

MarketFaith Ministries is an equipping ministry which is focused on helping Christians become more effective in living out their faith in the midst of the increasingly diverse worldview environment of modern society.

### Introduction

This past week has been quite a big one, don't you think? After all, the last of the Harry Potter books has been released. Isn't it amazing to see all of the publicity that this has generated in virtually every news media. But it has also caused a certain amount of discussion, and even condemnation, in Christian circles. What should we think about a series of books which has witchcraft as its theme? Today's article addresses that issue from the viewpoint of worldview. It is our hope that this discussion adds to your insight about the issue and gives you more confidence to use the release of the book as a platform for sharing Christ in your marketplace.

Taking this discussion one step further, how confident are you in your personal faith? Are you so sure of your belief in Christ that you are able to confidently express it to someone who is also confident in their beliefs? Can you not only share how a person can come to know Christ, but also why your belief in Christ is the Truth and other beliefs are not? Giving this kind of knowledge and confidence is the purpose of MarketFaith Ministries. We would love to have the opportunity to share with your church or Christian organization the practical implications of worldview which can make this a reality for your life.

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### Reality vs. Fantasy: Should Christians Have a Problem with Harry Potter?

Harry Potter has been quite the phenomenon over the last several years. Even its detractors admit that this series has been brilliantly conceived, written and marketed. To date there have been over 55 million hardcover and 30 million paperback editions sold, and it has made its author a billionaire. And the final book has just now been released.

As we look at the reviews of these books, we see an extraordinary range of opinions. Among the many viewpoints, there is one sentiment that the release of this series is a tremendous benefit. That is because it has caused a very large number of children to dive into reading in a day when reading is becoming less and less popular. These critics have no concern, whatsoever, about the content. Just the fact that so many are reading is enough in and of itself.

There is another group who are more concerned with the content. Many of these are Christian reviewers who consid-

er the book to promote witchcraft in a way that encourages other people to begin following that belief system. As a result, they are very strongly against the books and believe that people should not read them, even for enjoyment.

I certainly understand that point of view and respect the reasoning of those who hold that point of view. However, I believe that I want to put myself into a third category. I remember when I was growing up, I enjoyed reading and hearing fairy tales. These were, like Harry Potter, stories full of fantasy. In those days, no one seemed all upset that witches and other mystical creatures were being put forth in the public square for children to read about. At the same time, these stories were viewed by virtually everyone as fantasy. No one believed that Snow White's witch was a actual creature.

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We also have a request for you. We are currently working to expand our ministry and resource offerings, and have established a fund raising drive to help kick this off. Our goal is \$7000.00 to expand the website, produce new resources and expand the reach of the ministry by getting the word out more effectively. If you feel that our ministry is worthy of your support, we would like to ask you to consider a donation. All who contribute to the ministry between now and the release of the next book, *Worldview Witnessing*, will receive a free autographed copy as soon as it is released. You may send your **tax deductible** contribution to: MarketFaith Ministries, 321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312.

God bless,  
Freddy

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Which probably brings us to the real problem in our day. We seem to have lost the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy. Witchcraft is now a somewhat prominent belief system and there is a considerable group of people who not only believe it for themselves, but who are evangelists working to promote it. The problem seems to be that since so many are now taking witchcraft seriously, there should not be a popular set of books which glorifies it.

I get that point. But I prefer a different way of dealing with it. Rather than bashing the book and taking away the fun that many have received from the books, I would rather help people understand that it is fantasy rather than reality. Perhaps there are those who see it as reality, but that doesn't change the fact that it is not. No matter how much some want to believe, people will never fly on brooms or turn others into frogs. No matter what they believe, there are no such things as fire breathing, flying dragons and evil, black clothed spirit monsters who fly around and kill people. An understanding of worldview will help us get at this.

Witchcraft is nothing more than one of the expressions of Animism. Animism is the worldview which asserts that there is a separate spirit world which interacts with the material world in a symbiotic relationship. By rightly connecting with the spirits, one is able to manipulate them or take advantage of their power for one's own benefit. Adherents also believe that doing so wrongly can cause one's own harm or even downfall.

We could play around with the anecdotal evidence that believers in witchcraft put forth about how they, themselves, have worked successful spells or "feel the presence of the spirits." But let's just cut to the chase. There is no objective evidence whatsoever that any of this represents the Truth. People from virtually every belief system use this experiential approach to try and validate their faith – even Christians. They believe that experiencing certain emotions is a positive affirmation of the truth of a certain set of beliefs.

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But emotions and personal experience are simply not enough to establish the truth of a particular belief. The testimony of a Wiccan and a Christian cannot both be Truth at the same time. They literally contradict each other. Emotional experiences that people have can make them feel good, but that does not validate the truth of the belief. Someone's feelings are deceiving them. There has to be some other way to validate one's faith.

With witchcraft, there simply is nothing else. It is completely based on one's personal experience and preferences. There is no historical or archeological evidence that can be brought to bear. There is no revelation from the spirit world that has evidence to back up its validity. There is no empirical or other evidence to back up the belief that witches are indeed able to do supernatural feats. There is, simply, nothing except the presumptive faith of the believer that it is possible. And without some kind of objective outside validation, there is no reason to take it seriously. There is nothing to make it any more valid than the testimony of someone who touts a different set of beliefs. It amounts to nothing more than a personal preference.

So, we are back to whether or not to allow the reading of the Harry Potter books. Indeed, if we believe that it will be a stumbling block which will prevent someone from coming to Christ, we ought to refrain. But I believe that rather than trying to regulate away fantasy, the better approach is to disciple people regarding the truth of our Christian faith and the falsity of other belief systems. People who are not convinced of the Truth of Christianity are not going to turn to faith in Christ whether they read Harry Potter or not. If they don't become Wiccan, they will become something else. Our task is to share the gospel and show people how and why it is true.

So really, is it a big deal if people enjoy reading the Harry Potter series? If we can discern the difference between reality and fantasy, and if we take seriously our mandate as a witness for Christ, this need not be an issue for Christians to get all twisted up about. In fact, if we will use it, it can become a platform upon which we are able to share our belief in the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Coming in August – How Does the Christian Faith Match up with Human Experience.**