

IS THE NATIONAL LOTTERY A SIN?



Rev. Stephen C. Hammond
Exposes the sinfulness and
idolatry of the National Lottery

IS THE NATIONAL LOTTERY A SIN?

Stephen C. Hammond

SHEM International
London, England

This e-booklet is given with all our love and made freely available to the entire world. A donation towards the work of our ministry would be highly appreciated to allow us to do so much more. After reading this e-booklet please consider adding us to your regular giving list. You can do this online or by contacting us directly. Many thanks and God bless.

Yours in the harvest,

Rev. Stephen Hammond
www.SHEMInternational.org.uk

IS THE NATIONAL LOTTERY A SIN?

© 2000 Stephen C. Hammond

Published by:
SHEM International
7 Tellson Avenue
Woolwich
London
SE18 4PD
Tel: +44(0)20 8331 1310

For further information please visit our website at:

www.sheminternational.org.uk

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or be transmitted, in any form or any means, mechanical, electronic, photocopying or otherwise without the prior consent of the publishers.

Scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton, a member of the Hodder Headline Group.

ISBN 0-9538156-0-9

Printed in England by:
Hassall & Lucking Ltd., Cross Street, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 1HD

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	
PREFACE	
A Brief History Of Lotteries In England	5
INTRODUCTION	6
CHAPTER ONE	
Is The National Lottery A Sin?	8
CHAPTER TWO	
So What Is Permissible?	16
CHAPTER THREE	
Biblical Usage Of Lots	18
CHAPTER FOUR	
Is It Right For Christians To Apply	
To The National Lottery For Funds?	22
CHAPTER FIVE	
What Next?	29
RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING	

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Almighty God for giving me the privilege and special grace in order to write and complete this assignment. My prayer is that God will use this booklet to ignite a spiritual awakening in the land. I am grateful to my father and mother in the Lord, Pastors Andrew and Yemi Adeleke of The Redeemed Christian Church Of God for their help, support, encouragement and advice over the years. May God continue to bless you both. Special thanks to all those who helped me through the various draft stages, with their advice and views on the subject, to bring this booklet to the current standard. Particularly I acknowledge, Keith Tondeur (Action Credit), Lord Alton of Liverpool (Professor of Citizenship, Liverpool John Moores University), Pastor Jerome Obode (Global Bible Church), Pastor Steve Adewole (Believers Tabernacle International Ministries), Simeon Ademolake (Christian World International), Ed Harding (New Wine Ministries), Janet Phillington (Revelation Bookstore), Kofo Adeleye and Jessie Sampah. Lastly, a big thank you to all of the members of Praise Revival Christian Church Of God, for their continued patience and prayers for their pastor as this booklet was written. May God richly bless you all.

PREFACE

A Brief History Of Lotteries In England

“The first recorded lottery in England took place in 1569 mainly to raise money for the Cinque Ports. Over the next hundred years, various lotteries were promoted for public or semi-public causes, for example to bring fresh water to London or for poor and maimed soldiers. They were always regulated by the state, control passing from the King-in-Council to Parliament by 1698. From that year, all lotteries had to be authorised by Parliament, since the privately-run lotteries had led to scandals. By 1776, a state lottery had become an annual event, but at the same time there was increasing opposition to it on the grounds of the corruption which surrounded it and more particularly because of the attendant social evils. In spite of a highly critical Select Committee report of 1808, the lotteries were still held but were eventually discontinued in 1826.”¹

Legislation was passed by Act of Parliament in 1993 to create a single national lottery to raise money for ‘good causes.’ The National Lottery began operating in November 1994.

¹ ‘ALL IN A GOOD CAUSE? The Case Against the National Lottery’ by John Ashcroft, page 3, reprinted by permission © 1993 The Jubilee Centre.

INTRODUCTION

My intention for writing this booklet is to expose the sinfulness and idolatry that is synonymous with the National Lottery. To give a Christian perspective on the theological issues that are confronting the Church in this respect.

I have attempted to make the booklet as easy to understand, yet as comprehensive as possible. I believe most Christians already know it is wrong to gamble and likewise, know it is wrong to participate in the National Lottery. However, they may not know where to find the relevant Scriptures that say so. To these and those Christians that participate in it, this booklet has been especially written for you.

For Churches and Christian ministries, in Chapter Four I have covered the major Scriptural concerns that morally face us all with the issue of whether it is right or not to apply to the National Lottery for grant funding.

The history of this booklet began in 1995. When as a house group leader, I was asked the question of whether I thought participation in the National Lottery was a sin. This led me to produce a 1,100 worded response, covering trust in God, that He alone is our provider and the importance of our testimony.

Three years later, within ten minutes of my sermon at our very first church service of Praise Revival Christian Church Of God (on 14 June 1998), one of my members openly challenged me by asking, "Where in the Bible does it say that you are not allowed to participate in the National Lottery?" Because I knew that it was likely some of our group had participated in the National Lottery, I chose to respond to the question there and then. Having not prepared for this, I was relying heavily on the Holy Spirit to remind me what I had previously written three years

before, to help me to deal with the Scriptural issues involved. This, with God's help, was satisfactorily achieved.

Then in 1999, as a member of the board of a Christian business co-operative, we were discussing appropriate funding for our education charity. The issue came up on whether it was right to knowingly receive grant funding from another Christian education charity that we believed was partly grant assisted by the National Lottery Charities Board. This gave rise to a highly charged and intense discussion on the theological and moral issues involved. (Some of the theological arguments presented in Chapter Four directly came from this meeting.)

In January of this year (2000) it became undeniably clear to me that there still lacked an appropriate Christian theological response to the National Lottery. At God's leading and by His grace, I therefore undertook the assignment to write and publish this booklet.

My earnest prayer and desire are that this booklet will not be treated as just 'another useful contribution to the debate.' But as a platform document on which the Body of Christ can come together and agree on as one (Psalm 133). To build a strategy and launch a full scale attack on this spirit of idolatry, that is currently choking our nation. To bind it and finally cast it out of our great land. That's revival!

CHAPTER ONE

Is The National Lottery A Sin?

The New Oxford Dictionary Of English (1998) definition of a 'lottery' is "a means of raising money by selling numbered tickets and giving prizes to the holders of numbers drawn at random....a process or thing whose success or outcome is governed by chance." It defines the word 'gamble' as "playing games of chance for money....taking a risky action"²

We accept that the National Lottery is gambling because it is playing a game of chance for money. The real issue is whether Christians should be playing it, and if not, why not? This chapter will answer the question by focusing on the major sins directly associated with participating in the National Lottery. It is worth noting at this early stage, that all the Scripture arguments I have used to oppose the National Lottery may equally be applied to lottery instant win tickets as well as any other form of gambling.

Why Some Christians Play The National Lottery

Some Christians play the National Lottery because they believe that God will use it to make them prosper. However, no Scripture supports this view. God will not prosper His children this way because the Bible says that it is the diligent hard working hands that bring wealth (Proverbs 10:4), and "it is [God] who gives you the ability to produce wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18). Psalm 128:1-2 says,

Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labour; blessings

and prosperity will be yours.

God wants those who fear Him to prosper. This glorifies Him because it acknowledges that "wealth and honour" comes from the Lord (1 Chronicles 29:12).

For God, the issue is not just a matter of fearing Him, but also of trusting in Him (Proverbs 28:25b). That is trusting Him to "meet all [our] needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). The philosophy of 'God helps those who help themselves' is not written in Scripture. On the contrary, God's word says, "He who trusts in himself is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26a).

Our Faithfulness With God

As servants of Christ, God desires us to prove our faithfulness in what he entrusts us with (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). This includes money. If we bury our money in a hole, or waste it away, rather than putting it to good use, God will surely hold us accountable in the same way as the last servant, in the parable of the Ten Minas, was held accountable to his master (Luke 19:12-26). As stewards in His kingdom we need to prove our trustworthiness with what He commits into our hands (Luke 16:10-12).

So Why Doesn't The Bible Explicitly Say Gambling Is Wrong?

This is an interesting question, however just as we go by the Spirit and not the letter of the law (2 Corinthians 3:6), a better question would perhaps be: How do we discern the mind of God on an issue when it is not clearly mentioned in the Bible?

Take smoking for example. How do we know God disapproves of His children smoking? Well, we know that God's temple in the Old Testament was a dwelling place for His Name (1 Kings 5:5). In the New Testament, God has declared that our bodies are His

² © Oxford University Press 1998. By permission of Oxford University Press.

temple and that God's Spirit lives in us (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16-17; Ephesians 2:22). It is therefore God's will that Christians do not smoke because we have been made holy (Hebrews 10:10). We should remain holy and clean and take care of our bodies (2 Timothy 2:20-21; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 2:5). Besides this, since smoking kills, we know it is not God's will for us to experience an untimely death (Psalm 91:16; 3 John 2)!

In the same way, to know the mind of God on an issue when it is not explicitly stated in His word, we often have to go by the Spirit of what the Bible is saying. This is true of a number of important moral issues that are treated in this way. (E.g. Abortion and Euthanasia.)

Some Reasons Christians Give For Playing The National Lottery

I've heard some Christians defensively say, "If I win the National Lottery, I would be able to pay off all my debts, go on holiday, pay off the mortgage, give money to the poor, contribute to missions, even help the church buy its own property, etc." The list goes on and on. God will never tell someone to gamble on the National Lottery. Even knowing this, there are Christians out there that still participate in it week after week. Do they continue to participate in it because they have not been correctly taught from Scripture? This may possibly be so. However, those people who gamble in the National Lottery are still sinning because they are leaning on their own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6), and through their actions they are denying God's ability to "meet all [their] needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Covetousness At Work

The underlying motive for participating in the National Lottery is

covetousness. Covetousness is eagerly desiring something that does not belong to you (Exodus 20:17; Romans 7:7-8). Examples of this are in the story of the Fall (Genesis 3:6), Achan's sin (Joshua 7:21) and David's adultery (2 Samuel 11:2-4).

We know that coveting is at work in the National Lottery because it runs completely contrary to God's principle of "love your neighbour as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:27). Your neighbour is anyone who is nearby you, including your enemy (Matthew 5:43-44), whom you are expected to share God's love with (Romans 12:20; Hebrews 13:2, 16). This is clearly illustrated by Jesus in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37).

Participants of the National Lottery are brought together and become neighbours with each other by agreement (Amos 3:3). Some may know others but the majority obviously do not. Just like in today's housing estates. Most people will not even know who their own neighbours are, yet they all live nearby one another. The commonality is that they all co-exist together as neighbours in a community. Participants in the National Lottery come together as neighbours to form an invisible community of gamblers.

Each participant dreams of a big win by eagerly desiring (coveting) the stake money placed by millions of his potentially losing neighbours. If he did care about his neighbours, he clearly would not want to desperately see them lose, since this is necessary in order for him to win. Christians should not play the National Lottery because they love their neighbours and they love God and they know why Jesus died (John 3:16)!

Greed Is Idolatry

People who participate in the National Lottery are also motivated

by greed. That is the desire to gain immense wealth with little or no effort. The idea of ‘something for nothing.’ When associating Biblical “greed” with the National Lottery, we can say that, it is an intense desire for material possessions to serve self-interest in place of worship for God. Jesus warns us about the dangers of this kind of intense desire:

“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” Luke 12:15.

If a believer is not on his guard, “the deceitfulness of wealth (Matthew 13:22) will “trap” him (1 Timothy 6:9) into believing that “money is the answer for everything” (Ecclesiastes 10:19). When in reality, our Christian responsibility is to work hard so we can provide for our families, pay our bills and eat (Genesis 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8). If financial problems do exist and they seem too difficult to resolve, then it is wise to immediately seek appropriate Christian counselling for help and advice.

“Greed....is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5) because greedy people place their “hope in wealth” instead of “hope in God” (1 Timothy 6:17). They are “idolaters” (Ephesians 5:5). Such is the unfortunate characteristic of all who place their false hopes in the National Lottery to provide answers for all their financial needs.

The world determines how wealthy you are by your income and how many possessions you have. Not so for us in Christ Jesus. Your wealth status is not governed by how much you earn or own but by how much you give out and share with others (1 Timothy 6:18-19; Acts 2:44-45).

Jesus said, “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26). All the money in the world cannot buy our salvation. “It is by grace [we] have

been saved” (Ephesians 2:8). We have been “bought at a price” (1 Corinthians 7:23) and forgiven of our sins through the blood of Jesus (Romans 3:25; Ephesians 1:7).

Playing The National Lottery Is Serving The god Of “Money”

Obviously, the reason people play the National Lottery is because they love money (Ecclesiastes 5:10) and they want to win a lot of it. Paul the apostle, warns that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). The writer of Hebrews says, “Keep your lives free from the love of money” (Hebrews 13:5). Jesus tells us firmly that,

“You cannot serve both God and Money.” Matthew 6:24.

It is clear from Matthew 6:24 that Jesus sees serving “Money” in the same way as a pagan would serve an evil spirit or false god. Jesus is warning us against the sin of idolatry (Exodus 20:3).

Playing the National Lottery is idolatry because it is serving a false god Jesus called “Money” (Matthew 6:24). Participation in it, is transferring your hope and trust in the Lord, to the false provision and false values of this false god called “Money.” The Bible tells us that those who follow after other gods “prostitute themselves” with them (Leviticus 17:7; Judges 2:17). Not by their beliefs, but “by their deeds” (Psalm 106:39) they “unite” themselves with them (1 Corinthians 6:15-16).

Our Testimony Is Very Important

Our testimony in Christ is very important, and it was important for Abraham too. We can see this in more detail by taking a look at Genesis Chapter 14. Here we find Abraham’s nephew Lot has been captured. Abraham with his men pursue and overtake the enemy. Lot is subsequently freed and they recover all of the

stolen goods. After Abraham gave Melchizedek king of Salem and priest of God Most High one tenth of the spoils, he returned the rest back to the king of Sodom.

The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the throng of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.'" Genesis 14:21-23.

No unbeliever will ever believe it was God that caused you to win the National Lottery. They will say, "You were LUCKY!" They will say, "Well done, Jane or well done, John. YOU did really well!" How are you going to stop them giving you a pat on the back? More importantly, how are you going to stop them exalting you and giving you the glory? How are you going to prove to the unbeliever it was God, because there was no other explanation for it?

This was the problem that Abraham had. So rather than sin, he did not accept the spoils of this war. Would you do the same and refuse to accept the National Lottery winnings?

It is Satan who is enticing people to gamble their money away on the National Lottery. He was a deceiver and a liar from the beginning (Genesis 3:13; John 8:44). The Bible says that he desired to ascend above the tops of the clouds and make himself as the Most High (Isaiah 14:12-14). It is he who wants you to sin by denying God's ability to provide for you and tempt you to lean on your own understanding. With the knowledge that whether you win or lose, your actions will take away the glory that's due to God. Your testimony is then ruined because

most unbelievers already know that Christians are not supposed to play the National Lottery.

Conclusion

Sometimes, we may think that the rewards we may gain out of something, justify the possible risks involved. However, God does not deal in risks, neither is there any concept called 'chance,' just plans (Jeremiah 29:11). We may not know what will happen from one moment to the next, but we are assured "that in all things God works for [our] good....according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). This provides us with our faith certainty in God (Hebrews 11:1) and that He will do all that He has promised He will do for us (Numbers 23:19; Joshua 21:45; 2 Corinthians 1:20). Knowing whether something is part of God's plan for our lives can only be obtained through true relationship with Him and fellowship with His Spirit, reading our Bible everyday and being open to what He wants us to do.

There is no room for gambling in any form, in the life of a true Christian believer. The National Lottery is sinful and immoral because it is without doubt totally idolatrous and clearly draws people's attention away from serving the one true living God. No one doubts the highly addictive power gambling has with the outcome of ruined lives, careers, families and marriages. Gambling is a sin and playing the National Lottery equally is a sin.

CHAPTER TWO

So What Is Permissible?

The usage of lots to make a specific decision is as common now as it was in Biblical times. Except for divination, which is detestable to God (Deuteronomy 18:10-12), casting of lots where there is no financial or material gain can be considered harmless provided it does not conflict with God's will as revealed in His word. Examples of this are: tossing a coin to determine which sports team should play first, or perhaps a child's nursery rhyme to pick which child will seek and find while the others hide.

Though I confess to having a highly competitive nature, I rarely enter into competitions. In my opinion, if a competition is free or only requires either a stamp or minimal rate telephone call then this may be permissible, no matter how large the prize. However, I feel greatly put off participating in promotional competitions, (including those organised by catalogue companies, newspapers, on the internet, game shows and media generally,) because I jealously guard my testimony of Jesus Christ and God as my sole provider. If I were to win, would not the promoter of a competition want to take the glory that belongs to God alone, by saying that they "made [Stephen] rich" (Genesis 14:23)? I am sure you will agree with me that it makes more Scriptural sense to live a life that is "pleasing to God" (Romans 12:1) and not run after the consumer led lifestyle of this world. But, like I said. This is what I feel, personally.

Professional sport obviously falls outside the scope of the general subject of lotteries and therefore is not intended to be treated here.

If a believer enters promotional competitions (free or otherwise) because of a hobby, this is clearly not healthy and such a fellow has lost his first love (Revelations 2:4). He has been choked by the "deceitfulness of wealth" (Matthew 13:22), and needs to focus His mind on more wholesome things (Philippians 4:8), rather than looking for ways to gratify the desires of the worldly nature (1 John 2:15-16).

The American 'Green Card' permanent residency lottery is, in my opinion, Biblically legitimate because it is 'free.' And, indeed God has used this particular instrument to grant residency stays to a number of Christians I know, both to the glory of God and for the advancement of His work.

The above is obviously not intended to be exhaustive, but to serve as a prayerful guide in knowing what God's will is, concerning the issue of lotteries (Romans 12:2).

CHAPTER THREE

Biblical Usage Of Lots

There is a popular church pulpit story about a man who, when he wanted to know the will of God for his life, randomly opened up the Bible to the following passage: “Then he went away and hanged himself” (Matthew 27:5b). Not content with this, he did it again and then read, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37b).

“God Cannot Be Mocked”

The Biblical maxim that, “God cannot be mocked” (Galatians 6:7) is true and it is unfortunate that some believers will attempt to use the Holy Scriptures to justify playing the National Lottery.

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD. Proverbs 16:33.

They would say that Proverbs 16:33 proves that God approves of lotteries and is one of His divine instruments to bring about the ‘Wealth Transference’ that He is bringing about for the righteous. I have covered the issue of ‘Wealth Transference’ in Chapter Four. However, since it is money of the unrighteous that is at stake, it stands to reason then that all who participate in it must themselves be ‘the unrighteous.’ This being so, it makes justifiable sense to also say that those who do it are sinners and like every one else in this category, need to repent and get their heart right with God.

The Urim And The Thummim

In the Bible, under Law, the High Priest was given the means to

make divine decisions by casting lots called the Urim and the Thummim.

Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron’s heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD. Exodus 28:30.

We do not know what the Urim and the Thummim was made of. Neither do we know exactly how they were used. Perhaps they were marked pebbles, precious stones or sticks. The High Priest would use these to cast lots on highly important and urgent matters for kings and leaders of Israel.

The Urim and the Thummim were used by the High Priest for selecting the “scapegoat” (Leviticus 16:8-10). Joshua called for them to be used when dividing up the promised land between the tribes of Israel (Joshua 18:10). They were used to enquire of the Lord in matters of warfare (Judges 20:9, 18, 23, 27-28; 1 Samuel 30:7-8; 2 Samuel 5:19) and to determine who did the priestly ministry duties at the temple and when (1 Chronicles 24-26; Nehemiah 10:34). The Urim and the Thummim were also used in matters of judgment (Joshua 7:14-21; 1 Samuel 14:40-42). Casting lots in Biblical times was binding on the parties involved and could not be revoked.

How Other Nations Used Lots In Biblical Times

The Bible gives us glimpses in the use of lots being cast by nations other than Israel. To identify a guilty person (Jonah 1:7). The selection of a date for some future action (Esther 3:7; 9:24). Also, the fate of people of conquered territory (Joel 3:3; Nahum 3:10).

New Testament Usage Of Lots

In the New Testament, we have the well known incident of the soldiers fulfilling prophecy as they divided up our Lord's clothing by casting lots (Psalm 22:18; Matthew 27:35), and Zachariah the priest, who "was chosen by lot....to go into the temple of the Lord to burn incense" (Luke 1:8-9).

The Bible's last mention of casting lots is when the early church used this method to pick a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:23-26).

No Scripture Supports Gambling

All Scriptures in the Bible relating to casting lots were used as a means of gaining decisions and resolving disputes (Proverbs 18:18) concerning people, land and property. There is no Scripture on casting lots that supports gambling - the process of placing a wager or bet on an uncertain outcome - such as the National Lottery.

To Bring You Back To My Original Point

I feel obliged having given a Biblical perspective on casting lots that I need to, perhaps, dissuade any readers from attempting it. Please note the following, before you try it.

1. The outcome from casting lots is binding upon all participants involved. (That is, the decision cannot be reversed or revoked.)
2. If your life is not fully consecrated to God, you can be sure it will not work (Matthew 5:48; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16-24; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 John 3:21)!
3. Casting lots before the Lord is a specific ministry, and you must have the conviction of faith that God has called you to do it (James 1:6-8).

4. You must have both a highly apostolic and prophetic knowledge of what it means to be in "the presence of the LORD" (Exodus 28:30; Joshua 18:10).
5. The Bible never suggests that a member of the congregation should be permitted to cast lots before the Lord. Only the High Priest [Most Senior Minister] (Exodus 28:30), Major Prophet (1 Samuel 10:20-22) or Apostle (Acts 1:23-26), and even then, only when specifically called / led to do so by the Lord.

Some may not agree with my obviously preferred doctrinal position on what is commonly termed as the 'five-fold Christ ascension gift ministries.' I would like to say as a very short defence on this and not wanting to be distracted from the main issue of lotteries, the above points are only cited to bring the reader back to my original point at the beginning of this chapter that is, "God cannot be mocked" (Galatians 6:7).

CHAPTER FOUR

Is It Right For Christians To Apply To The National Lottery For Funds?

The above question is only slightly less contentious than the whole issue of whether taking part in the National Lottery is a sin.

I know of a number of Christians, who though they will agree that gambling is immoral, will not feel any slightest restraint from putting in an application to the National Lottery to apply for funds for their Christian projects. On the other hand, there are some who apply to the National Lottery because of their desperate need for money to pay for essential building refurbishment works to their properties. They will make their decisions to apply by overruling their own consciences, surrounding the source of such funding. In this chapter, we will be examining the Biblical and moral implications that Churches and Christian ministries need to consider, before they apply to the National Lottery for grant funding.

The Issue Of 'Wealth Transference'

Some justify their applications for grant funding to the National Lottery by seeing it as an issue of 'Wealth Transference' from the hands of the wicked to the righteous. The following Scripture passages might be used to infer their point.

To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. Ecclesiastes 2:26.

And again,

But a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.
Proverbs 13:22b.

The doctrine of 'Wealth Transference' is particularly self-explanatory and not new in the slightest. There are a number of Scripture passages that lend weight to this doctrine: Proverbs 28:8; Esther 8:2; Job 27:16-17.

Christians who hold to the above view, see the National Lottery as wicked and immoral, and those who participate in it are part of the wickedness and immorality. There is, therefore, a "gathering and storing up" of wealth by the wicked taking place and it is 'the duty' of Christians (in their opinion) to tap into this resource that 'naturally' God has provided for us.

While I personally do believe in the doctrine of 'Wealth Transference,' I do not agree with my colleagues who see the National Lottery as God's divine instrument for this purpose. I see the National Lottery as sinful and idolatrous. And like all idols set up to defy the living God, should be torn down and destroyed (Judges 6:25)!

The Proceeds Of The National Lottery Is Immoral ("Prostitutes") Income

As has already been stated, gambling is clearly immoral and the National Lottery, because it is gambling, is intensely immoral. Its public allurements to entice, is how a prostitute will ply her trade, to make the highest profits regardless of her immoral practices. The National Lottery is an idolatrous system set up by the devil to serve the god of "Money" (Matthew 6:24) and those that participate in it are engaging in "prostitution" with it (Leviticus 17:7; Judges 2:17).

Since the proceeds that the National Lottery generates is immoral income, it is therefore not permitted to be brought into the house of God.

You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, because the LORD your God detests them both. Deuteronomy 23:18.

To clarify this point further, because the money that the National Lottery raises for charitable aid is Biblically classified as immoral (“prostitutes”) earnings, it means that Churches and Christian ministries are not permitted to apply for this type of grant funding for their projects. To do so, is a sin because the Church is God’s house (1 Peter 2:5; 1 Timothy 3:15) and Christian ministries are there to outwardly reflect the ministry of Christ Jesus, who is our eternal high priest of the house of God (Hebrews 3:1-6).

Immorally Gained “Blood Money”

In the Gospel of Matthew, the chief priests had to deal with the issue of receiving immoral earnings (Deuteronomy 23:18) after Judas threw the thirty silver coins he was paid for betraying Jesus into the temple.

The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.” Matthew 27:6.

The hypocritical chief priests, wanting to look upright, “decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners” (Matthew 27:7). Going on a little further to the next verse (v. 8).

That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to

this day. Matthew 27:8.

The field the chief priests bought was no longer known as “the potter’s field,” but had been tainted because it was bought with “blood money.” It had now become known as “the Field of Blood.” When Churches and Christian ministries apply to the National Lottery for grant funding, they are tainting their image and reputation with this same kind of immorally gained “blood money.” Furthermore, the sincerest motives behind any Christian organization’s application cannot hope to remove the tainted label of immorally gained “blood money,” that is quite rightly attached to the proceeds of the National Lottery. My personal belief is that, such applications are drawn up in desperation and not in real faith. In any case, for the sake of Christ Jesus and the love of God, it is clearly not right for Churches and Christian ministries to apply to the National Lottery for grant funding.

Money Sacrificed To Idols

We examined the motives of why people participate in the National Lottery in Chapter One. The reasons we looked at were covetousness, greed and the love of money. The spiritual dilemma that confronts Churches and Christian ministries when they apply to the National Lottery for grant funding, mean that they are applying for immoral money that has been “sacrificed to demons” (Deuteronomy 32:17). In this case, the false gods of “Money” and “Greed” (Matthew 6:24; Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5). In practice, such applications involve partaking at “the table of demons” and consequently, “arouses the Lord’s jealousy” (1 Corinthians 10:19-22).

Jesus Came For The Sick, The Poor And The Unrighteous

I cannot help thinking that when a Christian organization considers applying to the National Lottery for grant funding that it

actually brings Christ down. We know that Christ came for the sick, the poor and the unrighteous. To give sight to the blind, hope to the dying and mend the wounds of the broken hearted. Yet to take money from an institution that has been set up solely to profit from potentially millions of addicted and problem gamblers, knowing that gambling is sinful, immoral and ruins lives is beyond me. I fail to see how some people may view the National Lottery as just another means of taxing people to raise money for the treasury and good causes. When in reality, those 'good causes' are supported by the unfortunate addictions of the same people they may be trying to reach out to and help. My own opinion is that such applications do "sin against Christ" and bring Him down because we are called to bear with each others weaknesses in love (Romans 15:1; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; Ephesians 4:2). Certainly not to benefit from them.

Even to justify an application by saying that we "are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). And, "Everything is permissible for me - but not everything is beneficial" (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23), clearly is taking Scripture out of context when we know that "God is love" (1 John 4:16). The Bible says, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:27). And, "Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" (1 Corinthians 10:24).

Organizations On The Front Line

Providing National Lottery money to financially assist organizations that help people with gambling problems such as Gamblers Anonymous might seem like an appropriate thing to do. However, these organizations have policies that prevent them from applying for this type of funding because it would be highly hypocritical of them. For the Bible says, "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly" (Proverbs 26:11). If someone is sick with leprosy, they would not seek help from the disease itself!

What Message Are We Giving To Our Children?

Some things may sound like very justifiable 'good causes' to spend National Lottery money on. For example, youth centres in deprived inner city areas or projects to help the homeless. However, no State should lose sight of its social and moral obligations, to the people it serves, by promoting gambling to raise revenue to pay for its charitable projects that should come from normal means of taxation. To do so, is immoral and completely unacceptable.

When the State is seen to be actively promoting gambling, what kind of message does that give to our children? Does it not teach them that the National Lottery is something that is beneficial and okay to do? If it is not okay to do it, how can it be justified to them that it is still okay to take money from it? Surely this is hypocritical. If we neglect to bring up our children in the way of the Lord (Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4) and neglect to teach them that God alone is their provider (Philippians 4:19), have we not endangered them by sinning in our parental responsibilities before God?

Experience Of Lotteries In America

Before I conclude this chapter, I want to quote a passage taken from part of an essay on the history of lotteries in the United States of America. It really manages to sum up my own sentiments and concerns about why I am so passionately and morally opposed to the National Lottery.

"...the compulsion of economic necessity and the general lack of moral opposition virtually assured the lottery of both a respectable status and a prominent position in the commercial life of the [early] Colonies...."

Numerous religious denominations resorted to the lottery to assist in their growth and development; only the Quakers and a few individual clergymen condemned them as immoral. After the mid-1820s, however, the clergy, having become less dependent upon the lottery as a source of revenue, concerned themselves with the potential moral issues involved. During the 1830s the lottery became subject to a mounting wave of criticism due to the prevalent fraudulent practices and the undesirable social effects. The general economic collapse following the Panic of 1837 accelerated the reform movement in all areas and resulted in the outlawing of the lottery by many states. The Civil War, with its many economic demands, afforded the lottery a brief respite; but within a relatively short time the force of public opinion, as moulded by ecclesiastical influence, resulted in the reaffirmation of state proscription.”³

Conclusion

It is not good for Christians in the Body of Christ to associate themselves with an institution that clearly thrives off the unfortunate, immoral and sinful addictions of others, and do this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We know that the National Lottery is sinful and immoral, and to bring this type of tainted money into our Churches and Christian ministries is equally sinful and immoral. The issue has all the hallmarks of the devil’s schemes to bring division into the Church. Manipulated by the sincere intentions of some but at the real expense of those we all should be aiming to reach out to and help.

³ ‘LOTTERIES’ by J S Castellano, NEW CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA, © 1967, Volume 8, page 1006, published by McGraw-Hill. Reprinted by permission of The Gale Group.

CHAPTER FIVE

What Next?

I believe, it’s time to serve notice on the National Lottery. To bind it and cast it out of our great land once and forever. I believe as Christians we have the moral right and authority of Jesus Christ to speak out on this very important issue. I also believe that the time to speak out is right now. However, this is not a job for lone prophets. We need each other because it is a national spirit that is confronting us. We all need to join our hands together in prayer and stand side by side to take action. Ready to do what is necessary in order to see “Righteousness [exalted in our] nation” (Proverbs 14:34) once again.

We need to preach vehemently against the National Lottery from our pulpits. Warning people of the dangers of compromising their faith in Christ Jesus with the worship of false gods (idols).

We need to jointly take action at national level across the denominations, and speak with one voice to condemn all association with this very evil principality, operating over our nation. I believe, the time to strike is right now.

We need to come together in unity (Psalm 133) to burn the golden calf in our midst (Exodus 32:20) that is deceitfully choking our nation (Matthew 13:22). We need to acknowledge and repent of our former ‘do nothing’ attitudes (Exodus 32:25), and boldly make our stand for the Lord be known (Exodus 32:26) by proudly proclaiming with one voice that “Jesus Christ is [truly] Lord” (Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:11) over our nation.

We need to “tear down” this idol (Judges 6:25) of “Money” and “Greed” in our midst (Matthew 6:24; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians

3:5). I believe we can do it together. I also believe all things are possible through Christ, “who gives [us] strength” (Philippians 4:13).

When Caleb, the ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ, from the tribe of Judah (Numbers 13:6) came back from spying the promised land, he gave the good report of the Lord to the people of Israel.

Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” Numbers 13:30.

Unfortunately, because of the hardness of hearts and unbelief of that particular generation, they missed out on the plans and purposes God had for Israel at that time. A whole generation was passed over before Israel could have another opportunity to take possession of the land (Numbers 14:23, 30-31).

Should we miss the trumpet call of God that I believe is being blown across our land from heaven right now. I wonder what the next generation of faith believing Christians will think of us. Caleb said, “take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it” (Numbers 13:30). I believe we can do it and I know many of my readers share with me the vision that revival is within our grasp. We need to take possession of our land back from the devil. Be united together (Psalm 133) and break down the dam of division among us to let the refreshing waters of revival sweep through our great nation.

We need to do what God called us to do. To be the “light of the world” (Matthew 5:14) and proclaim God’s righteousness (Psalm 40:9-10) to our generation. It is the Church’s responsibility to safeguard the moral conscience of the nation. The politicians and media, even if they do not like it at times, rely heavily on us to give them the clear moral lead and guidance to what is right or wrong in our society (Hosea 4:6).

I therefore beseech the Church to agree and adopt the following motion for forwarding by force (Matthew 11:12) upon Parliament.

We the Church of God and of Christ Jesus our Saviour make demand upon Parliament for all legislation pertaining to the National Lottery to be immediately repealed forthwith from the statute-book of our nation on the grounds that:

- 1. It is clearly not acceptable for the State to disregard its moral obligations to the people it serves by providing for itself a means of revenue from gambling which is historically and notoriously immoral, evil and sinful. Gambling undermines social and individual responsibility by deluding people into thinking it is possible to get ‘something for nothing’ instead of hard work and achievement.**
- 2. It is morally unacceptable for the State to finance its social responsibilities, particularly with grant funding to charities, with money that comes from gambling. To suggest that charities have a choice as to whether they wish to apply for this type of funding is exceptionally naive of the issues at stake.**
- 3. It is morally unacceptable for the State of this country to sponsor the renovation and repair of historic buildings, particularly Churches from the proceeds of gambling.**
- 4. It is morally unacceptable for the State to be seen to be directly or indirectly encouraging gambling from the most vulnerable in our society - our children! Children taking their cue from adults, are already familiar with the fact that buying lottery tickets is as easy as buying tobacco and alcohol. Both of the latter are already obviously commonplace among the young today.**

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

'What Price the Lottery?'

Keith Tondeur (Monarch, 1996). Available from Action Credit, 6 Regent Terrace, Cambridge, CB2 1 AA. Well researched and packed with plenty of facts and figures. Prime focus is on Christian stewardship and the moral impact on society.

'ALL IN A GOOD CAUSE? -The Case Against the National Lottery'

John Ashcroft (Jubilee Centre, 1993). Available from The Jubilee Centre, Jubilee House, 3 Hooper Street, Cambridge, CB1 2NZ. Very well researched. Gives insightful background into the National Lottery. Written in 1993 with many forecasts that have already come to pass. Concentrates heavily on the economic and social impact on society. Contains extensive Bibliography for further research.

The following helpful and informative articles came to light in my own research at the Evangelical Library, London:

'What Price the Lottery?' by Keith Tondeur (Librarians' Christian Fellowship, No.23, 1999).

'The National Lottery and the Wee Stinker' by R C Christie (Evangelical Now, July 1993, reprinted with permission from The Monthly Record).

'It Could Be You...' by Mark Burkill (Evangelical Now, March 1995).

'A National Scandal' by Alan C Clifford (Evangelical Times, January 1995).

'The National Lottery - Another Nail in the Coffin' by Gary Brady (Grace magazine, December 1994).

'The Sinfulness of Raffles and "Chances"' by J G Vos (Blue Banner of Faith and Life, Volume 31, No.3, July -September 1 ~76).

SHEM INTERNATIONAL

Want to know more about the work of SHEM International or would like to find out how you can either financially and pray fully support our work in reaching others with the Good News of Jesus? You can find out more by visiting our website at: www.sheminternational.org.uk or by email to: info@sheminternational.org.uk.

Also, if you would like to invite Stephen Hammond to speak on this or any other subject please contact us either via our contact details available on our website.

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY is one of the most contentious subjects to face the Body of Christ in recent times. This booklet aims to empower Christian believers with the Biblical answers necessary in order to effectively respond to the issues concerning the National Lottery. It also includes a section to help Churches and Christian Ministries to Biblically understand the complexities of whether it is right to apply to the National Lottery for grant funding.



Rev. Stephen Hammond, founder of SHEM International, and pastor of Praise Revival Christian Church Of God, East London, is a member of the African Caribbean Evangelical Alliance. He is a passionate teacher and preacher on the subject of personal and world revival.

SHEM International

Price £2.50

ISBN 0-9538156-0-9



9 780953 815609 >