



IS HARRY HARMLESS?

By Anne Feaster

The Harry Potter Phenomena has spread very quickly all over the world with hundreds of millions of readers. It has been hailed as outstanding and imaginative story-telling, with the promotion of “good values,” even by well known Christian leaders. It was even reported by the media that it had “Vatican approval” which is not the case. (One priest at the Vatican had made some positive comments.)

The truth is that the series glorifies witchcraft, and blurs the distinction between right and wrong. For example, in his books or movies, Harry displays rebellion, rudeness, and a feel-good revenge against others. (See articles by Michael O’Brien, studiobrien.com. or by Bert Kjos, News with Views.com) Also, occult expert, Richard Abanes, says that the Potter series contains **real world occult practices**, including spiritism and astrology. He says, “The Chronicles of Narnia and Lord of the Rings, on the other hand, rely on imagination and basic forms of magic and fantasy. The practices contained in these works can’t be practiced.” (“Halloween, Harry Potter, prompt concern from occult experts” by Lori Arnold, Christian Examiner)

However, the most dangerous aspect of the Potter series is that it makes witchcraft seem permissible and even exciting to children or teens who are still very impressionable, who are still forming their consciences. For example, “Rome’s official exorcist, Fr. Gabrielle Amorth, said bluntly, ‘**Behind Harry Potter hides the signature of the king of the darkness, the devil.**’ He maintained that many of the ideas expressed in the books were from the realm of darkness, that they contain innumerable positive references to magic, “the satanic art”, and attempt to make a false distinction between black and white magic, when in fact, the distinction ‘*does not exist, because magic is always a recourse to the devil.*’ He also criticized the disordered morality presented in Rowling’s works, which he believes strongly reinforces moral relativism.” (“Pope Benedict and Harry Potter” by Michael O’Brien, studiobrien.com) As we know, the practice of magic and witchcraft are strictly condemned in the Bible as very grave sin. (See II Chron.33:6, Exodus 22:18, Deut. 18:10-11, Acts 19:18-19, Rev. 18:23, Rev. 21:8, 1 Cor. 10:21, 1 Tim 4: 1-2) The Catechism of the Catholic Church also addresses the occult in #2116 and #2117.

Pope Benedict XVI also warns against the Potter series. When he was Cardinal, he said in a letter to a lady complaining about Potter: “***It is good that you enlighten us on the Harry Potter matter, for these are subtle seductions that are barely noticeable, and precisely because of that have a deep effect and corrupt the Christian faith in souls even before it could properly grow.***” (March 7, 2003) (See www.gabriele-kuby.de/resonanz.html)

The Bad Effects of the Potter Phenomena – According to research done by *Catholic World Report* magazine, there has been an increase of interest in witchcraft among the young. “In an interview with *Newsweek*, a spokesman for the Pagan Federation in England reported that he receives an average of 100 calls per month from young people who want to become witches-an unprecedented phenomenon which he in part contributes to the Potter books. An article in Dec. 17, 2000, issue of *Time* reports that a similar organization in Germany deals with an increasing number of inquiries, which it also credits to the Potter factor. Rowling herself expressed surprise at the volume of mail she receives from young reader writing to her as if Hogwarts was real, wanting to know how they might enter the school in order to become witches and wizards.” The magazine goes on to say that “A recent search of the Internet for Harry Potter references yielded more than 500,000 “hits”. Selective searches turned up more than 100 high profile websites under titles, such as “Learn more about the Secrets of the Occult” and “How to Become a Witch”. It also stated

that “Librarians in diverse social settings report that children in increasing numbers are requesting material from the occult sections of their collections. (*The Catholic World Report*, April 2001, p.58)

A fifteen-year old girl in Gwinnett County, Ga. recently testified at a school hearing that she became fascinated with witchcraft after reading the FIRST Potter book. She said that she and her friends used to cast spells. . She said that she and her friends used to cast spells. Once, she said, they performed a séance during gym class. She also said she became angry and depressed as she became more interested in witchcraft, and considered killing herself. She turned her life around and is now warning others about the dangers of the Potter books. (Atlanta Journal Constitution, Friday, Apr. 21, 2006, p. J1,J6)

According to Bob Larson, occult expert, the biggest danger of the Harry Potter books is that they casualize, familiarize and normalize people with the occult and takes away the sting and the danger of it. He says that Harry Potter explores every aspect of demonic practice imaginable. He says that we, (as Christians) are put down as an inferior class of society in every way because we are not willing to accept the demonic supernatural. (Bob Larson is one of the foremost authors on cults and the occult. He has preached in 80 countries and has researched this subject in great detail. He has written 30 books and 4 novels)

William Schneobelen, who was once deep into witchcraft, claims that there are over 70 actual witchcraft procedures in the books. (He has a ministry called Cutting Edge Ministries)

Elizabeth Wittman, who wrote an article in HPR magazine, says “An ardent reader of Harry Potter becomes familiar with terms such as divination, casting spells, omens, portents, and the weirdness of the occult is softened.” She says that a recent NY Times News Service article reported on the growth of witchcraft in America. “Witchcraft, it reads, ‘is gaining an ardent following among teenagers, mostly girls, who are in part captivated by the glossy new images of witches portrayed on television shows and in the movies.’ She goes on to say “Obviously, Shakespeare’s characterizations of witches in *MacBeth* as “midnight hags” and weird sisters are definitely behind the times.

Besides familiarizing children with occult terms, the Harry Potter books portray the occult as empowering. Harry is transformed from a besieged and misunderstood youngster into a hero through wizardry.”

Wittman goes on to say “A simple glance at the occult portion of the children’s section at the public library reveals plenty of books written to make the occult “user friendly” for children. Such titles as *Mysteries of the Supernatural*, and *How to find a Ghost*, are found side by side with *Paranormal Powers* and *Telling Fortunes*” Then she states there is book written especially for teen-age girls. She says, “Promising to turn its reader into a ‘pentacle-wearing, spell-casting, completely authentic witch’, “there is *Teen Witch :Wicca for a New Generation* a handbook written for the 10 to 17 year old girl by Silver Ravenwolf, New Age author. It is already in its third reprinting and has a cookbook style how-to-directions for casting spells, one of which calls for the use of holy water.”(“Occult Trends in children’s literature”, by Elizabeth Wittman, *Homiletic & Pastoral Review Magazine*)

A Wake-Up Call to Parents – Clare Merkle, former New Ager who was heavily involved in the occult, also addresses the Potter problem. She says in her article on Potter, “We parents still don’t get it. We still don’t understand that our children live in a reality steeped in violence, sex and the occult, and that they move and breathe and have their being in a culture we would not have recognized even 15 years ago, one that has done untold harm.” She goes on to say that the Potter books “not only propagates occultism, but offers advanced indoctrination into it.” She believes that children are attracted to the occult because they want to be in control. Often they “lack control in their lives and need to feel in control of their inner turmoil amidst divorce, latchkey-ism, and out-of-control classrooms.”(“Harry Potter and The Lost Generations”, by Merkle. crossveil.org.)

What is the solution? – If the reader has already exposed his/her child to the Potter books, I would suggest that you have a serious discussion with your child to determine what he/she understands about Harry’s occult practices. Does the child understand that this is fiction and cannot be done in real life, that it is gravely sinful and extremely harmful? If the child has done any of the spells, they need to go to Confession and be prayed with by a Charismatic priest. The books need to be taken out of the house. The

child could be encouraged to read “The Chronicles of Narnia” by C.S. Lewis. These adventure stories teach good values such as forgiveness, laying down your life for others, honor, truthfulness, and loyalty and **a clear distinction between good and evil.** Most importantly, our children need to know that they can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and that He is real; that He will help them with their problems, give them peace and joy if they will surrender their lives to Him. They can experience His love for them, instead of experiencing depression and restlessness from the occult. They need to hear the witness of people whose lives have been changed by Jesus Christ, about miracle healings and answered prayers. They need to hear stories of the great saints and heroes which are true stories, real life stories. They need a stable family life and to be taught right from wrong, and that there are certain inherent truths that cannot be changed. They need to know what the Bible teaches about occult practices and its consequences. If they come to know Jesus and experience His love, they will not need to look elsewhere. The Lord tells us in Jeremiah 29:11, *“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call Me, when you go to pray to Me, I will listen to you. When you look for Me, you will find Me. Yes, when you seek Me with all of your heart you will find Me with you, says the Lord, and I will change your lot.”*

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