

Spiritual Essence: 10 Spiritual Internet Resources for Queers

Spiritual seekers are increasingly taking their quests for wisdom into cyberspace, says a recent report. Nearly two-thirds of all Americans online have used the Internet for religious purposes, according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project's "Faith Online" study released in April.

Although most Internet users sought information about their own religion, about 26 percent of the online faithful have used the Internet to seek or exchange information about the faith of others. The spiritual surfers said they did so out of curiosity, but some also sought information about other faiths out of a desire to grow spiritually.

While the Pew Internet study didn't specifically track the responses of gay and queer Internet users, there is no shortage of fascinating pit stops for the queer cyber surfer. Here are ten of my favorites. Enjoy

1. Gay Spirituality & Culture gayspirituality.typepad.com

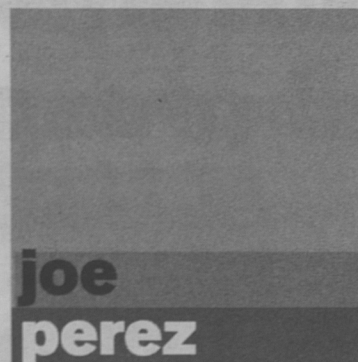
Here's a website with fresh writing on gay culture and spirituality on a regular basis. It's a weblog (or blog, an online journal) by independent writers who share a common vision for including spirituality and inner growth in the conversation about what it means to be gay.

There are currently eight contributors to the blog, including men from Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, neo-pagan, and other faith traditions. One of the contributors is Joe Kort, author of the popular book *10 Smart Things Gay Men Can Do to Improve Their Lives* (Note: I'm the founder and one of the writers, so I'm definitely biased. But if you ask me, it's worth a visit.)

2. White Crane Journal www.whitecranejournal.com

The White Crane Journal is a quarterly magazine that's been around for about 15 years. It was founded based on the belief that gay men have a unique and wonderful spirituality to share with each other and the world.

Unfortunately, the website doesn't have many articles online, so you will need to sub-



scribe to read most of the wisdom (it's definitely worth the price). You can find sample articles online, plus a forum where you can connect with other spiritual gay and queer men. There's also one of the largest and best directories of links you'll find anywhere.

3. Planet Out: Spirituality www.planetout.com

To find this site, go to the popular PlanetOut site, click the People tab, and then click Spirituality. There are some articles and news links (many with a pop culture angle), but nothing too deep. A recent feature included personal stories of how average gay people reconciled with their religion.

Probably the main attraction here is the forums. There are discussion boards where you can connect with gay and queer people of many faiths: Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Pagan, Buddhist, and so forth. This is a great place to ask those silly questions you're too embarrassed to ask your friends.

4. Independent Gay Forum www.indegayforum.com

Includes a large collection of essays on homosexuality, religion, and culture. Paul Varnell is one of the regular contributors, and he has posted several essays that explain how arguments against homosexuality from the Bible reflect bad scriptural interpretation.

These writings often have a slightly "conservative" bent, since these writers share a common belief that gays should not support radical social change or the restructuring of society.

Still, there's a diversity of perspectives, including religious and secular gays, and a common effort to counter the claims of the religious right.

5. GaySpiritual.Net www.gayspiritual.net

Offers an Internet directory with especially strong links in the areas of pagan spirituality and sacred sexuality. If you can get past the loud color scheme and background music, it's worth a look. The author of the site ranks some sites and offers his opinions, so this is a good directory if you want commentary along with your tour.

6. Easton Mountain www.eastonmountain.org

These three well-regarded organizations offer workshops, retreats, and intentional communities for gay men. Easton Mountain, for instance, is the home of an interfaith intentional community and retreat center for men who love men. It offers Gay Spirit Camp in the summer, which is exactly what the name suggests.

9. Gay Buddhist Open Forum groups.yahoo.com/group/gbof

There are also dozens of Internet discussion groups related to gay spirituality. Here are two that I especially recommend. For gay men with an interest in Buddhism or meditation, the Gay Buddhist Open Forum is an excellent resource. Beginners are welcome.

Gays with an interest in mysticism should also check out the popular Gay Mystics list. This is a more helpful resource if your interest is in interfaith or Eastern mysticism rather than Christian mysticism, though all are welcome.

In addition to these ten sites, there are many others for gays from particular faith traditions.

Here are a few good starting points for Jews, Pagans, Muslims, and Christians.

The World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews gltjews.org

gltjews.org is an umbrella organization that includes more than 65 Jewish organizations from around the world. There's also a list of resources and links to related sites you can explore.

Radical Faeries www.radfae.org

Radfae.org is a most excellent site for queer pagans, particularly those who identify with the Radical Faerie movement. It's one of the largest sources of information and links about Radical Faeries, the spiritual group founded by Harry Hay for queer men with strong pagan leanings.

Al-Fatiha Foundation www.al-fatiha.net

The Al-Fatiha Foundation is an organization for gay Muslims. The web site provides lots of valuable resources including events, discussion groups, mailing lists, and personals where Muslims can connect.

Whosoever www.whosoever.org

Whosoever (www.whosoever.org) is an online magazine dedicated to the spiritual growth of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Christians. Under the guidance of editor Candace Chellew, the editorial quality is excellent, making this a must-see site for Christians.

Whether you want to deepen your spiritual growth or just satisfy your curiosity, there are many online resources just for gay and queer folks to choose. ▼

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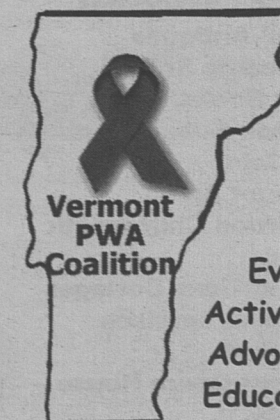
HIV/AIDS PROGRAM info

To learn more about:

- HIV testing
- Benefits of knowing your HIV status
- Treatment, support and counseling options

Call Vermont AIDS Hotline:

1-800-882-AIDS



Events
Activities
Advocacy
Education
Networking
Buyer's CO-Op

Vermont People
With AIDS Coalition
P.O. Box 11
Montpelier, VT 05601

in Vermont
800-698-8792
or 802-229-5754

Burlington Area Consumer
Advocate: 802-324-1507