1987 where both sides of the lawsuit would present evidence, witnesses, and testimony in support of, or against, the "issue(s)" being presented and in "dispute". Early on the morning of April 6, 1987. I was transported to the U.S. District Court in Columbus, Ohio and turned over to

the U.S. Marshals' Service after I arrived there for the hearing. During the trip from Marion, Ohio to Columbus, Ohio the CO (Correctional Officer)/guard had the radio tuned in to a Columbus, Ohio radio station, 610 WTVN, who had a "Call-In" talk show going and the topic/subject of "discussion" was me and whether or not I should be permitted/allowed to practice my Religious Faith (Wicca/Witchcraft) in prison. The CO/guard called back to me and said, "You are getting to be a famous man, Morehouse. They are doing a call-in talk show about you". And, I didn't know it at the time, but local television, radio, and newspaper news sources were preparing stories and coverage for the upcoming hearing. There were alot of news media people at the Federal Courthouse. The attorneys and witnesses for both sides were there and were prepared for the hearing. The hearing began at 9:00 A.M. and the very first "thing" that was done was that the attorney for the Defendants from the Ohio Attorney General's Office stood up and verbally conceded and stated for the record that the Religion/Faith of Wicca is/was a "valid and legitimate" Religion entitled to the protection of the First Amendment to the United States' Constitution. One of the main/major "issues" of the lawsuit was resolved and won even before the hearing really started. In a sense, it was a "historical moment" in Court, Prison, and State of Ohio history. At least that is what a local news anchor said to me a few years later when she herself did an interview with me. I wouldn't know until some time later just how much this "admission" by the State of Ohio would help members of the Wiccan Faith in the "free world" and society in the years to come. The Evidentiary Hearing lasted for two (2) days. I was the first to testify. During my testimony there were times that I almost broke down and started crying as I answered some of the questions about some of the harassment, mistreatment, and abuse I was subjected to. I was on the witness stand approximately three (3) hours. Then, my High Priestess and High Priest testified. Another High Priestess from the State of Wisconsin "testified" on my behalf through a previously obtained deposition that was solicited from Her by my attorney and the attorney for the State of Ohio. The opposition had only two (2) witnesses "against" me. Their testimony really didn't matter because one of the main "issues" had already been resolved in my favor. When the hearing was over, I was taken back to the Honor Dormitory at the Marion Correctional Institution. Another "thing" I didn't know at the time of the hearing was that media coverage of the hearing and its "subject matter" went nation-wide. I was in the national "Lime-Light" for about two or three straight days. And, not long after the hearing the reknown radio commentator Paul Harvey had included a story about me in one of his radio programs. Many people told me that they had read, seen, and heard many things about me and that alot of it was good and positive. Once the hearing was over "things" started to settle down and return to normal and an even "keel". It went this way until about January of 1988 when I appeared before Ohio's Parole Board for consideration for my possible involvement in a Work Release Program. At the hearing were some Parole Board Members who asked me a very few simple questions. Then, they told me that I would receive an answer from them "in the mail" in a few months. The answer did come. I was granted the Work Release/Furlough and would be placed in a Work Release "Center" when I was six (6) months away from my regularly scheduled Parole Board date. I left Marion Correctional Institution's "Honor Dormitory" on July 5, 1988. As I walked down the sidewalk from the front of the prison to the building I would be released from, I never looked back. When we drove away from the prison in the van, I never looked back. I just couldn't. I left alot there, and alot followed me. In many ways I could not believe that I was actually leaving the place where I went through so much and where I was told that I would never make it out of there alive because of my Religious Faith and my refusal to "drop" the lawsuit relating to it. I walked out of that prison with my head held high, joy and thankfulness in my heart, and with what seemed to be a promising future. The future. What would I encounter? What would I experience? And, where would my "Path" lead me? It didn't take long before I made these discoveries.

After arriving at the Work Release Center, I found out that I was given a "special status". I no sooner walked in and the upper level staff was conducting meetings on/about me. This was because of my Religious Faith and the pending lawsuit. It was "decided" to just sit back, observe me, and see if I went along with their program, which I did to the letter. I conformed with all of their rules and policies and earned a number of "privileges" as did everyone else. I obtained employment within walking distance of the Work Release Center and settled into a regular "routine". My Work Release Officer had to, on occasion, take me back and forth to my attorney's Office in Gahanna, Ohio to begin either preparing for an inevitable trial or a "Settlement" of the lawsuit, which is what took place. I signed the final papers for the Settlement which was basically everything I was seeking. On December 19, 1988 the documentation for the Settlement was filed with/in the U.S. District Court in Columbus, Ohio. The case was over and finalized. My Religious Faith, its members, and I had won something significant that would have an effect on the Wiccan Faith at that time and well into the future. Two (2) weeks after the filing of the Settlement/Agreement in the United States' District Court, I successfully completed my Work Release Program and was released on parole on January 3, 1989 from the Work Release Center. My father was there to pick me up and take his son home..... finally..... after visiting him in prison for so long. My father knew that "something" about me had changed, but he couldn't quite figure out what. On our way home my father finally said to me, "Bill, I know you went through some real Hell in there, but that's behind you now. Your family is here for you and I hope that whatever it was you went through hasn't taken you so far away from us that you can't find your way back to us. We still care alot about you. Just think about it before you go too far out on your own". I think that my father knew that there was going to be rough times ahead for me. He seemed to know that what I had experienced at the minds and hands of prison officials had left some very serious lasting effects on me that would come to bear on me as I sought to begin a "new life" after I was released.

"As My Walk With Her Continues....."

I returned to a world that had changed, but yet in some ways remained the same. I had to get to know people all over again and they had to get to know me..... all over again. People looked at me differently since the lawsuit and all of the media coverage surrounding it. People I met had "heard about me" and it seemed that everywhere I went there was always "that one" who would "recognize me" for some reason. I didn't mind..... except for the "throw-backs" to my experiences while being incarcerated. The memories came..... and sometimes wouldn't leave. Especially the ones which brought with them the anxiety, hurt, pain, and even fear of what I had experienced and what was to come even though there was nothing to come to me of an adverse nature. Even then, I knew there was "something" very wrong, but I didn't know what it was. I thought I was going to be "okay" and that time itself would heal me in the ways I needed most. I even thought that being away from prison would help, in and of itself, me to deal with, overcome, and be healed from all of the adverse, brutal, and cruel treatment I was subjected to for as long as I was. There was more to come for me that I was ill-prepared for. And it eventually did come to bear on me and would have as adverse effect on me that the mistreatment, abuse, brutality, and cruelty did.

My family and old friends from the past were there for me as best as they could be. They were glad that I was finally home, but there were "others" awaiting me who were literally "pulling at the bit" to have me there with them, those being my High Priestess, High Priest, Coven Members, and others of the Wiccan/Pagan Community who had heard about me and my plight; who had come to know me; and, who had supported me through the course of the lawsuit to its end. I couldn't wait to go to my Coven

for the first Wiccan "Holiday Celebration"/Sabbat Ritual that I had read so much about but had not yet experienced. I was welcomed at my Coven with open arms and open hearts. At that point I "felt" and somehow "knew" that I had found my "spiritual home and family". And my heart "knew" that all of the hard work I had done and all of the terrible things I experienced had been worth it to reach such a place in life. And during the Sabbat Ritual, I had an almost overwhelming "feeling" of being smiled upon by "someone", somewhere, and my heart of hearts knew exactly "Who" it was. It could not have been "anyone" else.....

At the Vernal (Spring) Equinox (March 21st) of 1989, I underwent my "formal" Dedication and first Initiation into the Religion/Faith of Wicca according to its ancient traditions. It was a very solemn, yet joyous, occasion. My High Priestess, High Priest, and Coven Members made it a very special and meaningful experience for me. I received a very special gift from everyone: A set of crystal Chalices to use in/for my own "holiday observances"/celebrations/rituals. It was a very, very special time. Then, on the next Wiccan holiday, Beltane (May 1st) of 1989, I received my next Wiccan Initiation that I had earned through study and practical application of traditional Wiccan teachings. I had learned and "earned" my way up to the Third and final Degree of the specific Wiccan "Tradition" (Denomination) that I was taught and trained in and that the Coven was based on. This began a new "part" of my Path and Spiritual Journey.

I became very active in the Wiccan Faith Community. I was invited to a number of other Wiccan Covens to attend their Sabbat celebrations and ritual "Circles". I attended some Wiccan Festivals/Gatherings and met some really great and wonderful people from all over the United States and Canada. I had some very profound and meaningful experiences at these Festivals/"Gatherings" with a number of those who had attended. I was again welcomed with open arms and open hearts. Many of them seemed to already know "who I was" and what, with their help, I had accomplished. A reknown Wiccan activist and Spiritual Leader from Canada thanked me profusely for what I had went through and accomplished for our Faith with a hug and tears streaming down his cheeks once he found out who was behind him in the line for the feast after the Main Ritual. I took many wonderful memories from that Festival/"Gathering" with me. I attended other Festivals/"Gatherings" as well..... as time passed. Each of them were very good and positive experiences for me. There were also occasions that I was contacted for assistance in some divorce cases where the husband was seeking full custody of minor children from the marriage by claiming that his soon to be ex-wife was unfit to have any form of custody because she was an "immoral" Devil-Worshipping Satanist..... when in fact she was just a practicing member of the Wiccan Faith. When information from my case was presented to the Court on her behalf the vindictive ex-husband-to-be was put in his "proper place" and was "lucky" to have any kind of visitation, let alone any kind of custody. This occurred every time in the divorce cases where my case was used to prove what the Wiccan Faith was truly "about". The interviews by the local news media continued as well. One of the reporters who became a very well known television news anchor told me, as she was interviewing me at my place of employment, that I had made State of Ohio "history" with the "win" in the U.S. District Court. Since it was a Federal Court case it "carried" alot of "weight" in the legal and Civil Rights "field(s)". Then, at a later time, I was contacted about doing some lectures/presentations to some groups of college students at two (2) Ohio Universities on the struggles and rights of minority Religious Faith Groups. While I was still incarcerated I never suspected that my life after release would go the course that it did. And, I never suspected that I would suffer, and eventually become a victim of, all of the effects that the abuse, mistreatment, cruelties, and brutalities I was subjected to would have on me.

When we hear about "PTSD" (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) we seem to always associate it with the military and its returning members from foreign countries where they have experienced some very terrible and horrendous experiences as they served their country and performed their duty. Far too many are suffering from this.

But PTSD isn't limited to military only related traumatic experiences. It can be the "end result" of any extremely traumatic experience, or experiences, underwent by any individual or group of individuals. I was to learn this many years later.

As time passed and my "new life" went on, I began feeling and experiencing "things" that I had never felt or experienced before. At least in the time before all of the mistreatment and abuse I had been subjected to. Some of it started as I was undergoing the worse forms of the abuse. I began having dreams/nightmares of having worse things done to me than what had actually been done. I would wake up from them sweating and shaking, sometimes crying. Oftentimes I would go to sleep at night, locked in my cell, afraid that in the middle of the night the door would suddenly open and "they" would subject me to some form of abuse. Other prisoners that I knew wondered what was "wrong" with me when I stayed in my cell alot and hardly spoke to them. I started having panic and anxiety "attacks". Sudden movements, loud noises, and someone tapping me on the shoulder or brushing up against me quickly startled me and made me "jumpy". And this was while I was still incarcerated. These "feelings and experiences" carried over into my life after I was released. I began feeling and experiencing "other things" as time went on. It seemed that I could never "relax" or feel "comfortable" anywhere even if it was when I was with family and/or friends. I avoided alot of family and friend related activities. I was either alienating myself from others or being alienated from others because of the "things" I was feeling and experiencing. And "things" in my daily life began triggering vivid memories, recollections, and "flashbacks" of a number of the "events" that I had experienced. At my place of employment I had an experience that put me in a downward spiral. A customer came in one day wearing an Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections "cap"/hat that guards/Correctional Officers (COs) wear while working in Ohio's prisons. As soon as I saw it I started to shake from the fear that came over me. I hurriedly went to the basement beneath the Shop where it was dark to get away from the person wearing the "cap"/hat and sat down on the dirt floor with my head between my knees and my arms wrapped around them. I was still shaking really bad and then the tears and sobs came. I was there for a while in the dark, alone. I didn't know who this person was or what their reason was for being at the place where I worked, but it caused all kinds of things to run through my mind and they only made me more afraid that "something" terrible and similar to what I was subjected to at Marion years earlier was "coming my way" and "in store for me" in the future. The stress and strain builded as time went on. I didn't know what was wrong; how to deal with it; or, who to go to to obtain some kind of help, advice, and guidance. It eventually reached a point where my thinking and attitude took a very bad turn for the worse and I began making some very emotionally charged decisions and it wasn't long before I found myself reoffending and returning to prison for a new offense committed while I was on parole for another one. No time was wasted in sending me back to prison. And I saw that in spite of all of the positive things I did and accomplished and all of the good, positive, and decent people I had in my life, I had been "damaged" in ways that I could not fix, repair, or renew on my own without the help of others that I truly needed.

I was returned to prison on December 3, 1991. As soon as I arrived at the prison system "Reception Center" I was placed "under investigation". Not for any suspected "criminal activity" but because of the Federal Court case I had pursued and prevailed on. As I went through "processing" I was "bounced" from cellblock to cellblock to cellblock as a form of harassment. I was hurriedly classified to Close Security Status and sent to the Close Security Institution (Lebanon Correctional Institution) in Lebanon, Ohio. I was there three (3) years and was subject to various forms of harassment by mid to upper level prison officials. When I discovered that all of my outgoing mail was being opened and "monitored" by the Institutional Investigator, without permission, or approval, of the prison system's "Central Office", I contacted the Warden about it and found myself being transfered back to the Marion Correctional Institution in Marion, Ohio a few days later. "Problem" solved..... apparently. As soon as I arrived at Marion a Deputy Warden, who knew

me, approached me after the handcuffs, "belly-chain", and "leg-irons" were removed from me and asked me point blank, "Bill, what are your intentions since you have come back here?" I knew then that I was going to be "scrutinized and monitored" for as long as I would be there. It seemed to be a case of "history repeating itself". I was also called into the Major's Office and another Deputy Warden's Office and questioned extensively. I began wondering how bad it was going to get for me there, but I found that all but one staff member who had been involved with the harassment, mistreatment, and abuse I had been subjected to the first time I was there were gone and the one remaining was very apprehensive of me and avoided me at any and all costs. He wasn't there very long after I returned there. But there was still a good number of staff members and guards there who knew about what I had went through the first time I was there. And, it was still talked about amongst the staff. There was an occasion where I was walking down the Main Hallway one day and two (2) guards/COs (Correctional Officers) were standing in the hallway talking. As I walked past them one said to the other, "There goes that poor bastard they took to the tunnel years ago and half beat to death over his religion and a lawsuit he had filed against them about it". I didn't know either guard and neither of them had worked at the Marion Correctional Institution very long. Other staff and prisoners who knew me told me through the years that they had overheard similar things being said about me. I never thought that that "part" of the prison's "history" would be kept somewhat in the "fore-front" after so many years had passed.

I had been returned to the Marion Correctional Institution on February 2, 1995. I transfered from there to the current prison (Southeastern Correctional Institution in Lancaster, Ohio) I am now incarcerated in on or about March 4, 2019. I was at Marion for 24 years on this term of incarceration. I "re-involved" myself with various legal pursuits against the Ohio Prison System and Ohio's Parole Board and was afforded a number of opportunities to provide "input" and information to a number of groups, individuals, organizations, and governmental officials regarding First Amendment Freedom of Religion and Minority Faith Group issues. In 1997, I was invited to write and submit a "paper" on religious issues for presentation to the Parliament of World Religions that was being held in Capetown, South Africa that year. My "paper" was entitled, "The Role of Government in Matters of Religion" and was part of a compilation of other submitted writings in book form that was provided to all 5,000 "delegates" that attended the Capetown, South Africa Parliament. Then, the American Friends Service Committee (the Quakers) approved me to sit on their Ohio Criminal Justice Program Committee for a term. I was the first ever Wiccan/Pagan to hold a position on this Committee. When "news" of my being appointed to this Committee reached one of the better known Wiccan/Pagan publications an article was written about it and printed in the publication and it wasn't long before I began receiving requests for information from State and Federal prisoners all across the United States. And, it wasn't just prisoners. I received requests from State and Federal Prison Officials (including Chaplains) for information about the Wiccan Faith so they could be better informed about it and allow its practice within their Institutions. I had copies of some of the most important documents from the Wicca related Federal lawsuit I had filed, and won, back in the 1980s and some other relevant, accurate information that I could provide to give a basic understanding of the Faith and its beliefs and practices. One day, I received a request from a High Priestess in Long Island, New York for this information and I forwarded a copy of it all to Her. She made numerous copies of the "packet"; named it "The Morehouse Papers"; and, sent them to groups and individuals all across the United States. What had been accomplished with the Federal lawsuit was still helping many people and was continuing to have far reaching effects. It was also during this time frame that I came by some information that started to give me some insight into the inner upheaval and ongoing "experiences" I was having. A friend who was a member of the AMVETS (American Veterans) that was at/in Marion at the time gave me a few pages of printed information that literally stopped me in my tracks after I began reading them. They were about PTSD and the symptoms and effects of it that

were experienced by people subject to it and who had underwent some extremely traumatic experiences. I read such things as "re-experiencing traumatic events"; "the sufferer having flashbacks, nightmares, obsessive recollections, and intrusive thoughts"; "avoidant behaviors"; "hyper-arrousal"; "easily startled and 'jumpy'"; "avoiding experiences or people that trigger memories of the event(s)"; "nervousness, over-reaction to sudden noises"; "difficulty sleeping"; "night sweats and nightmares at the same time"; "bouts of rage and/or depression"; "difficulty relating emotionally to others"; "isolation from others"; and, "feelings of extreme alienation and meaninglessness". It further stated, "In extreme cases, symptoms can include persistent thoughts of murder and/or suicide. Symptoms can vary in severity and take months, or even years, to develop. And, unless a proper diagnosis is made and appropriate treatment is given, the sufferer's life will remain an uncertainty and eventually become an "on again, off again" state of hopelessness, despair, and diminished sense of direction and worth". I just sat there deflated and wondering, "Is this what it is with me?" My friend simply said, "Bill, I've seen some of these things in you and some people that we both know have pointed some things out to me about you. You have some serious thinking to do and decisions to make. I hope for good things for you. You're a good guy and don't deserve the things that you are going through". I didn't know what to say or do. I just could not bring myself to go to prison officials for any kind of "help". I firmly believed that I could never trust them for anything..... much less "help" for the after-effects of what had been done to me by other prison officials years before. I just started avoiding "the issue(s)" and turned inward to just suffer in silence.

In 1979, during my first term of incarceration at the Marion Correctional Institution, I was part of a group of prisoners that composed, prepared, and filed a Class Action Lawsuit in Federal Court regarding the terrible and deplorable overall conditions that existed at Marion at the time. It resulted in a "Stipulated Judgment" that was "overseen" by Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law who was also Legal Counsel on behalf of all prisoners at Marion. After many years of "half-hearted" attempts of "compliance" with the Stipulated Judgment, prison officials sought to have the "Stipulated Judgment" lifted and I was part of the effort by our attorneys to keep this "Judgment" in place and in full force and effect because without it the conditions we sought to change would revert back to what they were, or even worse, without this "oversight". I was one of the prisoners who testified in Federal Court to attempt to keep this "over-sight" in place but it was eventually lifted. It was during these proceedings that I met the Law Professor of Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law and became friends with him, and even though the proceedings ended the way they did, we stayed in fairly close contact.

At the end of the year 2000, President Clinton signed into Law the Religious Land Use/Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 that afforded greater First Amendment Freedom of Religion rights to all, but most especially to Institutionalized Persons. A number of lawsuits were filed by Minority Faith Groups against various level Ohio Prison Officials in the same Federal Court in Columbus, Ohio where my Wicca related case had been filed. The Federal Court consolidated all of the cases into one because they raised similar claims of violations of the "New Law". The same Law Professor and the Ohio State University's College of Law were appointed to represent all of the cases that had been consolidated. The State of Ohio raised the claim that this "New Law" was unconstitutional and firmly maintained this position. A number of other States sided in with Ohio. The consolidated case(s) was to eventually go to the United States Supreme Court for a final determination on the major issue presented. In early March of 2005 while the case was still pending in the U.S. Supreme Court, I received a call from the OSU Law Professor at the Law College in regards to my going on National Television and being interviewed by the PBS News Reporter Tim O'Brian for the PBS program "Religion and Ethics Newsweekly". Mr. O'Brian and a PBS camera crew came to the Marion Correctional Institution from Washington D.C. to conduct an hour long interview with me about: My Religious Faith and the lawsuit associated with it; The plight of Minority Faith Groups throughout America's prisons; And,

the case and its issues that the OSU Law Professor was preparing/presenting in the U.S. Supreme Court. A segment of the interview was aired on the PBS Program, "Religion and Ethics Newsweekly" on March 25, 2005, Episode #830 entitled, "U.S. Supreme Court and Prisoners' Religious Rights". A few months later the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 8 to 1 that the challenged law is/was Constitutional and opened the door to affording prisoners and other Institutionalized Persons greater and more expanded Freedom(s) of Religion. The case's name/"title" was, "CUTTER v. WILKINSON". Some months later, I learned that all nine (9) Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court viewed my hour long PBS interview in its entirety as it was considering this case. I was very glad to have been a part of "something" so important, influencial, and "far-reaching".

In 2000/2001 after President Clinton signed this "Act" into law, something significant happened at the Marion Correctional Institution then. The first ever Wiccan Service (Sabbat Ritual) was "approved" and allowed to be held/conducted there by "outside" Wiccan clergy. Wiccan High Priestess Lady Feather, High Priestess of the Coven of the Sacred Moon, came to Marion to lead and conduct the Beltane (May 1st) Sabbat for the Wiccan Faith Group at Marion at the time. She had begun a "Prison Ministry" specifically for Wiccan and Pagan Ohio prisoners and was already entering other Ohio prisons to provide information, advice, and Spiritual guidance to not only Wiccan and Pagan prisoners, but also to prison officials as well. She was the very first Wiccan High Priestess to enter Ohio's prisons on behalf of Wiccan and Pagan prisoners and greatly contributed to the establishment of the Wiccan Faith in Ohio's Prison System. This opened the door for many other things that subsequently helped Ohio's Wiccan prisoners to continue learning and growing in their Faith. A very good friend and Wiccan brother of mine named Mike and myself were chosen to lead and facilitate the Wiccan Faith Community at Marion. We worked closely with "outside" Wiccan clergy; networked with other "outside" groups and individuals; and, did our very best to insure that the needs of the Wiccan Faith Community at Marion were met as completely as possible under the circumstances. Eventually other High Priestesses would come to Marion to teach, advise, and conduct services for members of the Wiccan Faith Community for years. Even today the Wiccan Faith Community at Marion continues to "function" and has outside "volunteers" to teach, advise, guide, conduct services for, and share fellowship with the Wiccan prisoners of Marion. It was once emphatically and adamantly "proclaimed" at Marion many years ago that the Wiccan Faith would never be allowed to be practiced, or even exist, in the Marion Correctional Institution. It was by virtue of a hopeful and faithful heart that this "proclaimation"/"admonishment" never came to be. What did come to be was that a Minority Faith Group (Wicca) was granted the recognition and protection it deserved, and was allowed to be established and practiced throughout Ohio's Prison System just as other Faith Groups have been permitted in the past and up to and including the present. I listened to and followed my heart. I would listen to and follow it yet again and again just as I did the first time to continue accomplishing the "tasks" and goals that I set for myself and that was set for me by "others".

"As I Remain At Her Side Even Now"

I have spoke of a number of "experiences" I have underwent in relation to my Religious Faith and "other involvements" I have been a part of, but I have not yet spoke about "experiences" I have had in relation to my obtaining my freedom and how I have been treated by those who have the power and authority to grant it.

I was at the Marion Correctional Institution for 24 years during this term of incarceration. The last 6 to 6½ years of that time I was in "their" Minimum Custody Facility called "Marion Correctional Camp". To date, I have had Minimum Custody status for over eight (8) years. I have appeared before the Ohio Parole Board twelve (12) times for parole/release consideration. Each time I was "assessed" additional

time to serve before my next parole hearing. The same "reason(s)" and "rationale" has been used by the Ohio Parole Board over and over and over again to "validate" and justify the repeated "continuances". At my last eight (8) parole hearings I have been "assessed" (given) "continuances" two (2) years in length to serve before my next parole hearing. In other words, I have been given eight (8) consecutive two (2) year continuances in a row, one right after another. I have not been given any conduct reports for any rule violations ever. I have participated in, and completed, many educational and rehabilitative programs. I have been given above average work evaluations from all of my institutional job assignments. I have outside support from family, friends, and others. I have outside resources to assist me with re-entering society and becoming a productive and contributing member of it. And, I have always had a place to live and employment opportunities available to me. I have never been involved with, or a part of, any illicit activities that are commonplace within prisons. And, most importantly, I have always truly expressed the remorse and sorrow from my heart that I have for all who have been affected by the offenses I have committed. In spite of my exemplary prison record and "history" I am kept in prison for reasons I and many others can only speculate on. At a number of my parole hearings my Faith/Religion and the Federal lawsuit associated with it has always been brought up. At one of my recent parole hearings one of the Parole Board Members had the audacity to ask me how many High Priestesses I knew across the United States and if I was "romantically involved" with any of them. It would seem that my Faith/Religion; my involvement in/with it; and, the people I know who are members in it are all "factors" that are being used and considered to deny me parole at all of my parole hearings. After being denied parole so many times some attorneys who specialize in parole proceedings were retained to begin presenting a case for parole for me at any and all future parole hearings I may have. At my initial "interview"/meeting with the attorneys I provided them with extensive information and documentation about my offense(s); my institutional conduct and work record(s); my "parole plans"; employment opportunities; and, my educational and rehabilitative program participation, involvement, and completion. After informing me that they "knew" all about my Religious Faith; my devoted involvement in/with it; and, the Federal lawsuit associated with it, I told them the "whole story" about everything including all of the harassment, mistreatment, and abuse I went through as the result of it. They listened very closely and intently as I told them about all of the various kinds of abuse I endured. They later determined that I was suffering from extreme, untreated PTSD from all of the beatings and other abuse I had been subjected to at Marion many years before. In the "Parole Packet" they submitted to the Ohio Parole Board on my behalf, they pointed out, and strongly argued, it had been a major contributing factor of my re-offending and that I had been suffering from it since before I had been released on parole. The Parole Board questioned me extensively about it at my next parole hearing. They didn't seem to care if I was receiving any kind of counseling or treatment for it. They never even bothered to ask about it. They just adhered to their "norm" and gave me additional time to serve like they did all of the other times I appeared before them. At all of my parole hearings I have always been subjected to verbal and mental abuse by various Parole Board Members. I just sat there taking it without responding to it in any way. In January of 2022 I will appear before the Ohio Parole Board for my 13th parole hearing after completing the latest two (2) year continuance I was given at my last parole hearing. Nothing will have changed except that I will be two (2) years older. People that I know both inside and outside of prison have told me that they firmly believe the main reason(s) I am being continuously denied parole is because of: my being Wiccan; my Federal lawsuit and other legal proceedings I have been involved in/with; my being part Native American (Blackfoot) and my having extremely long hair; and, my refusal to "bow" to "them" and remain silent about the many civil and human rights violations "they" commit against prisoners here on a regular basis. I am coming to think, feel, and believe that this just may be so.

I am at a new place called the "Southeastern Correctional Institution" in Lancaster, Ohio. The prison staff are very punitive minded towards the prisoners here.

I have never seen such a place where the officials and staff do so much to make the lives of the prisoners as miserable as possible and punish the majority for all of the "transgressions" that the minority of prisoners here do. They abuse and mistreat the older and elderly prisoners in ways that are just so wrong. There is a small Wiccan Faith Community at this place that is regularly discriminated against and mistreated even though it is supposed to be afforded the recognition and protection that all other Religious Faith Groups are supposed to be afforded. Even the Muslims, Jews, and Catholics are subject to this same treatment. I have been here about two (2) years and have seen many things that troubles me, saddens me, and hurts my heart. I practice my Faith Solitary as I have been taught to do under the circumstances. I continue to maintain contact with Wiccans and High Priestesses in the "free world" all across the United States. They continue to strengthen and inspire me in ways that I need most.

I continue my "Walk" with the Goddess Diana in the ways I think She means me to. I "kiss my hand" to Her whenever I catch sight of the Moon..... in any "phase" ..... to honor Her. I am content and comforted in the knowing that She has always been with me through the easiest as well as the most difficult of times even though it may have seemed at times She wasn't. I believe there are yet more "trying" and "difficult" times ahead for me as I continue my "Walk" with Her, but I know that She will always be with me to guide me along my way. She has smiled on me many times throughout my life and my heart tells me She always will..... and I am glad.

About The Writer

This Writing/Narrative, entitled, "As I Walk With The Goddess Diana: The Plight of a Pagan Heart", has been written by a 68 year old man who has spent approximately 45 years of his life in prison. It has been a "work" of love as well as of pain. Most of his family and close friends have passed away since he has been incarcerated. He has never been married and has no children. He is only a High School Graduate who has self-educated himself and is reasonably well read. He has always been interested in Folklore, Ancient History, Anthropology, Archaeology, and Mythology most of his life. He has not allowed the "snares" of prison life and his many years of incarceration to "bind and shackle" him from reaching long, hard, and far across prison walls and fences to "connect" with those who were willing to give him a chance and share a part of their heart(s), loves, thoughts, feelings, interests, and beliefs with him in spite of where he was/is.

This Writing/Narrative relates more than just a "story" of the prison and life experiences of the writer and his individual and Spiritual "journey". It is a "testimony" to/of how prisoners had their Civil, Constitutional, and Human Rights violated by prison officials for asserting these Rights and seeking redress in a Court of Law. And, it reveals how specific prisoners were treated simply because they were different socially, racially, culturally, and religiously.

This is the Writer's "story" and he can but hope that it will "speak" to the hearts of those who may read it and prompt them to offer an understanding and compassionate "hand" back in return.

DATE: February 17, 2021

William E. Morehouse

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