

MARANATHA MESSENGER

Weekly Newsletter of
MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Private Circulation Only
16 December 2007

"Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28)

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LOSING YOUR SPIRITUAL BEARINGS WITH THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Introduction

Here it comes again. It is not over yet after JK Rowling spellbound many with Harry Potter, a more sinister movie has invaded our country. While the purpose of a real compass is generally to give us right directions, this one, The Golden Compass will lead many spiritually astray instead. The Golden Compass which hit the big screens last week in Singapore, the US and Europe is a blockbuster that is touted as a must-see event of the year and is a multi-million dollar popular movie with Chinese subtitles and a PG-rating for fighting scenes of violence. This much acclaimed movie tries to **make evil look attractive and fun. It is an attempt to make witchcraft and magic look heroic** (there are powerful animal creatures, both great and small and other occultic influences that smacks of Harry Potter). In this movie, the heroine is a little witch. According to the trailer, the movie's main message is that the truly brave will fight against God and will never be his. **This movie promotes a contradictory state of affairs, which claims that God is the source of evil, and evil is the source of good. The Golden Compass has the full potential to steer unsuspecting children toward evil if not confusing them at least, trying to make evil look good and it glamorizes witchcraft, violence, sorcery and the triumph of evil over good.**



The Golden Compass and Killing God

This first movie made from Philip Pullman's astonishing "His Dark Materials" trilogy, "The Golden Compass", is a complex, mystical, and spiritually dense fantasy epic that is more influential than the evil wizardry of Harry Potter. Pullman's luminous novels have everything to do with rejecting faith or destroying or inhibiting the spirit of seeking God. They relish the substitute for a true God, the use of spirits, magic and occultic fantasy instead soaked through with diabolical inspiration of a different kind that any Christian should be vigilant and discerning about. According to the movie and the book, the Golden Compass is a alethiometer (ie alethia in Greek means truth, hence a meter that tells the "truth" apparently) or a spiritual device invented by a metaphysical scientist in the 16th century and comprises 36 symbols on its ornamental surface that when combined together in different permutations give the answers to any "truth" itself. It is apparently

a powerful instrument but the interpretation of it is enigmatic and only the house of Lyra's has the secret to unlock the mysteries of the Golden Compass but there are foes alive and hence the movie ensnares and beckons us to watch it to know its conclusion. **Christ in the Truth (John 14:6) and the Holy Spirit will leads into all truths (John 16:13) as found in the word of God. John 17:17 says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."** The face of the alethiometer of the **Golden Compass smacks of modified horoscopes and astrological signs that occultic masters are familiar with.** Should a Christian watch the Golden Compass for truths or spiritual directions in life? Let Isaiah 47:13, 14 speak to us, *"Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it."*

The nefarious aim of the movie and the book to kill religious authority and God if possible. It is strange and almost insane logic that an atheist who supposedly does not believe in the existence of God is trying to kill God who is apparently "not there" according to him. A most extraordinary perception by Philip Pullman. It is about the destruction of religious dogma. It is about power, about who wants to control and manipulate life on Earth and misled people including children; it is about blind, ignorant, even violent propaganda of diabolical and atheistic thought and belief that will alter behaviour, thinking processes and convictions effectively, if possible.

In the movie, there is a "God of organized religion". This is supposed to be the so-called deity that promotes "numb groupthink" and inhibits growth and abhors the feminine divine (and atheism), the same God that is against perversion of the gays and protect us from vile pagans and other religion and feminists and the corruption of the world "by God" who will **be annihilated at the end of the movie by a child.**

While the movie (and the book by Pullman) is brilliantly directed and produced with stunning arctic scenery and fine stagemanship by the actors and actresses, it **has a powerful and subtle message of encouraging magic and the occult and seducing young minds to trust and try the supernatural and to believe in them and hence undermining true saving faith in Christ if possible.** Did not our Saviour warns us in Matthew 24:24, *"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."* and Peter in 2 Peter 2:1-2, *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."* This can come in the form of a book or movie as well in the 21st century and we are to be forewarned against it (1 Peter 5:7, 8).

The shameless and most outrageous thing about this Golden Compass Trilogy is that it is designed to softsell godless beliefs to unknowing and innocent little souls and to mislead good and trusting parents into believing the story is actually harmless! **The fact is that the author is trying to indoctrinate young minds into skepticism, doubt, cynicism, disbelief and to hate God and true religion.** Pullman had done "very well" by human standards in this movie as a man with a clear mind and a powerful product for an evil agenda.

Parents should pray and consider further into this subject. As guardians of our children, it is a grave Christian parental duty to keep our covenant children away from the spiritual harm which assail them under many disguises in these last days. This occultic film (and the book) is paraded as innocent and harmless pure entertainment (and the publicity, trailers and previews for the movie are stunning and seductive for many)! But the truth is that this is another diabolical trap launched on the theistic community, this time aimed at gullible youths and innocent children.

To combat this most recent assault on the children, young souls must be educated in the truths of the Christian faith found in the all sufficient word of God (Revelation 22:18-20) so they may defend themselves against the lies and deception of this seductive movie. We should not slack in this vital spiritual exercise but to be rooted and grounded in the glorious truths of the word of God to grow and mature in the most holy faith. (A good start is to read Leviticus 19:26-31 and Deuteronomy 18:9-14, Galatians 5:20, Revelation 21:8 and Isaiah 47:13, 14.) We must help them to develop wisdom and right judgment! There exist an ultimate right and wrong, an objective truth which is not to be distorted by myth, magic and diabolical atheism.

A word from the infamous atheist!

Let us hear directly from the horse's mouth. Here are some noteworthy Quotations from Philip Pullman, author of the Golden Compass series:

"I've been flying under the radar, saying things that are far more subversive than anything poor old Harry has said. **My books are about killing God,**" he explained. (Terry Mattingly/Scripps Howard News Service Saturday, November 17, 2007.)

"I'm an atheist. There's no God here. There never was." (Pullman vs. the Magisterium by Terry Mattingly). This reminded us of **Nietzsche**, the infamous atheistic philosopher who suggested that the acceptance of the Death of God will also involve the ending of accepted standards of morality and of purpose. Without the former and accepted faith based standards society is threatened by a nihilistic situation where people's lives are not particularly constrained by considerations of morality or particularly guided by any faith related sense of purpose.

Pullman, along with Michael Rosen, has created a DVD for 11-year-olds called "Why Atheism?" In the video, students talked frankly about their atheism and why they left their religion. **Pullman wants atheism to be taught in the schools, which is why he made the DVD.** (From "Why Philip Pullman Wants to Teach Children about Atheism," The Independent, July 10, 2007.)

Pullman wants to give the biblical account of Adam and Eve a new spin on its head. He beckons kids to learn that "the temptation in the Garden of Eden was that of enlightenment rather than an invitation to evil disobedience" (ie sounds familiar when we read Genesis 3:6, 7 of the diabolical twist of the serpent, there is nothing new under the sun). Indeed, two of his central characters, Will and Lyra, "are a sort of Adam and Eve", notes Deborah Ross, but "instead of reaffirming the Creation story, CS Lewis-style, they subvert it". According to Ross, Pullman is "all for Eve listening to the serpent and trying the fruit". Pullman himself admits that "I see it as a positive act." When asked if Eve's defiance shows curiosity and a willingness to embrace life, he answered, "Yes. Absolutely."

About the book: His Dark Materials

The book that Pullman wrote tells of Lyra's quest to rescue a kidnapped friend and then charts her efforts to save the fantastical world she inhabits. She has to fight the forces of the dominant religious authority, the evil Magisterium, which condones the abduction of children for experimentation by cutting. The three-part series culminates in an epic battle in which God apparently dies, at the hand of a child.

Excerpts from the novel

One fallen angel tells one of the novel's young heroes, "The Authority, God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty - those were all names he gave himself. **He was never the creator. He was an angel like ourselves, the first angel (ie this is the teaching of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormons or the Church of the Latter Day Saints, an influential cult of more than 10 million followers worldwide).** True, the most powerful, but he was formed of Dust (ie eternal matter) as we are, and Dust is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself." (ie note the subtle promotion of atheistic evolution here).

When the hero finally finds this "god", he is ultimately described as a "demented and powerless" creature that "could only weep and mumble in fear and pain and misery". The boy then kills this "god" by breaking him out of his crystal cell, thereby evaporating him. The only "god" in this universe is matter, (a powerful lie that may deceive many into the unreasonableness of deadly atheism.) The movie story also took **a malevolent swipe at biblical creationism and hence promoting unfounded evolution instead.**

In the book, the Church is also depicted as an evil organization bent on power, control and the torture of children by cutting and punishing them. One heroine in the story who turns from the Church did so when she realized, "there wasn't any God at all and...the Christian religion is a very powerful and convincing mistake, that's all."

Note the sinister distortion of truth and biblical facts in the book and movie and its powerful impact on young impressionable minds who may be easily swayed by subtle messages, causing disquiet and unhappiness with God and the religious authorities and a possible rejection of biblical truth about God (and His church) who creates us and came to redeem us and is coming back again.

In the parallel universe set up by Pullman in his series, His Dark Materials, Magisterium becomes the name of a dark and malevolent religious organisation that perpetrates abuse, torture and murder. Hollywood's Magisterium note that the official website for the Golden Compass movie has an area where children can meet their own daemon, an animal spirit that will guide us and that exist in Lyra's world. It says: "To discover your very own Daemon, look into your heart, and answer the following twenty questions openly and honestly. Your true character and the form of your Daemon will be revealed... **(Do you want your child to be led by a demon as proposed by this movie and the movie's website?)**

According to one review, there are many seductive creatures including a large and fruity polar bear on the loose in **The Golden Compass**. In Lyra's world, spirits exist outside the body and are alive and stalk the world. A gigantic and ferocious polar bear

is the heroic guardian of Lyra, and a danger to those over the age of 32. His ego is more terrifying than his bite and he is violent and engaged in fighting scenes.

This is the year end's fantasy tale after Harry Potter and Hogwarts, and Narnia and the Rings. Taken from Pullman, ***His Dark Materials***, **it is well poised to seduce and ensnare young gullible minds into a deadly philosophical cocktail of godless atheism and the death of God mindset.**

Pullman invented a whole new world where every human is blessed with a daemon: a talking animal that serves as a guardian angel, and arguably with a soul. **That is powerful perversion of biblical truth and ignoring warning that we are not to dabble with the occult and magic and the supernatural which is an abomination to God (Deuteronomy 18:14).**

The whys and wherefores are never explained. **The Golden Compass itself is an oversized pocket watch that reads secrets and truths apparently, but it is hopeless when it comes to real spiritual directions in life. It leads its adherents deeper into spiritual darkness, ignorance and superstition and into the occultic realm.**

The all out cast includes Dakota Blue Richards and the 12-year-old Lyra, an orphan at an Oxford University college. Her dashing uncle, Lord Asriel (Daniel Craig), is tramping around the icy Arctic and there is also the stunting Eva Green. They are stalked by sinister academics who want to rule the world, notably Nicole Kidman who has an army of the Gobblers that specialises in stealing children. Kidman, an oscar winning actress plays the Wicked Witch of the West role. With her frozen charms and extraordinary glee and finesse, she cleverly propagated the dark arts of the supernatural in an attractive costume. Revelation 21:8 says, *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*

The Unreasonableness of atheism and the case for God

As Christians, we must be careful what we watch and what we read. These books and movies may seem to be harmless on the surface or maybe just mere fantasy and fun as proposed by some, but viewers and readers can be subconsciously influenced in a very subtle way or we can open a door to false teachings and demonic influences in our lives. Witchcraft, spell casting, magic and sorcery even in Harry Potter movies and some Walt Disney cartoons can have a strong spiritual and mental influence on our children. A true Christian who loves the Lord would not compromise to pay to see this movie or buy these occultic books (Acts 19:19) for the atheistic author will receive royalties from them and this would support and promote future such God-dishonouring books and movies to be produced. There is the Almighty God above who created this world and Isaiah, the inspired prophet had said it well in 740 BC,

Isaiah 45:18, *"For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: **I am the LORD; and there is none else.**"*

Isaiah 45:21, *"Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the*

LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me."

Isaiah 45:22, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

The target audience of this movie is those tender hearts who have not been brought up to know the truth. The Bible, to many young people, is just another book in the library and often discarded or neglected and we pray that this trend will be reversed by God's mercies and grace. **One should not support nor promote any movie that goes against the true belief in the God of the Bible. We should explain to and protect our children from anti-God multimedia propaganda that spiritually corrupts their minds;** Satan knows this very well and that is why the target is the young. **Many have not hid the Word of God in their hearts to fortify (Psalm 119:11) and defend themselves against this fiery darts of the evil one. Let us pray and do our part that God will protect our children's minds from this form of sinister brainwashing.**

The heavens declare the glories of God and the firmament tells of His power and majesty (Psalm 19:1, 2, Hebrews 11:3-4). There is a strong **cosmological argument** for the existence of God when we behold the symmetry and beauty of the creation around us that is hardly plausible to have come out of a big mess in the "big bang" or the "meteoric hitting the earth billions of years ago" hypothesis. (It takes greater faith to believe in the latter than the former.) The reasonable conclusion is that **God is the Uncaused First Cause of the world.** The **teleological argument** speaks of order and purpose in this universe that comes from an orderly mind or **an intelligent universe Designer** that has an end in all things. The fact that there is a universe at all, that scientific laws operate within it, that it contains conscious humans with very complex intricately organized bodies, coupled with our religious experiences is evidence for God. St. Anselm of Canterbury, the celebrated 12th century schoolmen used the **ontological argument** to advance philosophically the case for God. He stated that we have a concept of the existence of a perfect being and that cannot come from within us but from outside of us, hence there is a perfect being out side of us. If this sounds too profound, consider also the intangible conscience (Romans 2:14-16) within us and moral basis or behaviour of humans having the knowledge of right and wrong ethically that is beyond us points to **an Absolute Moral Being with absolute standards.** **The resurrection of Christ from the dead and the empty tomb attested by more than 500 witnesses (1 Corinthians 15:1-5) in the first century and the authenticated testimonies of changed lives of many Christians all over the world lent credence to the reality of God.** It is more reasonable and plausible to believe in God than not at all. Above all, the infallible, inspired and **all sufficient word of God is God's own revelation of Himself to us and that is invincible** and consistent with true science and history ought to be pondered over seriously by every living mortal instead and not the occultic Golden Compass (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Romans 3:10-12; Acts 4:12; John 14:6). Jeremiah 27:9 warns, **"Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your *diviners*, nor to your *dreamers*, nor to your *enchanters*, nor to your *sorcerers*, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon".** Pullman cannot fool or deceive (2 Corinthians 4:4) the truly enlightened of God with godly discretion and prudence from above with his sinister movie. The God of the Bible is sovereign and real and He still reigns today and is returning with judgment soon (Zechariah 14:4; Jude 14, 15).

Conclusion

This is just another sign of the end times of spiritual deception, scoffers and moral perversion and the falling away of our last days generation (2 Peter 3:1-3). We are witnessing the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, as Jesus said the last days would be similar to the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-42). That is what we are witnessing today. As we approach the end of this year, people are doing what is right in their own eyes. The evil in men's hearts is waxing worse and worse with the passage of time (2 Timothy 3:1-10). We should do whatever we can to communicate the gospel of everlasting life and God's benevolent love to a sinful and depraved world. **The church of Jesus Christ needs to commit as never before to prayer for discernment and spiritual revival of the church and that we be vigilant and watchful and be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit and put on the full armour of God against the wiles of the evil one** (Ephesians 6:10-18). There is a lost world that needs to seek and know God's only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16) and the need for evangelical repentance. Pray, reach out, warn and witness for Christ to someone for there will be many who need to hear **the true gospel of salvation from the word of God before it is too late for them lest they follow the wrong spiritual directions in life with the defective and deceptive Golden Compass and their souls lost for eternity.**

Jack Sin

Choir Ministry at Mr Tow Siang Ling's home 25 November 2007

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

277 Blessed Assurance

The author of this hymn is Fanny Crosby who wrote more than 8000 gospel song texts in her lifetime. It is truly amazing that anyone, and especially a blind person, could write on this variety of spiritual truths and experiences with such proliferation. Often, the themes for her hymns were suggested by visiting ministers wishing to have a new song on a particular subject. At other times, musician friends would first compose the music and then ask Fanny Crosby for the words. Such was the case for the hymn, "Blessed Assurance". The music for the hymn was composed by a close friend who played this melody for the blind poetess and asked, "What does this tune say?" Fanny responded immediately, "Why, that says: Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine."

Heb 10:22 says,

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

7 Great is Thy Faithfulness

Of the many gospel hymns written on the theme of God's goodness and faithfulness, this hymn stands out like a beacon light. While many hymns are born out of a particular dramatic experience, this hymn was simply the result of the

author's "morning by morning realization of God's personal faithfulness."

Thomas Obadiah Chisholm accepted Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour at the age of twenty-seven. He was later ordained to the Methodist ministry but was forced to resign after a brief pastorate because of poor health. Later in his life, Chisholm wrote in a letter, "My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. Although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness."

Thomas Chisholm is also the author of the hymn "Living for Jesus".

Let us read together Lam 3:22 & 23

It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

122 The Old Rugged Cross

This hymn was written by George Bennardin 1913, a minister who was busily involved in conducting revival services, especially throughout the states of Michigan and New York. One time, after returning to Michigan, he passed through a trying experience which caused him to reflect seriously about the significance of the cross and what the Apostle Paul meant when he spoke of entering into the fellowship of Christ's suffering. As Bennard contemplated these truths, he became convinced that the cross was more than just a religious symbol but rather the very heart of the gospel.

Bennard continued his evangelistic ministries for 40 additional years following the writing of this hymn. In 1958, at age 85, Bennard exchanged his "cross for a crown." Near his home in Michigan, there still stands a twelve foot high cross with the words, "'The Old Rugged Cross' - Home of George Bennard, composer of this beloved hymn."

168 Day by Day

The waves of revival that swept the Scandinavian countries during the latter half of the 19th century were greatly influenced by the wealth of fine hymns which flowed from the pen of Lina Sandell, born in 1832 in Sweden. She was a daughter of the pastor of the parish church. Being a frail youngster, she usually preferred to spend her time in her father's study rather than to join her comrades in play. When she was twenty-six years old, she accompanied her father on a journey to Gothenburg, but tragedy occurred before the destination was reached. The ship gave a sudden lurch and Lina's father fell overboard and drowned before the eyes of his beloved daughter.

Although she had written hymns prior to this tragic experience, more songs began to flow out of her broken heart which reflect a simple, child-like trust in Christ and a deep sense of His abiding presence in her life. She has often been called the "Fanny Crosby of Sweden" for her many fine contributions to gospel hymnody.

164 Be Thou My Vision

This was an eighth century anonymous Irish hymn that expresses, in quaint Celtic style, the ageless need of man to have a heavenly vision and to experience God's care and personal presence throughout this earthly pilgrimage. The author's high regard for God is evident in the various titles ascribed to Him: Vision, Lord, Best

Thought, Wisdom, Word, Great Father, High King, Inheritance, Treasure, Sun, Ruler and Heart.

Angelina Sin

(Editor's note: These were read out by some of the Choir members before singing them together to Bro Siang Ling and some of his family members to encourage their hearts in the Lord.)

Life BPC Lively Teens Fellowship Camp

My heart is filled with joy to see the blessings in the camp. The young teens who took the initiative to approach the leaders about their salvation are some of our wayward ones ... They confessed to having backslided. About 5 or 6 of them were ministered to individually. These teens have actually reaffirmed their faith and yet are still unsure of their salvation. Several of them gave their testimonies at the thanksgiving. They shared about being away from God and have made the decision to keep a close walk with the Lord. They said that the camp has been a blessing to them and through the messages and devotions they knew God was speaking to them. They even shared that they were surprised that people were so caring and friendly at the camp even though they have been pretty irregular at the LTF meetings. The Lord's hand indeed has been working on these teens.

One of the teens father spoke to me today and was encouraged that the son was reading the bible and doing his Quiet Time last night. It has been a very difficult and trying period with this teen in LTF. Literally parents dragged him to LTF and we pushed him along. Praise God for a receptive heart.

We will have the group leaders minister to their groups and also will discuss with the leaders on how to follow up these teens.

The Camp Committee has been greatly encouraged. I will meet up with them after my trip back from Cambodia. Will keep you informed.

Much blessed,
Poh Yok
Camp Advisor

(The LTF camp was attended by about 70 youths from 3 to 7 December at Life BPC on the theme of 1 John where the gospel and sin were preached, and many were brought under the conviction by the Holy Spirit. Pray for their continued walk with God into the new year. All glory to God alone.)

Email from Kenya, East Africa

Thank you very much for the "pastoral chat". We have begun our DVBS today and we greatly praise the Lord for the good beginning. 110 showed up today and we are looking forward to having more participants tomorrow and more will come on Saturday. Our theme is: 'Being Transformed into The Image of Christ and Not Conformed to This World'. Thematic Text being Romans 12:1-2. Pray for the teachers are doing the good work of teaching.

May the Lord richly and abundantly bless you,

In Christ

Rev Masila Stephen

(Do pray for Rev Masila who is the dean of BCEA and a pastor of an evangelical church in Kenya.)

At the Pulpit

Theme for the Quarter:

Last Words of Godly Men For Our Edification

Pr David Weng

“John’s Farewell & Close Of Canon”

(Rev 22:8-21)

[*End of MM*]