

Harry Potter & the Christian Connection continued

Without giving too much away about the *Deathly Hallows* [DH] I will add to my earlier articles [in the *Anglican News* and on our Parish Website] about the Christian connection in Harry Potter.

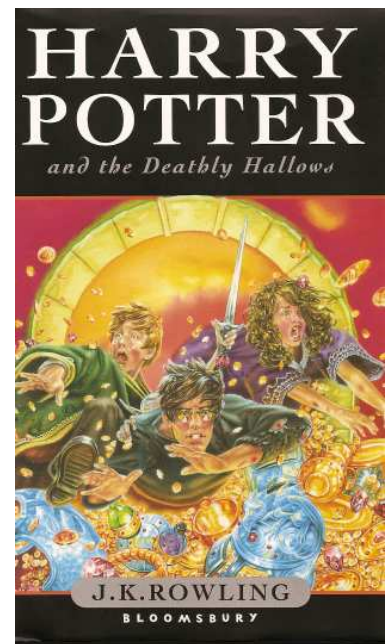
J K Rowling said in an interview in 2000 that she didn't talk about her Christian faith because if she did readers would know exactly how the story would end. In another interview, she told a reporter with questions about her faith to come back after the seventh book and that, if he had read it, his questions would be answered.

A central theme of the whole series is the power of sacrificial love: its power to transform and its power to overcome and vanquish evil. That love is more powerful than hatred or violence, is an important and great message to send to young people and adults today. Think about the ways

in which Rowling draws out this theme in the books. To what extent is it a "good story" or does it find its roots in the voluntary self-sacrificial love of Jesus?

Throughout the series Rowling emphasises the power of choice in the formation of character. Some of the most powerful sections of DH are those when Ron makes choices. The tension, difficulties and consequences are superbly recounted in the narrative. Two sides to this. She gives more hints about how to decide - and that is certainly not to take the easy way! In the most crucial choice that Harry makes he finds "the fiercer the longing for the Hallows burned inside him the less joyful it made him" Brilliantly Rowling indicates a key principle of discernment: how does the choice affect our inward disposition? Having said that, Rowling shows that a bad choice is not always the end, there is time for change and to get back on the right track. Dumbledore is the obvious example of this. Described as one of the best characters in children's fiction, his life is complex and we see that he is a flawed man; nevertheless he is a hero because he learns to live with his flaws. His life reminds us that out of great error can come a life of genuine service and heroism.

I wonder if another theme of this book, which has been underlying in other books, is the notion of how easily government, and even good people [Dumbledore?] can be corrupted; whether by "Magic is Might" or "For the Greater Good". Rowling recognises the beguiling corruption of the desire for power. When the only interest of government is remaining in power then it will quickly be subverted by any lie that enables it to retain its power and most people will not question what is taking place. It takes the "outsider" [Griphook the goblin describes Harry as an "odd wizard"] to see through the lie and to counter it. On the other hand the character assassination of Dumbledore by Rita Skeeter has strong resonances with the way the popular press can scurrilously rubbish good people.



Far from leading us down a pathway of witchcraft, J K Rowling takes her readers on a noble journey; emphasising those things that are right and true and just. House elves play a crucial part in this book. Harry, Ron and Hermione are helped by them because the elves have received kindness from them. Contrast Sirius Black who because of his bad treatment of Kreacher is led to his death by him.

In life, as in computer games, the way to win is to kill your enemy. But we see in this book that Harry does not kill. His trade-mark magic is noted because he will disarm and stun his opponents; he will shield himself but will not kill. Through her hero Rowling is saying that even though evil and hatred are real, killing is not the answer. Violence and killing only brings heartache and grief; it does not resolve the problem. The answer is sacrificial love.

For heaps of thoughts and ideas go to <http://hogwartsprofessor.com/>

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