The late 1990’s saw the rise of racist paganism to become one of the most dynamic religious expressions of the white power culture. This fact should not mislead the reader to assume that racism is inherent in paganism or that all pagans are racists. The invention of the classificatory categories “race” and “nation” are products of modernity and were, probably, unknown to the pagan cultures of pre-Christian Europe. Pagans of today, however, live in social realities long governed by these classificatory categories as organizing principles and hence impossible to avoid. In fact, a perennial conflict among today’s pagans involves different understandings of what paganism is and for whom a certain tradition is appropriate. Is it necessary to be an American Indian to practice Native American religion or could anybody become a shaman? May an African American be part of an Asatrú guild or is Norse religion only for those claiming a Northern European ancestry? On this issue, today’s paganism has taken three distinct positions: a non-, or even anti-racist position, an explicitly racist and an ethnic position.

To illustrate with Asatrú or Odinism, the pagan milieus involved with reviving the pre-Christian traditions of northern Europe. Nonracist Asatrú is a polytheist spiritual path that welcomes any genuinely interested person irrespective of race or ethnicity. Dismissing nonracist Asatrú as an effeminate new age corruption, the racist position defines Asatrú/Odinism as an expression of the Aryan racial soul and hence an exclusive creed open to whites only. In fact, many, but not all, adhering to the racist position prefer terming their warpath of spiritual politics “Odinism” or the Germanic “Wotanism” rather than risk being lumped together with nonracist Asatrúers. Attempting to get beyond the issue of race, the third position defines Asatrú as an ethnic religion, native to northern Europe and therefore “natural” to Americans of northern European ancestry. The notion of an “organic” link between ethnicity and religion obviously implies an assumption that genetics somehow determine the spiritual disposition of man. Accordingly, although most take exception to racism, adherents of the ethnic position share certain presuppositions with racist paganism. This unresolved element of
philosophical ambiguity has left ethnocentric Asatrú open to criticism from both nonracist and racist pagans. Simultaneously being denounced as racists and race-traitors, ethnic Asatrúers argue that they are neither, insisting that partisans should leave their politics out of pagan activities. Numerically, the nonracist position seems to be the strongest, although there are no reliable statistics available. The reader is encouraged to keep this in mind during the following presentation of racist paganism. As much as the activities of Christian Ku Klux Klan activists do not make all Christians racists, the existence of racist pagans should not taint all pagans. 

The surge of racist paganism is related to a process of radicalization of the white power culture. As such, it is a continuation of the refutation of Christianity that took hold in the Aryan underground in the 1980s. Similar to the iconoclastic rhetoric of Creativity, many racist pagans single out Christianity as a key to the perceived demise of white power and Western civilization. Racist pagans tend, however, to be dissatisfied with the basically atheist outlook of the Church of the Creator. Opting to replace Christianity with an alternative native to

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1 Creativity is the brainchild of Ukrainian born Florida realtor Ben Klassen (1918–1993), self-appointed Pontifex Maximus of the Church of the Creator (COTC), founded in 1973. Though basically an atheist, Klassen observed that religion has been a constant feature of all known cultures of man and concluded that the only feasible choice was between “bad” and “good” religion, defined according to their role in promoting racial loyalty and survival in a hostile world. “What is good for the White Race is the highest virtue, what is bad for the White Race is the highest sin”. The white man, Klassen taught, needs to realize that “(a) We are embroiled in a racial war for survival on this Planet Earth. (b) All mud races are our enemies in this fight for survival. (c) The Jews are leading and orchestrating this war against us; and (d) The Christian Churches are their most ardent ally and most potent weapon”. Christianity was to Klassen a “Jewish creation”, “designed to unhang and derange White Gentile intellect” by promoting suicidal advices to ‘love your enemy’, ‘turn the other cheek’ and ‘compassion’ for the weak; a “theology of mass insanity” based on superstitious beliefs in “spooks in the sky” and unsubstantiated theories about life beyond death. Klassen outlined the basic creed of Creativity in the three “holy books”, Nature’s Eternal Religion (1973), the White Man’s Bible (1981) and Salubrious Living (1982) and a rich production of secondary writings. In line with the general heath fad of the 1980’s, Klassen issued a “salubrious living” program. To secure a wholesome life free from cancer and other diseases, Klassen prescribed fasting, physical exercise, sufficient resting and a fruitarian diet of organically grown uncooked and unprocessed fruits, vegetables, grains and nuts. Issuing the battle cry RaHoWa (Racial Holy War), Klassen hoped that his healthy racist elite would ignite a world wide white revolution to “expand the White Race, shrink the colored races, until the White Race is the supreme inhabitant of the earth”. The realities of the Church of the Creator stand in sharp contrast to the grandiose visions of its Pontifex Maximus. Investing a substantial part of his personal fortune, Klassen in 1982 established a “World Creativity Center” at Otto in the Blue Ridge Mountains