

Sight & Sound

BOOKS

Bewitched by Harry Potter?

Harry Potter and the Bible: The Menace Behind the Magick

By Richard Abanes, Horizon Books,

275 pages, paperback, \$.

Cult examiner Richard Abanes tackles the spiritual implications of the Harry Potter phenomenon in a comprehensive and credible fashion—not content to oppose Potter-mania through emotive decibels but with documented and careful evidence.

A brief introduction sets the tone for the manuscript, as Abanes asserts that “the literary world has been be-witched” by J.K. Rowling’s best-selling series that focuses on the adventures of a young wizard. Although many place the works on par with the fantasy writings of . Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, Abanes supports the conclusions of those who see the books as haphazardly exploring the occult and offering a “general nastiness underneath the mantle of cuteness.”

The novels’ characters “lie, steal and take revenge,” while Rowling herself claims her world of wizardry is a “world of imagination” and a “moral world.” Abanes also criticizes the books’ popularity within the nation’s public school systems, as the books are religious in nature.

The heart of Abanes' work is the methodical analysis of each of the four Potter books published to date. (Seven books are planned, and a feature film is due out later this year.) Abanes dedicates one chapter per Potter book, explaining the storyline, then takes another chapter to examine the subtle and overt messages woven within the prose. This is highly beneficial for those who either have not read the books or have not had the time to absorb them in great detail.

Abanes does emphasize that it is unproven that Rowling deliberately is trying to draw children into black magic or the occult and encourages parents to carefully examine the books to get their information straight before raising concerns about them.

Abanes reminds us that the Holy Spirit who dwells within us is more powerful than any dark force of the world. He encourages believers to rely on the Spirit as they give examples to their children of how and why the Potter series is unbiblical. Christians wishing to be taken seriously as they engage in the Potter debate must communicate concern rather than condemnation, and recognize that the true enemies are the spiritual forces of darkness.

John M. De Marco

Renew Your Vows

Divorce Proofing Your Marriage

*By Linda S. Mintle, Ph.D., Siloam Press,
236 pages, paperback, \$.*

Relationships are hard work; there's no denying. But clinical psychologist Linda S. Mintle, Ph.D., believes too many couples

divorce over fixable problems. In her latest book, *Divorce Proofing Your Marriage*, Mintle offers sound, biblical advice to help make marriages last a lifetime.

Subtitled *10 Lies That Lead to Divorce, 10 Truths That Prevent It*, Mintle's book pulls no punches. She challenges couples to see marriage as a covenant, not a contract that can be broken when one partner perceives his or her needs aren't being met. Within a few pages, it becomes clear that Mintle sees few circumstances that merit divorce, save dangerous and abusive situations. She writes that marriages can even survive adultery, though trust must be restored.

Among the lies she debunks is that incompatibility kills relationships and that lost love can't be restored. Drawing from real-life examples, Mintle walks readers through the process to repairing broken relationships. She dismantles each scenario—the wife who won't clean the house, the couple who says they have nothing in common, the intrusive in-laws—and reveals root issues, such as misplaced priorities or a lack of self-discipline.

Whether couples are experiencing marital difficulties or not, this book is an excellent resource to safeguard relationships against common threats. Singles, too, can glean insights from reading the challenges real couples have faced. Smart and sophisticated, *Divorce Proofing Your Marriage* is filled with practical wisdom from a writer who is experienced and spiritually discerning. It would make an excellent addition to anyone's library.

Adrienne S. Gaines

Freedom in Christ

Portraits of Freedom

By Bob Davies with Lela Gilbert,

*InterVarsity Press, 192 pages,
paperback, \$.*

For those who doubt that anyone can truly be free from homosexuality, Bob Davies, North American director for Exodus International, has compiled a book of 14 testimonies from people who have been set free from homosexuality.

Portraits of Freedom offers an honest peek inside the various ways gays and lesbians have found freedom in Christ. Readers will watch them stumble at times and cope with childhood trauma that influenced their homosexual behavior. Davies is quick to note that the book is not intended to be a political pawn proving that gays can change. The testimonies offered in the book are individual journeys—and many of the contributors admit they still struggle with homosexual feelings, though they refuse to act on those feelings.

The book does not tell readers how to minister to gays and lesbians, debate the root causes of homosexuality or chastise the “gay Christian” movement. Yet Portraits gives examples of how various approaches helped or hindered the individuals’ journey toward healing. For example, a fundamentalist Christian couple was instrumental in helping one former lesbian find salvation. Then as she participated in an 18-month Christian counseling program, she stayed with the couple in their home.

While some testimonies describe childhood abuse that may have encouraged homosexual behavior, other stories are devoid of such abuse or any other circumstance that may have “induced”

homosexuality. Portraits offers no pat answers, as it clearly conveys the complexity of the issue. The book, however, will give readers a compassionate glimpse into a homosexual's journey—and prove that change is possible by the power of Jesus Christ.

Adrienne S. Gaines

MUSIC

Music to Touch The World

CeCe Winans

By CeCe Winans, Wellspring Gospel.

Grammy and Dove award winner CeCe Winans has been regarded as one of the most respected and celebrated singers in Christian music. Her music and ministry have transcended cultural and musical boundaries. With her latest release, she wanted to reach the world.

To follow up her 1999 gold-selling album *Alabaster Box*, Winans emerges with her most diverse collection to date. She showcases her versatile vocal and songwriting abilities on 13 genre-spanning tracks that encompass pop, R&B, inspirational and gospel. The album opens with the prayerful “Heavenly Father,” a mid-tempo, danceable groove with infectious rhythms. The prayer theme continues on the power-packed “Anybody Wanna Pray” and “Say a Prayer.”

Soulful ballads “More Than I Wanted” and “No One,” which were previously secular recordings, are love songs that can either be directed toward God or an individual. The album also

features a moving duet featuring CeCe and her brother Marvin Winans on “Bring Back the Days of Yea and Nay,” a song her brothers’ quartet, the Winans, first recorded in the 1980s.

Winans also breaks new musical ground with the spiritual warfare track, “Out My House” that features Winans’ smooth vocals laced over hard-hitting, bass-pumping beats. She also delivers a beautiful worship cut, “Holy Spirit, Come Fill This Place” that ministers a solemn plea for God’s presence. With her self-titled release, CeCe Winans achieves her purpose of reaching out to the world with music and the message of Christ.

Twanna Powell

Modern Worship

All Around the World: Modern Worship

*By Matt Redman, Tim Hughes,
Paul Oakley, Neil Wilson, Sparrow Records.*

Here’s an interesting combination: Take four young British worship leaders and mix them with two Americans known for their modern-worship talents, and you get All Around the World. The new worship album by Matt Redman, Tim Hughes, Paul Oakley and Neil Wilson (the British side) is produced by former SonicFlood members Dwayne Laring and Jason Halbert, and brings a passion for God and technical excellence from two continents.

Sonically, this project captures a conglomeration of European pop/rock praise (reminiscent of bands such as Delirious) and the straight-up, free-form worship style of American favorites such as SonicFlood. This is progressive, modern, in-His-face

worship by young people obviously determined to radically change, at least, their own lives, if not the whole world.

New songs such as “Be Glorified,” “Jesus, You Alone” and “Because of You” are straight guitar-driven pop, the main ingredient in this worthy effort. The most striking moment comes right at the end in the raw, poignant plea “Can a Nation Be Changed?” a free-flowing chorus that calls for restoration with the One who sets us free.

Natalie Nichols Gillespie

Highest Praise

Dwell in the House

By Ron Kenoly, Integrity Music.

With more than 3 million copies of his inspiring worship music sold, Ron Kenoly returns with *Dwell in the House*, a slight departure from his usual fare. A studio project rather than a live recording, *Dwell* opens with the title cut, a funky, pop-flavored jam that is as appropriate for radio airplay as congregational singing.

But Kenoly certainly hasn't abandoned his roots. Slowing the tempo on “Seek Your Face” and “Move Spirit Move,” Kenoly maintains his worshipful lean—albeit with stronger R&B and blues influences than in previous releases. The undisputed highlight of the album is the worship cut “You Alone,” a stirring duet with Darlene Zschech that is becoming a favorite around the world.

The pace picks up again on “Mighty King,” followed with a revival of the classic R&B cut “Grandma's Hands,” made popular

by Bill Withers. "Praise Him" is a festive groove, featuring backup vocals by Chris Rodriguez. Then taking listeners into more worshipful ballads, one of Kenoly's strengths, are the quiet and reflective "You Alone," "All the Way" and "My Quiet Place."

Dwell in the House does what good praise and worship does best—motivate

listeners to seek God's face. It's one you won't want to miss.

Andrea R. Williams

Healing for Ireland

Come Heal This Land

Featuring worship leader Robin Mark, Hosanna.

Come Heal This Land opens with a traditional Irish reel, "Mulhaires," featuring the pennywhistle and strings in a ditty that positively begs listeners to get up and do a jig. It sets the tone for this lively Celtic praise offering.

The live album was recorded at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh, Northern Ireland, and was the idea of an Ulster minister who wanted to see the local body united. Hosanna hooked up with songwriter Robin Mark to record Come Heal This Land. During the recording, Mark led 600 in worship as people in the United States interceded in prayer for healing of the strife-filled country.

The title track is a stirring prayer for the healing of Ireland, inviting the homeless, the widows, the poor to come feast at the Father's table and stating: "There's a place for rest / at your Father's breast / Does a cry ring out from a

broken nation / From a people who have been brought low? /
Come heal this land.”

Come Heal This Land inspires praise for the freedom found here in America and is a great reminder that this land of freedom desperately needs a spiritual healing too.

Natalie Nichols Gillespie

Gospel Jazz

Melodies of My Heart

By Angie Winans, Against the

Flow Records.

Another sibling in the famous Winans family steps into the limelight with her solo debut *Melodies of My Heart*. Angie Winans, half of the Winans duo Angie & Debbie and the ninth of 10 children, takes the lead in this reflective and meditative project. *Melodies of My Heart* is a rare merging of contemporary jazz styling and the message of Christ. Produced by the award-winning duo Victor and Cedric Caldwell, the latter of whom is Angie’s husband, *Melodies* is the perfect CD to just put in and let play.

Winans’ love for jazz and classical piano is evident on the first cut, “Come Go With Me.” The second, “Changing My Whole Life,” is a testimonial piece set to the music of Roberta Flack’s classic “Killing Me Softly.” An excellent fusion of worship and jazz, *Melodies* offers cool ministry on cuts such as “The Lord’s Prayer,” an R&B-flavored rendition of Jesus’ model prayer.

Brother Marvin Winans joins Angie on the dance track “Let ‘Em Go,” and saxophonist Kurt Whalum adds his special touch to “Mack Avenue.” Winans dedicates “Roses Again” to her three children, then rounds out the release with “Lady Wisdom.”

Incredibly innovative, *Melodies of the Heart* is a refreshing addition to the Christian music scene. Not only is it a musical gem, but the release offers inspiring, heartfelt lyrics that will minister to mature and new believers alike. Winans’ release will leave listeners craving for more.

Andrea R. Williams

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Author Jim Goll believes a prophetic revolution is imminent. But before it can manifest, there must be a prophetic revolution in the church. That’s why the 49-year-old Tennessean has written his ninth book, *The Coming Prophetic Revolution* (Chosen Books)—to goad those longing for something new to break forth in Christianity.

Unlike many other writers on the prophetic, Goll, founder and director of Ministry to the Nations, a prophetic teaching and intercession ministry, focuses less on spiritual gifts and more on intimacy with God. “My heart is to communicate that great change is on the way and to call forth a pure and yet powerful stream of the prophetic which cooperates with the other ministries in the body of Christ,” he explains. “This revolution in the prophetic includes a revolution of lifestyle, wisdom and clarity of vision.”

Goll has observed many of the church’s weaknesses and longs to see a prophetic church that operates with personal integrity.

"We need a people of passionate intimacy to come forth who love the Word of God coming into them more than the gifts of the Lord just going through them," he says. "We must cultivate character to carry the gifts of God so we will grow up and up."

"We must see a cooperation of apostolic and prophetic teaming together to complement one another and not compete with one another. We must see revolution, a dramatic and sudden change in the church, so that Jesus Christ will receive the rewards of His suffering."

—Margaret Feinberg