

Halloween's Pagan Origins

[Original headline: Halloween's Pagan Origins Are Pretty Scary, Kids]

Is Halloween more than a goofy night for candy and costumes? Those evangelical Christians who bemoan it as a pagan holiday know what they're talking about. The authority for that assertion is none other than proudly pagan Gerina Dunwich, a self-professed witch of 25 years' standing. Dunwich, of Los Angeles, explains the spiritual significance of Oct. 31 in her new paperback, "The Pagan Book of Halloween" (Penguin).

Much to the author's regret, Europe's "old religion" of pre-Christian times and worship of various nature deities--she lists 43 goddesses and 21 gods around the world--was supplanted over the centuries by devotion to the one God of the Bible. Or, as Dunwich would have it, "the Christians' patriarchal god."

Today, with networking assists from the Internet, the ancient creed is being reconstituted by seekers, occultists and feminists. In his Encyclopedia of American Religions, J. Gordon Melton catalogues dozens of groups, some defunct and none sizable, that practice "Neo-Paganism," "magick," witchcraft or Wicca, and related forms of worship. Long ago, Dunwich writes, the church counteracted the pagans by Christianizing their old rituals. Since the pagans had their festival of the dead, the 7th-century papacy introduced All Saints' Day to honor early Christian martyrs. In 900, the date of All Saints' Day was switched from May 13 to Nov. 1, in line with the pagan date of Oct. 31. For pagans, that was the holiest night of the year, the point when the connection to supernatural forces was strongest and the barrier between the living and the dead was weakest. In the British Isles, Oct. 31 was the pagan Samhain, or "summer's end." For Christians, the night before All Saints' was Allhallows Eve, which evolved into "Halloween."

By Dunwich's account, virtually all our associations with Halloween are rooted in pagan ritual: Nighttime in general; bats, cats, spiders, broomsticks, skeletons, ghosts, goblins, cauldrons and masquerades; trick-or-treating (recalling deeds of mischievous spirits); jack-o'-lanterns (to scare away earthbound ghosts); and bobbing for apples (drawn from an old divination rite). Even the black and orange color scheme is symbolically pagan: black for death and magic, orange for harvest time.

Dunwich says 19th-century Irish immigrants brought to America the pagan holdovers that constitute what we think of as Halloween. At the same time, other immigrants were introducing Santa Claus, decorated trees and other non-Christian add-ons to create the modern American Christmas. For Halloween, the Irish drew upon lore of the pre-Christian Celtic peoples and their priestly caste, the Druids. Theirs was a lusty and sometimes sinister creed. Druids are thought to have burned to death prisoners of war and criminals on the holy night. Sometimes horses, oxen and especially cats would be roasted alive as sacrifices, too. The purpose was not just to appease the deity of the dead but also to foretell the future by the way victims died.

In one legend, every seven years a dark-skinned race stole children and sacrificed them to their god. Another said townspeople were required to surrender two-thirds of their children to a feared race of gods every Nov. 1.

Is that the inspiration for those Halloween slasher films? Perhaps, but Dunwich emphasizes that modern Neo-Pagans have not revived such ancient traditions. As for lust, she writes that some Wiccans still perform "the Great Rite" at Halloween, sacred copulation between the high priestess and high priest of a coven. This rouses "magickal energy" and represents the sacred union of "the Goddess and Her consort, the Horned God," a masculine personification of "the Life Force" that dies each year on this night. But Dunwich says the act "is normally carried out in private" and that many prefer instead to enact it symbolically.

And today's Neo-Pagans believe in Eastern religions' teaching of reincarnation, an endless sequence of lives with one's fate determined by karma, the accumulation of positive and negative deeds. For that reason, she reports, wise pagans no longer practice black magic.

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HALLOWEEN PAGANISM

Halloween originated from the witch and warlock religions of Britain, France, Germany, and the Celtic countries. The practicing witches, called druids, lived 100 years before the incarnation of Christ.

The celebration of "Hallow's Eve" honored the pagan Celtic god Samhain, the lord of the dead. The celebration was held on the last day of October, the Eve of the Celtic New Year. On Hallow's Eve Samhain was supposed to call all of the wicked dead back from the prison of hell, and place them in lower animal bodies (dogs, cats, wolves, bats, etc.). The Celts felt that if they pleased Samhain with their worship, then he in turn would protect them from these resurrected demons.

Judaism and Christianity ignored Hallow's Eve because of its Satanic overtones. The worship of Hallow's Eve nearly died out until the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (100 AD). He built a Temple of the Dead to appease the druids. The Temple gave the people a reason to start backing the festival again. Rome went through a series of battles until Rome itself fell under barbarian conquerors. By 607 AD the Roman emperor Phocas recaptured the city. From the time Rome first fell until 607 AD, the Church of Christ had moved into Catholicism. Phocas wanted to insure [that] Rome remained a part of the Roman empire, so he gave the city to Pope Boniface IV. Boniface reconsecrated the Temple of the Dead, dedicating it to Mary, the "Mother of God".

It was a long standing policy of the Catholic Church to avoid making religious waves among the pagans. The Catholics began to wrongly equate physical growth with spiritual growth, so they would modify Church doctrine in an attempt to make it more pleasing to the pagan. "Certainly", the bishops reasoned, "If the pagan joins the Church, they will be converted to Christ in time". Actually their tactic had the reverse effect, and the Church doctrine became more and more muddled by pagan influence. When the city of Rome was given to Boniface IV, he decided to allow worship of Samhain to continue as long as the pagans joined the Church. The legacy of Boniface and Samhain is that many Catholic Christians, even today, light candles and pray for the dead, just as the druids did nearly 1400 years ago. The Catholics, rather than praying to Samhain, pray to Mary, the Mother of God. This practice, fermented out of the warped religions of the druids, finds no support in the Holy Bible. The druids day of worship, Hallow's Eve, was modified to be called All Saints Day.

For two centuries the yearly celebration of the dead was called "All Saints Day", and was held on the last day of October. In 834 AD the celebration was moved to November 1st, though it still retained the name of All Saints Day. As I said before, deluded Catholics still pray to

Mary (just as the druids prayed to Samhain) for the souls of the dead. Their reasoning is that, since Mary was Jesus' mother, surely she'll convince Jesus to let these unrepentant souls into Heaven. The Bible, however, makes it plain that you can only be saved if you accept Jesus as Savior while you are in this life:

Acts 4:10-12 "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

WHY THE CHILDREN SHOUT 'TRICK OR TREAT'

The most effective ploy that Satan ever uses is to try and deceive as much of Christianity as is possible using the same trick in different ways. The Catholic Church, by allowing pagan ritual and worship, followed Samhain worship under the guise of All Saints Day. But what about the Reformed Protestant Church?

Ancient druidism had another practice that, up to now, we haven't discussed. The druids demanded human sacrifice in order to show "proper respect" for Samhain. In order to accomplish this, the druids went from castle to castle and demanded women so that they could be sacrificed. The women were then taken to sacrificial altars and killed (one of the most prominent areas we know of today for human sacrifice was Stonehenge in England). If the sacrifice was willingly given, the druids left a hollow gourd outside of the castle walls filled with burning human fat. This burning fat was supposed to protect the castle from demonic attack. If the druids were refused the sacrifice, they drew a hexagram on the door or wall of the castle and left. Before dawn someone in the castle would be found dead from fear.

This practice of going "door to door" eventually found it's way into society as a form of Halloween ritual. The earliest settlers in America encouraged their children to go door to door shouting "Trick or Treat", little knowing that they were mimicking ritualized murder of days gone by. The children were given fruit, much like the druids were given human sacrifices. If the children were refused a treat, they were allowed to play a little "trick" on the household. Parents put candles inside of pumpkin gourds (just as the druids put human fat inside of hollow gourds) to commemorate Halloween. By making it all seem like harmless fun, Satan drew both Catholic and Protestant, believer and unbeliever into the web of druidic paganism.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH A LITTLE INNOCENT FUN?

Most people, even strong Christian believers, defend Halloween as only "A little innocent fun for the kids". It may be innocent, but is it fun to mimic (however unknowingly) devil worship, female sacrifice, and witchcraft? Once the Christian household allows paganism into it's midst, then how much harder is it for Satan to get us involved in real druidism? The Ouija board, seemingly harmless, is no less than a familiar spirit:

Leviticus 20:6-7 "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God."

Deuteronomy 18:10-13 "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God."

The question that the Christian must ask his or her self is this: "Do I want to play Satan's game? Do I want to participate in a festival that originates from human sacrifice and demon worship? What do I want my children to learn?" Take a hard look at these questions and the evidence presented: your spiritual condition (as well as that of your children) may well depend on your answer.

Are there alternatives to Halloween? Absolutely! Many Churches have begun promoting "Fall Festivals" on Halloween night. The festivals are held at Church, children are offered Christian activities and adults have valuable time in which to fellowship with each other. Other Christians use Halloween night as a time to take their children out to eat, to skate, to a clean movie, or just to spend quality time with them. You do not need to deprive your children of fun in order to avoid Satan's traps. Christians may even use Halloween as an opportunity to witness to the "visitors". Rather than decorating your yard with ghosts and ghouls, focus on the Christian theme of love and salvation through Jesus. If you feel compelled to give out "treats" to the children, give out salvation tracts as well while telling the children about your Savior. Reclaim the night for Jesus!

John Stanko states, (New Wine Magazine, 1984):

SHOULD CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN?

"Every October 31, Christian parents face a number of questions about Halloween, such as, "Should we allow our children to be out trick or treating?" and Should we answer the door and give out candy or tracts? " Without a sufficient knowledge of Halloween's history and what the Bible says, it is difficult for a Christian to adequately answer these and other questions about participation in Halloween.

The celebration of what we know as Halloween dates back to before the time of Christ. In the Celtic countries of Britain, Germany, and France, the Druids (the priests and teachers of the Celts) set aside October 31 to honor Samhain, the lord of the dead. At this time of year the crops were harvested and it was a time of general decay. The day honoring Samhain highlighted the gloom and cold of the coming season. The Celts believed that Samhain assembled all the souls of the dead on October 31, the eve of the Celtic new year. This freed them to return to their homes, where their families were to entertain them. If they didn't find an acceptable welcome the spirits would cast spells or cause other problems for the living (the first form of trick or treat) To prepare for the arrival of these spirits the Druids built huge bonfires, sacrificing animals, crops, and even humans. This fire was also used for divinations (they studied the remains of the sacrificed animals). During this ritual, many people wore costumes made of animal heads and skins. When the Romans conquered the Celts, they combined the festival to Samhain with their own festival honoring Pomona, the goddess of fruit and trees, making apples and nuts an important part of the rituals. Despite the prevalence of Christianity this pagan rite continued. The Irish held parades to honor Muck Olla, one of their gods. A leader wearing a white robe and an animal head marched at the head of the parade. Those who followed him asked for food to help celebrate the October 31 festival, punishing farmers who refused to cooperate (another form of trick or treat). Bonfires raged throughout Wales, Scotland, England on October 31. In the year 834 Pope Boniface IV moved the church feast of All Saints' Day (also known as All Hallows'

Day) from May to November 1 to counter this growing pagan rite. October 31 naturally was called All Hallows' Evening - eventually abbreviated Halloween.

In medieval times satanic witches took Halloween as an opportunity to mock the saints of the church commemorated on All Saints' Day. The witches supposedly flew on broomsticks accompanied by black cats (also believed to be a type of witch). In later years the poor in England went door to door for food on November 2, All Souls' Day. Beggars received "soulcakes" in return for their promise to pray for the dead of that household. In America however, because of the strong religious convictions of the early settlers, Halloween celebrations were banned. In the early 1800's, as more immigrants of Celtic origin arrived, Halloween celebrations were instituted.

Despite the contemporary decline in trick or treating (perhaps because of dangers such as poisoned candy) Halloween lives on. School parties, the media, and peer pressure all serve to make Halloween a fun and necessary time in children's eyes. Christian parents face extreme difficulty in deciding what their family should do about the annual celebration.

Considering Halloween's origins, it should not be difficult to establish a Scriptural position on the holiday. Deuteronomy 18:9-12 states: *"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee."*

As Christians seek to make a firm decision regarding participation in Halloween, it is important to keep in mind that believers are called to:

1. "Be separate from the world": *1 Peter 4:1-4 "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:"*

2. Be transformed: *Romans 12:2 "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

3. Be obedient and holy: *1 Peter 1:14-15 "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."*

4. Be God pleasers: *James 4:4 "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."*

5. Be leaders: *Ephesians 5:11 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."*

Answering questions about distributing candy on Halloween or allowing children to 'trick-or-treat' is something each individual Christian must do for himself. But as we look at the roots of Halloween and what the Bible says, we now have the firm foundation we need to base our decisions on.

II) HALLOWE'EN

SHOULD CHRISTIANS BE APART

BIBLICAL DISCERNMENT MINISTRIES

GOSHEN BIBLE STUDY WEBSITE:

<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/hallow/>

"Halloween is the time of year when the world holds its festival to honor the powers of darkness the time when stores stock up on all the goodies that children seek as they make their way from door to door with their wails of "Trick or treat." Doting parents take pictures of them in their little costumes, dressed as witches, demons, monsters, and their favorite media characters. They no doubt think of how cute their kiddies look as they waddle about the neighborhood working their peculiar brand of blackmail.

Humor aside, it's important that Christians consider the true meaning of this holiday called Hallowe'en. Whether or not Christians should be a part of these festivities is a legitimate question. It's one among many concerning how God's people are to relate to the affairs of the world. If we are called to be holy and separated unto Him, we should seek to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise (Eph. 5:15).

Many Christians think that Hallowe'en is an outgrowth of Christian tradition honoring the saints of the Church. While the name and most recent influences of this holiday appear to be Christian (the name means the evening before All Hallows, or All Saints Day), most of its customs are remnants of ancient pagan superstitions connected with the Druidic new year. The date was a joint festival known as Samhain (or Sowein), held in honor of the Celtic people's sun god and their Lord of the Dead.

Common to new year festivals around the world, to the Druids this was a time when the dead came back to mingle among the living. The Celts believed that the sinful souls of those who had died during the year had been transferred to the bodies of animals. Through gifts and sacrifices, their sins could be expiated and the souls freed to enter the land of eternal youth and happiness. The Lord of the Dead judged the souls and decreed the form in which their existence was to continue, whether as humans or animals.

Some modern witches claim the day as a time to give thanks to their great goddess and god for their abundance in harvest. As the start of the pagan new year, Hallowe'en is the time when they also invoke the help of spirits for the coming year, since the veil between the dead and the living is believed to be at its thinnest.

"CHRISTIAN" INFLUENCE

The reason many Christians associate Hallowe'en with Christianity is that in the eighth century Pope Gregory III established November 1st as the Roman Catholic feast day honoring the dead. Then, in the ninth century, Pope Gregory IV decreed that the day was to be universally observed by the Roman Catholic Church which, at that time, held the greatest influence among the Christian populous because of its political strength. The evening before, that Roman Catholic feast day coincided with the pagan Samhain festival and came to be called All Hallows Eve or Hallowe'en (Hallows Evening). In reality, then, Hallowe'en was at first a pagan festival which was later merged with a

Roman Catholic feast day. During the Middle Ages, the evening before All Saints' Day became known as the time most favored by witches, sorcerers, and devil worshipers.

It should be noted that not all witches are Satanists, since they believe that Satan is a fabrication of the Christian faith. Today's witches in the Celtic tradition adhere to Wicca, a form of witchcraft that worships nature.

The belief of Wicca is that God is beyond understanding and, thus, can only be understood by looking at "parts" of God. Since every person and everything is believed to be a part of God, they often greet one another with the expression, "Thou art God."

Wicca holds to a form of dualism that is often expressed in the masculine and feminine, or, god and goddess. What they believe to be the mother aspect of God they call Goddess, and prefer it to the father aspect because the feminine is seen as the more understandable aspect of God. This is why Wicca is very active in the feminist movement. Satanism is a different form of witchcraft which invokes the power of Satan specifically. There are many kinds of witchcraft throughout the world and some of their traditions are similar. Satanism is one form of witchcraft whose traditions and practices are in many cases similar to those of Wicca. To both forms of witchcraft, Hallowe'en (which they call Sowein, pronounced similarly to "cowain") is the most sacred day of the year.

PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL DANGERS

The physical dangers that Hallowe'en presents to children are easily discerned. There are numerous warnings on radio, television, and in other mass media outlets of what to beware of in the way of contaminated food, how to dress to avoid the hazards of fire and to be easily seen at night, and what to give children to offset the aches in their little tummies from gorging themselves on too many sweets.

However, the physical dangers of Hallowe'en are minimal when compared to the spiritual dangers. Yet through ignorance and/or love of human tradition, many professing Christians continue to engage in its festivities and encourage their children in them. The common argument in favor of their doing so is, "It's only in fun and the kids don't know the difference anyway."

And that's the problem: it's all in fun and they don't know the difference. The desire for fun often runs counter to the commands of Christ. Our joy should be in Him, and the things we do for enjoyment, while not always necessarily spiritually edifying, should at least not compromise our testimony. As we should do all things to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), so, too, we should abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thes. 5:22).

When we engage in tributes to Satan and pagan gods, we are sanctioning the works of God's enemies. It is the same as enjoying a banquet held in honor of someone who has sworn to kill our earthly father. If we will look at pagan festivities in that light, we may better understand how our involvement grieves our Lord. In participating in these things, either we are failing to acknowledge the reality of those demonic forces and their influence in the world, or we think they are something with which we can align ourselves and not be adversely affected. Nor does the argument that Hallowe'en isn't what it was originally hold up in view of its continued observance by witches in honor of their pagan gods. On that day, also, Satanists continue to engage in all sorts of perversions, including animal and human sacrifices.

Whether we believe in these things or not, the traditions linked to Hallowe'en carry evil connotations, and the fact remains that it's still a feast of Satan. It really doesn't matter whether or not certain types of witches acknowledge him as a reality. Therefore, its practices must be exposed for the evil they are. As we look at these customs we should realize that their very nature is contrary to the Christian faith.

TRICK OR TREAT

The modern custom of going from door to door begging candy, nuts, apples, and money while masked and dressed in grotesque costumes goes back to the pagan new year feast. The spirits that were thought to throng about the houses of the living were greeted with banquet laden tables. At the end of the feast, masked and costumed villagers, representing the souls of the dead, paraded to the outskirts of town leading the spirits away. This was done to avoid any calamities the dead might bring upon them should they not be provided for. Were the living to fail in their provisions, they believed that they might find their lives disrupted by having their livestock die, their milk turn sour, their food spoil, or by some other mischief the spirits of the dead might devise.

This appeasement of the spirits was celebrated in various ways according to locale and custom, with minor differences. One way was to set out bowls of fruit and other treats so they could partake of them and, once satisfied, they would leave in peace. Your child, going door to door, is reenacting that ancient superstition.

JACK O LANTERNS

The jack o lantern (also known as will o the wisp, fox fire, fairie fire, friar's lantern, and corpse lantern, among other things) was believed to be a wandering soul which could not find refuge because of a particularly evil deed committed in its lifetime. Some believed it to be a malignant imp. The Finns believed that it was the soul of a child buried in the forest.

According to ancient folklore, a will o the wisp wanders about swamp areas, enticing victims to follow. Should a person succumb to curiosity and follow its light, he may become hopelessly lost or lead to his death in a bog or pool. There are tales of these mischievous spirits chasing terrified victims through mud and brambles until confused, and then leaving them stranded with the sound of mocking laughter ringing through their ears. Today's Icing pumpkin face is symbolic of that mocking spirit.

A corpse candle is said to be a small flame moving through the air in the dark, and is believed by the superstitious to be an omen of the observer's imminent death, or the death of a loved one. These strange fires, thought by the more rational to originate from the atmospheric ignition of swamp gasses, were also known as "Ignus Fastuus," or "Foolish Fire," because only a fool would follow them.

BONFIRES

Most everyone is familiar with the Hallowe'en bonfire. This had its origins in the Celtic fire festivals.

In North Wales, every family built a bonfire into which each member would throw a stone he had marked with his own identification. The family would recite prayers to their gods while gathered around the fire. Should a stone be missing when they returned to the site the next morning, it was believed that the owner of that particular stone would die within the coming year. A similar belief existed in the Scottish Highlands, and diverse forms of fortune telling would accompany the festivities. The Celtic new year provided a suitable time for predicting the future due to the closeness of the spirits. Even today, during this time of year modern "mystics" fill the newspapers with their predictions for the next year. It is believed that the bonfires were first meant to provide light and heat to compensate for the feeble sun during the darkening and chilling winter to come. On this particular night, all the people would extinguish their fires at home and congregate at a great community bonfire consecrated through sacred rites during the fire festival. In order to receive fire for the next year, it was necessary to engage in pagan rituals, many of which included human and animal sacrifices to the gods of nature.

DUCKING FOR APPLES

There were many divination practices associated with Samhain, many of which dealt with marriage, health, and the weather. Ducking for apples was a marriage divination based on the belief that the first to bite into an apple would be the first to marry in the coming year. This is similar to the wedding tradition of the throwing of the bride's bouquet for women and her garter for men.

Apple peeling was another type of divination to determine how long one's life would be. The longer the unbroken peel, the longer the life of the one peeling it.

BLACK CATS & OTHER TALISMANS

Witches of many persuasions own living talismans animals indwelt by evil spirits, through which they derive their power. Common talismans are dogs, owls, snakes, and swine, but among the most common are cats. The witches invoke the familiar spirits to enter their bodies of their talismans for the exercising of power. The black cat in particular has come to symbolize these familiar spirits, because black represents evil, death, and darkness commodities with which evil spirits are obsessed.

THE UNHOLY MADE HOLY?

The other trappings of Hallowe'en are all steeped in magic and the occultic practices of ancient civilizations. With the advent of Christianity, rationalizations were given to these practices in order to make them palatable to the Church, while providing for appeasement of pagans forced to become "Christians" or lose their lives at the hands of the Roman clergy.

One variation on trick or treat, for example, was for children to go around on the eve of All Souls' Day (the day following All Saints' Day) offering to fast for the departed souls of loved ones in exchange for money or some other offering.

Like many pagan festivals that were conveniently adapted for Christian usage, Hallowe'en is today accepted as Christian in origin and practice. But the darkness that permeated the minds of those within the Roman Church at that time resulted in the taking of that which was consecrated to Satan and the pagan gods of nature, and offering them to God. We have numerous Scriptures that reveal this as an abomination to God, punishable by death. That's how much He detests such practices, regardless of whom one says they honor.

Jeremiah and the prophet wrote, "Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jer. 10:2). Lest those "under grace" think this doesn't apply to the present, they should read Paul's words in 2 Cor. 6:14 18.

To engage in revelry associated with such an anti Christ festivity as Hallowe'en is a slap in our Lord's face. Yet because of "vain tradition," Christian parents and even some churches go all out to make Hallowe'en a special time of celebration. Some churches and Christian organizations even go public with "haunted" houses designed to scare the wits out of people for profit in order to finance their programs. Yet God says that He has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love and power, and of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).

THE REAL ISSUE

Witches frequently propagate their beliefs through the handing out of tracts to trick or treaters. But is it suitable for the Body of Christ to embrace the symbols of Satan for any cause and, for the excuse of "fun," induce ungodly fear in people? How easy it is to become oppressed by evil spirits if we don't keep our guard up and continue in the peace and joy of Christ, but instead allow ourselves to indulge our senses in momentary pleasures revolving around Satan and his domain. We cannot have fellowship with them or involve ourselves in their festivities. There is nothing on earth, least of all some bits and pieces of candy, which can justify embracing Satan in his unholy days celebrations. For too long, Hallowe'en has captivated the minds of Christian children and adults alike to the detriment of their spiritual lives. It's time that pastors and teachers take responsibility to educate their flocks to God's requirement of holiness for His people.

As pastors and teachers have the responsibility of educating parents in the Church, so, too, the responsibility of educating children belongs to parents especially the fathers. But no more so in this age or society than in ages past. The difference is that today children rule many homes, Christian and non Christian alike. For that reason, compromise is the easy way out for parents. Thinking they are showing love by acquiescence, they are really destroying their children's spiritual life.

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES?

No matter what evil the world utilizes to entice children, parents are forever searching for alternatives in order that their children not feel deprived of the world's fun. When it comes to Hallowe'en, Christians decide to substitute their own parties for the world's. Instead of calling their festivities "Hallowe'en parties," they call them "Harvest Festivals" and dress their children in the costumes of Bible characters.

But that's what Hallowe'en is: a Harvest festival! By dropping the name "Hallowe'en" in favor of "Harvest Festival," they are actually drawing closer to the meaning of the pagan celebration. If anything, it would be more "Christian" to retain the name "Hallowe'en" and shun the name "Harvest Festival."

Besides, many children of professing Christians wear Bible character costumes for Hallowe'en anyway, so what's the difference except in the compromise of their minds? You can be sure that to most children it's still Hallowe'en that they are celebrating.

It is a religious spirit that persuades Christians that by substituting angel costumes for witches' costumes they are somehow pleasing God. But His Word calls for separation, not compromise. It isn't going to traumatize children if they aren't allowed to join in some things just because "everyone else is doing it." It's the responsibility of Christian parents to teach their children the truth from the beginning not wait until they've been sufficiently infected by the world that they must be deprogrammed at a later date.

Children who are taught to love Jesus will understand that, because of that love, they should not have anything to do with a celebration that glorifies the power of God's enemies. Even if they rebel and, for a time, reject the truth, parents can trust God's promise: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prv. 22:6).

If parents will be faithful in their responsibility to bring their children up in the knowledge of God's righteousness, He will keep His hand upon their children and will guide them back to the truth. On the other hand, Jesus' warning in Matthew 18:6 applies no less to parents and Church leaders than to child molesters and abusers: "...whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

If Christian parents encourage their children in celebrating pagan festivals in any manner even by calling it something that it isn't they are placing before them stumbling blocks in their relationship with Christ. This is an offense against their own children, even if propagated in ignorance. Yet there is a Biblical alternative to Hallowe'en: A church service which educates Christians to these and other dangers, and which continues in worship, praise, and prayer. This is an idea whose time has come.

Special services can be held for the children in which the Church can help the parents by educating the children of their responsibility to avoid the appearance of evil. It's a perfect time to contrast our faith with the world's beliefs. Thus, we will be displaying to God our seriousness in wanting to stand for His righteousness to reign in the hearts of our neighbors. This is no trivial matter. Satan is alive, and souls are being lost in great numbers daily. But so, too, is God alive. And He is working His plan of redemption. If we want to be a part of that plan and, just as importantly, if Christian parents want their children to be part of that plan, we must once and for all let God have His way at any expense. This is a tremendous responsibility; hardly worth sacrificing on the altars of worldly pleasure.

*This material has been adapted and/or excerpted from a Media Spotlight Special Report of October, 1989 (Albert James Dager, P.O. Box 290, Redmond, WA 98073).

III) THE TRUTH ABOUT HALLOWE'EN
BIBLICAL DISCERNMENT MINISTRIES, CONT.
GOSHEN BIBLE STUDY WEBSITE:

<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/hallow/part.htm>

The Hallowe'en customs the world observes on October 31st had their beginnings long ago. The origins and traditions can be traced back thousands of years to the days of the ancient Celts and their priests, the Druids of ancient Gaul and Britian. We know little of the Druids, but of certain is that they had an elaborate religious and political organization. Some were soothsayers, magicians, sorcerers, and barbs (composers and reciters of heroes and their deeds). Their religion worshipped numerous gods and natural objects, such as trees, wells, etc., in which magical practices were involved. The Druids believed that witches, demons, and spirits of the dead roamed the earth on the eve of November 1st. Bonfires (literally "bone fires") were lit to drive away the bad spirits. The great bonfires served another purpose as well on this night, unspeakable sacrifices were offered by the Druid priests to their Lord of Death (Samana). The celebration was called "The Feast of Samhain" The Druids would carefully watch the writhing of the victims in the fire (sometimes animals, sometimes humans). From their death agonies, they would foretell the future (divination) of the village. The local householders then each took a portion of the fire to their own hearths for good luck and good crops in the new year.

To protect themselves from the mean tricks of these spirits (like killing livestock), the Druids offered them good things to eat (sometimes food, sometimes female children). The Druids also disguised themselves in order that the spirits would think the Druids belonged to their own evil company, and therefore, not bring any harm to the Druids. They also carried "jack o' lanterns," a turnip or potato with a fearful, demonic face carved into it, to intimidate the demons around them. And, thus, this "tradition" is carried over today as Hallowe'en and is celebrated by dressing up in costumes, playing trick or treat, wearing masks, and carrying jack o' lanterns.

Much later, the Roman Catholic Church set aside the first day of November to honor all the saints who had no special days of their own. This was known as All Saints' Day, and was preceded by All Hallows' Eve (derived from the word "hallowed" or "holy evening"). Eventually, the two festivals (the old pagan customs and the Roman Catholic feast day) were combined, and All Hallows' Eve was shortened to Hallowe'en. Professing Christians were now provided a convenient "alternative" to the aforementioned pagan ceremonies.

Despite half hearted attempts by the Catholic Church to destroy the pagan religious practices associated with Hallowe'en, they have survived. During the Middle Ages, such practices found an outlet in the practice of witchcraft, which was and is devoted to communing with the spirits of the dead and to the worship of Satan himself. To this day, one of the special "sabbaths" for Satan worship continues to be October 31st HALLOWE'EN!

The Bible is very clear as to its position concerning the so called celebrations connected with Hallowe'en "Let no one be found among you who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, who practices divination [fortune telling] or sorcery [the use of power gained from the assistance or control of evil spirits, especially for divining], interprets omens, engages in witchcraft [the practice of dealing with evil spirits via the use of sorcery or magic], or casts spells, or who is a medium or a spiritist [a male witch skilled in sorcery] or a necromancer [consults with the spirits of the dead]. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord" (Deut. 18:10 12a). And, "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God" (James 4:4 5).

Yet we still hear professing Christians claim that, "Letting the kids dress up in costumes, playing trick or treat, wearing masks, and carrying jack o' lanterns doesn't mean anything pagan or occultic to me, so I'll exercise my Christian liberty and partake in all of it." (Some parents even think that somehow God excuses all the evil associated with Hallowe'en as long as the kiddies dress up as Bible characters instead of witches and goblins or have "Harvest" or "Reformation Day" parties!) Obviously, if one were to take such a cavalier approach to the physical world (e.g., "I can drink rat poison because I choose not to regard it as poison"), it would likely lead to a quick physical death. Why then, do Christians think they can avoid spiritual harm by ignoring God's spiritual warnings?"

Dr. Russell K. Tardo states, [FAITHFUL WORD PUBLICATIONS, P.O. Box 496, Arabi, La 70032, 'What's Wrong with Halloween?'] "Numerous legends surrounded the holiday [halloween], but two significant things supposedly occurred on that night:

First. It was believed that the dead would rise out of their graves and wander the countryside, trying to return to the homes where they formerly lived. Frightened villagers tried to appease these wandering spirits by offering them gifts of fruits and nuts. If not placated, villagers feared that the spirits would kill their flocks or destroy their property. *This is the origin of our present day 'trick-or-treat!'* It's a custom born out of superstition, and pagan superstition at that!

Furthermore, it's a blasphemous perversion of the Christian belief in the Resurrection. In Christianity, the righteous dead are resurrected in a glorified, immortal body. In Druidism, the dead are raised as horrifying creatures of the night, hideous monsters, decaying skeletons, vampires, etc. They received not glorified bodies, but grotesque ones, not immortal bodies but inhuman ones.

Second, Samhain was the supreme night of Demonic jubilation. This was a celebration of the beginning of Winter and darkness, as daylight grew noticeably shorter, and nights lengthier. The hoardes of hell would roam the earth in a wild celebration of darkness and death, all in honor of Samhain! Pity the poor mortal forced to travel on such a night! The only thing the superstitious people knew to do to protect themselves on such an occasion was to masquerade as one of the demonic hoarde, and hopefully blend in unnoticed among them! *This is the origin of Halloween masquerading as devils, imps, orges, and other demonic creatures."*