



**Would You Like to
Initiate Your
Children to Satanism?**

Harry Potter The Truth Behind the Story

A pamphlet of [St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery](#)

Table of Contents

I. [Would You Like to Initiate Your Children to Satanism?](#)

- [1. The New Fad](#)
- [2. Who is Harry Potter?](#)
- [3. Some Objections](#)
- [4. What the Books Say](#)
- [5. A Few Observations](#)
- [6. Just a Story?](#)
- [7. Charming Harry and the Big Picture](#)
- [8. The Children](#)
- [9. Troubling Fruits](#)
- [10. Conclusion](#)
- [11. Raising Our Children](#)

II. [Journey to Orthodoxy](#) (*Orthodox America* vol. XVIII, No. 5, (161)) - Robert Stauffer

III. [Never Kneel](#) (*From Death to the World* no. 4) - Collin Ivy

IV. [Led by the Spirits](#) (Archimandrite Savvas Achilleas, *Μαγεία, Δαιμονισμός, Απολύτρωση*, Athens 1990 pp88-93)

V. ["The Craft"](#) (*Orthodox America*)

VI. Straight Talk on Harry Potter by William J. Schnoebelen

1. Introduction

2. Bargains with Demons?

3. Step into the Abyss

4. A Deadly Game

Bibliography

Endnotes

Would You Like to Initiate Your Children to satanism?

Harry Potter!

1. THE NEW FAD

Just recently, the Greek movie theaters were flooded by children of all ages, waiting in line to watch Warner Bros' movie, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone."

The movie is based on Joanne K. Rowling's¹ first book; Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Bloomsbury 1997. This book and its three sequels² have sold 116 million copies and have been translated into 47 languages.³ Her first four books have sold many millions of copies; they were on the best seller lists for many long months; and they have received many awards. Researchers in the US say that over 50% of children in the US, aged 6-17, have read at least one Harry Potter book.⁴ The internet is full of Harry Potter fan clubs. The publishing house of Harry Potter in Greece, Ψυχογιός says:

*The revealing sign of the new fad, which is called "Harrypottermania," is the number of letters, telephone calls and e-mails that the Ψυχογιός publications receives daily for the Harry Potter book: the letters alone surpass 7,500!*⁵

Moreover, the Coca Cola Company has signed an agreement to pay 150 million dollars to Warner Bros for the exclusive right of displaying Harry Potter on the packages of its products and its advertisements.⁶ We also learn that "school playgrounds [abroad] are awash with Harry Potter paraphernalia, books, cards, glasses like those worn by the young wizard,"⁷ many of which we see now even in Greece.

Harry Potter even invaded school classrooms; teachers give the children assignments on Harry Potter books, handling out also extended references on witchcraft and occultism.⁸ In Athens, certain private language schools use the book in the original English text to improve the reading skills of the students. Many parents and school teachers, being rather ignorant of the context, are extremely happy that the book-phobic toddlers have now become manic readers...of Harry Potter. In view of the Christmas holidays, whole classes of Elementary, Junior-High and High

Schools--even entire schools--accompanied by the teachers, visited the movie theaters to watch the Harry Potter film. Consequently, certain children that had not found Harry Potter up to that time, returned home asking their parents to buy them the books.

These are marketed as children's books (the first is suggested for ages 8-13 and the last book ages 10 to adult) although they are well written and are being enjoyed by adults as well. The problem, of course, is in the spiritual nature of the books.

The author herself, admitted in 1999 that more than one third of her books are based on actual occult practices.

2. WHO IS HARRY POTTER?

Harry is a cute, young, orphaned, nerdy lad, who lives together with his unsympathetic, abusive, dull relatives. When Harry was still an infant, Voldemort,⁹ the wicked wizard, killed his parents and tried to kill him also; but the baby, gifted with supernatural powers, escaped death. From this encounter, as a souvenir of the incident, he was left with the sign of a lightning bolt¹⁰ scarred on his forehead, a sign that would make him famous later.

When Harry became 11 years old, he was "saved" from his bleak existence by receiving an invitation from the "Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry," that offered him a scholarship to study witchcraft. It was then that he found out that he "was a warlock, and a very good one, but with some practice of course." So, Harry became a boarding student in the witch school.

Harry, along with the reader of course, becomes slowly initiated into the "craft," which is presented extremely seductively, full of mystery and challenges. In the world of witchcraft, and in its people, he finds the love, acceptance, and recognition--even monetary benefits--which he lacked when he was living with the muggles¹¹ (read non-wizards), which in all the Harry Potter books are depicted either as slow-witted or full of hatred and evil. Up to this point, some people might have considered the whole thing as pure fantasy--and why not? However, there is more to come. Read along!

3. SOME OBJECTIONS

1. First of all, part of the problem is that witches and wizards do exist and they do cast spells as in the Harry Potter books.
2. The author herself, Ms. J. K. Rowling, readily admitted in 1999 on *The Dianne Reihm Show*¹² that she researched pagan and witchcraft practices to make the books more realistic. She said that more than one third of her books are based on actual occult practices.¹³
3. The growing trend has been described as "troublesome" by John Buckeridge, editor of *Youthwork*, a monthly Christian magazine. He said: "The growing number of books and TV shows like *Harry Potter* and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* encourage an interest in magic as harmless fun. However, for some young people it could fuel a fascination that leads to dangerous dabbling with occult powers. So what starts out as spooks and spells can lead to psychological and spiritual damage."
4. Media officer Andy Norfolk of *Pagan Federation* said: "In response to the increased queries coming from youngsters we established a youth officer, not to promote paganism but merely to answer those queries and allow someone to offer advice and information."

The aforementioned Federation also stated that the Harry Potter books, along with some TV series like *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, are responsible for this new wave of interest in the black arts. Kate West, a 42 year-old witch and vice president of the Federation, said: "When I was a teenager, there were only about 10 books on witchcraft around. But now there is so much information on the Internet which makes it so much more accessible." However, Andy Norfolk soothingly reassured the parents that they should not be alarmed by their children's sudden interest in magick.¹⁴ "Paganism is recognized as a valid religion."

5. The Union of Teachers and University Professors in England rang the bells of warning for the extremely popular creations of Mrs. Rowling, and called on both parents and teachers to be careful. The Union of Teachers has been for a long time suspicious that children are occupied with the occult. Peter Smith, the general secretary of the Teachers' Union, emphasize: "The children should be protected from the extreme forms of occultism and should be taught a responsible and positive way about the dangers of trips into the unknown. The film of Harry Potter will lead a whole generation of children to the discovery of witchcraft. While it is important to prevent extreme forms of opposition...the dangers are clear. More and more children are spending whole hours by themselves on the internet in search of satanic web pages and we do worry about it because there is no one to check up on them."¹⁵
6. A former wizard and now Protestant Pastor, David J. Meyer, said, "It was the Communist revolutionary Lenin who said, 'Give me one generation of youth, and I will transform the entire world.' Now an entire generation of youth has been given to a woman named J. K. Rowling and her four books on witchcraft, known as the Harry 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. Untold millions of young people are being taught to think, speak, dress, and act like witches by filling their heads with the contents of these books. Children are [so] obsessed with the Harry Potter books that they have left television and video games to read these witchcraft manuals. How serious is this? By reading these manuals, many millions of young people are learning how to work with demon spirits. Vast numbers of children professing to be Christians are also filling their hearts and minds, while willingly ignorant parents look the other way."
7. "On top of that," said Bill Schnoebelen (another former ceremonial magician), "many

"I made a very conscious decision, right from the beginning, that I was writing about someone evil, and wasn't going to tell a lie."

-J. K. Rowling

media report that children are not just reading the Potter books, they are re-reading [them] over and over again! They do this because they are entertaining, but also because they find this world of sorcerers and magic beguiling and charming (both words

rooted in magic) and because they identify with the wizards. This is eerily like Christians who read and re-read the Bible, except of course they are digesting the very Word of God. Whether or not they grow up to be sorcerers, they are immersing themselves in the magic world-view that does not fit with the Bible. You cannot be your own god and also worship the one, true God. This is why these books are more dangerous than they appear."¹⁶

8. Consequently, expected opposition also came from the Christian world of all countries, as is demonstrated by the great many number of webpages which one can locate with any search engine.
9. The Harry Potter books are among the most controversial, as reported by the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom. For the years 1999 and 2000 there are 1,188 signed protests. These protests constitute less than 1/4 of the actual number of protests in schools and libraries, asking the withdrawal of Harry Potter books on the basis that they are "occultic and satanic."
10. At least one school in England, the Grammar school of St. Mary in Chatman, banned the Harry Potter books in its library.¹⁷
11. One of the biggest chain toy-stores in UK, the "Entertainer," banned "Harry Potter merchandise" from their shelves. One of the owners, Gary Grant, admitted that this action might cost him profits of 500,000 sterlings, but he explained that he was worried about the uncontrollable situation in which the children would find themselves.
12. In Greece, the Scientist's Association "Προοπτική" is involved in deep research on the subject, studying among other things the psychological and pedagogical facets of this new phenomenon. The "Προοπτική" Association expresses its deep concerns not only about Harry Potter but also for J. R. R. Tolkien's trilogy, The Lord of the Rings.
13. In Athens there are responsive educators, parents, priests, and Sunday-school teachers, that are informed--or have already faced some of the immediate consequences (manifestations of fear, sleep disturbances, etc. in the life of the child)--of the subject and are trying to avert this great danger that threatens youth.

Do these statements sound overly critical? We wish there were.

4. *WHAT THE BOOKS SAY*

At this point there are four Harry Potter books on the market, and three more are waiting to be published to complete the series. Ms. Rowling knew since the beginning that she would write seven books, one for each year Harry Potter studies in the school of sorcery, and, accordingly, has completed her seventh book many years ago. The books are written with a progression from bad to evil.

For example, in the first book the heroes found blood stains of an animal (which, by "pure" coincidence, happened to be a unicorn) and then became witnesses of a horrible scene where the demonic creature that killed the unicorn drinks its blood; finally, at the end of the book is presented, quite abruptly and ghastly, the demonic possession of one of the teachers who then tries to kill Harry.

In the second book, the little wizard learns how to purge the garden of gnomes, without taking pity on them even when they scream. Later on, the young students of the school of sorcery are taught, among other things, how to plant mandrakes in the soil; these mandrakes are plants which, instead of roots, have little, soiled, grotesque infants that shriek at the top of their lungs. Later on, in the same book, we read about the animal sacrifice of the pet cat of the school (which, please take note, is name "Mrs. Norris") and also about the demonic possession of one little female student, who then loses accountability of her actions and proceeds to strangle roosters and to attack both the living and the dead of the school. Now the whole thing has transformed into a

true "horror movie," since every body is now in danger of getting killed.

In the third book we learn about lollipops with blood flavor--in the first book we were presented just with "vomit-flavored" candy. We also learn about some creatures that continuously alter their form in order to scare humans, then about some other demons, and later on about the executioners of the jail of sorcerers, the "lunatics," horrible demonic creatures that suck the souls out of human beings so that the latter will lose them forever. We also witness Harry hearing his dead parents streaming before getting killed, and then we learn that the pet that Ton carries continually with him (it even gets to sleep in the boys' dormitory), is not truly a pet rat(!) but a warlock--of the kind that transforms into animal forms¹⁸--and an evil one, too.

The fourth book, which is the most sizeable, is endowed with 654 pages and the most atrocious scenes; Ms. Rowling defines it as the "main book." "It is the book where all the deaths start," she said to *The Times* and continued saying, "it will cause a lot of confusion but now damage." This matches the book title well since "Potter" in her British dialect also means "bother, irritate, annoy."¹⁹ The fourth book begins with a string of murders, a literal contest of life and death, where the heroes are called to win by putting into practice all the sinister dark arts they were taught in the previous three years. At the end of the contest, one of the heroes ends up murdered and the whole thing reaches its climax with a shocking satanic ritual--the kind which only a completely perverted mind would conceive.

One, then, can only wonder: what is next?

5. A FEW OBSERVATIONS

Even if someone could encounter in the books some humor, some elements of imagination, and a veneer of moral values, still, how can children read such books? How appropriate are these kinds of books when they are plagued with such problems:

1. **They familiarize the reader with evil, witchcraft, occultism, and demonology.** Harry is a wizard (his mother was a witch, his father was a wizard) and is training both himself and the reader to use occult powers of astrology, alchemy, divination, spell casting, and so on.
2. **They blur the distinction between good and evil.** The stories are often portrayed as 'good' versus 'evil'. However, Harry uses witchcraft, among other vices, to overcome the enemy wizard Voldemort. Their powers come from the same source.
3. **They cultivate a negative attitude.** Characters who have magic powers are portrayed as being 'cool'--the rest are considered inferior, slow-witted, and wicked.
4. **They contain anti-pedagogical messages.** Not only do the characters have unethical behavior; such as conscious lying and rule breaking, but also when they are caught, they are not only not punished but rewarded instead.
5. **They weaken the will to endure the natural hardships of life.** Children get the false impression from the books that they can escape the hardships of life by cheating and resorting to the paranormal. Thus, they train themselves for a life of misery and failure.
6. **They undermine traditional family values.** As was mentioned earlier, Harry's biological parents were murdered and his foster family is horrible, mean, selfish, and unloving. They are "Muggles" (non-sorcerers) who make Harry's life miserable because

of his beliefs and even make him sleep in a closet! His witchy friends are made to appear very appealing next to these loutish family members. The normal human adults of his family are seen as stupid and powerless, while the witches and warlocks are wise and powerful. What sort of message does this send to children about their relatives who might not live lives as fascinating as those portrayed in the books? Is that the kind of gratitude you would expect from your children for your sacrifices for them?

7. **They nurture a prolonged descent into a daydreaming mental state.** The children lock themselves inside their fantasies, alienating themselves from the perception of the true world around them. Hence, not only do they become unable to respond to the requirements of normal life, but they become unable to respond to the requirements of normal life, but they also develop abnormal psychological states--including despondency and megalomania.
8. **They cultivate thirst for satanic pride.** They tickle the desire to become "little gods"--the ancient lie of the serpent--and fill the child's head with violence, blood sacrifice, and a worldview which is decidedly anti-Christian. Is this desirable? Especially when the books are so well-written that the children are reading them over and over and virtually memorizing them?

6. JUST A STORY?

It is very likely that some people will argue that the Harry Potter story is just fantasy and as such cannot have any real impact on the formation of a child's character. "After all, it's just a story." Yet, we saw the author herself admitted that her books describe *actual* occultic practices. Even more, newer studies demonstrate that the most potent method of pedagogical instruction is precisely story telling. As a matter of fact, "lively narrative format is being used increasingly in higher education..." writes Dr. Abrahamson in his report, *Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool in Higher Education* (posted in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* website), and he continues saying that,

storytelling can clearly be viewed as the foundation of the teaching profession...The best methodology for education is not simply the use of didactic instruction for it needs to be an awakening and moving experience in order for the content to have meaning for the learner. Inspiration, encouragement, satisfaction must be integrated with information in order to provide an education that has meaning to the learner and will have true, lasting effects on that person's life and the society in which he or she interacts. What a person usually remembers the longest is information that has an emotional impact.

What's more alarming is that similar studies claim that storytelling teaching--by employing emotional elements, suspense and surprises in the plot--captures the audience's attention and momentarily suspends critical thinking, preparing the mind to accept *without scrutiny* the real message of the story. "If the stage is successful," says Dr. Abrahamson, "consciousness has been distracted."

Even if our children do not outright embrace satanism, we have to understand that exposure to such literature--especially at a young age--will surely affect their perception of the world around them. A child's perception is fundamentally different from an adult's. As adults, we can--if we want to--develop a perspective on what we read or watch, reflecting on the relationship between what we are reading and our own thoughts and experiences. However, the children cannot,

"As a former magician myself, I can say that an intelligent child could learn a great deal of authentic magical material [from the Harry Potter books]..."

because their life experience and understanding is too limited. "By blurring the line between fantasy and reality," said senior news analyst for National Public Radio, Daniel Schorr, "it crowds out reality. And people are starting to catch on."²⁰

Let it be noted that in many parts of the books, which we presented, the heroes learn and execute spells, make magical potions, recite incantations, learn to use phrases with magical results--good or evil. The heroes also learn to levitate objects, talk to the dead, are taught astrology, divination, and curses with which they can control, torture, and kill. The occultist and satanic elements are plentiful, as are also the scenes that cause horror, terror, and disgust. A former ceremonial magician, Bill Schnoebelen, brings the following troubling elements to our attention:

Just as a small sample, imagine a ten-year-old reading about an animal sacrifice of a cat; non-magicians like you and I (Muggles) portrayed as dull, boring, cruel, or useless; power is the ultimate moral choice, irrespective of good or evil; blood sacrifices; cutting off the hand of a living person for a ritual; boiling what seems to be a baby or fetus alive in a cauldron; demon possessions; werewolves; vampires; bringing an evil wizard back from the dead through the shedding of blood; astral projection or travel; casting spells and levitation; being able to shape-shift into an animal [lycanthropy]; crystal gazing or divination; a hero (Harry) who tells lies, steals, breaks the rules, and cheats by copying another student's homework; approval of astrology; being taught that people can exist without their souls; communion with the dead; dead souls living within us; Harry takes mood-altering drugs (which are REAL herbs that are used by witches and shamans); use of the "Hand of Glory" (a grisly occult artifact that is the severed hand of a hanged murderer. Its fingers are lit and burned as candles. The hand is placed in a house to make everyone in the house fall into a spell); use of magic charms. As a former magician myself, I can say that an intelligent child could learn a great deal of authentic magical material [from the Harry Potter books]. For non-Christians like Harry, death is a one-way ticket to hell!²¹

Very cunningly, the toddlers are indoctrinated into believing that there is also "good" magic, and that everyone is free to choose for himself between "good" and "evil" sorcery.²² Indeed, some people,

defend [the books] by saying that good magic always wins and overcomes evil magic. This is the oldest con game ever hatched out of hell. As a real [ex-] witch, I learned about the two sides of "the force." Apparently, so do many "Christian" leaders. When real witches have sabbats and esbats and meet as a coven, they greet each other by saying "Blessed be," and when they part, they say "The Force be with you." Both sides of this "Force" are satan. It is not a good side of the force that overcomes the bad side of the force, but rather it's the blood of Jesus Christ that destroys both supposed sides of the satanic "Force."²³

The fast-paced plot of the story; fully of emotion and suspense, camouflages its real message--the replacement of the old moral values based on God's commands with a paganistic ethos. Harry, Ron and Hermione (the character with whom little girls can identify themselves) become models for the children, and these models happen to be young sorcerers that defeat the evil warlock with "good" sorcery. Harry's parents were good sorcerers and the substitute for Harry's father is none other than Dumbledore; the "good" sorcerer, who personifies the ideal father.

The brainwashing is widespread derision, or even contempt, for those who fear sorcery or despise it as evil. There is no doubt that Harry was created to embody the new savior, the Antichrist--something hinted by the name of the hero itself ("Old Harry" in the author's British

dialect denotes satan). At the same time of his birth, he is threatened with death and always exposed to injustice, but Harry with supernatural means defeats his enemies and saves the people around him. Let us pause for a minute and ask ourselves: who is the other one, who also performs miracles--but without God's help--and is considered by his followers as the "injustice-suffering god"?

In addition, it is easily demonstrated that the three good heroes steal, lie, display moods of hatred and revenge, and continually break the rules of the school--and all these always become acceptable and even reward. Pay attention to the following excerpt:

"Very good," the teacher said encouragingly to him when he finished. "You found where the entrance was by breaking all the rules of the school." Harry looked, by hunch, at Dumbledore. The later gave a faint smile (Book II, p.344) "If I am not mistaken, I had strictly warned you that you would get expelled if you kept breaking the rules of the school," said Dumbledore. Ron's jay dropped. "And this proves that sometimes, even the most moderate of us should shut our mouths," Dumbledore continued with a smile. "Both of you will be rewarded with a special award for exemplary services to the school and...hmm. let me think...yes, two hundred points. (Book II, pp.347-348)

7. CHARMING HARRY AND THE BIG PICTURE

It becomes evident that the Harry Potter books are part of a global effort to replace the Christina way of life with New Age principles, which include initiation into satanism and the paranormal.

A word needs to be said about films, which also compose the atmosphere surrounding children's play. The top money-making films today focus on the preternatural manifestations of the kingdom of darkness. Designed for adults were such films as *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Exorcist*, *Omen*, and *Poltergeist*; for children, the *Star Wars* Trilogy, *E.T.*, *Ghost-busters*, and *Gremlins*. The *Star Wars* Trilogy, since it first appeared in 1977, has generated sales for *Star Wars* licensed products (i.e. primarily toys) of \$3 billion! George Lucas, the producer of *Star Wars*, admits being strongly influenced by Carlos Castañeda's *Tales of Power*--a cult book of the 1960s and 70s which chronicles the (what many believe to be true) story of Don Juan, a Mexican Indian sorcerer. Furthermore, *Star Wars* introduced many viewers to Zen Buddhism through the character of Yoda, known as "Zen Master." Yoda taught Luke Skywalker, a type of Buddhist monk, about the "ever-present Force"-- a term used in witchcraft down the ages to describe the power witches receive from satan! Lucas himself has said, "People in the industry don't want to accept their responsibility that they had a hand in a way the world is loused up. But, for the better or for the worse, the influence of the Church, which used to be all-powerful, has been usurped by film. Films and T.V. tell us the way we conduct our lives, what is right and wrong."²⁴

And do not think that Mr. Lucas is a fringe case. The Mormon Church, for example,

has gotten no small amount of favorable exposure as a result of its connection with the Osmonds. The Jehovah's Witnesses sect has reaped great benefit from its ties with the Jacksons (though superstar Michael Jackson defected a few years ago). The Church of Scientology has likewise received heavy publicity due to the growing number of Hollywood celebrities joining the church--including Tom Cruise, Kirstie Alley, Mimi Rogers, Anne Archer, Sonny Bono, John Travolta, and Chick Corea. Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism (a "name it and claim it" form of Buddhism) has benefited as a result of its association with actor Patrick Duffy (of "Dallas" fame), musician

Herbie Hancock, and rock star Tina Turner. Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism has been called one of the fastest growing religions in America. Another form of Buddhism--Tibetan Buddhism--has received tremendous publicity as a result of star Richard Gere's affiliation with the religion.²⁵

The cases are numerous. LeVar Burton (known as Lt. Geordi LaForge in "Star Trek: The New Generation") dropped out from a Catholic seminary for yoga and crystals following "inner voices." Linda Evans (known from her role in "Dynasty") left the acting scene in preference of necromancy (or "channeling" as it is euphemistically called in New Age parlance). And, of course, Shirley MacLaine, the New Age prophetess who preaches that, "you must never worship anyone or anything else [other] than [your]self." Indeed,

The substitution of New Age thinking for Christian awareness starts at home with pre-schooled children under the very nose of the parents. This is accomplished through toys and television, through games, and video games. One need only to turn on the television in order to investigate the meaning behind the majority of the children's programming from cartoons to films, to delve into those ideas which are presented, and to study their forms of presentation, in order to be convinced of this. In the prologue to the He-Man cartoons, the children are taught that Adam (He-Man's name) received wondrous magical powers when he raised his sword and proclaimed, "by the power of Gray Skull, I am the power." In other words, the children are taught that Adam received what the serpent promised by rising against his Creator.²⁶

Very cunningly, they focus their attempts on children--for the latter are spiritually vulnerable and most receptive to images and sounds--so as to prepare the new generation to readily accept and worship the messiah of the New Age, the Antichrist.

We should now say a word about Antichrist. He is not simply a cruel dictator who is anti-Christian. I think most people, when they think of Antichrist, think of someone like Hitler, who was a persecutor, or Stalin, who persecuted Christians and is against religion. But that is not Antichrist, though he has that aspect. "Anti" means not just "against," but also "in place of." He will be someone who will come and take the place of Christ; it says quite clearly that he will be worshipped as God in the temple of Jerusalem. You don't go and worship some kind of ordinary dictator; and the whole world could not very easily do that. But he will come as a world dictator who is accepted as God, as something and someone very positive; thus, he will do everything possible to imitate and take the place of Christ...Thus, it will be something very deceptive; in fact so much so that the elect themselves might be deceived if the times were not cut short! Christ Himself warns, in speaking of the last days, that false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. And in the Apocalypse, St. John states that the last times will be characterized by demonic spirits working wonders. Thus, one of the signs of the coming of the end is the multiplication of demonic signs and wonders; that is, false miracles and things of that sort. By such things I mean in particular, for example, the increase in the last several decades of outright satanism--satan worship--which only in this last twenty years or so has achieved such openness and notoriety; people who openly call themselves witches; the greatly increased interest in Eastern pagan religions, which in these last two or three decades have become tremendously fashionable so that there are now Western-born--American and English--gurus and Zen masters, and so forth.²⁷

Indeed, the dark powers, in their struggle for global supremacy, are preparing for themselves favorable ground so that at the right time, at the culminating moment, the overwhelming majority of our children will readily accept the Antichrist as their political and spiritual leader.

8. THE CHILDREN

Lest these words sound over exaggerated, we shall now present a few indicative words from the children who have read the books. We found these on the internet and in the Greek edition of the books.

1. Girl, age 12. "I have read all the books at least three times. Every time I do so I find myself in a magical world and I imitate the three friends. I would like myself to become a witch."
2. Girl, age 15. "I wish there was really such a school for me."
3. Girl, age 13. "Dear friends of Harry Potter, I am one of the biggest fans. To illustrate my point, just think that for a certain period I read the first book through to the last one and then started all over again. The books became a psychosis for me. I read the four books in six school days. But then I understood that Harry Potter is a great love that should not become a mania."
4. Boy, age 10. "I don't think there is a sorcerer's city close to my house but I wish there was one, because I would like to become a wizard."
5. Boy, age 10. "I want to go to wizard school and learn magic. I would like to learn to use a wand and cast spells."
6. Girl, age 9. "I really believe there is an actual city of sorcerers close to my house. I continually see weird dreams. My friends say that I have become crazed, but it's true. When I walk in the street, I see old men, strange people who...wear glasses...and cloaks. What other proof do they want?"
7. Girl, age 9. "I am a fanatic reader of Harry Potter and I wish there was sorcery for real, as so many others do. Of course, the fourth book really scared me when Sentric Digory died; I saw horrible nightmares for a while."
8. Boy, age 10. "There must be some sorcerer's city close to my house. And that lady that lives in front of my house looks a bit quaint. She could be a witch."
9. Girl. "I like Harry Potter because I can put into practice what I read right away."

With over a 150 million readership, this little girl could be your own daughter--practicing what she reads (i.e. casting curses) on you!

9. TROUBLING FRUITS

It is possible that some people might still argue that the whole phenomenon is just another whimsy passé that will disappear without leaving any trace. No doubt, the Harry Potter fad will eventually die out as every fad does. Yet, who can estimate the damage, both spiritual and mental, that these books will inflict to untold millions of children world-wide? Consider the following facts:

1. Most Americans reject the notion of absolute truth.²⁸
2. Nearly two-thirds of all American adults contend that the choice of one religious faith over another is irrelevant because all faiths teach the same basic lessons about life.²⁹

3. Some 67 percent of American adults claim to have had a psychic experience such as extrasensory perception.³⁰
4. Approximately 30 million Americans believe in reincarnation.³¹
5. Some 25 percent of Americans believe in non-personal energy or life force which they roughly equate with God.³²
6. Northern Illinois University conducted a survey which found that 67% of U.S. adults read astrology columns.³³
7. About 1 million people in the US practice Transcendental Meditation regularly, while 6,000 doctors recommend it to their patients.³⁴
8. Over half of the Fortune 500 companies admitted of having exposed their personnel in psychic "human potential" techniques.³⁵

Things are unlikely to get better. One can even speculate that, with the mass youth indoctrination into the occult by the HP type of literature, a good portion of our own children will become even hostile to Christianity and alien to salvation. We think the following poem, written by a high school student, is apt:

*Now I sit me down in school
Where praying is against the rule
For this great nation under God
Finds mention of Him very odd.*

*If Scripture now the class recites,
It violates the Bill of Rights.
And anytime my head I bow
Becomes a Federal matter now.*

*Our hair can be purple, orange or green,
That's no offense; it's a freedom scene.
The law is specific, the law is precise.
Prayers spoken aloud are a serious vice.*

*For praying in a public hall
Might offend someone with no faith at all.
In silence alone we must meditate,
God's name is prohibited by the state.*

*We're allowed to cuss and dress like freaks,
And pierce our noses, tongues and cheeks.
They've outlawed guns, but FIRST the Bible.
To quote the Good Book makes me liable.*

*We can elect a pregnant Senior Queen,
And the 'unwed daddy,' our Senior King.
It's "inappropriate" to teach right from wrong,
We're taught that such "judgments" do not belong.*

*We can get our condoms and birth controls,
Study witchcraft, vampires, and totem poles.
But the Ten Commandments are not allowed,
No word of God must reach this crowd.*

*It's scary here I must confess,
When chaos reigns the school's a mess.
So, Lord, this silent plea I make:
Should I be shot; My soul please take!
Amen*

10. CONCLUSION

Let us pause for a moment; let us reflect on what we have read. So far, we saw the author of the Harry Potter books readily admitting that her works are based on actual witchcraft experiences; like-minded producers unscrupulously acknowledging that they consciously degenerate the public through their works; official witches enthusiastically recognizing that these works cause "surges" of converts into satanism; and young children exhibiting eager interest in the sinister arts.

We also saw that this kind of literature promotes rebellion against God, instills satanic pride, teaches authentic witchcraft practices, locks children in their fantasies, overturns traditional family values, blurs the distinctions between right and wrong, desensitizes children to evil, and familiarizes them with demonic spirits--with whom in all probability, if left uncorrected, they will spend eternity.

It is written in the Scriptures, "as I find you, I will judge you." (Ez. 33:20) Suppose death finds us reading those kind of books--what will our apology be? How much different will our apology be from that of St. Seraphim's, whom death found kneeling in prayer before the icon of the Mother of God? Should not death find every Christian in prayer? Are we not instructed to pray without ceasing (I Thes. 5:17)? Really, what will our apology be for reading such books?

Our children are soaked in a culture that promotes evil, occultism, and lust of power. Preschoolers spend more time watching television than it takes to get a college degree. By the time of graduation from high school, the average child will have spent approximately 11,000 hours at school and 22,000 hours in front of television.³⁶ According to the National Coalition on Television Violence, the average American teenager; by the age of 18, will have witnessed 200,000 acts of violence, including 40,000 murders.³⁷ Our

America is a nation in which we say we believe in God, while at the same time we behave like atheists. When judged by even a remotely traditional Christian standard of behavior, Americans can hardly be described as a "Christian people." Measured against other cultures, we Americans are perhaps the most materialistic and desecralized people on earth. But according to what we say about ourselves, we Americans are "religious," even a "good" people. One's view of American society will therefore depend on whether one judges Americans by what we say or by what we do. We say we love our families. But fifty percent of all marriages are shattered by divorce. We Americans say we love our children. But almost one third of all American children conceived are aborted (1.6 million per year), and millions more who are born are abandoned to a failed educational system and to the tender mercies of our divorce courts, social workers, and "day care"

orphanages. From a vantage point which accepts the inherent truth of historical Christianity, the moral problems which surround us are not the result of a lack of religion in our society, but the consequences of too much faith in the wrong religions. We live in a nation that believes itself to be intensely religious. However, religious fervor notwithstanding, faith in the historical teaching of the Church--in other words, Orthodox Christianity is out of fashion in America.³⁸

Even worse, the occultic world-view is all around us, promoted in board games, cartoons, music, movies, and on television. More critical, it is often promoted in classrooms. Think about it, we now have several major T.V. shows where the heroes are witches. Our young people swim in a stench of spiritual filth that they cannot even discern anymore. Often, God has been driven from their lives and has been replaced with the ethos of power, violence, and self-indulgence--in short, SATANISM. Should we allow this to happen to the children, which God entrusted to our care?

11. RAISING OUR CHILDREN

Our youth today are already on toxic spiritual overload just from living in our society. It is a miracle if any young person can keep their faith.

The Holy Scripture warns those that say that evil is good and that good is evil, those who try to pass the sweet for bitter and the bitter for sweet. And Father Paisios of the Holy Mountain said, "Let us pray that God will do something, for now the children can not find any help to become good people but demon possessed." Let us protect our children and let us understand our responsibilities before them and before God's infinite love. But how is this accomplished?

A great influence for good is exercised on children by frequently taking them--from the earliest age--to church, by having them kiss the holy Cross, the Gospel, the icons, and by covering them with veils. Likewise, at home frequently placing the child under the icons, frequently signing him with the sign of the Cross, sprinkling him with holy water, burning incense, making the sign of the Cross over his food, his cradle, and everything connected with him.

The blessing of the priest, the bringing into the house of icons from the church, the service of molebens, and in general everything from the Church in a wondrous way warms and nourishes the life of grace in the child and protects him from attacks by invisible, dark powers every ready to infect the developing soul. Likewise, the spirit of faith and piety in the parents should be regarded as the most powerful means for the preservation, upbringing, and strengthening of the life of grace in children.

But every effort will come to nothing and be made fruitless by unbelief, carelessness, and impiety on the part of the parents. The inward influence of the parents of the child is especially important. Where parents are "too busy" to spend time with their children, the children will learn through other sources. If parents cannot strictly control their children's viewing of television, let it be banished from every Christian household, let no book or magazine depicting improper or violent scenes be permitted to cross the threshold. Let the child be surrounded by sacred forms and objects of all kinds, let his first memories be of the soft light illuminating the icons in his room, the smell of incense and the sound of sacred music. Let everything that can corrupt in example and depictions be put away. And so let the child grow in an atmosphere sanctified by piety.

However, training in piety, though foremost in child development, alone is not sufficient to help children battle the onslaught of the world. There should be an alternative to the dark culture that is inflicted on even the youngest and most delicate souls. If the child is exposed from the earliest age to the finest examples of western Christian culture, then by the time he is old enough to discern and choose between good and evil his soul will already have formed itself sufficiently and will feel revulsion for contemporary culture. Cultivating the child's taste for classical music, art, and

literature will give him not only an alternative to modern culture, but what is more important, will act as a stepping stone in elevating the soul towards the higher, spiritual culture of the Church.³⁹

More importantly, the child is being helped in his upbringing by frequent confession with an experienced spiritual father and by frequent receiving Holy Communion. Children should be taken for confession as early as possible. There is a misconception that parents should wait until the child "grows up a bit" before taking him to confession. "After all, what will such a small child have to confess?" Admittedly, a small child does not have anything major to confess. However, he will acquire the good habit of opening his little heart to confession and humbly subjecting his judgment to the discretion of his experienced spiritual father. More importantly, he will learn how to uproot evil passions before they even sprout in his soft heart.

One more thing, which can easily-become an engaging family entertainment, is to set apart some time every evening to gather the children and read aloud to them the lives of the saints. The children will not only enjoy their parents' company and become fascinated by the stories but will also gradually acquire spiritual discernment, wisdom, and a will to take upon their shoulders the light Cross of the Lord.

Finally, ask your spiritual father to assign a rule a daily personal prayer. This daily rule is to be the minimum allotted amount of prayer; meant to keep trickle-charging one's spiritual batteries. Even the smallest daily prayer rule, if done consistently and conscientiously, has an amazing power in helping a person grow spiritually and keep his mind focused on the one thing needed.

We shall now present some personal testimonies of people who have dabbled in the dark arts to illustrate the dangers of failing to protect our children. Please note that all of them were slightly edited for space consideration.

Journey to Orthodoxy

ORTHODOX AMERICA (vol. XVIII, No. 5, (161))

Robert Stauffer

I was born into an essentially atheistic family. Insofar as my parents had a philosophy of life at all, it was that of the American Dream--earn what you can, enjoy what you can, and don't worry about the afterlife. As I was growing up, I did not think deeply enough to question this world-view. Consequently, when I left home to attend college, the only thing that gave my life meaning was the prospect of pulling down a hefty salary someday.

In college I was introduced to Western philosophy, and this prompted me to examine my life and the world around me more deeply and with more intensity than I ever had before. I slowly and quite painfully realized that riches and success do not lead insuperably to a happy and meaningful life. My own experience served as a testimony to this, for despite my bloated dreams of future earthly wealth and comfort, I had to admit that I was living in a sinkhole of despair. I took frequent long-walks at night looking up at the silent sky; and the thought that there was nothing up there looking back at me--just a cold, empty, impersonal universe--left me with a black emptiness inside that words simply cannot describe. I realized to my horror that my life "meant" absolutely nothing: I came together by chance, I would be dissolved by chance and

nothing that I did in between really mattered. Because I did not know God, I had no choice but to believe this was the truth, and yet this "truth" was draining me of any will to live.

When I was about to hit rock bottom, a friend suggested that I read a book by C. S. Lewis entitled Mere Christianity. I got a copy and read it from cover to cover. The book opens with Lewis' argument for God's existence, and though some have found his argument to be unpersuasive, I found it to be logically compelling.

In essence, Lewis argued that human awareness of good, evil, and the sanctity of life points us to God, because these higher-order ideas cannot trace their origins back to a universe consisting entirely of cold atoms and impersonal natural laws. The fact is, argued Lewis, if the atheists are correct then any talk of good, bad, or the meaning of life is sheer gibberish. In light of this, the fact that we human beings do believe in good and evil, and believe instinctively that our lives are meaningful, is "proof" that the universe cannot be impersonal and random. There must be a Creator in order for life to be meaningful and sacred. As Lewis shrewdly put it, "If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning." That one simple statement contains a world of truth. Thus, after reading Lewis, I came to believe that there is more to the universe than impersonal matter and energy: behind the curtain of our visible world lies another: the world of God and spirit. Shortly thereafter, I had an experience that confirmed this newfound belief.

In 1989, I came home from college for spring break. Shortly before my trip home, my family had bought a harmless-looking game called Ouija.⁴⁰ My family claimed that it worked but, ever the young rationalist, I was certain the game was either a gimmick or an outright fraud. After approaching the Ouija board and trying it myself, however, I discovered that it was no fraud.

I soon found myself having conversations with disembodied "entities" that I could neither see nor hear, and who "spoke" to me by spelling out messages on the game board. Many of these spirits claimed to be the spirits of deceased human beings, although one claimed to be "satan," and yet another claimed to be "God." Many of the spirits' messages were laced with profanity; others revealed a subtle undercurrent of cold superiority or mocking laughter. Over time, I began to test what these spirits could know and what they could not. One evening, while "playing" the Ouija game, I was wearing a T-shirt with a tacky logo on the front that read: "Yes, there really is a Kalamazoo." I had bought the shirt in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I asked the spirits to tell me what color my shirt was. Silence. It was as if the spirits were pondering their response. Then the reply came, slowly K-A-L-A-M-A-Z-O-O. I was flabbergasted. From the standpoint of philosophical atheism, these invisible spirits who could read my T-shirt and tell me what it said simply defied any "scientific" or "logical" explanation. Where the atheistic worldview was short of an explanation however, Christianity was quite up to the challenge. In the wake of such a bizarre experience, Christianity had the most sane explanation: the foul mouthed invisible entities I was "speaking" to were nothing other than fallen angels--demons.

C. S. Lewis taught me in the realm of abstract philosophy that God exists. The Ouija board taught me in the the realm of actual experience that the devil exists. The combined effect of these lessons was to drive me inexorably to Christianity. I returned to college after spring break and never touched the Ouija board again. A few months later, with the encouragement of some Christian friends, I prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ for the first time in my life, and from that time on I considered myself a Christian--which in my religiously naïve mind was synonymous with Protestant. Shortly thereafter, I began to attend a Protestant Bible church on the outskirts of my college campus.

As I learned more about the New Testament, I became painfully aware that my new Christian

lifestyle, although a notch higher than my lifestyle as an atheist, still fell woefully short of the New Testament model exhibited by Christ and the Holy Apostles. Although in my mind I had been given the irrevocable free pass into heaven that constitutes "salvation" for many Protestants, I was still bothered by my distressingly sinful behavior.

After graduating from college, I enrolled in a Protestant seminary hoping that a more scholarly study of the Bible would deepen my understanding of it...But this "sophisticated" Bible study did not seem to help my battle against sin--and it raised more questions in my mind than my Protestant professors could satisfactorily answer. Some passages of Scripture allowed for as many as three or four viable interpretations. No wonder there was such a myriad of Protestant groups, each with their own particular theology. With so many options, how was one to choose to "rightly divide the Word of Truth"?

Then I was hit by a novel thought--novel to me, at least. I was reading the Bible in a vacuum, but the Bible was not written in a vacuum. The same Apostles who wrote the New Testament also planted scores of churches and taught those churches Christian doctrine and liturgical practice in person and face-to-face. When the Apostles could not be present, they wrote letters to the churches, letters which simply complemented or expounded upon what they taught orally. There could be no contradiction or conflict since the Apostles were the source of both, and both flowed from the same fount, the Spirit of Truth Himself. It became clear to me that the living tradition of the Church "interpreted" the living words of the Bible, and vice-versa. With this "revelation," I immersed myself in the writing of the Early Church Fathers. They introduced me to a worldview radically different from that which I had known as a Protestant...After pouring over the words of the Fathers, I was led to the conviction that the Tradition of the Apostles, this harmony between the written and oral teachings, has been preserved today only in the Orthodox Church.

In 1999, on the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God, I was officially joined to the Orthodox Church through the Mystery of Holy Baptism. In that Mystery, and in the life of the Church in general, I have experienced a Grace that is beyond description. Of course, my battle against sin is not over; it has only just begun. However, I now have the Orthodox Mysteries, and especially the powerful weapons of Repentance and Holy Communion, to help me in this struggle.

This is how our merciful and longsuffering God drew me to His Church. May His name be praised both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

Never Kneel

(From Death to the World no. 4)

Once upon an average morn, an average boy was born for the second time. Prone upon the altar there, he whispered up a prayer he kept hid inside. The vision came, he saw the odds, a hundred little gods on a gilded wheel. "These will vie to take your place, but Father by Your grace I will never kneel." - Steve Taylor

I unfortunately, did kneel. I was raised in a very average "Brady Bunch" family. Mom had me and my sister; and Dad had my older brother and sister. I was very excited to have a new father (my biological father died when I was 3, of an alcohol-related heart-attack) and a new brother and sister. We did not live happily ever after.

My brother, feeling jealous and angry at the separation of his family and having to come and live with a new family, took it upon himself to punish everyone else for this. He proceeded to torment my existence in every way he could. I was emotionally and physically abused by him until I was 13 years old. I had developed into a deathly insecure adolescent. I lived in my own fantasies and other realities that I had created. He couldn't hurt me there. I went to church every Sunday and most Wednesdays. I sang and listened but heard nothing; even there I was in my own reality. It was about this time I had left the geek scene and entered the punk scene. Punk were the only people who ever treated me with respect and didn't run me down. I went from polo shirts to a blue mohawk and combat boots. This was 1986 in a rural cow town in Oregon. I was then tormented by everyone in town. My brother had been replaced. Because of my individuality I was shot, stabbed, and beaten. One day a friend of mine invited me to a party of sorts. This party consisted of some of my friends from school and two older ladies. It was described to me as friends sitting around and talking, drinking soda, eating chips and playing games.

The two older women were witches and the party was the gathering of a coven. I was then initiated into the practice of Wicca. If you don't know, Wicca is an ancient feminine dominated form of druidical magic. That is why I was called a witch and not a warlock. I progressed rather rapidly and became a practicing witch. My mind sank into a strange sort of delirium and dementia. It was obvious to me that insanity was the ultimate experience. If you die, it's all over. If you go insane, you pass through death without dying. This was my philosophy: I strove hard for it day and night. My practice of witchcraft took me to many new places, mostly through astral travel. It was a natural expansion of my fantasy world. I was all-powerful and everything looked up to me in this world that I had created. The feeling of power is why keeps you going in witchcraft. In the real world I was nothing, in witchcraft I was something. I felt invincible. I was wrong.

One night I woke up due to a rather strong call of my bladder. This was one of those times when you lie in bed and switch from looking at the clock and then looking at the door trying to decide if you can make it until the morning without wetting the bed. I decided to get up and go to the bathroom. I then realized that my entire body was paralyzed from the neck down. In Wicca there are no drugs or alcohol. If you would be found using these things you would be expelled from the coven. I knew that I had nothing in my system that could cause this. The only explanation I could come to was that something spiritual was attacking me. I left my body and suspended myself above it. I then went into shock. Sitting all around me and holding me down were about 15 demons laughing hysterically. One turned and looked at me and spoke, It said I was the biggest xxx idiot it had met in along time. It said that I was taught what was right but went the wrong way, and now I was so deep into it I was going to hell and there was no way out. He then proceeded to make a deal with me. Two of them came to my astral body and turned me around. When I was turned around I found myself in Hell. There is no way to describe what I saw, felt, and smelled. I will never forget it. The faces. They returned me to my room and gave me the ultimatum. I can kill myself and become like them and torment instead of being tormented, or die and go to hell anyway.⁴¹ I chose suicide.

Just before they let me return to my body, I said under my breath, "Jesus, if you're there, help." There was a great flash of light and they were gone. I sat up and began to curse God. Why did

He let me go through these things? I cursed Him for about an hour while I cleaned up the vomit my body expelled during the experience. It was then that I, for the first time heard the voice of God. He said only one simple phrase that stopped me in my tracks. "All I wanted you to do was ask."

--Collin Ivy, Portland, Oregon

Led by the Spirits

*The following is a translated excerpt from
Archimandrite Savvas Achilleas' book
"Μαγεία, Δαιμονισμός, Απολύτρωσις," Athens 1990 pp88-93*

I am from Athens. My parents are pious folks and I myself, up to the age of twelve, was a regular churchgoer. I never missed Church, always in the altar, a helper to the priest.

At the same time, I loved to read *Mickey Mouse* comic books. Likewise, I was fond of watching cartoons on television. One day, as I was reading through the pages of a comic book, alone in my room, three demons appeared in front of me. I was then twelve years old...

When I say this vision, I started trembling. I wanted to scream at the top of my lungs to ask help and protection. I wanted to make the sign of the cross but I could not. Invisibly, as if someone had attacked the center of my nervous system, I remained immobilized, paralyzed.

Then they all started saying to me, "Do not be afraid. You are ours. We are they who implant these things that you read in the minds of the people who print them into books. We are they who suggest this magic stuff, the warlocks and witches, to appear continuously on television so as to demonize the infants and all viewers. From this moment on we will be close to you. WE will not go away, even when you will not see us. Whatever you want, just ask it from us, and we will provide it instantly.

When they said these things...in a few fractions of a second they disappeared. I could not recover. I kept bringing to mind all that they said to me. I could see them with my imagination ever-present next to me. My color changed and my blood ran irregularly in my veins.

The second day, at the same time, twelve in the evening, the same three demons appeared again in front of me. They repeated that I was theirs and that I should not be afraid; that they will never part from me; that they will give me whatever I ask. They stayed with me the same amount of time and then suddenly disappeared. But I would never forget their presence. Wherever I happened to turn my gaze, I thought I was seeing them and hearing them saying, "you are ours."

This continued for a whole year. However, I never said anything to anyone. By then I had reached my thirteenth year and I wanted to find a job. My parents were watching me change daily. I departed from the Church. Whenever I heard the bell ringing, I felt like someone was hitting my head with irons. I felt like finding the person, who was swinging these irons to choke him.

Whenever I happened to see a priest, I would insult and spit at him. Whenever I would pass by the Church, I would turn my head the other way so as not to see it, and I would make inappropriate insulting gestures with my hands at it. I never venerated any icons. My mother, worried about my sudden change, tried to bring me to my senses with her prayer and used to

cense me, but I turned away from it.

Finally, I managed to find a job in a factory that made handles for furniture and other uses. But, even as I was working, the three demons would come and press me to ask something from them. Up to that point I had never asked anything. But the demons kept asking me persistently to cooperate with them.

From all this pressure, I still do not know how, it came to my mind to ask them to create a quarrel between my boss and his employees. There were both men and women in the factory.

The minute I asked this, a great fight erupted, and within a few minutes the whole business stopped. I was sitting quietly on top of a machine, as if not noticing what was going on...The next day, since I enjoyed that fight very much...I asked the same thing. Again, another fight erupted, and the people began even to beat one another.

The next day I thought that I should not ask the same thing, for people were getting suspicious about me. Instead, I decided to ask for the machine I was working with to break down so that I would not have to work. Within a few minutes there was a great bang and all the components and the screws flew into the air. There was nothing of that machine left in place. So, I seized the chance and stayed idle the whole day, waiting for the machine to get fixed. I used to repeat this often, and finally my boss got angry and said, "From the day this kid came here, everything has gone wrong...Go away. It was you who brought all these demons here."

So I was left unemployed. However, the three demons approached me and directed me to an infamous magician living in Kallithea, a suburb of Athens. I stayed with him for a whole year...Then the demons suggested I get their magical books, saying that the minute I open them, they would be with me...

Immediately after that, they pointed out another infamous magician in Simi, a Greek island. "We have great plans for you," they assured me. So, I left for Simi. By asking, I finally found an old, cunning man with a small beard...He was a failure of an old man who was making good money by stealing people from the Church, promising "solutions" to their problems. I stayed with him for one year.

Then the demons came up again and directed me to still another notorious wizard in Turkey. I went to Turkey. I stayed under this horrific wizard for two years. I learned a great deal.

Then I got involved with another one in Egypt who was supplying me with amulets filled with snake skins...From that time on, I started working with connections. One person would direct me to another...

Around that time I got involved with a young girl whose mother was a witch. I wanted to marry her. However, the young girl became afraid of me and I became afraid of her witch mother! Finally, her witch mother; in order to protect her daughter from harm, sought safety in the Church. [Ed. In Egypt, an Islamic state under shari'a, there are only very few Orthodox Christian Churches available.] She went and confessed, reconciling herself with God. I too, to escape harm from the old witch, sought safety in the same Church. Now, I am asking the mercy of God. Will He forgive me?

I burned all my magic books. One of them, the most "important," would not burn. I kept trying but the fire would die down. The fire would advance a bit but then it would die down, leaving the book untouched. Finally, after a considerable effort, I burned everything. I now feel free. Whatever God allows I am willing to suffer; being contented that I am free from demonic bondage.--

Editor's Note: It is alarming to see that even innocent-looking comic books can lead a person--even dedicated altar boys--to satanism. If harmless-looking cartoons, that contain only passing

references to witchcraft, bring so much harm (even to dedicated Christians), we cannot even imagine then how much harm the HP type of literature brings.

We should also pause and ask ourselves why both the young warlock and the old witch were so much afraid of one another. If both were so advanced in magic, couldn't they use it to protect themselves? The answer is that real sorcerers (as we will see in the following stories) know that their incantations invoke not a neutral and impersonal "force" but demons--and those malicious creatures desire only one thing: to harm humans. There is no such thing as "white" magic. The demons may pretend for a while to help the magician, but only in order to serve their own plans, i.e. to bring a greater harm to the people. When the magician is of no more use to them, then they will destroy him as well.

Finally, we should take notice that both sorcerers knew that the *only* way to protect themselves from demonic harm is to run under the protection of the true Church, seeking in repentance the infinite mercy of our all-mighty Lord.

"The Craft"

The following testimony appeared in Orthodox America by a reader who, for obvious reasons, decided to remain anonymous.

Having my eyes opened since converting to Orthodoxy, I realize what a terribly "close call" I had. Were it no for the grace of God, I shudder to think what would have become of me. And so, I think it's important for your readers to get a glimpse into the mindset that creates the proper climate for this attraction to the occult.

My quest for God began at an early age because my parents were a classic example of a mixed faith marriage. Their "solution" was to simply have no particular faith commitment at all--an ecumenical spiritual vacuum. As I Grew up, I "made the round" of churches, including a synagogue.

For a short while when I was about seven, my mother took me to a small Roman Catholic parish dedicated to the Archangel Michael. I remember being astounded at the beauty and solemnity of the old Latin mass. The candles, the incense, and the vestments--it made a terrific impact on me as a child. It was something that never left me.

Later, my parents just slept in on Sundays; we had a nice breakfast, and read the Sunday paper, but there was no more church. And my parents never explained anything to me. I was spiritually bereft. I remember as a teenager praying to God: "I know You're there. Please, I really need Your help; I need direction." But I felt lost.

By the time I graduated from college I had been heavily infected by the twin demons of a pluralistic society: humanism and ecumenism. I became very involved in the back-to-the-land movement and reverence for the earth. It seemed good at the time, but it was all separate from the idea of a Creator. And that's where I fell into a real trap: I unconsciously worshipped the creation rather than the Creator. It was at about this time that I discovered "The Craft." Representative of "The Craft"--actually a "coven"--had given an anonymous interview in the local college newspaper. I knew people on the staff of the paper; and by nudging and poking and sneaking looks at the files I managed to get names and phone numbers for this group.

I contacted them. It was all very secretive: my "contact," whom I didn't actually see face-to-face questioned me about my beliefs. Then, for three months, there was silence. Nothing at all, until the day the head of the coven, the "High Priest," called and set up a meeting with me. He seemed totally "normal;" asking me more about my beliefs, which were mostly just a reverence for life and nurturing the earth. He gave me a list of books to buy at an occult bookstore. I got them and read, and read, and read. It all made "sense" to me because the Craft was presented as a pre-Christian, agricultural religion going back [supposedly] about 25,000 years in Europe. Since I knew very little about Christianity anyway, I didn't see this as being in conflict with it.

The course of study for wicca is a year and a day, at which time you meet with a highly initiated male (if you're a woman) or a female (if you're a man)--indiscriminate sex and homosexuality are not permitted in legitimate Craft circles. There follows a Rite of Dedication in which the candidate commits himself to the principles of the Craft, to the "mother Goddess," and to a great "horned God"; these are the principle deities. You also receive a preliminary Craft name and are introduced to more intensive study, during which you are permitted to copy things out of the *Book of Shadows*.

Every witch has a Book of Shadows, which contains essential laws, prayers, rituals, spells, and incantations, which have been passed on from generation to generation. IO began to see that all of this was opening great psychic "doors" for me, allowing me to do many things that others could not do. As an Apprentice Witch I was also permitted to attend certain Craft rituals called "Shabbots." These are held on the full moon each month and are for the purpose of "raising the power" to produce certain results. Halloween was one of the greater feasts, and was dedicated to the "Horned God."

Our particular coven worshipped in robes--but some covens are "skyclad" or naked. So there are robes, necklaces, engraved silver bracelets, rings and other amulets, incense, the sprinkling of water and Cabalistic incantations. At initiations into higher degrees, the witch signs his or her Craft name in blood, in a Book of Shadows held by the High Priest. By this point I knew that I was dealing with "forces" that could be very dangerous, because ceremonial magic does work--and I had become a direct "link" to something "beyond"; there were definite "manifestations." I can tell you that I have seen things face to face that were not pretty, but were VERY frightening.

At first it is exhilarating because power is addictive, intoxicating. But after about a year and a half things took a decidedly different turn as a constant feeling of paranoia started to grow and intensify. I experienced intense terror and oppressive feelings, as well as objective manifestations. At one point I felt I was losing my mind. I believe now that I was close to becoming demonically possessed because of the malice of the "forces" we had stirred up.

A classic "progression" takes place: at first everything seems good and positive; then, once you open a "door"--even though you think you can control it--things begin to turn and show themselves for what they really are, which is EVIL.

It took three or four months for me to disengage from the Craft, although for a while I was still emotionally attached and saved my Book of Shadows, my robe and other paraphernalia. It wasn't until I converted to Orthodoxy that I burned everything and made a complete break.

I really believe that even at my lowest, darkest moments, God knew that I was just searching and had gotten on the wrong path. He pulled me out of it before it was too late. It's only by God's mercy that I didn't lose my soul. I wish I could talk to every person who's involved in this, and warn them that it's a real mockery of God.

One might wonder: do I have any lasting effect to deal with all these years later? On one level it's almost like being a recovering alcoholic. Once you've acquired the ability to tap into such

tremendous power, it's sometimes difficult to walk away from it, especially when life is difficult and you find yourself having to go without things. It's hard not to use that ability again to turn things around and change them to suit yourself. But on another level, having once been immersed in tremendous darkness, and now having seen the fullness and glory of the Orthodox Faith, it's very painful to see those who have been caught up in the occult, or have just been somehow "tainted" by the general cultural acceptance of these things. Many people innocently pick up the terminology and mindset, without ever actually participating directly in the occult--but it affects how they perceive the world around them.

Also, people don't believe at all in the depths of the evil that surrounds us. Yet today, demons walk openly, and are everywhere. In the coven we called them up to do our bidding, so I know that they're real; I've seen them with my own eyes! But others don't believe in the reality of demons. Stephen King's novel, *Salem's Lot*, expresses this very well: its most stunning and compelling point is the absolute refusal of most people to believe in the existence of evil, soul-killing evil. And it then destroys them; for if you don't believe in something, then you aren't prepared to defend yourself, and you become a victim of it.

AN ALARM MUST BE SOUNDED AT ALL COST! We are so close to this diabolical "force" that seeks to destroy us. It's far better to leave it totally alone and have nothing whatsoever to do with it! Even movies like "Poltergeist" and "Ghostbusters" desensitize people to the fact that there are invisible evil beings who are not innocuous; *they literally hate us, and seek the complete annihilation of our souls*. People today--even some who are Orthodox Christians--are no longer offering any resistance to this terrible malevolence prowling all around us, seeking whom he may destroy.--

Straight Talk on Harry Potter

By William J. Schnoebelen

Mr. W.J. Schnoebelen, being a Protestant pastor, holds several views that are at variance with the historical Church.

Nevertheless, we feel that the following excerpt accurately describes the dangers of dealing with the paranormal.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a former magician myself, let me explain what charming little Harry Potter would have to do to arrive at the place he is at in these books. Let me walk you through an actual magical rite in brief. To achieve the power to fly, for example, the wizard might employ and number of rituals. He would have to determine what kind of elemental force is involved.

The actual ceremony (aside from preparation) can take a long time. The wizard summons the spirit into this "triangle of manifestation." This is a triangle painted or inscribed on the floor about a meter on each side. This is the evocation. There will be lots of incense burnt, partially because this is believed to give the spirit some sort of material basis with which to materialize.⁴²

The goal is to actually get the demon to appear visibly in the triangle, but in a form that is not too disturbing to the wizard's sensibilities.

2. BARGAINS WITH DEMONS?

Once the demon has manifested, the wizard will have some sort of talisman with which to bind the demon to their will. The demon will not want to obey, so there is usually a long period of threatening the demon, brandishing the sword at it and uttering horrid maledictions if it will not obey. The demon will also try to escape or trick the wizard into leaving the circle. If the wizard should step out of the circle during this time, the demon would have the right to crush him to a pulp and carry him off to hell (or somewhere like the abyss). Another thing that could occur is that if the wizard accidentally does something to disturb the integrity of the circle (scuffing off some of the chalk or sulfur, etc.) then the demon could do whatever it wanted to him.

It may take several hours, but finally the demon will grant the wizard's demands. This may involve simply bestowing the power of flight on the wizard, or charging him a talisman with powers of flight so that as long as he wears it, he can fly. Then the demon is released to return to its place with the final adjuration that it promises to do nothing to ever harm the wizard once he banishes the circle. Demons are supposed to keep their word (??).

This is all based on an elaborate set of rubrics that, in my experience, the demon or spirit frequently will just ignore and rip the wizard to shreds. Most wizards really believe that these rules (such as the circle) will keep the demon at bay. Sometimes the demons will allow the wizard to luxuriate in this delusion for some time before finally lowering the boom. This is why most real wizards I have known have come upon bad ends, VERY bad ends.

3. STEP INTO THE ABYSS

What follows is an actual account of a ceremonial magic rite that went very wrong. The magician had set up his circle in the garage after painting all the windows over with black paint. He had done all of the ceremonies described earlier and had called up a demon into the triangle. The garage was filled with the smell of incense and the howling of the demon. It was not happy at being confined to the triangle.

After almost four hours of cursing and adjurations back and forth between the wizard and the demon, the room had grown very dark. There was no light left but the candles and the lurid coals of incense. The very chalk lines on the floor marking the circle and triangle seemed to shimmer in the gloom. The demon seemed just about to buckle to the will of the magician.

Then, all of a sudden, the telephone rang! Without thinking, the magician reached out of the circle to answer it. With a horrid scream, his entire body disappeared in a belch of flame, along with eh demon. In a second, the garage was empty of all but the faithful, terrified scribe sitting in the corner and the smell of roasting human flesh. The magician was never heard from again, and left behind a wife and child. The ultimate irony of that tragedy is that there was no phone in the garage!

4. A DEADLY GAME

This illustrates how demons will NOT play by the rules, and how deadly magic can actually be. A magician would say that this unfortunate fellow had been sucked into the abyss⁴³ forever. A more Biblical suggestion would be that he was sent to hell for his blasphemy. Most magicians ultimately think that they can become God. At the very least, they believe they can acquire god-like powers.

This horror is the "back story" behind cute little Harry. True wizardry or sorcery would not really allow him to have much fun at all without going through the above rituals. This is what Harry would have to learn at his wizard's academy, Hogwart's.

Some say that "Harry was born a wizard. His parents were magicians. Therefore, he comes by his talents naturally [i.e., he does not use ceremonial magic]. He is a natural born wizard." There is a bit of truth in this. In real life, if Harry's parents were really magicians or wizards, they would be demonized to their eyeballs. They would have more demons than a cheap hotel has roaches... Those demons would pass into baby Harry at birth. He would indeed grow up with a (super)natural propensity for sorcery. However, instead of having to conjure up all these different demons with their different powers, he would have them right within him from birth. It is "convenient," but it is not something I would want MY child to desire.--

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4. Fr. Anthony Alevizopoulos, "Νεοσατανισμος και Ορθοδοξη Αντιμετωπιση"
5. The Penguin Dictionary of Religions. Edited by John R. Hinnels, Penguin Books, 1984
6. William Schnoebelen, Wicca satan's Little White Lie, Chick Publications, USA 1990
7. *The Orthodox Word*, St. Herman of Alaska Publications
8. *Orthodox America*, St. Nicodemos Publications
9. The internet references that were already mentioned.

ENDNOTES

1. Ms. Joanne Kathleen Rowling was born in Bristol, UK, in 1965. She studied French Literature in the Exeter University, worked as a secretary, got married in 1992, abandoned her husband in 1993, and found herself with her little daughter Jessica in

Edinburgh, without money and a very few friends, where she started writing her first Harry Potter book. In her interview in *The Times* (<http://www.thetimes.co.uk>) June 30, 2000, we read that she had gone through a period of severe depression, and that the "lunatics" (certain demonic creatures that torture humans in her third book) were not just "characters" but a conscious description of her depression.

2. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Ψυχογιός publications, 1998; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Ψυχογιός publications 1999; Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, Ψυχογιός publications, 1999; Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Ψυχογιός publications 2000.
3. <http://logosresourcepages.org/OurTimes/potter.htm>
4. <http://logosresourcepages.org/OurTimes/potter.htm>
5. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Ψυχογιός publications 2000
6. <http://www.saveharry.com/thefullstory.html>
7. http://www.news24.com/News24/Archive/0,,2-1661_1103183.00.html
8. <http://www.cultureandfamily.org/articledisplay.asp?id=195&department=CFI&categoryid=cfreport>
9. A former wizard, and now Protestant Pastor, David J. Meyer, said "High level witches believe that there are seven satanic princes and that the seventh, which is assigned to Christians, has no name. In coven meetings, he is called 'the nameless one.' In the Harry Potter books, there is a character called "Voldemort." The pronunciation guide says of this being, "He who must not be named."
10. The sign of the lightning bolt on Harry Potter is a symbol from the Runic alphabet, an ancient Germanic alphabet which gradually fell into disuse but acquired occultist significance in the dark ages, and signifies destruction. The very same symbol was used by Hitler for his Nazi SS, his elite destruction corps, and also for the Nazi Youth. The symbol on Harry, who escaped a very powerful warlock, suggests that the lad is even stronger, that is the *Απολλων*, the Destroyer, the Antichrist; this assumption is also supported by the name of hero itself. In the author's British dialect, "Harry" as a very means to "assault, devastate, ravage," and as a noun ("Old Harry") denotes the satan, while "Potter" means to "bother, irritate, annoy" (Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, Electronic Edition, v2.5, 2000--some witches, though claim that Potter was a Mesopotamian goddess of fertility). Many other symbols are used extensively today by the general public without the latter realizing the occult meaning behind them. For instance the familiar symbol of peace (so much used by the hippies in the '60s), that resembles an upside-down cross with its arms bent downwards, is actually the symbol of death in the ancient Runic alphabet; again, the very same symbol was used by Hitler to replace the Cross in the Christian cemeteries. The fact that these symbols are used appropriately, according to their occultist meaning, makes it obvious that they are used consciously.
11. Muggle, probably cockney (London slang) for marijuana. The world of Ms. Rowling is divided in the "initiated ones" and the "sleepy ones."
12. <http://www.wamu.org/programs/dr/99/10/18.php>
13. <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/12/B/79/>
14. There is confusion between "stage magic" (illusion), such as practiced by people like Houdini or David Copperfield, and real magic. For this reason, most serious practitioners

of the art of sorcery prefer to spell it the old English way, as "magick," precisely to distinguish it from pulling a rabbit out of a hat.

15. http://observer.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,6903,587261,00.html
16. William J. Schnoebelen, "*Strait Talk On Harry Potter.*"
17. http://www.observer.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,6903,587261,00.html
18. Shape-shifting into animal forms, that is "Lycanthropy," explains a former wizard "is an old and honored element within the disciplines of magic and sorcery. The werewolf is the best example of lycanthropy, but there are others. Most third world cultures which practice shamanism have practitioners who endeavor (and sometimes succeed) in shape-shifting themselves into animals--bears, wolves, ravens, etc."
19. Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, Electronic Edition, v2.5, 2000.
20. Daniel Schorr, "*T.V. Violence, What We Know But Ignore,*" as appeared in *Orthodox America* Vo. XIV, No. 8 (132)--May-June 1994. "Reality has become fluid, and no medium has done more to make it so than film, with its wide accessibility, its sense and psyche-altering format and its effortless gift for persuasion..." Holland Cotter, "*Films that keep asking, Is it Fact or Fiction,*" *New York Times*, 1-19-01.
21. Schnoebelen, "*Strait Talk On Harry Potter.*"
22. Not unlike the "good" and "evil" side of the "Force" in Star Wars, or in Hinduism and Buddhism.
23. Pastor David J. Meyer, "*Harry Potter What Does God Have to Say,*" Last Trumpet Ministries International.
24. Rassaphore-monk Hilarion, "*Offend Not These Little Ones; On Toys and Children,*" in *Orthodox Life*.
25. Ron Rhodes, "*The Culting of America, the Shocking Implications for Every Concerned Christian*" (Harvest House Publishers, 1994), p.116.
26. N.N. "*Walk Circumspectly,*" in *Orthodox Life* 1992.
27. Father Seraphim Rose, "*Signs of the End of Time,*" transcription of a lecture given in Santa Cruz in 1981.
28. George Barna, *Absolute Confusion, How our Moral and Spiritual Foundations are Eroding in this Age of Change* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), p.15.
29. George Barna, *Absolute Confusion,* p.15.
30. Russell Chandler, *Understanding the New Age,* (Dallas, Word Publishing House, 1989) pp.8-9.
31. Russell Chandler, *Understanding the New Age,* p.8.
32. Ruth Tucker, *Alternative Religions and the New Age Movement* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), p.8-9.
33. Russell Chandler, *Understanding the New Age,* p.9.
34. Anita Manning, "*Meditation on 30 Years of TM,*" *USA Today*, 17 August 1989.
35. The corporate community in America has been thoroughly permeated by the New Age movement. A *Wall Street Journal* article reported that "business after business is putting its managers into 'New Age seminars'...All promise 'consciousness-raising' and nonreligious conversion resulting in a 'changed person.'" (*The Wall Street Journal*, 24 July 1987). This was confirmed by a revealing article in the September 28, 1986 edition of *The New York Times*: "*The magazine California Business* reported recently that its survey of 500 company owners and presidents found more than half said they had resorted to some form of 'conscious raising' technique. Although such 'human potential'

programs are more in common in California than elsewhere, industry experts say that recently they have been the fastest growing type of executive development program." Companies that have utilized the services of New Age seminars include AT&T, All State Insurance, Boeing Aerospace, Calvin Klein, Campbell Soup, Dupont, Ford, General Electric, General Foods, General Motors, IBM, Lockheed, NEC, Proctor and Gamble, RCA, Scott Paper, Westinghouse and McDonald's. These seminars, besides discussions of the "New Age Capitalist," include training in meditation, chanting, "dream work," the use of tarot cards, and even specific instructions on how to contact personal 'Spirit Guides'--all founded on the triple New Age credo "you are your own God, you can create your own reality, and you have unlimited potential." in 1989 *The Wall Street Journal* reported, "There is nothing voluntary, as a rule, in company-ordered group-psychology sessions. In most cases managers are simply told to attend... They are ordered to attend a session aimed at 'changing their personality' because somebody claims that it's likely to be good for them or, maybe, good for the company--no one quite knows. Company ordered psychological [New Age] seminars of this kind are, in other words, an invasion of privacy that is not justified by company needs." (Peter Drucker, *The Wall Street Journal*, 9 February 1989). Similarly, an article in *Fortune* magazine asserted, "It's one thing if an individual walks in off the street and signs up for a course, but quite another if your boss sends you. Then there's a level of coercion. Does my boss have the right to put me through training that conflicts with my religion and world view?"

36. Rassaphore-monk Hilarion, *Offend Not These Little Ones; On Toys and Children*.
37. Daniel Schorr, "T.V. Violence, What We Know But Ignore," as appeared in *Orthodox America* Vo. XIV, No. 8 (132)--May-June 1994.
38. Frank Schaeffer, *Dancing Alone*, Holy Cross Press, 1994, p. xv.
39. Rassaphore-monk Hilarion, *Offend Not These Little Ones; On Toys and Children*.
40. Trademark used for a board with the alphabet and other symbols on it, and a planchette (a small triangular board supported by two casters and a vertical pencil) which when touched lightly by the fingertips, spells out spiritualistic messages on the board.
41. Of course, this was a demonic lie to push the young lad in to suicide so as to die unrepentant and go to hell for sure--demons have no authority in convicting a person.
42. Actually, burning incense is an ancient practice of offering to God. The demons, in other words, usurp honors due to God alone. The magicians, for cheap exchanges, agree to do that which their ancient forefathers suffered torture and martyr's death to avoid: worship demons and lose their souls.
43. The abyss is a concept in ceremonial magick that is described as a place of annihilation or a place of mindless horror and darkness--in either case, the magician's soul is believed to be utterly destroyed forever. In other words, even sorcerers themselves know that hell awaits them.