

1: Harry F. Ward (Author of Social Evangelism)

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The existence of syncretism in Christian tradition has long been recognized by scholars, and in recent times many of the instances of syncretism have also been acknowledged by the Roman Catholic church. Early works of this type have tended to be downplayed and even dismissed as a form of Protestant apologetics aimed at "purification" of Christianity. Early Christianity Ante-Nicene [edit] Main articles: Rather, they instructed new believers to avoid "pollution of idols, fornication, things strangled, and blood" KJV , Acts These clarifications were put into writing, distributed KJV , Acts The Apostolic Decree thus helped to establish nascent Christianity as a unique alternative among the forms of Judaism for prospective Proselytes. The Twelve Apostles and the Apostolic Fathers initiated the process of transforming the originally Jewish sect into a diaspora of communities composed of both Jews and gentiles, united by their trust in Jesus. The Armenian , Georgian and Ethiopian churches are the only instances of imposition of Christianity by sovereign rulers predating the council of Nicaea. The initial conversion of the Roman Empire occurred mostly in urban areas of Europe, where the first conversions were sometimes among members of the Jewish population. Later conversions happened among the Grecian-Roman-Celtic populations over centuries, often initially among its urban population, with rural conversions taking place some time later. The term "pagan" is from Latin and means "villager, rustic, civilian. Late antiquity 4th-6th centuries [edit] Further information: The Christianization of the Roman Empire is typically divided into two phases, before and after the year , which marked the momentous conversion sincere or not debated for centuries of Constantine. By this date, Christianity had already converted a significant but unknown proportion of at least the urban population of the empire including a small number of the elite classes. Constantine ended the intermittent persecution of Christianity with the Edict of Milan , in fact a quote from a letter of the emperor Licinius by Eusebius, which granted tolerance to all religions, but specifically mentions Christianity. Although all state temples in all cities were ordered shut in , there is evidence that traditional sacrifices continued. Under Julian , the temples were reopened and state religious sacrifices performed once more. Again, however, this process ended state official practices but not private religious devotion. As Christianity spread, many of the ancient pagan temples were defiled, sacked, destroyed, or converted into Christian sites by such figures as Martin of Tours , and in the East often by militant monks. From to he issued a series of decrees which led to the banning of pagan religious rites, and the confiscation of their property and endowments. The Olympic Games were banned in because of their association with the old religion. Further laws were passed against remaining pagan practices over the course of the following years. The effectiveness of these laws empire-wide is debatable. Christianization of the central Balkans is documented at the end of the 4th century, where Nicetas the Bishop of Remesiana brought the gospel to "those mountain wolves", the Bessi. A turning point came after the Battle of the Frigidus of , ending the last serious attempt at a pagan revival in the now Christianized Roman Empire. After the defeat of Eugenius , the conservative pagan families of Rome gave up their resistance to Christianity and began to re-invent themselves to maintain their social leadership. By this time the Christian hierarchy had adopted classical education and culture as the marks of the civilized person, thus bringing the two social groups into alliance. Under the regency of Stilicho , some paganism was still tolerated, but later in the 5th century, legislation against pagan possessions, and other pagan practices, became increasingly strict. There appear to have been later attempts at a pagan revival, in in circles surrounding the general Marcellinus and under Anthemius r. Marcian in put the death penalty on the practice on pagan rites, and Leo I in reinforced this by penalizing anyone who was aware that pagan rites were performed on his property. The early Christianization of the various Germanic peoples was achieved by various means, and was partly facilitated by the prestige of the Christian Roman Empire amongst European pagans. The early rise of Germanic Christianity was, thus, mainly due to voluntary conversion on a small scale. Christianity at this time then constituted of a mix of Arian Christianity, Catholic Christianity, and Christianized Germanic paganism. The Lombards adopted Catholicism as they entered Italy, also during the 6th century. Conversion of the West and East Germanic

tribes sometimes took place "top to bottom", in the sense that missionaries sometimes aimed at converting Germanic nobility first, after which time their societies would begin a gradual process of Christianization that would generally take a matter of centuries, with some traces of earlier beliefs remaining. In or are also possible he let himself be baptized in Rheims. Anglo-Saxon Christianity and Hiberno-Scottish mission In most of Britain, the native Britons were already partly Christianized by the time of the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Britain ; it is not clear how thorough this process had been. However, ecclesiastics of the time such as the British Gildas and later Anglo-Saxon Bede , criticized them for generally refusing to work at all for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons , in fact many were absorbed into the religion and culture of the new settlers. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons was begun at about the same time at the far north and south of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in two unconnected initiatives. Irish missionaries led by Saint Columba based in Iona from and elsewhere, converted many Picts. The court of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria , and the Gregorian mission , who landed in , did the same to the Kingdom of Kent. In both cases, and in other kingdoms, the conversion was generally "top down", with the royal family and nobility adopting the new religion first. The Viking invasions of Britain and Ireland destroyed many monasteries and new Viking settlers restored paganismâ€™ though of a different variety to the Saxon or classical religionsâ€™ to areas such as Northumbria and Dublin for a time before their own conversion. Germanic Christianity 9th-century depiction of Christ as a heroic warrior Stuttgart Psalter, fol. The Eastern and Western tribes were the first to convert through various means. However, it would not be until the 12th century that the North Germanic peoples had Christianized. In the polytheistic Germanic tradition, it was possible to worship Jesus next to the native gods like Woden and Thor. Before a battle, a pagan military leader might pray to Jesus for victory, instead of Odin, if he expected more help from the Christian God. According to legend, Clovis had prayed thus before a battle against one of the kings of the Alemanni , and had consequently attributed his victory to Jesus. The next impulse came from the edge of Europe. Although Ireland had never been part of the Roman Empire, Christianity had come there and developed, largely independently, into Celtic Christianity. The Irish monks had developed a concept of peregrinatio. The territory of Great Moravia was originally evangelized by missionaries coming from the Frankish Empire or Byzantine enclaves in Italy and Dalmatia since the early 8th century and sporadically earlier. Christianization of Bulgaria Baptism of the Preslav Court by Nikolai Pavlovich date of completion unknown After its establishment under Khan Asparukh in , Bulgaria retained the traditional Bulgar religion Tengriism and the pagan beliefs of the local Slavic population. In the mid-9th century, Boris I decided to establish Christianity as a state religion in Bulgaria. In , he was baptized in the capital Pliska by Byzantine priests. After prolonged negotiations with both Rome and Constantinople, he managed to create an autocephalous Bulgarian Orthodox Church and used the newly created Cyrillic script to make the Bulgarian language the language of the Church. Christianity was challenged during the rule of his first-born son, Vladimir-Rasate , who decided to return to the old Bulgarian religion. Boris I, who had previously retired to a monastery, led a rebellion against his son and defeated him. At the counsel of Preslav in , his third son, Simeon I who was born after the Christianization, was installed on the throne and the capital was moved from Pliska to Preslav as a symbol of the abolition of the old religion. Simeon I led a series of wars against the Byzantines to gain official recognition of his Imperial title and the full independence of the Bulgarian Church. As a result of his victories in , the Byzantines finally recognized the Bulgarian Patriarchate. Serbia[edit] Seal of prince Strojimir of Serbia , from the late 9th century - one of the oldest artifacts on the Christianization of the Serbs Basil I with delegation of Serbs The Serbs were baptised during the reign of Heraclius â€™ by "elders of Rome " according to Constantine Porphyrogenitus in his annals r. The fleets and land forces of Zahumlje , Travunia and Konavli Serbian Pomorje were sent to fight the Saracens who attacked the town of Ragusa Dubrovnik in , on the immediate request of Basil I , who was asked by the Ragusians for help. The Serbs adopt the Old Slavonic liturgy instead of the Greek.

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Careful assessment of the rise and development of Halloween or the three-day observance of Triduum of All Hallows October November 2 reveals that paganism was not the only influence upon these observances. The Influence of the Celts Map of Celts Wikipedia One of the most important influences upon the rise and development of what is now known as Halloween was a group of people who shared a common ethnic, linguistic, and cultural origin, known as the Celts. It is common to associate the Celts with the British Isles, but the land originally inhabited by the Celts was far more extensive. The term druid was given to their spiritual leaders [6] who were organized into three classes or offices: Many Christian writers, eager to defend the truth of Scripture, fail to distinguish between the two groups. Having more information on modern Druidry, they often place the beliefs and practices of this younger form upon the older Druidism that exercised greater influence upon Halloween and Hallowmas. The first information known to exist concerning their practices comes from ancient sources. Two ancient Greek sources, which no longer exist, first recorded general information about druid priests about BC. As the term paganism is used to identify people groups who believed in many gods, uninfluenced by the Hebrew and Christian idea of one God, this term may appropriately be applied to the Celts and their druid priests. Before the influence of St. Writing on Druidism, Julius Caesar recounted that druids learned a large number of verses or saying, committing them to memory, which sometimes required up to twenty years to complete the course of study. From the fragmented remains of Druidism, it appears their faith and practices were passed on in oral rather than written form. As is true of much of the pagan world, their forms of worship were closely associated to prominent features of the natural world, often observing natural occurrences as signs concerning future events. Roman historian, Pliny the Elder, records the fact that the druids believed a waxing crescent moon, like the mistletoe, was an instrument of healing, and for this reason, Celtic goddesses are sometimes depicted wearing lunar amulets. Ritual of Oak and Mistletoe Druid Dolmen temple Holding the oak tree and mistletoe in great reverence, Druids customarily conducted their rituals in oak forests, where they commonly used stone altars. This place of worship or natural temple was called a dolmen. Though ancient writers do not provide evidence that the Celts and their druids believed in pantheismâ€”that all was god s â€”they do provide images of forms of worship that are closely associated with nature. The mistletoe was regarded as a cure for infertility and highly desirable. The druids â€” that is what they call their magicians â€” hold nothing more sacred than the mistletoe and a tree on which it is growing, provided it is Valonia Oakâ€¡. Mistletoe is rare and when found it is gathered with great ceremony, and particularly on the sixth day of the moonâ€¡. A priest arrayed in white vestments climbs the tree and, with a golden sickle, cuts down the mistletoe, which is caught in a white cloak. Then finally they kill the victims, praying to a god to render his gift propitious to those on whom he has bestowed it. They believe that mistletoe given in drink will impart fertility to any animal that is barren and that it is an antidote to all poisons. Julius Caesar indicates that the Celts practiced human sacrifice, often with criminals or enemies placed inside a wicker effigy of a man, then set ablaze, apparently with many humans encased within it. Patrick vigorously opposed the sacrificing of infants by the Irish Celts to harvest gods. Like Patrick and generations of Christians who preceded the life and ministry of Patrick, Christians in the present generation are likewise called upon by God to defend the unborn and weak. Christians are presently being called upon to save the lives of the unborn and redeem their cultures from the paganism that ostensibly gains more and more vitality daily. The Celtic Irish were fierce warriors. In his ministry among the Irish, Patrick vigorously opposed long established practices relating to prisoners of war. Prisoners were often sacrificed and their skulls used as ceremonial drinking bowls. Would it have more civilized, more humane for Christians to have neglected ethical concerns? The struggle between Christianity and paganism in this case the form of Druidism had begun many years before Patrick arrived in Ireland as missionary, and it continued many centuries following. Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnasadh and Samhain. The last of these four events, Samhain, was observed

from sunset on October 31 to sunset on November 1. October 31, according to the Celts in this corner of the British Isles, was the close of one year and November 1 the beginning of the new year. Activities pertaining to this festival may be roughly classified into two categories, though they are not mutually exclusive, but interrelated to each other. The first category of activities associated with the celebration of Samhain related to the land, crops, livestock and well-being of the people. At this time of the year, cattle were brought back from summer pasture and livestock slaughtered for winter provisions. It was also a time of threshing and preparation of other foods for the winter. Naturally, this was a time of feasting and sharing, though overshadowed by yet another more sinister aspect of their celebration. Turnip Jack-O-Lanterns The second category of activities associated with Samhain was spiritual in nature. The Druid priest practiced divination rituals in an effort to determine the degree of fortune or misfortune that would be experienced in the coming year, often making their prophecies based upon numerous natural signs. It was believed that spirits or fairies were given greater liberty by spiritual forces to enter the realm of the living. Evil spirits were regarded as menacing figures that would steal infants, destroy crops, and kill farm animals. The Celts felt obligated to win the favor of these sinister spirits so that they and their livestock could avoid their fury and survive the winter. To placate these evil spirits, food and drink was left out for their consumption. In addition, the practice of dressing in grotesque costumes and appealing for treats throughout the neighborhood appears related to attempts to ward off evil spirits on one hand resulting from much activity in the village while deceiving the spirits by impersonating them on the other hand making them believe they also were evil spirits. Pranks, similar to the mischief of spirits whose favor had not been won, were also performed, and to guide them on their rounds through the community, impersonators of the evil spirits hallowed out turnips, carved grotesque faces on them to be more convincing to evil spirits and illuminated them from within to make turnip jack-o-lanterns. Thus, the rise of trick or treat. Accompanying this notion of the ease of movement for evil spirits at Samhain was also a belief that the spirits of departed family members would visit their kinsmen in search of warmth and good cheer as winter approached. The living beckoned the spirits of departed loved ones to return and a place was set at the family table for them. As was the case with the major festival in May Beltane , special bonfires were lit and believed to possess special cleansing powers when accompanied by the druid rituals associated with them. These bonfires were attempts to ward off evil spirits and at the same time to guide home the souls of departed loved ones. This practice was the beginning of the practice of lighting candles and saying prayers for the dead. The Influence of Christianity The Celtic observance of Samhain October November 1 has come to greatly influence Christian observance of Halloween and of the larger three-day observance of Triduum of All Hallows October November 2; discussed above in the introduction. Following the Jewish custom of beginning to celebrate a holiday or special observance the day before the actual observance on the eve , Christians began to also celebrate on October 31 in anticipation of the two special days that would follow. For this reason, both the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity chose to commemorate all the saints on one day. It was first introduced by Odilon, abbot of Clugni, [15] who encouraged its observance among his reformed Benedictine monks beginning in Prayers for souls in purgatory, as advocated by the Roman Church, assumed distinct features that continue to influence present-day observances of this season. In time, it became customary for individuals to dress in black and amble about towns and cities, each pealing out a mournful tone on his own bell to remind their hearers of the souls yet in purgatory. Use of Costumes Grotesque costumes had been used by the Celts in the observance of their Druidism to both ward off evil spirits and disguise themselves from the spirits. Among many Christians, costumes were also used as a means of disguise, but for a different reason: In order to avoid being recognized by any soul that might be seeking such vengeance, people would don masks or costumes to disguise their identities. Pagan ancestor worship was one of the first errors Christianity faced. Lamentably, Christians began to credit to departed individuals the power of intercession with God. Those who had lived the most exemplary Christian lives—the saints—were believed to possess the greatest influence with God, and for this reason, Christians offered their prayers to the saints instead of God himself. The relics related to departed saints were placed on display during the Hallowmas season and special blessings were often promised for the veneration of these relics. In those towns and villages that were too small or poor to host a display of relics, a

tradition arose which honored the lives of devoted believers by dressing like and impersonating them. Among some contemporary Christians, similar efforts have been used for the sake of appreciation rather than veneration or worship. Use of Candles Bonfires at this season of the year were used by the Celts to ward off evil spirits and direct the spirits of departed kin to their homes. It is no surprise that in countries such as Austria, England, and Ireland burning candles were placed in every room of a home to guide souls back to visit their earthly homes. Your small gift is tax-deductible and will go a long way to help us meet our operating budget " and it is vital, because America deserves to know its true heritage. Conclusion Martin Luther With the rise of the Protestant Reformation, Christian practices were increasingly held up to the authority of Scripture, not the traditions of men, the pronouncements of council, or pontification of any individual. As Justice Brewer writes, Christians are obligated to continue the work of Christianizing culture from a biblical perspective. Too many times, the civilizing influence of the Gospel has been diluted to appease the vain and vicious. With regard to those observances related to the Halloween season October November 2 , several facts must be kept in mind as Christians seek to identify ways they can redeem culture: First, Halloween celebrates paganism. Let Christians earnestly look for creative, yet biblical, ways to celebrate the One true God. Second, Halloween celebrates Satanism. Scripture clearly cites Satan and his demonic forces as the reality behind the occult Deut. Let believers allow God to control Satan and the demonic world; human efforts to manipulate Satan and his forces are vain. Third, Halloween celebrates fear. Rather than celebrating the peace that is spoken of in Scripture, Halloween glorifies fear cf. Fourth, Halloween celebrates death. Jesus told his disciples that he came to bring life and to bring it more abundantly. Halloween, however, honors what Christ came to destroy cf. Let the death of Christ and the life He brings to believers as a result be dominant themes in all we do. But Gap is not alone in this decision. Calendar Articles Christian Living Christian Morality Devotional Literature As military conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan continues to claim American lives, I am mindful that many in our great nation will observe the holidays in a much more somber spirit because of the sacrifices they and their families have made in the interest of our nation. Perhaps at no other time of the year is their loss sensed as deeply as it is during the holiday season. I am forever indebted to those who have risked and given much so that my life Read more Druid priest often performed their rituals under oak trees. Christian Apologetic and Research Ministry <http://> This was a group of reformed Benedictine monks. Stephen Flick Number of posts: Concerned with the cultural decay of America, Dr. Flick has sought to provide answers to fellow Christians and unbelievers concerning the questions and objections to Christianity often posed by secularists and the irreligious. He earned his Ph.

3: Harry F. Ward - Wikipedia

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Early Christians escaping Roman persecution nearly years were sheltered in Central Anatolia. Those who were influenced by this spritual movement though that no human activity should be undertaken apart from prayer. Among those who adopted this attitude, some remained within the church, others left. Basil took pains to minimize distinctions between the Christian and monastic vocations. Barbara Church with prayer walk through the burials and tombs. As the nature of Cappadocia the landscape preserves the rock-cut architecture, soo too it preserves the rock cuttings for burials. All types of churches and chapels are out fitted for burial in Cappadocia: Arcosolium tombs are ubiquitous in the region. Basil Church in Gomed Valley is a quiet and unique place for asceticism. For this reason the valley is fully decorated with Chapels and cells. Basil Church is one of them and located on the skirts of a tufa heap and observes total silence. Goreme Open Air Museum is located in the Goreme Valley, number of small communities with their own churches formed the large monastic complex towards the end of the A. Red Valley is probably the most amazing route among all valleys in Cappadocia. Walking along the labyrinth-like formations you can spot monk cells in every corner and come across a friendly smile from a local who works in the fields. John the Baptist Church is the oldest and the biggest church in the Cappadocia triangle so we will have the opportunity to study it in terms of early Christian art. In the 4th Century, Christians wanted to build larger edifices for worship. But as emperor Constantine the Great wanted to memorialize his imperial piety, they already had useful model at hand, the Basilica. The Basilica was originally a very classic model of Roman meeting halls with high platforms and large columned halls. This is where the apostles begun their mission journeys from to Europe and Asia. We continue our tour to the Opposite Church in Gulsehira to explore and understand more about the wall paintings. Early Christian art not only used Roman forms, it also used Roman styles. The later classical style included a proportional portrayal of the human body and impressionistic presentation of space. The two Byzantine outbreaks during the 8th and 9th Centuries were unusual in that the use of images was the main issue of dispute, rather than a by-product of wider concerns. For iconoclasts, the only real religious image must be an exact likeness of the prototype -of the same substance- which they considered impossible as they saw wood and paint as empty of spirit and life. For this reason, churches got back to basics and used only early figures to indicate their beliefs in geometrical forms. Winter is coming upâ€ Pottery Kebab of Cappadocia.

4: Christianization - Wikipedia

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