

## WHY CHRISTIAN STUDENTS SHOULD TAKE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE AT SPM LEVEL

Many Christian students do not know that there is a subject known as Bible Knowledge available on the examination time-table at the SPM level. This is a privilege that has been preserved in our country by God's grace. We encourage Christian students to consider taking this subject as part of their studies in Forms Four and Five for the following reasons.

1 Christian students need to know God's Word as well if not better than their academic subjects. Far too many Christians strive for success and strain every nerve and muscle to reach university level in the academics but are content to leave their knowledge of the scriptures at Sunday School level. Some of them know their Sejarah (history) textbooks from cover to cover to ensure that they score a distinction. They know their Science and Mathematics so well that they can rattle off complicated formulas without battling an eyelid. However when it comes to the Bible they are lost and unsure of what a verse is all about. To know God better, we need to know His Word.

2 Taking Bible Knowledge (BK) is an investment of time for eternity. Matthew 24:35 tells us *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words shall not pass away."* One day the earth as we know it will be burnt up in fire; and all the science and mathematics associated with it will not be applicable anymore. But God's word shall not pass away. It will be the only thing that we can take with us into eternity of all the subjects that we study in the eleven, thirteen or seventeen years that we spend in school.

3 Bible Knowledge is the anchor that our students need for these times of turmoil. We live in such times of social unrest, physical disasters and economic uncertainties that young people grow up with an unspoken fear in their hearts as to what tomorrow may bring. The transience of time is felt as never before. The bible is our only anchor. God's Word alone can give the sense of security that we need today so that our hearts will not faint because of fear. If students will get to know more and more of the God of the bible they will stand secure in the knowledge that our God alone *"owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the wealth in every mine."* How wonderful to know that *"the hand that spilt the stars all across the wide heavens"* is the hand that holds our lives safe and secure in all circumstances.

4 Bible Knowledge will undergird the minds of our students and provide them with a moral compass that will guide all their actions and decisions in their everyday living. Today young minds are bombarded with all the programmes offered on TV, Astro. MegaTV, while opening wide the channels of information for us, have made available all kinds of shows with questionable values. Peer group pressure is very strong. Many young people are left without adult supervision today while both parents are out at work. Moral education in school is largely taught by teachers of a different religious persuasion. The only other subject that may teach principles for living is fast fading from our school curriculum, that is English Literature; and again it is largely taught by non-Christians. The study of Bible Knowledge will help our students make decisions that are based on biblical principles.

5 The church in Malaysia needs strong leaders today and tomorrow. Christian leaders are grown not born. Our students need help to nurture their roots in the Christian faith in order to provide dynamic leadership in the future. If they will consciously decide to set aside time to study Bible Knowledge for SPM, they are disciplining themselves to master the material in Luke and Acts and filling their minds with the knowledge of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Early Church. As they do this week by week, they will saturate their minds with the thoughts of God and begin to think God's thoughts after Him. Taking Bible Knowledge is like having a part-time theological seminary brought into our own school curriculum. The in-depth study of Luke and Acts will prove to be an invaluable foundation for the study of the other books of the Bible in later life.

6 Taking Bible Knowledge will help improve the students' command of the English language. Statistical studies have shown a correlation in this. We live in an age of Information Technology, surfing the WEB and international business. It cannot be denied that English has become the *lingua franca* of the world. Reading, discussion and written homework in English gives invaluable practice in the language. Memorization of certain passages will help the formation of language patterns in the mind that will automatically enhance mastery of the language.

7 Finally, taking BK for SPM is a testimony to our teachers, school administrators and government officials that our Christian faith means something to us. We are actually very privileged in Malaysia. It is probably the only Muslim country where the government still makes available a paper on The Life and Teaching Of Christ as contained in St. Luke and The Founding Of The Early Church contained in The Acts Of The Apostles. On the front page of the paper it is stated, "*Hak cipta kerajaan Malaysia*". We thank God for a government that is tolerant. Just a brief scan of the statistics of the number of candidates for BK nationwide over the years will pose a challenge to us.

Year	No. of candidates
1960's	Many thousands at Form 3 and Form 5 level
1987	500+ at SPM level
1993	200-300 SPM; no longer available at Form 3 level
1994	BK taken out of SPM, listed as SAP subject
1995	BK re-instated as SPM subject; only 20 candidates
1996	50+
1998	150+
1999	200+
2004	400+
2005	600+
2007	900?

(Total no. of SPM candidates in 2007: Over 400,000)

The numbers have begun to climb slowly because concerted efforts have been made in the last few years by the Malayan Christian Schools' Council, Teachers' Christian Fellowship, the Catholic churches and Scripture Union to make the Christian public aware of the existence of this subject in the examination syllabus. Will Christian students, parents, teachers, church members rally round and help to restore the numbers to this subject as a testimony to our government that we want our young people to be well grounded in the Word of God?

May our churches play a leading role in this as we have always placed great emphasis on the study of God's Word so that every believer is well equipped to serve effectively where he is placed. Perhaps through this avenue we will see restored to the churches a strong core of young men and women able to teach and preach God's Word and inspire the churches to grow dynamically and take the gospel to every corner of our country.

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\*SPM BK Study Materials: Two new Study Guides to Luke and Acts ( Issachar ) RM 18.00 each  
 An Exam Guide with Trial exam marking schemes RM 10.00  
 Other Aids: Teaching BK Seminar VCDs (new production in July 2006) for teachers  
 VCDs – Luke's Gospel (Campus Crusade) / Paul of Tarsus (Pustaka SUFES)  
 For more information, contact:  
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