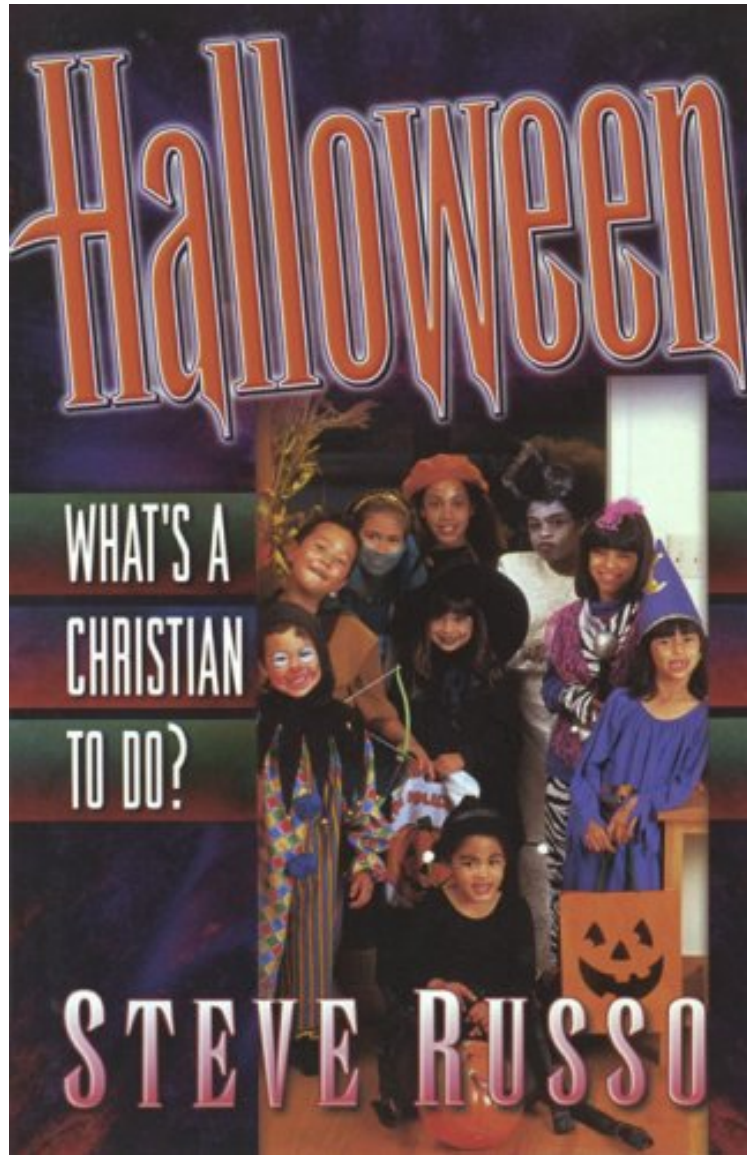


(Free pdf) Halloween: What's a Christian to Do?

## Halloween: What's a Christian to Do?

*Steve Russo*

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**Steve Russo : Halloween: What's a Christian to Do?** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Halloween: What's a Christian to Do?:

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. It was very informative. By michael r hyer I chose this rating because the book was helpful and informative. It was interesting to me as a christian and person who enjoys the playfulness of this holiday. 0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. well written By Ron Lynn because of bible saying not to adopt pagan ways. but it did give a lot back on Halloween. well written. 3 of 4 people found the following review

helpful. A CHRISTIAN CRITIQUE, FOLLOWED BY A PROPOSAL FOR EVANGELISM

By Steven H Propp

Steve Russo is an evangelist, author, and speaker on the TV program "24/SEVEN." He has also written other books such as *Keeping Christ in Christmas: Helping Families Find Their Focus*. He wrote in this 1998 book, "Most thoughtful Christians wrestle with celebrating this holiday because of its apparent connections with the occult. However, since it is such a popular holiday with our culture, there is great pressure to conform... it is important to step back and examine its true origins. We will also look at how the early church responded to the celebration of Halloween and the way it is currently celebrated in our own culture." (Pg. 9) He observes, "The festival Samhain was closely related to the seasons of the year: a time when crops should be harvested... The gates that separated the living and the dead ... were opened... With the belief in the wandering spirits of the dead came the custom of preparing offerings of special foods and dressing up as these spirits and wild animals. These customs were widely practiced in ancient Ireland, which was converted to Christianity... Christian missionaries then began a redefinition of calendrical celebrations. To a large extent the early church adopted and accommodated the traditional religious beliefs and practices of those it sought to convert... Many traditional beliefs and customs associated with Samhain ... continued to be practiced on October 31. This day became known as the Eve of All Saints' Day..." (Pg. 10-11) He notes, "trick-or-treating is a more recent American phenomenon and dates back to the 1930s. It is a custom that was intended to control and displace communally disruptive pranking activities... Prior to the 1960s Halloween was widely seen as an opportunity for child's play and adolescent pranks. Today it can be a scary night for both parents and children... Reports of anonymous sadists who laced candy with poison or razor blades began to affect the practice of trick-or-treating as early as the 1970s. In the 1980s these fears were augmented by alarming news reports that satanic cults were kidnapping and murdering children." (Pg. 12) He observes that "The jack-o'-lantern tradition grew out of Celtic belief during the Dark Ages. Jack-o'-lanterns were carved from turnips to ward off evil spirits. Legend has it that the jack-o'-lantern is the lantern of an Irish watchman who loved to play pranks on God and the devil. Because of this, he was cursed to carry his lantern throughout all time to light the way for the spirit world." (Pg. 20-21) Ultimately, he suggests, "Because Halloween is such a huge business... Why not take advantage of all this fanfare and use it to 'turn on the light' of God's Word with an alternative... Remember that participating in an ALTERNATIVE is not the same thing as celebrating the HOLIDAY... The right alternative can be safe and fun for kids and yet still honor God. It's important that our kids do not feel as if they are missing out on something just because they are Christians. Ultimately, Halloween can be a great opportunity to 'overcome evil with good.' (Rom 12:21)" (Pg. 90-91) He proposed, "take advantage of the fact that trick-or-treaters automatically come to your door. When you answer the door, give them some candy and a Christian tract on fear or some other topic related to Halloween." (Pg. 92) Later, he adds, "There are also certain times of the year when people are more curious about the supernatural, and Halloween is one of them. So let's follow Paul's advice in Ephesians 5:16 and make 'the most of every opportunity' by taking advantage of the massive attention our society gives to Halloween." (Pg. 115) As with his book on Christmas, Russo's criticisms are balanced by his more "positive" suggestions, and this book will be of interest to all Christians studying the holiday.

Long Summary Coming Soon