

Halloween and the Way Different People View It (Introduction)

In 2004, the editor of an electronic magazine interviewed five people regarding their views about Halloween. This included two people (including myself) who claimed to be "Christians" (perhaps broadly defined) and three who claimed to be practicing witchcraft, wicca or something similar. When the e-magazine was discontinued, I asked for permission to put the interviews on my website.

The purpose of these interviews is to inform. It does *not* mean that I endorse the other views - there are obvious disagreements - but it is not my purpose here to critique them. A careful reader will see that there are even significant differences between my view and the perspective of the other interview that claims to be Christian. (There may even be differences in the way we define the word "Christian," but in this article, it is not my purpose to focus on that issue. Any views I may have regarding the definition of the word "Christian" may be found elsewhere on this website.)

Some people seriously endorse Halloween and all that it stands for; others seriously oppose it. It is my view that a person cannot be "neutral" about Halloween. The other interview that claims to be Christian would probably disagree with me - and if you use the word "Christian" in its broadest commonly-used sense, perhaps that would be the "majority view" of Christendom.

I want to thank the editor of the e-magazine, who made the original interviews and who compiled them into one article. Except for a few obvious spelling errors (which I corrected), all the interviews are exactly as they were written.

One last thing: I do not know the identity of those who were interviewed. Please don't ask me to forward anything to them!

Here is what I believe is a basic overview of the perspectives:

Interview / Author	Claims to be...	Basic perspective
#1 - Chrystal	Christian	Focus on the candy, fun, and costumes.
#2 - Mike	Practicing Witchcraft, Mythology, and Folklore	It's the most important holiday of the year for most Witches... celebrate it any way you want.
#3 - Basket Hedgewitch	A practicing Hedgewitch	It's a powerful day/night. Celebrate, commune with the dead, reflect on the future.
#4 - Dennis	Christian	Avoid, or (if necessary) emphasize things that are compatible with the Bible. Also, the Protestant Reformation began on this day... that could also be a focus of one's celebration.
#5 - ShadowWolf	Eclectic Solitary Wiccan Witch	Focus on the togetherness of the living and nonliving people, as well as on the celebration of life, death, and rebirth.

Halloween and the Way Different People View It (Interviews)

Comment by the *original* Editor:

*Here I have given a little interview to some people that have different backgrounds, on what they perceive Halloween is and the meaning of Halloween. I would like to thank everyone who participated in this for me. I really appreciate all your thoughts.

Interview #1 - Chrystal

1: First, can you tell us about your belief as a Christian.

Christian is a personal belief in God. It is believing that His Son Jesus was at one time on earth in human form and supernaturally healed people. According to our belief He died for our sins that one day we would join Him in the Afterlife in a place called Heaven. Forever we would walk on streets of Gold and Praise the King of Kings found in Revelation of the Bible. My belief goes very very deep. I was raised by parents in Baptist and Methodist in the 60's and 70's. Now since this is a personal question to me, I am not the ordinary Christian. I have studied many many areas of all faiths in God. There are many paths we can choose even in a Christian prospective pathway. Today I have an open mind to all faiths. Have I been born again as I was taught as a child, yes, at the age of 14, I personally accepted Christ as my personal savior. God is everywhere and we all are striving in some sort of way to have eternal life when we leave this world. John 3:16 in the Bible is the verse all Christians believe in. We believe in all the Bible as our roadmap on earth to follow first and foremost. I Corinthians it talks about the gifts of the spirit, this is my personal favorite chapter in the Scriptures. Mark 11:23 is excellent for faith that obstacles can be removed through Christ.

2: Since our October issue is based on Halloween, being Christian, can you give us the meaning of Halloween in a Christian view?

In a Christian view most view Halloween as a pagan holiday. Why can't Christians have fun and celebrate it in their way as a Christian Halloween with Candy, Fun, and Costumes also is my personal view. I was fortunate enough to have parents that were Christians to let me celebrate each year dressed up in costumes and carrying trick or treat bags to each home in a place in Ohio. Each area is different in Christian views on this. Where my family was from it was not a coooooool thing but in Ohio is was great! I want to give a verse out of Scripture...and this is good enough for me to except Halloween, Luke 11:9 quote: (And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.) What is easier than asking for candy on Halloween? No matter what path you may be on, we all enjoy Halloween, costumes and all. The ones that I have dealt with in Christian just dress up in maybe lighter costumes such as Angels, Princess, Clowns, etc. Not all Christians are against Halloween.

3: In your opinion, the History of Halloween started a long time ago, in those Centuries that have passed, what time line do you think the aspects of Halloween changed and why?

This is a difficult question on what time line do I think the aspects of Halloween changed and why? First they have been changing since the beginning of this world or planet earth as we call it. I know that some Christian faiths believe in praying for the dead after they have crossed over and Halloween represents a time when the veils are supposed to be thinnest between both worlds. Some even celebrate the Day of the Dead. I would say starting more in the 80's and 90's things have really changed that People in the Christian Lifestyles are more open to realizing there are many truths about the stories and tales of Halloween then we are being told in the pulpit. Again this is my opinion and not all Christians would agree on this point.

4: If you could teach someone one area of Halloween in a Christian perspective, what would that be and why?

If I were teach Halloween in a Christian Perspective, it would be this. That God loves everyone in this world including Halloween People and doesn't leave anyone out of His grand plan of this beautiful universe He has created. I would teach it in a way not offensive to our belief as a Christian and that it is ok to celebrate and have fun in a reasonable fashion of Christian love to share and care for everyone including Halloweener's. There is no scripture to say we cannot have fun and laugh in the Bible and until someone can show that God does not laugh with us I accept Halloween as part of my Holidays. Laughter is Good Medicine it says in Proverbs. So that is good enough for me.

Interview #2 - Mike

1: Can you tell us how you got into Witchcraft, Mythology, and Folklore and what inspired you to learn and teach about those areas.

There were several reasons I was attracted to these subjects. First, I can't remember a time when the supernatural and the occult didn't fascinate me. As a kid, I loved ghost stories. And even then, I'd had a few psychic experiences of my own. But at the Catholic church and school I attended, whenever I asked the nuns or priests about these things, I was always told that they were "evil" and to steer clear of them. Instinctively, I just knew that wasn't the right answer. Second, I've always had a deep love of nature, a reverence for it. It has always seemed sacred to me. When I was very young, I remember telling my parents that I felt "closer to God" when I was out in the woods by our home than I did in church. In my teen years, I became interested in environmentalist concerns. Third, I was always a feminist, even before I knew what the word meant. It just seemed unfair to me that girls were often seen and treated as being inferior to boys in some way. It didn't matter that I was a boy myself. Chalk it up to my Libran sun sign if you must, but fairness has always been critical issue with me. This spilled over into theology as well. In eighth grade, I outraged my teacher by asking why we must always think of God as male. Why couldn't we say "Our Mother who art in heaven..."? Plus, I was beginning to discover Goddesses in other world religions, and I liked them! Finally, I was always an advocate of the slogan "Question Authority", and that included religious authority. I didn't think I needed a middle-man, like a priest or minister, to mediate my contact with the sacred. I was perfectly capable of "touching the infinite" all by myself, thank you very much. So I started thinking, wouldn't it be nice if there were a religion where magic and the supernatural were not seen as inherently evil, where Goddesses had equal

billing with Gods, where Nature itself was seen as holy, and where I could connect with "the God-thing" in my own way! Then I started thinking, what was the religion practiced by my ancestors in Europe before the coming of Christianity? To my amazement, the religion I discovered there had all the elements I had been searching for! But of course, it was now called by a name that had some serious PR issues: Witchcraft. Nevertheless, I embraced it and pressed on, knowing it was right for me. And along with others of my generation, we redefined it, or perhaps gave it back its original definition.

2: Since our October issue is based on Halloween, can you give us your version of the meaning of Halloween and what it means to you.

Well, as you know, I've written a lengthy essay on this, but to sum up... Halloween is the most important holiday of the year for most Witches. It is one of the four cross-quarter days of the calendar, occurring halfway between the Autumnal Equinox and the Winter Solstice. It is our New Year's Eve, standing at the beginning of Winter. And like all New Year's festivals, it has two themes: remembering the past and anticipating the future. And so we celebrate it as a festival of the dead, doing things to commemorate friends and family members who have gone on ahead us into the great mystery of the next world. We believe that the veil that separates that world from ours is very thin on Halloween night, and spirits of the dead may return to celebrate with us. At the same time, we look toward the future, wondering what the next year will bring, and we do Tarot readings or other divinations to get a glimpse of it. At no other time of the year is seeing into the future so likely to succeed. Some practices, such as holding séances, actually combine the two.

3: There are so many different opinions from a religious aspect of the meaning of Halloween, being in your area of belief, has that changed through the years, And how has this affected the original belief?

True, it seems like there are an infinite number of perspectives when it comes to Halloween. One of the most comical, to me personally, is to listen to what the Christian fundamentalists have to say about it. To them, Halloween is a day of evil, the day of the devil, Satan's holiday. And yet, if they would only stop and think about where Halloween comes from. It is a cross-quarter day and, just like the solstices and equinoxes, it is a part of nature, built into the way the Earth works. If, as they would say, "God created the heavens and the earth", then He must have been the one to set the earth orbiting around the sun, and He must have been the one to tilt the Earth's axis to the ecliptic, thus creating the solstices, equinoxes, and the cross-quarter days between them. So, ultimately, God is the author of Halloween, not Satan! What an amusing irony! For me, as the years roll by, I have become more and more aware of how Halloween fits into the complete pattern of Pagan holidays, how it is a part of the cycle, rather than a stand-alone holiday. It is a station on the wheel of the year, although arguably the most important one. And its true meaning can only be seen in relationship to the other seven Sabbaths of the Witches' year.

4: If you could teach one aspect of your belief of the meaning of Halloween what aspect would that be and why?

I'm not sure it's possible to ferret out one aspect of meaning as being more important than all the others. Halloween has an incredible depth of meaning and symbol logy, and these all blend together to make it more than the sum of its parts. But I would say this: Whatever else you may think or do about Halloween, don't neglect to celebrate it! It doesn't really matter how. Throw a huge costume party. Spend quiet time communing with your friends on the other side of the veil. Go trick or treating. Put the candle in the jack-o-lantern on your porch. Visit a haunted house. Watch some scary movies. Take a candle-lit bath with your lover(s) to welcome the new year. Roast pumpkin seeds. Read Ray Bradbury's "The Halloween Tree".

Play some harmless pranks. Be a little impractical and unpredictable. But whatever you do, don't let Halloween pass as any common night.

Interview #3 - Basket Hedgewitch

1: In your Bio, I noticed that you stated you were a practicing Hedgewitch. Can you tell us more about that?

Yes, I am a practicing Hedgewitch and that means different things to different people. My definition of Hedgewitch often differs greatly from the other Hedgewitches out there, as I believe that Hedgewitch is away of life, and in no way is a religious path in itself, it is our choice to incorporate spirituality into it or not. Hedgewitches were the old village "wise women & men", sometimes seen as a bit creepy or odd as they were pretty reclusive except for visitors and the occasional apprentice or family member they would pass their knowledge onto. The term "Hedge" comes in because they often lived near the bordering hedges that separated towns and villages. They were very knowledgeable in the field of herbs, and was one with nature. Hedgewitches of old would bring in extra money by selling spells, potions, reading the various signs of the seasons, omens and such for customers. (If you've ever seen the movie "Practical Magic", the aunts, in my opinion were Hedgewitches.) Also, Hedgewitches of old were about the only ones who could truly "fly". They made "flying ointments" (hallucinogenic herbs cooked in fats and/or oils and placed upon pulse points of the body and sometimes sexual organs) specifically to travel to the Otherworld to bring back the souls of the recently deceased for paying customers. Hedgewitches of old were spell casting women and men, its what they did, part of their everyday life, to bring in extra income, possibly right a wrong or two, maybe for something to go their way or even to bring in a good crop of herbs, fruits and veggies. And since they were the village "wise women & men", there was a Hedgewitch in nearly every culture. How does this apply to me? Well, excluding the "flying ointments", I'm striving to live as closely to the Hedgewitch life of old, growing, learning about herbs and their uses, I'm trying to rediscover the secrets of old, and also journey to the Otherworld, though again, without the use of flying ointments, but rather through meditation, lucid dreams and working with nature spirits such as the Green Man. I'm not against giving or selling a spell if the need is great enough and my instinct tells me its the right thing to do. I do pay attention to and observe the changing seasons and always have my eye open for omens or signs that may appear before me.

2: You gave me some great information about Halloween in your Private Message to me in the Pagan Forum, can you brief us on your belief of what Halloween means.

Halloween is a powerful day and night! First, it is a time to truly be yourself among those who may not be so tolerant any other day of the year. Also, as I mentioned, it is a time when the veil between the worlds is at its thinnest, this is an excellent time to travel to the Otherworld, talk with those who have passed on and so much wisdom and experience to share. This also is an excellent time for celebration, it is harvest time, time to reap the rewards of all the hard work and love I've put into raising my leafy herb babies. It is a time to give thanks, thanking the plants themselves for their love and trust in me and finally their very selves for me. Again, because of the dead being freed to roam for the one night, it is an excellent time for learning about what they can teach and show us, or just frolicking along with them in the glory of the day/night that has been bestowed upon us! It is a time of reflection and new beginnings! For those who observe the "Wheel of the Year", this is our New Year. It is a time to see what we've accomplished and revel in our success! It's a time to look at what we need to work on

and make plans for what we'll be striving for in our lives, for the planet, and our fellow earth-dwellers. Halloween is a time for feeling great, working toward our goals and sharing our bounty with not just friends and loved ones, but everyone! It is also a time to begin to prepare for the darker months. It is an advance notice to get our thoughts in order, our cupboards a bit fuller, and our hearts and hands ready to help out those who need a helping hand in the cold, dark months to come.

3: When did you feel, as a part of your practicing belief, did the meaning of Halloween change from century to century, and why?

I always knew/felt that Halloween was more than just dressing up as a ghoul, witch or fairy princess and knocking on doors, begging for candy. Though I was raised as a Christian, Halloween brought out feelings in me that no other holiday did and I often was chastised by my grandmother for reveling in it so. Even still, I get absolutely giddy, probably more so than any child. As far as the Hedgewitch path, it has changed and changed again through the generations. As Christianity became the popular thing to do, more and more pressure was put on everyone to convert. I'm sure some converted, but I believe that many stayed out of public eye and practiced in secret, verbally passing down well guarded secrets. Also, since many Hedgewitches were illiterate, they were forced to verbally pass down their secrets and ways to those they could trust. For those blessed enough to have a relative or two who still practiced their craft and passed it down, it is them we thank for remembering the old ways and passing them onto those who heard and felt the call, but couldn't find the way, or even know that there was a name for the way of our heart's desire.

4: If you could teach someone about your belief in the aspect of Halloween, what would that be and why.

I would try to pass on that Halloween is a time to reflect and figure out our hearts desire and then follow that desire. It is a time to be one with nature and in turn being one with ourselves since we are of nature. It is a time of power, love and learning and sharing knowledge. The veil between the worlds being so thin allows for so much knowledge and ability to be gained and shared. It is a time to help thy neighbor, which in turn helps ourselves by lifting our spirits, opening our minds, filling our hearts and getting lucky by maybe making a friend or two. The way of the Hedgewitch is a way of life and because Halloween is such a powerful day/night for so many reasons, it is a great time to begin to figure out if this path is for you and possibly begin the first steps of this path, after all, it is "New Year" and a great time for new beginnings!

~ Brightest blessings, Basket ThicketWitch

Interview #4 - Dennis

1: First, can you tell us about your belief as a Christian.

I accept the Bible "as written" (with everything taken within its context). My specific perspective is spelled-out on my website [www.journal33.org/bible/tbgwtap.htm] and I believe that anyone who accepts a similar "starting point" will reach approximately the same perspective. I consider beliefs and lifestyle to be equally important. Being a follower of Jesus requires a 24/7 commitment to his teachings and values - and their application to life. All is to be done in a way that honors God. Also, I consider there to be a radical difference between following Jesus (which involves a relationship) and "religion." There are a lot of religious people who call themselves "Christian," but who do not follow the ways of Jesus.

2: Since our October issue is based on Halloween, being Christian, can you give us the meaning of Halloween in a Christian view.

Much of what occurs at Halloween is incompatible with the Bible and a lifestyle that honors God. This would include anything that encourages the occult (witchcraft, etc), as well as the strong emphasis or preoccupation with things such as death, gore, horror, religious superstition, etc. Even “All Saints Day” (Nov. 1) is a man-made religious holiday that the Bible says nothing about. Most of the practices have a pagan origin, and were “Christianized” by various religious leaders during a time of compromise between the institutionalized church and the pagan state of that day. Of much greater historical significance is the fact that October 31 was the “birthday” of the Protestant Reformation, when Martin Luther challenged the practices of the institutional church of his day, which claimed to be able to sell “forgiveness for sins” for a fee.

3: In your opinion, the History of Halloween started a long time ago, in those Centuries that have passed, what time line do you think the aspects of Halloween changed and why?

Most of the Halloween practices have a pagan origin and were incorporated into a compromising “church,” probably to make it more appealing to the pagans. Today we have additional negative factors, such as crass commercialism (which itself is not compatible with Christ) and “tons” of candy (if you have any concern about your children’s diet). As far as a future “timeline” is concerned, it seems to me that we are living in a day in which interest in occult and pagan practices is increasing. I would expect that, in the future, as the general interest in the occult increases, Halloween will become less “Christianized.”

4: If you could teach someone one area of Halloween in a Christian perspective, what would that be and why?

This is not an easy question to answer, since so little is compatible with the Bible. I would probably focus on the “Reformation” aspects of the October 31, or would suggest various ways a person could respond to Halloween that would be compatible with the Bible. One possible response would be simply to not participate. This is what I have chosen to do. However, not all aspects of Halloween are forbidden by the Bible (or incompatible with following Jesus), so a second possible response could be to focus on the compatible aspects (such as costumes, parties, a focus on positive things rather than blood and gore) and omit the incompatible aspects. This second perspective may be a practical alternative for a family that has very strong disagreements on whether or not to celebrate.

There is an article on my website (written by a friend) that offers suggestions along this line of thought. You can view more information here: www.journal33.org/m-frank/hallown.htm.

Interview #5 - ShadowWolf

1: Give us a brief description of your belief.

I am know as an Eclectic Solitary Wiccan Witch. This mean I take from other pagan religions mostly spells but I follow mostly the Wiccan ways. Wicca is a sect of paganism.

2: How does Halloween fall into your belief.

Halloween, known to me as Samhain (pronounced sow in), is a holiday that has the death of the god and the passing over the veil of him to be reborn again, within the goddess womb. On this days the veil between the worlds of dead and living is thin and it is easier for them to come back and for us to contact them.

3: You stated that you do rituals.. Can you tell us about that.

Usually I am a solitary witch, but most traditions leave an extra food plate and seat at the dinner table to honor the dead and if it is a recently deceased person you can leave them there favorite food. Contact with faeries is more likely on this night as well. Rituals depend upon the path and such of the person but mine usually follow the basic ritual format and has offering to the passed over ancestors and an honoring of the god and goddess. I am in a group that has an open circle and this year for Samhain we are having a reenactment of the dying of the god and the rebirth and everything. It is fun.

4: What is the most important aspect of Halloween in your belief to you?

The most important would be the togetherness of the living and nonliving people as well as the celebration of life, death, and rebirth

~*~Blessed Be~*~ ~*~ShadowWolf~*~