

The Effects of Harry Potter

Most people have an opinion on the Harry Potter phenomenon. Some Christians think he is harmless; others do not. I would like to share with you some research which reveals the effect of Potter on some of our teens. A Christian organization called the Barna Group has interviewed 4,370 teens in the U.S. from age 13 to 18 on the Potter series and their involvement in other aspects of the occult. Their findings are alarming.

They have discovered that 84% or four out of every five teens polled have personally read or watched Potter. 77% of these are church-going teens. Despite the widespread exposure to Potter, only 4% have received any teachings or discussions about this subject in a church. The vast majority found it to be just a “fun to read” story. However, **ONE OUT OF EVERY 8 TEENS (12%) SAID THE POTTER SERIES INCREASED THEIR INTEREST IN WITCHCRAFT.** If this sample is applied to the general population, it would translate to millions of teens.

The Barna report states, “The most common types of witchcraft behaviors were using a Ouija board and reading a book about witchcraft or Wicca, each of which had been done by more than one-third of the teenagers. More than one-quarter of teens have played a game featuring sorcery or witchcraft elements. One tenth of teens had participated in a séance and 1 out of 12 had tried to cast a spell or mix a magic potion.”

This is alarming because doing witchcraft or using a Ouija board can put the teen in direct contact with evil spirits, according to Fr. Amorth, the Vatican exorcist. Amorth has also said, “Behind Harry Potter hides the signature of the king of darkness, the devil.” In addition, the teens may not realize that these practices are gravely sinful. The Bible explains this very clearly in Deut.18:10. It states “Let there not be found among you anyone who immolates his son or daughter in the fire, nor a fortune-teller, soothsayer, charmer, diviner, or caster of spells, nor one who consults ghosts and spirits or seeks oracles from the dead. Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the Lord, and because of such abominations, the Lord your God is driving these nations out of your way.” Since this cute little wizard is doing white witchcraft, he would be an abomination to the Lord in real life. The Potter books send a confusing message to children.

Of the teens who found it “fun to read”, they too have been affected. They have been exposed to and de-sensitized to some of the most sinful and forbidden practices that exist, thinking them to be completely harmless. Testimony from an ex-Teen Witch High school student, Jordan Fuchs, testified at a school hearing in Gwinnett County, Ga. in April 2006 that the Potter books had a bad influence on her and her friends in middle school. Her teachers had encouraged the students to read the books. She states in her testimony, “After reading the first book, many of my classmates decided that we wanted to learn more about witchcraft. While at school we looked up witchcraft on the internet. We looked up

how to become a witch and how to perform the Craft. To us the Harry Potter books had made witchcraft seem mystical, exciting, and innocent". She then stated, "We continued to search for info on how to perform spells, curses, potions, hexes and vexes just like Harry." After practicing witchcraft, she said she became "an angry, bitter, depressed, vengeful, manipulative, disobedient, rebellious person." She had become so depressed that she set out to kill herself. Fortunately, she had confided in a friend who told her Mother who then intervened and found some help for her. However, it took her several years to get back to where she was before.

Teens and other occult practices - The Barna Report also states " As for psychic activities, more than one-fourth of teens have had their palm read (30%) or their fortune told (27%). Other psychic deeds included being physically present when someone else used psychic powers (14%), visiting a medium or spiritual guide (9%) and consulting a psychic (9%). They also reported that "seven million teens have encountered an angel, demon, or some other supernatural being. More than two million teens say they have communicated with a dead person (10%). Nearly two million youth claim they have psychic powers." (The Barna Update, "New Research Explores Teenage Views and Behavior Regarding the Supernatural" and "Harry Potter's Influence Goes Unchallenged in Most Homes and Churches." (www.barna.org)

Unfortunately, there are some witch's covens at some of the high schools in the U.S. When Moira Noonan, an ex-New Ager, was giving a conference, a lady told the audience that there was a witches' coven at her daughter's high school. They wore witches' T-shirts to school. The principal objected, and the teen witches demanded the right to continue because the Christian students were wearing theirs. The principal, therefore, made the decision to allow only school spirit or school team shirts.

Effects of Potter on Children -Our children have grown up in an occult-friendly world with an unusual number of cartoons, and TV programs that glorify the occult, especially magic and sorcery. In some cases, the small child learns about the occult from cartoons before he has a chance to learn about the Christian faith. In other cases, he learns all about the occult, and nothing at all about God. Pope Benedict XVI has expressed his concern about this problem when he was a Cardinal.

Unfortunately, the Potter series has affected some of our elementary school children. Though the Barna Report did not interview children, we know from the stories of teachers that the Potter books have made witchcraft and occult practices very appealing to children who are far too young to sort out right from wrong in the stories. For example, an elementary school teacher in the Atlanta area told me that she has overheard children talking about casting spells on others, and had a child in her classroom casting spells on another child. She later taught in high school and overheard the same conversations. Jordan Fuchs, the teenager who testified at the Gwinnett County hearing, had included in her testimony this startling fact. She said, "**I remember many children telling me that they were "hooked" into witchcraft by Harry Potter.**"

Quotes from Children: There is a book by Sharon Moore called *We love Harry Potter, We'll tell you why*. Moore interviewed children who explain why they like the series. Here are a few examples: "If I could go to wizard school, I might be able to do spells and potions and fly a broomstick." Said Mara, 12. "It would be great to be a wizard because you could control situations and things like teachers." Jeffrey, age 11. "I would like to go to wizard school and learn magic and put spells on people. I'd make up an ugly spell and then it's pay-back time. Catherine, age 9. "I feel like I am inside Harry's world. If I went to wizard school I'd study everything: spells, counter spells, and defense against the dark arts." Carolyn, age 10. "I liked it when the bad guys killed the unicorn and Voldemort drank its blood." Julie, age 13.

Warnings from an Ex-Witch - In the 60's a man named David J. Meyer was practicing witchcraft, astrology, and numerology. At the end of that spiritually troubled decade, was also delivered from every evil spirit that lived in me and was set free." He is now a Pastor and is deeply concerned about the Potter series. "As a former witch, I can speak with authority when I say that I have examined the works of Rowling and that the Harry Potter books are training manuals for the occult." Meyer also states "Through Harry's world of sorcery they are learning what tools today's witches and pagans use, supernatural imagination, spiritual concentration, wands, brooms, spells and curses." He goes on to say "Harry's world says that drinking dead animal blood gives power, a satanic human sacrifice and Harry's powerful blood brings new life, demon possession is not spiritually dangerous, and that passing through fire, contacting the dead, and conversing with ghosts, others in the spirit world, and more, is normal and acceptable." (From www.harrypottermagic.org/bigdealhp2.htm)

Wizardology Instructions at Book Fair A Gwinnett County teacher at a Scholastic book fair reported that they were selling a book called *Wizardology* alongside the Harry Potter books. It is a non-fiction book which comes with several interactive tools, including tarot cards. The book teaches spells and how to read palms. The book came to her attention when she found a group of students huddled over the book casting spells in her class! She complained about the book to the media specialist and was met with rolled eyes. However, the principal did remove the book! Books describe many murders Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince mentions 15 murders. A few examples are: • Five year old brother of Montgomery sisters – killed by Greyback because his mother would not help the Death Eaters. • Hannah Abbot's mother – murdered by Death Eaters. Also, in the *Goblet of Fire*, a living person's hand was cut off in a ritual, and it describes a child sacrifice. *Chamber of Secrets* describes an animal sacrifice. Is this really suitable reading for elementary school children?

Report from a Counselor –A counselor in Lawrenceville, Ga. reported that many, many children have been brought in to her with various problems resulting from the reading of the Potter books. She cites case histories (no names) of children and teens suffering anxiety, fear, nightmares, insomnia, and panic attacks. One 9 year old reported something evil in her closet and objects moving. Another 13 year old was practicing Wicca (witchcraft). She was frustrated, confused, angry, and was talking to things that were not there.

What can a Parent Do? – It would be wise for the parents of teens and children to discuss the Potter series with their child. Find out what their attitudes are and be sure that the child or teen understands the dangers of the occult practices in real life and its terrible consequences. (Spells do go through and harm people, except for those who have a deep prayer life, according to Fr. Amorth, the Vatican exorcist.) Jordan Fuchs, the ex-teen witch became angry, bitter, depressed. She was later delivered from witchcraft by the mercy of God, but she had to rebuild her life. If a parent has a child or teen practicing witchcraft, they must seek help from a priest or a Charismatic deliverance team. Some of the signs are: the teen pulls back from her old friends; there is a dramatic change in behavior; the teen has “A Book of Shadows; an unusual amount of candle wax in their room;. (Protecting Your teen From Today’s Witchcraft, Steve Russo.) The easiest solution would be to give the children books on the Narnia Series. These are popular with children and they are not harmful.

In summary, warnings about the Potter books have come from Pope Benedict XVI as Cardinal, Fr. Amorth, (the Vatican exorcist), ex-witches, teachers, parents, teens, counselors and research from the Barna group. In other conferences and publications, warnings have come from Focus on the Family, Clare Merkle and Moira Noon who are ex- New Agers. The Pagan Federation of England reports over 100 children per month calling them to inquire how they can become witches. We now see that many children have truly been harmed. **THE DEBATE ON POTTER IS OVER. WE MUST NOW PRAY FOR THOSE TEENS AND CHILDREN PRACTICING WITCHCRAFT AND FOR THEIR VICTIMS. We must share this information with other parents, and ask the Lord for the courage to speak the truth about the effects of Harry Potter on our children and teens.**

Moira Noonan also speaks out against the Potter books at conferences. We highly recommend her book, Ransomed from Darkness. Raised as a Catholic, author Moira Noonan began apprenticeship in New Age practices and ideas as a college student. Over a 25 year time frame, she worked in Religious Science ministry, as a psychic counselor and therapist. She became certified or developed expertise in Hypnotherapy, Past Life Regression, Astrology, The Course in Miracles, Reiki, channeling, crystals, goddess spirituality, clairvoyance, and other occult practices. **Then in 1993, after a series of powerful conversion experiences, she returned to the Church, and is now a popular speaker, witnessing, evangelizing, and explaining the deeper influences of the New Age movement.** She has told her story via religious cable and radio stations worldwide. She has featured chapter about her conversion in Prodigal Daughters, Ignatius Press.

To order articles and fact sheets by Author Anne Feaster on the New Age, call Sword of Light & Truth Ministries at 770-9211634. All articles tapes and publications from Sword of Light & Truth Ministries, Inc. are free. For further information on the New Age Movement, visit Clare Merkle’s website, crossveil.org. Videos on Merkle also available at EWTN 1-800-854-6316 or Living His Life Abundantly- 1-800-558-5452. Moira Noonan’s website is www.spiritbattleforsouls.org.

Recommended Books

The New Age Counterfeit, by Johnnette Benkovic. To order, call Living His Life Abundantly 1-800-558-5452. Also available is a tape series on New Age.

Catholics and the New Age by Fr. Mitch Pacwa To order, call EWTN 1-800-854-6316

Ransomed from Darkness: The New Age, Christian Faith, and the Battle for Souls by Moira Noonan. Available at Borders, and Barnes & Noble. Or order from Amazon.com