

THE ANTI-HOLIDAY

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5).

Either I'm becoming an old fuddy-duddy or else the culture I live in has become perverse! Like many of you, I grew up thinking Halloween was a really neat occasion to dress up in a costume and walk around the neighborhood collecting candy. No parents warned us of the dangers involved in going door-to-door and no preachers pontificated about the occult connotations of the day. My memories are of happy times involving smiling pumpkins, hayrides, bobbing for apples, eating candy and dressing up like Superman.

Today, I no longer view Halloween as an innocent fall festival. As I look at the way our culture celebrates October 31, my spirit is deeply troubled. In my neighborhood, yards are decorated with tombstones, skeletons, and straw cadavers hanging from trees. Stores are marketing ghoulish merchandise and decorations. Blood and gore sells. Pictures of zombies, vampires, demons and haunted houses are everywhere. And now, we are witnessing a new spin on this anti-holy-day: sex. Costume parties encourage Snow White to dress like a vixen rather than a virgin. Goldilocks looks like she has been sleeping in lots of beds and Little Red Riding Hood is dressed like a hooker. Halloween now is giving girls cultural permission to be bad... at least for a day. My, how times have changed. I can only wonder what visitors from other countries must think of a nation like ours that markets death, celebrates darkness, and glamorizes promiscuity.

If you want a good scary story, read I Samuel 28. King Saul dresses in disguise, visits a witch, and talks to the dead! For full effect, gather your children around you, turn out the lights, and read the story in the dark. Boo! But notice the moral of the story. Saul is a fool and his folly is manifest for all to see. The story exposes evil for what it truly is and warns us not to be deceived by its seductive power. God shines light in the darkness exposing lies and banishing fears.

Like a parasite, evil derives its power from the good. It is the anti-good. Halloween can only exist because of the day that follows it: All Saints Day. Originally called All Hallows Day (the word "hallow" means to make holy, to sanctify), November 1 was set apart by the early church to remember and honor the saints of God, the living *and* the dead. Through the centuries, October 31, Halloween (All Hallows Eve) thus became the anti-saint day. Those opposed to God found on this day an occasion to celebrate all that was unholy.

So what should the children of light do when the culture around them is celebrating darkness? Each family will have to come to its own conclusions, but I would humbly suggest the following:

- Reflect on the meaning of death.
- Celebrate the communion (spiritual fellowship) of the saints... both living and dead.
- *Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them (Ephesians 5:11).*