

The 2000 VINE

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An error was made in
last month's Vine.
Truly the first of its
kind.

Where in between
passing articles thru
e-mail,

I mistook an old story
for a new tale.
Did you spot the
mistake?



Grace to you and peace from God. This month there is a teaching/revival seminar called "The Law of the Holy Spirit" from September 7-10 at Grace Assembly of God Church co-organised by a number of churches. The speaker is Rev Dr Ezekiel Choong. The objectives of the seminar is to train and raise God's people and churches to be on fire for evangelism, to stir-up and equip God's people to move and operate the gifts of the Holy spirit and to heal and deliver those who are sick and in bondage and make them the disciples of Jesus.

I believe that Spiritual gifts are important ministries in the church even today. We need to have a clear biblical understanding of spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12-14 is a key passage in this respect.

The Nature and Purpose of Spiritual Gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14

One of the most instructive sections in Holy Scriptures on the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts is 1 Corinthians 12-14. Note some of the basic instructions that Paul gives in these chapters regarding spiritual gifts. Among the points made by St. Paul that are particularly relevant to our discussion are the following:

1. Already in the preface to his letter the apostle calls the attention of the Corinthians to the many blessings they possess in Christ. In Him they have every spiritual gift (1:7); they have sanctification (1:2), the grace of God (1:4), enrichment in speech and knowledge (1:5). Because they are in Christ, they lack no spiritual gift. They also wait for the "revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ." Only the return of the Savior would bring complete victory for them. Apparently the Corinthian Christians thought of themselves as already existing in the realm of glory, engaging in the work of the Spirit, which they conceived of as being beyond Christ. Therefore, the apostle reminds them again and again that the spiritual gifts they now possess are theirs **in the crucified and resurrected Christ**. And at His return they will be complete.

But while possessing all spiritual blessings, they were not using them as they should, and in chapters 12 to 14 Paul proceeds to give them instructions on the nature, purpose, and proper use of these great gifts.

2. The fact that an individual is in an ecstatic state does not in itself indicate that he is spiritual. Ecstasy is not limited to Christians. The Corinthians knew this from past experience. Before they were children of God, the very essence of their religious experience was their feeling of being carried away by spiritual forces. But then they were led away to dumb idols. Now the Corinthians are being led by the Spirit. They can recognize this from the fact that they are able to call Jesus their Lord. This confession of Christ is the characteristic mark of those possessed by the Spirit of God, says Paul.

3. But if the central work of the Spirit is leading men to honor Christ by confessing faith in Him as Lord, the Holy Spirit also manifests Himself through a variety of gifts and services with which He endows the Christian church. In 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 38-30, the apostle provides lists of the spiritual gifts he had in mind. They include the utterance of wisdom, the utterance of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, the ability to discern spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. Prominent at the head of the lists are gifts of intelligent and thoughtful utterance. Prominent at the end are gifts of tongues and their interpretation.

Among the spiritual gifts referred to in 1 Corinthians 12 are a number of terms that require some explanation. In verse 8 "the utterance of wisdom" and "the utterance of knowledge" may refer to an exceptionally thorough knowledge of the great truths of divine revelation, particularly the mysteries of the Gospel, and the ability to expound them in a clear and convincing manner as well as to apply them to individual cases in life. "Faith," in this context, can hardly refer to saving or justifying faith but must point to a heroic, unwavering trust and confidence in the power of God to reveal Himself in extraordinary deeds that may seem impossible to men. The expression "gifts of healing" no doubt refers to those remarkable deeds performed in the early Christian church by certain believers who were enabled by the power of God to heal the sick without medication, cast out unclean spirits, cure the lame, and even on occasions raise the dead. "The working of miracles" is a broader term including the many wondrous deeds performed by the early Christians through the almighty power of Christ.

"Prophecy" is a rather difficult term to understand, since it is used in various ways in Scripture. It does not refer primarily to the gift of declaring coming events in advance, although this did occur in the apostolic church (Acts 11:27: Agabus). It includes also the God-given ability to interpret Scripture correctly and to apply its message of Law and Gospel to the needs of men. It is the gift of expressing what the will of God was in a given situation. The ability to "distinguish between spirits" refers to a God-given power

by which certain individuals in the early church were able to test the prophets to determine whether they were false or true and to judge whether a doctrine was of God or not. "Various kinds of tongues," in the case of the Corinthians, apparently had reference to a "language," unintelligible to others as well as to the speaker, by which a Christian praised God. (Paul discusses this gift at great length in I Corinthians 14.) "The interpretation of tongues" evidently was the ability to transmit the content and message of such "language" for the benefit and edification of the speaker and other members of the body of Christ.

4. These spiritual gifts are not reserved for the select few in the church, who are consequently in a privileged class above the rest; instead, Paul states that all Christians have been endowed by the Spirit with gifts of one kind or another. (V. 7)

5. All Christians have been baptized into the body of Christ, and all are made to drink of the one Spirit (v. 13). Therefore the spiritual gifts that each possesses are for the benefit of the entire church; they are given "for the common good" (v. 7). The Christian is to use his gifts in the service of Christ's body, the church, and not merely to serve himself. Any use of the Spirit's gifts that does not edify the church is contrary to the Spirit's intention.

6. In I Corinthians 13 Paul discusses the basic attitude with which the Christian is to use the spiritual gifts God has given him. In the previous chapter he has indicated that they are **charismata**, gifts of grace. Now the apostle admonishes the Corinthians to employ them in a spirit of love.

7. It appears that in the congregation at Corinth the possession of certain spiritual gifts had led to senseless pride and chaotic confusion. Paul, therefore, admonished them in a most forceful manner that love must permeate and motivate their use of spiritual gifts or they become meaningless and useless. Even though a person may possess the very loftiest kind of tongues-speaking and though he may be able to speak not only in an unknown human language but with the tongues of angels, unless this gift is exercised in a spirit of love, it becomes nothing more than an unintelligible, meaningless set of sounds. Neither speaking in tongues nor prophetic insights nor heroic faith that can move mountains nor superhuman sacrifice can be useful and meaningful unless they are exercised in a spirit of Christian love. Thus it is not the miraculous nature of a gift nor the spectacular character of one's willingness to sacrifice that makes spiritual gifts unambiguous marks of the Spirit's presence and power; it is only the spirit of Christian love in which the gifts are exercised.

8. St. Paul then proceeds to describe very carefully the nature of this love about which he is speaking. It is not primarily something emotional or ecstatic, passionate or fiery; instead, it tends to tame those emotions that are so apt to lead to the abuse of spiritual

gifts. Love is patient, long-suffering, and kind. More specifically, it is not jealous or boastful, arrogant or rude, irritable or resentful. It does not insist on having its own way. It does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in what is right.

9. Christian love also has the remarkable characteristic that it will continue on into the unending future, always relevant. Other gifts of the Spirit such as prophecies, tongues, and knowledge are imperfect and incomplete in this life and shall therefore pass away when they have served their purpose, but Christian love will remain intact even in the state of perfection. (13:9-13)

10. In the context of this magnificent discussion of Christian love, the apostle then exhorts the Corinthian congregation: "Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy" (14:1). Immediately thereafter, he addresses himself to certain problems that had arisen in Corinth with regard to speaking in tongues.

11. St. Paul, who himself possessed the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 14:18), believed that it could be an authentic gift of the Spirit. He did not forbid its use for self-edification or, when interpreted, for the edification of others (1 Cor. 14:5, 39). However, it should be carefully noted that the apostle in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 is not discussing the gift of tongues for the purpose of encouraging or assisting the Corinthians in acquiring this gift. His purpose is rather to point out dangers and abuses that have resulted from its misuse and to encourage the use of other spiritual gifts, especially prophecy.

12. St. Paul prefers prophecy to tongue-speaking for a number of reasons. One who speaks in tongues speaks not to men but to God, for no one understands him, and the result is that he edifies only himself (14:2). On the other hand, he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation. Such a person edifies the church. Edification now becomes the theme of this chapter (vv. 3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26). According to St. Paul's manner of thinking, the ultimate criterion for a spiritual gift is this: "Does it build the church?"

13. Tongue-speaking can be useful in the church only if it is supplemented with the gift of interpretation (v. 5), for only then will it edify the church. Without interpretation no one will know what is being said, and it will be as if one speaks into the air (v. 9). Therefore he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret in order to edify (v. 13). Paul thanks God that he has spoken in tongues more than all of them (v. 18); nevertheless, he concludes: "I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue (v. 19). In full accord with this expressed principle, we have no record of Paul ever speaking to his churches except in understandable language.

14. Accenting the gift of tongues out of proportion to other gifts is a sign of immaturity. In 1 Cor. 14:20-25 the apostle therefore challenges the Corinthians to “grow up” in their thinking. They should consider the effect that speaking in tongues might have on the church’s program of evangelism. At an assembly of the church the effect of speaking in tongues on “outsiders” and “unbelievers” may be adverse, for it may lead them to think Christians are mad (v.23). In verse 21 the apostle inserts an Old Testament quotation (Is. 28:11-12) into the discussion, emphasizing that the effect of tongues on an unbeliever will be to harden rather than soften his heart. Thus the use of strange tongues in the Corinthian congregation might not serve to convert the sinner but instead could cause him to blaspheme.

On the other hand, when members of the Corinthian congregation prophesy, which involves a testimony of their faith, and an outsider is present, there is the possibility that the unbeliever will be made conscious of his sin and unbelief. The secret sins of his heart may be revealed, and the result might well be that such a one repents and worships God, openly recognizing God’s presence in the congregation. Using the gift of prophecy in that way may result in winning people for Christ.



15. Each believer is to consider himself a vital and responsible participant in the life of the congregation. In a church service everything should be done in an orderly fashion. Although Paul does not forbid speaking in tongues in their worship services (v. 39) he makes three important stipulations: (a) not more than three should speak in tongues in any one service; (b) these three should take turns and not speak all at once; (c) there should always be an interpreter present. Without an interpreter “let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God.” (Vv. 27-28)

The same rules of good order apply to those who prophesy. They should prophesy in turn while the rest exercise judgment on what is said. This sentence indicates that the assembly’s right to criticize should not be suspended no matter what gift might be exercised. Since God is a God not of confusion but of peace, all gifts, even prophecy, should be used in an orderly fashion. Amen.

Pastor Martin Yee



2 Word and Sacrament

Among Lutherans the primary religious practice is attendance at the service of 'word and sacrament'. This expression is shorthand for the service of the Lord's Supper, which always includes proclamation of the gospel in readings and preaching, as well as the receiving of Christ's body and blood in Holy communion, in which worshippers receive consecrated bread and wine, conveying Christ's presence and power. More, Lutherans have also begun to use the term 'Eucharist'. Luther called the whole service 'the mass', and some Lutheran churches, particularly in Scandinavia, continue to do so. Some aspects of the service go back to the New Testament—for example, the cry 'Lord have mercy', and the hymn 'Glory to God in the Highest'. An ancient dialogue precedes the celebration of the Holy Supper as the leader invites the congregation to 'Lift up your hearts' and the congregation responds 'We lift them up to the Lord'.

A low rate of attendance and participation at the Eucharist has been a longstanding problem even prior to the Middle Ages, when most people attended services each Sunday but stood back when it came to receiving Communion. In more recent centuries the regular main Protestant service has often been cut back to include readings, preaching, prayer and praise (sometimes called 'the dry mass') but not Communion. Lutherans too inherited this problem, although in the last thirty years, in the Lutheran Church and in some other denominations, Communion has been celebrated more frequently and Communion attendances have more than doubled.

This change seems to reflect a shift in understanding as well as practice. Many congregations used to hold a separate confessional service, focused on the reality of sin and the grace of forgiveness, prior to each Communion. Such preparatory attendance and registration with the pastor helped to make the good news of absolution from sin real to many people in their personal lives. It also bound communities together. In the Lutheran Church today, confession of sin and private confession to pastor or fellow Christian, though encouraged, are generally not held to be a sacrament. Rather, the holy Eucharist itself is considered to bestow forgiveness of sins. In many parishes a Eucharist service takes place every Sunday, after being introduced by a short form of common confession.

Lutherans generally use the term 'sacrament' only for baptism and the Eucharist as the only two ordinances explicitly instituted by Jesus as bestowing saving grace. These sacraments and the word of the gospel undergird the Lutheran view of salvation and of the Church.



Think of it — a group of 61 members and guests packed into a room and added to this were the 61 chairs and a buffet table! Well, we were glad to have a room big enough to accommodate all with space to spare and with air conditioning for cool comfort. Yet, within the four walls, you could find no escape from the warmth of fellowship that was the order of the evening.

Those present were a very balanced mix of old and not-so-old members, new and not-so-new friends who are becoming part of the JCC community, adults, youths and children.

The councilmen, led by Chairman Ronnie Lim, were conspicuously present to extend their hospitality to the new and not-so-new brothers and sisters in Christ who worship with us at JCC.

The befrienders and nurture leaders were glad to have the wonderful opportunity to soak in the spirit of oneness in the Body of Christ permeating every individual regardless of whether he/she is “host” or “guest”, “old” or “new” in the JCC community.

All factors combined to make the Welcome Party on Saturday evening, 12th August, a memorable one that bubbled with energy sustaining the fun and interaction well beyond the scheduled 7.30 p.m. farewell.

We rejoice in the experience of God’s blessings and wish that the community spirit in JCC will grow strong as members aspire to belong, not underestimating the value of friendship that enhances mutual care and concern through fellowship in the Body of Christ.

In accord with Bro. Ronnie Lim’s exhortation to all present at the Party, let each and everyone be an active member of a Care Group so that we may all uphold one another in the development of our spiritual life and thereby be strong enough as a united body to withstand the onslaught of undesirable forces in the world today.

John Lee

If you noticed that last issue's report on the Befriender's Party was a repeat of an old article, then you are a true-blue Vine reader.



JESUS' FINAL COMMAND

Imagine with me that Jesus is standing on the Mount of Olives, ready to ascend into heaven. For three and a half years, He has taught His disciples. Now, He must summarize all that He has taught them in a few final words.

As recorded in the Gospel of **Matthew**, Jesus said:

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Now, read Jesus' parting words in the Gospel of **Mark**:

"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.'"

Now, look at **Luke's** record of some of Jesus' last words to His disciples.

"And the repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

The closing chapters of **John's** Gospel also contain a Great Commission statement:

"So, Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you' "

It is evident from **Matthew**, **Mark**, **Luke** and **John**, that Jesus, during His final moments on earth, was consumed with the prospect of every man, woman, boy and girl hearing the Good News of salvation and new life.

- Have we lost sight of that which was foremost in Jesus' mind?
- Have we done good works for Jesus, yet neglected the one thing that He asked us to do?

We can do many good things in the name of the Lord, but we must not neglect to do what Jesus, in His final command specifically asked us to do. Evangelism is not just for those who feel "called"; it is every believer's privilege. We must find ourselves laboring in at least two of the following three areas of the Great Commission:

PRAYING

We must pray for laborers!

"Then He said to them, 'The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest' "

SENDING

We must send others to preach to those who have never heard. The "sending" involves financial giving and a personal interest in missions.

"And how shall they preach unless they are sent?"

GOING

We, ourselves, must be involved in "going".

"For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved'. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Not all believers will travel abroad to preach the gospel, but all share an equal responsibility in world evangelism.

It is indeed our prayer that all at Jurong Christian Church be willing to face reality – to look at the spiritual harvest field of 2 billion people who have never heard of Jesus, and 5.3 billion who may have heard but are not yet saved; and to do something about it NOW!

Adapted from Peter Youngberg's "Is Jesus Satisfied?"



15 THINGS GOD WON'T ASK YOU.

1. God won't ask what kind of car you drove, but will ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.
2. God won't ask the square footage of your house, but will ask how many people you welcomed into your house.
3. God won't ask about the fancy clothes you had in your closet, but will ask how many of those clothes helped the needy.
4. God won't ask about your social status, but will ask what kind of class you displayed.
5. God won't ask how many material possessions you had, but will ask if they dictated your life.
6. God won't ask what your highest salary was, but will ask if you compromised your character to obtain that salary.
7. God won't ask how much overtime you worked, but will ask if you worked overtime for your family and loved ones.
8. God won't ask how many promotions you received, but will ask how you promoted others.
9. God won't ask what your job title was, but will ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.
10. God won't ask what you did to help yourself, but will ask what you did to help others.
11. God won't ask how many friends you had, but will ask how many people to whom you were a true friend.
12. God won't ask what you did to protect your rights, but will ask what you did to protect the rights of others.
13. God won't ask in what neighborhood you lived, but will ask how you treated your neighbors.
14. God won't ask about the color of your skin, but will ask about the content of your character.
15. God won't ask how many times your deeds matched your words, but will ask how many times they didn't.

Articles from the Internet

The Mark Of The Beast (666)

According to the Scriptures, the "mark of the beast" is received on the right hand or forehead. With modern technology, it is very possible that this mark may be directly linked with a computer chip. But regardless if it is or isn't, everyone who is living immediately before the return of Christ will be forced to take this mark in order to buy or sell anything:

"He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666" (Rev. 13:16-18).

But this mark, which will be universally issued around the entire world, **MUST NOT** be received under any circumstances, even by Christians! Scripture goes on to say:

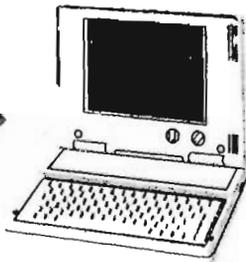
"A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: **If ANYONE worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur** in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. **And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those**

who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name. **This calls for patient endurance on the part of THE SAINTS who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus'**" (Rev. 14:9-12).

As the mark will definitely be issued one day, as Scripture declares, the eternal destiny for all who receive that mark will also be in accordance with Scripture! Do not be deceived about this. **If you are a Christian, you MUST NOT take this mark or you, too, will miss the kingdom of God and suffer eternal torment over this single act of disobedience, according to Scripture!** If the popular teaching of eternal security (also known as the perseverance of the saints) was true, Rev. 14:9-12 would be an impossibility! So don't be deceived by the teaching of eternal security. You must endure to the end to be saved (Matt. 10:22; Heb. 3:14; Rev. 2:10,11).

The people who make the eternal mistake of receiving the mark and worshiping the beast and/or his image will be deceived by accompanying miraculous signs and wonders:

"But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. **With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.** The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur" (Rev. 19:20).



"And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed" (Rev 13:13-15).

"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness" (2 Thess. 2:9-12).

Those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast and worship his image are referred to in the following passage. These are the same ones who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus:

"I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for

Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6).

Please notice, the "first resurrection" will not occur until the mark of the beast is made available! The first resurrection is for those who have done good and will rise to live, as opposed to those who have done evil and will rise to be condemned (Jn. 5:29). **YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE A PERSONAL DECISION REGARDING THE MARK OF THE BEAST THROUGH A PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE.** Regarding "that day" or "our being gathered to him" (2 Thess. 2:1), the Bible says:

"Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction" (2 Thess. 2:3).

Those who remain faithful to the Lord Jesus will refuse this mark, but will be beheaded as a result. This same fate for the God fearing who endure to the end is also

mentioned in the following passage with another possibility for "the saints":

"He was given power to make war against THE SAINTS and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast — all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. He who has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of THE SAINTS" (Rev. 13:7-10).

Dear reader, if you die in the Lord as a consequence of refusing the mark of the beast, please realize that you will immediately be in the presence of the Lord in "Paradise" (Lk. 23:43).

Regarding physical death for a Christian, Paul wrote:

"We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far" (Phil. 1:21,23).

REGARDLESS WHAT HAPPENS, DO NOT TAKE THE MARK! There will be many who will accept it at this time. Great pressure will be on you also to conform to their example. Miracles from satanic power will deceive many into taking the mark. **YOU MUST REMAIN TRUE TO GOD, EVEN IF YOU GET BEHEADED OR**

GO INTO CAPTIVITY AS A CONSEQUENCE. YOUR ETERNAL DESTINY HANGS IN THE BALANCE with this single act, if we are the last generation. Pass this vital information on to other people with whom you are acquainted. If we are the last generation, this could be the most important message they will ever learn. It may make the difference in where they will spend all of eternity.

"They overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death" (Rev. 12:11). "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

Pastor's comment:

The Lutherans generally understand the mark of the beast "666" as symbolic of imperfection or unholy as 6 is short of the perfect number 7.

Other Biblical Scholars understand the number "666" as either:

1. *A gematria - manipulation with numbers from alphabets. Commonly believe to represent Nero Caesar. Nero Caesar when transliterated to Hebrew from Greek is qsr nron, the numerical value for the Hebrew alphabets are q=100, s=60, r=200, n=50, o=6. The total is therefore 100+60+200+50+200+6+200=666.*

2. *A triangular number - sum of consecutive series of integers beginning with 1. Sum of integers from 1 to 8 = 36 i.e. 1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8=36. The sum of integers from 1 to 36 = 666 i.e. 1+2+3+4.....+35+36=666. The number 666 is identified with the eighth king of Rev 17:11*

3. *A symbolic number - a number with symbolic significance similar to numbers like 7, 12, 1000, and 144,000 found in revelation. like*

The Truth About Harry Potter

About the Books

Hidden in the 'slickly' written and so-called 'rollicking good reading' pages of the Harry Potter books is a very dangerous main theme. Harry, a nerdy, family-less, abused, unhappy, 11 year old kid discovers he is actually a powerful wizard and leaves his adoptive home to attend a school of witchcraft and wizardry. Here he finds new life, success, and friendship along with great powers (wizardry) within him. He uses these powers to gain victory and respect in his life.

To suggest to any child (especially underprivileged ones like Harry) that there is a way to escape the unhappy, real-life world they live in and retreat into a mystical fantasy world to find happiness is totally irresponsible and deceitful. To then suggest that the world of the occult (witchcraft) can be the power which can make it all happen is in fact an evil lie.

We are told that the theme of the books is to help kids to discover truths about bravery, loyalty, choice and the power of love. While there may be some truths told about human nature, the vast majority of what is put forth in these books is lies and deceptive half-truths.

Examples

Quote #1: "You can exist without your soul, you know, as long as your brain and heart are still working. But you'll have no sense of self anymore, no memory, no.. anything. There's no chance at all of recovery. You'll just-exist. As an empty shell."

(The Prisoner of Azkaban, page 247)

Truth: We cannot exist without our soul. Since soul and spirit are one, if spirit leaves, the body dies.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8: "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident. I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Quote #2: "You think the dead we loved ever truly leave us? You think that we don't recall them more clearly than ever in times of great trouble? You know, Harry, in a way, you did see your father last night.. You found him inside yourself." (The Prisoner of Azkaban, page 427-428)

Truth: The spirits of our dearly departed do not live within us (memories - yes, their spirit - no).

Note: Both of these concepts are witchcraft philosophy. One of the High Holy days to witches is Halloween. In

the book Witchcraft for Tomorrow.



Doreen Valiente writes, "The Sabbath of Halloween is particularly suitable for communication with the spirits of those who have passed on, as this is the ancient festival of the dead, and our loved ones who have gone on before us."

J.K. Rowling has said in interviews that her "very favorite" time of the year is Halloween.

THE "REAL" THEME

The book's main theme is supposed to be the fun of "fantasy" and the world of "imagination". But the underlying theme that recurs throughout all three books is that the occult world (witchcraft/wizardry etc.) is being presented as perfectly acceptable and harmless for children. The truth is that the world of witchcraft is not fantasy and it is not fun. It is very real and it is not a happy world. It is in fact a world of fear, suspicion, competition (for self-gain), disrespect for authority and evil.

Proponents of these books are wrong in comparing them to Peter Pan, The Wizard of Oz, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and C.S. Lewis' The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. The central characters in these books are not witches and wizards.

Dorothy (Wizard of Oz) is not a practicing witch. Peter Pan, Charlie and the kids in C.S. Lewis book are not driving their success in life from practicing the occult/witchcraft themselves. It

exists in their worlds, yes. but it is not their lifestyle! Kids identifying with Harry are



being told that these occult powers are O.K. for use! They're working for Harry.. why not you too!

More Wrong Themes

#1: Harry's disrespect for authority. In "The Sorcerer's Stone", Harry disregards his teacher's order and is later honored for it!

#2: Muggles or "humans without one drop of magic in them" are painted as losers and no-nothings (that's us folks).

#3: The books discussion guide suggests that Harry's fantasy world of flying cars, dragons, magic and sorcery becomes 'real' as readers discover truths about bravery, loyalty and the power of love. The truth is we should not be looking to the world of the 'occult' to find our 'truths' in life.. it is filled with deception and lies.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17.

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:" Ephesians 4:14-15.

#4: In the "Sorcerer's Stone", Harry is told that "there is no good and evil, there is only power.. and those too weak to seek it." This presents "good" (the weak) as losers. There is good and evil in the world. God and Satan are real and to

suggest anything else will lead someone into a world of lies.

The conflict between good and evil is nothing new for sure, but these books present a twisted view of this conflict. Harry is a bonafide wizard and is being taught divination (crystal ball, and tea leaf reading) and other occult practices. He is the hero and uses his powers of darkness to fight a greater power in the dark world (the evil Lord Voldemort) who murdered his mother (a witch) and his father (a wizard).

This is saying that it's O.K. to use evil to fight evil if your intent is for self-gain. That is a cardinal doctrine of Satanism and will lead you to believe that you can control the use of evil. The truth is that Satan (in the real world) loves to deceive people into thinking this so he can pull them deeper into his world to ultimately destroy them.

#5: One of the most blatant statements of witchcraft doctrine comes when a professor tells Harry, "after all, to the well organized mind, death is but the next great adventure." (The Sorcerer's Stone, pg. 302)

This is Wicca Witchcraft doctrine pure and simple. Starhawk (a noted witch) states in the book "Spiral Dance", "Death is not an end, it is a stage in the cycle that leads on to rebirth. After death, the human soul is said to rest in "Summerland," the Land of Eternal Youth, where it is refreshed, grows young and is made ready to be born again."

The Bible makes it clear that reincarnation is a false hope.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:" Hebrews 9:27.

Summary

These books have sadly become enormously popular. Parents are saying, "I'm just happy my child is reading." One teacher actually told our ministry, "I don't care if they read the Satanic Bible as long as they are reading."

We believe that the consent of teachers and parent to read books, which encourage living in a fantasy world where witchcraft and other occult practices are endorsed, will undoubtedly lead millions of impressionable youth into the occult.

The Harry Potter Books are in fact designed to be recruiting tools for Wicca/Witchcraft and the occult.

The problem is that most parents/teachers don't even believe that witchcraft and Satanism are "real" and thereby simply cannot see the imminent dangers of it. The actual reason children are so consumed by Harry Potter is that the world of the occult is presented as "harmless" fun. Kids believe in it, accept it as O.K. into their minds and do not realize that there is a very real dark power which then "lures" them so they want more and more.

We suggest you act to protect your child.

Editor:

This is an e-mail making it rounds and you may have come across it. I have trimmed it quite a lot to fit the pages of The Vine. However, I have not read any of the Harry Potter books to comment on it. Would appreciate anyone who has read the books to give their views on the subject of witchcraft as propounded by these books.

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MILLENNIUM HANDWRITTEN BIBLE

Enclosed is the amount of \$50.00 for the Millennium Handwritten Bible project. This amount is for the purchase of the Bible and the cost of the postage. The Bible will be sent to you in the next few weeks. The postage will be paid by the Bible Society. The Bible will be sent to you in the next few weeks. The postage will be paid by the Bible Society.

LETTER OF THANKS

We received a letter of thanks from the Bible Society for our support of their Millennium Handwritten Bible project, which is to raise funds for printing Bibles in poorer countries of the world. They have about 13 more books left to complete the whole project. When the project is completed, the Millennium Handwritten Bible will be put on display in the Singapore Philatelic Museum. This is expected to be around **December 2000**, together with a "Bible on Stamps" exhibition.

ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD

It's a lovely sentimental idea to suppose that all religions are basically one, and that they all represent variations on a common theme. But unfortunately it flies in the face of all the evidence. How can all religions lead to God when they are so different? The God of Hinduism is plural and impersonal. The God of Islam is singular and personal. The God of Christianity is the Creator of the world. The divine in Buddhism is not personal and is not creative. You could scarcely have a greater contrast than that.

It is foolish to say that all roads from Nottingham lead to London. They do nothing of the sort, and it is not helpful in the least to pretend that they do.

It is no kindness to anyone if we tell everyone that their views are as true as anyone else's. It is the same as saying to a blind man sitting on the edge of the cliff, "It doesn't matter which way you move. All paths lead to the same goal."

*The above is an excerpt from the book **YOU MUST BE JOKING!** by Michael Green regarding popular excuses for avoiding Jesus Christ.*

Scripture
Union

TRAINING
SEMINAR

Creative
Children's
Worship

Date:
7th Oct 2000
Venue:
**Bible House,
4th floor Chapel**
Time:
2.00-6.30 pm
Cost:
\$50 per person