

The **Vine** 2001 Millennium

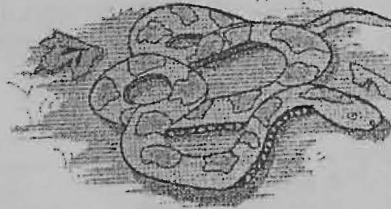
For Internal
February 2001
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Circulation Only

Grace to you and peace from God! How wonderful is our Lord's love for us. However, in this Chinese New Year at the end of January, I cannot help but be again amazed by the prevalence of Chinese astrological influence even amongst Chinese Christian and the Chinese church community. We need however to be discerning in this matter, as we may be believing in or indulging wittingly or unwittingly in something which is utterly displeasing to Yahweh God whom we pledge allegiance and worship, and suppose to love with all our heart, soul and might.

The command of Yahweh God in Deuteronomy through Moses to His people should be pretty clear, "Let no one be found among you... who practice divination or sorcery, interprets omens. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD (Yahweh)" Deuteronomy 18: 10.

Yahweh is the covenant name of God in the OT, formerly erroneously rendered as Jehovah in KJV and translated as the LORD in NIV.

Some may say that this is just a Chinese tradition. What is wrong with talking about Year of Snake? However life is not so simple. The snake has a powerful religious symbol in Asian religions e.g. Chinese, Indian and even Christianity.



JCC BUSINESS MEETING

will be held on the 6th March

JCC Family Day will be held on the 1st May.

In Hinduism, snake is a symbol of spirituality and important in Hindu astrology. The Hindu God Siva has a snake around the neck, Vishnu sleeps on a snake, and Krishna dances on the head of a snake (The Star Newspaper, Jan 24, sect 2,p3).

In Christianity, Satan was disguised as a snake to tempt Eve in the Garden (Gen 3:1). God cursed the snake!

In Buddhism, on the sixth week after supposedly attaining enlightenment, Buddha was under a Mucalinda tree when he had a rare encounter with a snake. A king cobra came and coiled himself seven times around Buddha's body.

In a Chinese astrology myth, the lazy snake depended on the frog to catch food for it. The people however liked frogs and thus distrusted the snake. The snake became mad with envy and went on a rampage, hurting and killing humans and animals. The Jade Emperor Yu Huang punished it by cutting off its legs and giving them to the frog. The snake turned over a new leaf and helped humans and the dragon to control rains and floods. It also donated its body for medical purpose. The Jade Emperor rewarded it by placing it after the dragon in the 12 years Chinese astrological cycle.

Thus putting two and two together it will not take too long for us to discover a common thread about snakes in various religions and its connotations. Therefore as Christians let us be more discerning before we chit chat about which animal year we are born in etc. Amen.

Pastor Martin Yee.

A Brief History

This Lutheran church was founded by a vision of the Council of Churches who met on December 2nd 1965 as an outreach to industrial workers in the then new Jurong Industrial Estate. The pioneer staff of six members consist of Lutherans, Anglican, Methodist and one from YWCA. Besides being a place of worship it also functioned as a civic center providing classes, counseling and a simple library. It served the industrial community at all levels of social involvement. The church building was completed in 1968.



Our belief

We confess Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church and acknowledge the Bible as Holy Scriptures, the norm for faith and life of the Church.

Our mission

To share the love of God with all peoples.

Is the NIV the Word of God?

By James M. Frye

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: All scripture quotations are taken from the Authorized King James Bible. Any deviations are not intentional. All underlines, bold and items within parentheses are the author's.

NASV says ... - W James?", etc. Durin one morning, the tes John 5:4. The King . says:

For an angel went e season into the pool water: whosoever th troubling of the wate made whole of what had.

And then the teacher

The title of the above article is self-explanatory. When it came into my hands, my first reading of its astounding claims against the NIV bowled me over. However, upon second reading, and then a third, ... I realized that it is just part of the Bible-versions debate that has been ongoing for decades. I pondered two choices: Just leave the hot potato alone, or take on the task of sharing some thoughts to get a weight off my chest. In fact, I had information that some Christians known to me have already been bought over by the pro-KJV-anti-NIV arguments. It is an important issue on two counts: Firstly, it cannot be wished away, especially with the Internet culture of swift document transmission; secondly, harmless personal convictions or preference aside, Christians mingling with Christians of all ages of faith simply cannot avoid occasions when they have to face head-on the question of which Bible version to recommend or which to use. Personal orientations can have a significant impact on witnessing, and the devil will be happy enough to see emotions, contentions and confusions rule.

It is a painful feeling how some debaters on either side of the issue in a faraway land have gone to the extent of name-calling. Who is right and who is wrong in their positions, God will be the ultimate judge. It is up to us individually as respectable Christians not to indulge in wayward hissing of self-righteousness without regards to the rights of others to their convictions. By and large, regardless of the translation you use, there is no question about the accuracy of the Gospel in the Bible and the simple fact that Jesus Christ our Lord is the only Way to eternal life. Whatever guidance one may need in the course of studying the Bible, one has recourse to prayers and the working of the Holy Spirit. One does not depend solely on the written Word for enlightenment

on issues. All of us who are called Christians who abide in God and have God abiding in us have an eminent Counselor:

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26 NIV)

But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26 KJV)

Besides, the spiritual leaders of the Church are always available for consultations. They are the ones we can trust because God places them there to watch over our souls (underlining mine):

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Heb. 13:17 NIV)

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. (Heb. 13:17 KJV)

I have refrained from touching on which Bible version is best. This is for a number of reasons. Basically, of course, I am not qualified as a Bible scholar to take on the intricacies of textual criticism that have entangled many a Bible scholar in a web over the decades with no resolution of the issue. For every point made for KJV and against NIV, a counterpoint can be dug out from the mass of debate resources. It will not help anybody much for me to be mired as well. Anyway, the Vine is certainly not the proper forum for a satisfactory (which must mean 'exhaustive') discussion stretching endless pages.

My next reason is my personal conviction that both the KJV and NIV have their places in the lives of Christians. I am satisfied in my conscience that I have been able to use the different Bible translations without detriment to my faith in Jesus Christ. As a brief 'testimony' of my personal confidence with

various translations, I have quoted verses above in both NIV and KJV. In some of my writings in the past, I had quoted from other versions as well, including TLB, without conflict of truths with any other translation but enhancing the effectiveness of conveying my thoughts with the appropriate linguistic thrust

James M. Frye who posed the question "Is NIV the Word of God" and went on in his article to question the integrity of NIV will be glad to know that I have not turned away from the KJV Open Bible, a KJV analytical Bible and two other handy KJV Bibles in my possession for useful study of God's Word. However, he may not appreciate as much as I do about the values other Bible translations (NIV, Jerusalem Bible which I also possess a copy, Chinese Bible, etc.) have contributed to my spiritual nourishment and Christian service. I have found the different translations useful in clarifying points, articulating views and quoting verses with appropriate clarity and effect, and carrying out translation work between Chinese and English. Therefore, I do not appreciate as much as *Frye* does his exclusive bent towards KJV. I cannot imagine how, if Frye has his way, well-intentioned though he is, the world and I will have to retain only the KJV (and the original manuscripts in Greek and Hebrew) and throw away all the rest (including the Chinese Bible and the Children's Bible), and evangelical outreach will be made a hundred times more difficult. Whereas large numbers of people over large numbers of years have benefited themselves from the Word of God in multitudes of translations (including translations by mouths of missionaries) and come to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, I shudder at the thought of God requiring, as from today, everyone in every corner of the world to understand only one language in one dialect (English Language in the 'Authorised' dialect as used in KJV) in order to have the benefit of knowing Him by His written Word.

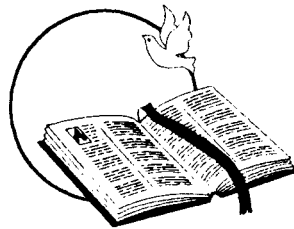


With respect to my brother-in-Christ at Grace Bible Church, *James M. Frye*, I must say that I do have a very high regard for the KJV, its scholarship and source of translation documents. There is no better way to assure him of at least a reasonable basis for my appreciation of the NIV and some other translations than to quote from the DEDICATION by nobody else but the translators of the KJV themselves (underlining mine):

"... if on the one side, we shall be traduced by Popish persons at home or abroad, who therefore will malign us, because we are poor instruments to make God's Holy truth to be yet more and more known unto the people whom they desire still to keep in ignorance and darkness; or if, on the other side, we shall be maligned by self-conceited brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil, we may rest secure, supported within by the truth and innocency of a good conscience, having walked the ways of simplicity and integrity, as before the Lord, and sustained without by the powerful protection of Your Majesty's grace and favour, which will give countenance to honest and Christian endeavours against bitter censures and uncharitable imputations." (in King James English)

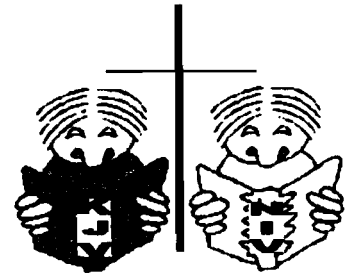
If you have a copy of KJV, you will find the above. It is a testimony that even the KJV translators in concluding their mammoth translation project were perceptive of their human limitations and therefore they were careful not to claim perfection in their work as justification for acceptance.

I would also like to refer the reader to the back page of the Vine (Jan 2000 issue) where the characteristics of different Bible versions were listed. Obviously, each has its purpose for its choice of vocabulary and style commensurate with the target readership; yet, word-for-word precision with the source material was neither the aim of the translators nor a possibility to accomplish by virtue of inherent linguistic limitations. With this understanding, whenever I study the Word of God, appreciating the faultlessness and eternal value of the Truth embodied in it, I read the Word with a consciousness borne of a developing relationship with God and according to the direction of the Holy Spirit so as to comprehend the depth of God's message that literal words in any human language alone are inadequate to convey. Ah ... even without considering the beauty of the human expression, the exquisiteness and magnificence of God's Truth reveal itself in a way that we can only attribute to God's gracious dispensation and not the mere work of human messengers and translators! Thanks be to God also that His omniscience was spot-on in recognizing our need for a Teacher in the Person of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).



I sincerely believe that arguing until the cows come home as the debate has gone on for decades (especially in the United States) over which Bible version is the best will only raise up walls and cause destructive divisions in the body of believers instead of building on unity and harmony. If I have a child coming to me for advice on what Bible to buy, I would recommend him a paraphrase Bible for young children. I would recommend the KJV not to a speaker of simple modern-day English but to someone who appreciates the literary beauty of King James English and has no problem with comprehending it. If I am approached by someone who looks scholarly and is a multi-linguist in Greek and Hebrew, you know what I can suggest to him. However, if someone of some category comes to me and I do not know what Bible to recommend him, I would refer him to the pastor.

Whatever Bible version we choose for ourselves or for others, we must not detract from the need for an orderliness in the body of Christ so that peace prevails when the body gathers for discussion and there is no problem of you not understanding me and vice versa. Here is where we depend very much on the God-provided leadership for supervision. We want to demonstrate the love of Jesus to attract more people to join the Church, not to foment a contentiousness that frightens off others who are watching on the wayside.



My conclusion is this: If you prayerfully conclude that the NIV is for you or someone you love, nobody can stop you deriving and disseminating spiritual benefits therefrom. If you prayerfully convict your heart that the KJV can help you better, take note that the KJV is available in all Christian bookshops. However, if you feel that you will enjoy most the flavour of an English Bible with much older "vintage" than the KJV (1611), you have a choice between the Bible translated by William Tyndale (1535) and the one translated by John Wycliffe from Old Latin Vulgate (1383), both of which will have no problem with the Bible-version debaters. Please don't ask me where to hunt for these "vintage" Bibles. For myself, I shall cling on to my KJV, NIV, Jerusalem Bible, Chinese Bible, Children's Paraphrase Bible, etc. and read them prayerfully with the help of my excellent Teacher, the Holy Spirit.

John Lee



FROM THAILAND TO SINGAPORE



Rev. Terry & Sally Kee

77/267 Soi Phumjit, Rama 4 Road, Phra Khanong,
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

February 2001

Dear praying friends,

"Look among the nations and watch - be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you."
Habakkuk 1:5

God is indeed working mightily in ways beyond our comprehension and imagination.

Take for example, when we commit Somboon who was suffering from Leukemia and required monthly blood transfusion for more than 10 years into the mighty hands of God, we did not expect God to heal but He did! Somboon's mother brought him to us in September, asking us to pray for him. They had just returned from the hospital and the blood he needed was out of stock. He had to return to the hospital for transfusion a week later and his mother was afraid that he might not

have the strength to last until that day. Evangelist Thavorn and Terry prayed for God's mercy to be on him. By the grace of God and beyond our expectations, when he went to the hospital a week later, the doctor was amazed that his blood count improved by 4% in that one week and no transfusion was needed. Another appointment was set for November and this time his blood improved by another 2%. There was great rejoicing and this boy was one of those who received the Lord's baptism in December 2000.

A week after we prayed for a woman in Phimai, Nakorn Rachasima who was demonized for more than 10 years, her whole family chartered a pickup and traveled more than 100 Km to receive Jesus. The deliverance she experienced and her change of behaviour convinced her mother, aunt and brother in

law of the reality of our God.

We asked God for opportunities to evangelise people of influence in the community in Nong Han. Terry was approached by Ms. Wipawadi (Committee member for development of English Teachers in Nong Han District of the Ministry of Education) to explore the possibility of running an English Camp from November 28 to 1 December 2001 for 75 English Teachers of Nong Han District (one teacher per school). We are permitted to give out tracts and share the gospel at that meeting.

We are thankful to God for being with us every moment of our lives and ministry and we pray that

2001 be another year of God's grace in both our lives and ministry.

We are mindful of the fact that it's your prayers that made the difference. Please continue to pray for us as we seek to glorify God and extend His kingdom in Thailand.

PRAYER POINTERS

1. The Bishop of ELCT had requested that Terry assist in the provision of pastoral care for the pastors and evangelist in the ELCT. Pray that Terry can fulfill that task in addition to his other commitments. He

teach Pastoral Care in L.I.T.E.; provide training for the members of Baan Buk Preaching Place in Buriram, Baan Pran Preaching Place in Sisaket and Nong Han Preaching Place in Udon Thani. He is also serving as the V. Chairperson of the Lutheran Mission; the board member of L.I.T.E. as well as a member of the Executive Council of ELCT. As for his studies, he is doing Pastoral Care in the Thai Context; Church Planting in Thailand, Christian Education and Pastoral Epistles for this semester.

2. Pray for Sally's skin allergies as well as your ministry with the LWF.
3. Pray for our ministries in Nong Khai. A man and his son is preparing to be baptized in March while another family is interested to know more about the Lord.
4. Pray for volunteers to assist us in the Evangelistic English Camp from 28 November to 1 December 2001.

Yours in Christ's love,

Terry & Sally Kee

FACING A DECISION

by Neil Anderson

Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths (Psalm 25:4 NIV).

I would like to share with you 10 questions you'll want to ask yourself and pray about when you're faced with a decision. The first five are generic. They represent moral issues and godly wisdom that are normative for all times.

1. **Have you prayed about it?** Prayer was never intended to be a fourth-down punting situation in which we ask God to bail us out of our hasty decisions. It was intended to be a first-down huddle. We aren't supposed to ask God to bless our plans; we're supposed to ask God for His plans.
2. **Is it consistent with the Word of God?** In our culture, ignorance of God's Word is no excuse since resources abound. I believe that every home should have at least a concordance, a Bible dictionary, a topical Bible, a good commentary, and a study Bible with notes. Most pastors would love to share what God has to say about a given matter. If they wouldn't, you have called the wrong pastor!
3. **Can I do it and be a positive Christian witness?** A seminary student stopped by my office and told me about a job he had been offered. It would take care of his financial needs, but he had some reservations concerning the sales pitch he was required to use. I asked him if he could use the sales technique and be a positive witness for Christ. He didn't take the job.
4. **Will the Lord be glorified?** Can I do this and give glory to God? In doing it, would I be glorifying God in my body? Am I seeking the glory of man or the glory of God? Am I doing this to be noticed by man or am I seeking to please the Lord?
5. **Am I acting responsibly?** God doesn't bail us out of our irresponsibility. But when we are faithful in little things, He will put us in charge of greater things. Don't get ahead of God's timing or you will be over your head in responsibilities. Seek to develop your life and message, and God will expand your ministry.

Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long (Psalm 25:5 NIV).

The next five questions to ask yourself regarding God's will are to help you when facing a change in direction.

6. **Is it reasonable?** God expects us to think. His guidance may transcend human reasoning, but it never excludes it. God doesn't bypass our mind; He operates

through it: "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature" (1 Corinthians 14:20). We are warned in Scripture not to put our mind in neutral. We are to think and practice what we know to be true (Philippians 4:8,9).

7. **Does a realistic opportunity exist?** Closed doors are not meant to be knocked down. If you have a hopeless scheme, let it go. If it isn't God's timing, wait. If a realistic opportunity exists, and all the other factors are in agreement, then take the plunge. God may open a window of opportunity, but it will close if not taken advantage of. The faithless man asks, "What do I stand to lose if I do?" The faithful man asks, "What do I risk losing if I don't?"
8. **Are unbiased, spiritually sensitive associates in agreement?** Be careful not to consult only those who will agree with you. Give your advisors permission to ask hard questions. Don't be afraid of "no" answers. If it isn't God's will, don't you want to know before you make the mistake of acting impulsively?
9. **Do I have a sanctified desire?** Don't think that being in the will of God must always be an unpleasant task. The joy of the Lord should be our strength. I find my greatest joy in serving God and being in His will. But don't get the idea that if everything is wonderful, you must be in the will of God. Is this a desire to satisfy a lust of the flesh or a Spirit-filled desire to see God's kingdom established and people helped?
10. **Do I have a peace about it?** This is an inner peace. Is the peace of God guarding your heart and mind?

If you have been able to answer yes to all 10 of these deciding factors, what are you waiting for?

NEWS REPORTS

20th Jan 2001 - **Corporate Prayer Day.** About 50 persons turned up to pray together for the various ministries and projects of JCC. When a call for dedication was given, most of the people came forward to the altar.

28th Jan 2001 - **Touching the Community.** A record 80 adults and a number of children took part in this project to reach out to over 700 homes around JCC with CNY oranges, a tract and a fact sheet. The community was very hospitable and some of our teams were given oranges or chocolates in return, while others were invited into the homes. Indeed we want to thank God for His protection. Continue to pray that the seed we planted will lead to a mighty harvest of souls for the glory of God.

LIMITING ANXIOUS FEELINGS

by Neil
Anderson

Cast all your anxiety on Him [God] because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7 NIV).

Let's assume you have sought God's will for a certain direction, and you believe that He has led you to make specific plans. The problem is you are still worried about whether your plans will come about as you have hoped. When I'm facing such situations, I try to follow the six steps described below to limit my anxious feelings.

1 state the problem. A problem well stated is half solved. In anxious states of mind, people can't see the forest for the trees. Put the problem in perspective. Will it matter for eternity? The danger at this juncture is to seek ungodly counsel. The world is glutted with magicians and sorcerers who will promise incredible results. Their appearance may be striking. Their personality may be charming. But they are bankrupt of character. Avoid them (Psalm 1:1).

2 separate the facts from the assumptions. Since we don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, we make assumptions, and we usually assume the worst. If the assumption is accepted as truth, it will drive your mind to its anxiety limits. Therefore, you must separate assumptions from facts.

3 determine what you have the right or ability to control. You are responsible for that which you can control, and you are not responsible for that which you can't. Don't try to cast your responsibility onto Christ; He will throw it back.

4 list everything you can do which is related to the situation that is under your responsibility. When people don't assume their responsibility, they turn to temporary cures for their anxiety, like eating, TV, sex or drugs.

5 once you are sure you have fulfilled your responsibility, see if there is any way you can help others. Turning your attention away from your own self-absorption and onto helping people around you is not only the loving thing to do, but it also brings a special inner peace.

6 the rest is God's responsibility, except for your prayer, according to Philippians 4:6-8. So assume your responsibility, but cast your anxiety on Christ.

This daily devotional is published and distributed by Crosswalk.com. It is written by Neil Anderson at <http://www.ficm.org>