July 21, 2007, at one minute past midnight, the seventh and last Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, went on sale. Released globally in 93 countries, *Deathly Hallows* broke sales records as the fastest-selling book ever, selling more than 11 million copies in England and in the United States in the first 24 hours following its release. The previous record, nine million in its first day, had been held by *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, volume six of the series.

The Harry Potter books are available in 66 languages in more than 200 countries, and to date about 340 million copies have been sold. What is it in these books that makes children who haven’t read a book in their lives, suddenly read every page of every book J. K. Rowling produces? And many read them more than once. Parents report reading levels jumping four grades in two years. What is it that makes these books the biggest phenomenon in publishing history?

Harry Potter is a young boy in need of friends. His parents were killed by the evil sorcerer Lord Voldemort, and he grows up with an aunt, an uncle, and a cousin who mistreat him throughout his childhood. While living with these relatives, he receives a message that he is to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, where he discovers that he has supernatural powers. The books recount his experiences and adventures at Hogwarts School. Millions of children identify with Harry the orphan because he is marginalized yet admirable.

Evolutionary scientists have refused to accept as true the biblical account of the origin of life forms at the hand and word of God. However, as Ellen White states, “Since the book of nature and the book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony. By different methods, and in different languages, they witness to the same great truths.” The space program discoveries confirm what the book of nature tells us that if oxygen has always been on planet Earth, life could not have arisen by evolutionary principles. As Snow and Javor rightly suggest, this conclusion shows, in harmony with biblical revelation, that life came “through a creative act by the One who commanded that ‘the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind’ (Gen. 1:24).” This is a faith-building implication.

Sometimes science has pleasant surprises for the creationist. The discovery of the existence of oxygen at all times on our Earth, which would block the evolutionary development of life forms, is powerful and encouraging. This strengthens our faith in the biblical statement that, “the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isa. 40:8, NASB).

**REFERENCES**

2. Ibid., p. 159.
3. Ibid.
On the other side of the fence, Jack Brock, pastor of the Community Church in Alamogordo, New Mexico, organized a public book burning of Harry Potter books. An Adventist school in Australia banned the books from its premises and was praised and condemned on a nationwide TV news station. Richard Abanes, who wrote the book *Harry Potter and the Bible*, considers the books harmful to children primarily because they introduce them to the occult. Furthermore, he asserts that there is no place for God in these books: “Harry Potter lives in a world free of any religion or spirituality of any kind. He lives surrounded by ghosts but has no one to pray to, even if he were so inclined, which he isn’t” (*Time*, July 23, 2007).

Scripture warns us about the activity of spiritualism in the time of the end. The apostle Paul wrote, “The Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1, NKJV). And he adds: “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9, NKJV).

The Book of Revelation tells us that, prior to Armageddon, the spirits of demons will work through the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (16:13, 14); and Ellen White wrote: “Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome.”

About 30 years ago, the New Age movement swept across the Western World, and it is still with us, as the many books on this topic in any bookstore testify. Through the New Age movement, Satan reaches out to the adults. Through the Harry Potter books, he is reaching out to the children. This seems to be one of the reasons for the tremendous success of these books—a supernatural power is directing this success.

In the Harry Potter books, Satan sometimes surreptitiously, sometimes openly, introduces his teachings. In speaking of the evil Lord Voldemort (Satan), one of the characters in the book *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* says, “I met him when I traveled around the world. A foolish young man I was then, full of ridiculous ideas about good and evil. Lord Voldemort showed me how wrong I was. There is no good or evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it.”

*There is no good or evil, there is only power.* What a message! What counts is power! If you have power, you can force other people to do what you want them to do. This is the same message children see on TV time and again. If you have a gun, you have power. If you have money, you have power. If you are a Harry Potter, you have power.

But the most devastating message in these books is that witchcraft can be something positive. In Deuteronomy 18:10, 12 God says, “Anyone . . . who practices witchcraft . . . [is] an abomination to the Lord” (Deut. 18:10, 12, NKJV). The Harry Potter books teach that witchcraft can be acceptable and good.

Since children have been reading the story of Harry Potter, they have become more interested in paganism and the occult, which is not surprising. A spokesperson for the Pagan Federation told Associated Newspapers: “Parents should not be alarmed by their children’s sudden interest in magic. Paganism is recognized as a valid religion. In no way is it a cult and certainly it offers nothing untoward.”

Just as Ellen White predicted, “Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.” We know the Harry Potter books are pure fantasy, but smaller children cannot tell the difference between fact and fiction. One of the side effects of Pottermania is that witchcraft has suddenly become less objectionable. And real witches and wizards celebrate their positive portrayal in Harry Potter.

Considering the situation we need to ask ourselves, what can I, what can we as a church, do? First, we need to understand that the Great Controversy is a battle for the mind—yours, mine, and that of our children. And the mind is influenced by what it sees and hears. Just think of the influence of violence on TV on our children and young people. “I saw it on TV” is a frequent excuse of juvenile delinquents.

Second, we need to determine that we will not invite Satan into our homes and schools.

To flirt with spiritualism is to invite disaster. In the 1860s, Moses Hull, an eloquent minister, thought he could outfox Satan. He loved to debate and defeat spiritualists. Ellen White warned him against it, but he did it anyway and ended up a spiri-
It takes only one brain cell to recognize Jennifer Aniston, Halle Berry, or Bill Clinton. This edifying bit of information comes as the result of a recent research project by the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California. As part of a treatment for epilepsy, devices were planted in test subjects to monitor brain-cell activity. When the subjects were shown photos of famous people, it took only one brain cell to recognize them.

Though this may at first blush seem to be of negligible value, it may add some light to an ongoing discussion among scientists over how many cells it takes to effect recognition. Many have thought that it would take many cells to recognize, say, one’s own grandmother. Neurobiologist Jerome Lettvin coined the term “grandmother cell” to poke fun at those who thought that such recognition could take as little as a single neuron.

But it appears that grandmother cells may actually exist. Considering that the average human brain of an adult contains some 10 billion interconnected cells, it makes you wonder: When we recognize a newspaper photograph to be that of George W. Bush, for example, what are the rest of the cells doing?

We know that through electro-chemical impulses the brain controls both voluntary and involuntary behavior. While we’re utilizing one or more brain cells to decide whether we recognize a celebrity in a photograph, whole other sections of the brain are firing to keep our physical body running: heartbeat, digestion—at the risk of being overly simplistic, basically the plumbing and air conditioning.

Presumably, though, the grandmother cells would be included in the voluntary part of the brain. We “voluntarily” program our minds to remember specific bits of information. Computer people would call this the storage of data. And the superficial bits of information, such as the likeness of Johnny Depp on...