

29/9/2013. *The world of Harry Potter*

J.K. Rowling has been in the news recently, speaking about government policy toward single mothers (she was one), getting outed as the author of a book written under a pen name, and starting the script of a Harry Potter spin-off film. She will always be best known for Potter. He is a boy at an English boarding school called Hogwarts, and the books are full of English boarding school life; this is a genre more than a century old. But Hogwarts is no normal school. It is a school of occult arts. Some Christians have attacked the Harry Potter books for this reason. Other Christians have welcomed the books since good consistently triumphs as characters struggle to do the right thing in the face of evil and danger; furthermore, commitment-love (*agapē*) is rightly understood to have deep and positive outworkings. Harry Potter is a worldwide phenomenon. How should Christians view it?

The books, whether well written or not, are certainly gripping. I read the climax of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, a scene of which Rowling herself thinks highly, and I appreciate that children will be unable to put them down. But this only makes the problem more acute. For, no matter how the characters behave, these books advocate magic (spells), not God, to combat magic. New Agers call this 'white' magic versus 'black' magic.

And that is the key point: *The Potter books promote the view that the occult is neutral, and can be used for good or evil according to the user's intent. But in scripture God tells believers to keep clear of magic arts, which are dangerous.* They are dangerous to the user and dangerous to their targets other than Christians. (Christians have the armour of God – Ephesians 6.) The difference between 'white' and 'black' magic is a deception through which Satan has deceived many; 'occult' means 'hidden.' This supposed difference is the basis of witch-doctoring or shamanism. The occult's bitter fruits of immorality and misery can be seen in the lives of many New Agers, but the Potter books fail to portray these consequences, and the books disparage people who avoid involvement in magic ('muggles').

Nothing about the Potter books is as significant as their supposition that people can use magic for good. After the series took off, the Pagan Federation in Britain stated that it was receiving 100 phone calls a month from children, whereas before it took a tiny number from adults. It is not for me to judge what J.K. Rowling's own beliefs are, but by fascinating our children with magic her books are furthering Satan's kingdom.