



Marketplace Moments

Welcome to Marketplace Moments

This is our first edition and launch of the **Marketplace Moments**. We hope that this monthly update to our friends and partners in ministry will keep you abreast of what is happening at MCN through this simple news letter. We hope to provide information on our upcoming events.

We also have a section on **Bibliophoria** (our term for 'Crazy about Reading'). It is important that we spend some time to read more good books in a culture of volunteer illiterates (those who can but do not read).

Eyes in a darkened room is a column by Vong Hin who helps us to review movies. Movies tells story and embedded is a world-view. Through movies, we can see the world from another's perspective, We also need to decipher that perspective with the Biblical text. Movies are also great conversational starters among people who may lead to deeper discussions about world views and the gospel.

Of heart and mind brings to us a reflection that bridges our theology with our everyday

experiences, practicing faith and spirituality in our work, home, community and the public square.

Google Plus provides web-site review of our postmodern, techno savvy folks where they can find good stuff from a biblical perspective.

For More information on **Marketplace Christian Network**, please visit our web-site at www.marketplacechristian.net.

For those of you who are interested to share your story of how *God* is working in your life and how he is helping you to face the daily barrage of work, or have good recommendation for books, movies and web-sites, do write to share with us. We'd love to hear your story and share it so that others may be encouraged.



From the Director of Ministry, Timothy Liu

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Bibliophoria

Down-to-Earth Spirituality

Encountering God in the Ordinary, Boring Stuff of Life.

Most books on spirituality focus on disciplines like prayer and Bible study. But this can mislead us into thinking that God can only be experienced when we are doing something

"spiritual." Apart from private devotional times or church on Sundays, God may seem distant and even irrelevant to our daily lives.

R. Paul Stevens has a radically different view of Christian spirituality. True spirituality, he says, is down-to-earth--we encounter God in the ordinary, common stuff of everyday life.

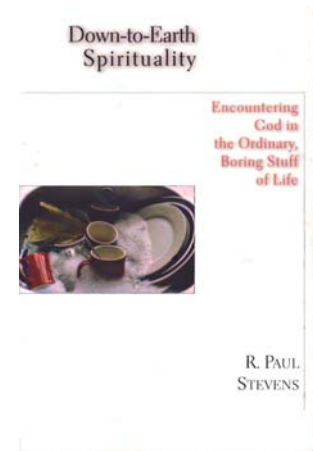
Bibliophoria (cont)

Taking his cue from the biblical story of Jacob, Stevens explores the Genesis narrative and uncovers how ordinary moments are made extraordinary, transformed by the presence of God in the midst of the mundane.

Dreamer, schemer, worker and entrepreneur, Jacob embodies a multifaceted life of earthy passion and gritty spirituality. Jacob encounters the sacred not only through visions of ladders to heaven and mysterious wrestling matches with angles. Jacob also meets God at home and at work, at meals and in

sleep, in solitude and in relationships. From birth to death, through every passage of life, Jacob sees God in the routine details of his everyday experience.

"Everyday life is the spiritual discipline in which God continuously and graciously meets us," Stevens writes. And in this book, Stevens helps us see that what appears commonplace on the surface actually has great spiritual significance. When we least expect it, God surprises us by re-enchanting our daily experience and making every moment an opportunity to experience his blessing.



About the Author

R. Paul Stevens is Professor Emeritus, Marketplace Theology, Regent College, Vancouver BC and Marketplace Ministry Mentor. He has worked as a carpenter and small businessman, and served as the pastor of an inner city church in Montreal. He has written many books and Bible studies, including *Liberating the Laity*, *Marriage Spirituality*, *The Other Six Days* and *Satisfying Work*.

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(Excerpts from Inter-Varsity Press web-site and the introduction on back of the book.)

Eyes in a Darkened Room

Brokeback Mountain

Have you seen any "good" movies lately? Here are some quick questions. In the last 2 weeks, did you go to the cinema? (Sorry, watching a video at home doesn't count). In the last 2 weeks, did any reference to a movie currently in the theatres come up in conversation with any one else,.....or yourself? i.e. at some point did you think about some aspect of a movie perhaps with reference to

something else you were pondering about?

What is a "good" movie anyway? By "good" do we mean that it was "enjoyable", "well done", "entertaining", "romantic",.....(insert one's own preferred criteria here)? If say for the sake of argument, we take Hollywood's Oscar nominations as a yardstick for what is considered noteworthy in the film industry - a criteria which incidentally

I do not necessarily agree with, but that's a subject for another article some other time - perhaps the one movie this year that has garnered the greatest attention (deservedly or otherwise) was "Brokeback Mountain". (Ennis Del Mar (Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhal) are a pair of poor ranch hands who meet when they both get a job watching a flock of sheep on a Wyoming promontory called Brokeback Mountain). Have you seen it? Have your

Eyes in a Darkened Room (cont)

friends seen it? Do you have any feelings or thoughts about this film - its story, its theme, its message, its technical or cinematic aspects, its director, its lead actors, etc., etc.

If you are even only vaguely engaged with the world - i. e. not completely engrossed in whatever it is that you are preoccupied

with - you probably cannot have failed to notice that this is a much talked about movie and like many others thrust into the limelight, it has drawn its share of supporters and detractors. Here is a mere sample of each:

It's a deeply felt, emotional love story that deals with the uncharted, mysterious ways of the human heart just as so many mainstream films have before it. The two lovers here just happen to be men.

By Kenneth Turan, *LA Times Staff Writer*

Brokeback Mountain is a work of art, more concerned with telling a story about characters than with making sure



Movie Poster of Brokeback Mountain.

that the viewer feels a certain way about a moral issue.

That's not to say that Brokeback Mountain doesn't have a point of view. It does have a point of view — a profoundly problematic one, one that makes it potentially far more insidious than mere propaganda. All the same, it doesn't commit the artistic fraud of shaping every single element in its story to move the viewer's sympathies in one and only one direction.

That sort of one-sidedness is increasingly the single thing that I find most quickly sabotages a film's persuasiveness; nothing else so glaringly announces that the filmmaker himself hasn't really put his own point of view to the test, and doesn't trust the audience to see things his way unless he stacks the deck in his own favor.

What I often find most compelling is a filmmaker bold enough to stack the deck against himself — to insist on hearing the case for the opposite point of view, on seeing those on the other side as human beings rather than comfortable stereotypes.....

Other than a passing comment from

Ennis about the "fire-and-brimstone crowd," religion is almost totally absent. On the one hand, this means that homophobic attitudes isn't particularly attributed to Christian teaching or belief. On the other hand, it means that the range of moral issues relating to Jack and Ennis's relationship is rhetorically limited to conflicting commitments to their spouses and children — and, of course, the intolerance of society itself.

The meaning of a work of art cannot be reduced to a thesis or proposition; if it can, it is not art but propaganda, a tract. Brokeback Mountain is not a tract. Still, there is a perspective at work in its depiction of these characters and events. The film does not argue, but assumes, that the pain suffered by men like Jack and Ennis and those around them is the result of what is and isn't permitted by entrenched social attitudes of intolerance and hate, which constrain such men from following their bliss, and push them into conventional arrangements that are ultimately truly satisfactory to no one.....

In the end, in its easygoing, nonpolemical way, Brokeback Mountain is nothing less than an indictment not just of heterosexism but of masculinity itself,

It's a jaundiced portrait of maleness in crisis — a crisis extending not only to the sexual identities of the two central characters, but also to the validity of manhood as exemplified by every other male character in the film.

and thereby of human nature as male and female. It's a jaundiced portrait of maleness in crisis — a crisis extending not only to the sexual identities of the two central characters, but also to the validity of manhood as exemplified by every other male character in the film. It may be the most profoundly anti-western western ever made, not only post-modern and post-heroic, but post-Christian and post-human.

By Steven D. Greydanus, *Decent Films Guide – Film appreciation, information and criticism informed by Christian Faith.*

So, whether you have a passionate interest in the silver screen or is only peripherally curious, please watch this column for the times when we'll try to bring you hopefully a thoughtful, even provoking comment on some happenings in the "art"

world. Perhaps they will encourage you to hone your own thinking about some movie, or summarize some salient points, or articulate some hitherto vague sense you are struggling to give voice to. In any event, we hope that these reviews (of not only movies but other art forms as well) will be interesting if not provide some food for thought.

By Yap Vong Hin

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Coming Events

11 Apr - Terror Unleashed. Forum on War and Terrorism. 6.15pm-9.00pm (Dinner Provided), St Andrew's Cathedral. Register with Simon, 63144910.gcfsing@singnet.com.sg. (RSVP)

22 Apr - Reality Café. Computer Virus and Bird Flu (The corruption of Sin on Work). We continue our series on Understanding God's Will in our work. 2pm-5pm at 03-05, Bible House, 7 Armenian Street. Register with Elaine, info@marketplacechristian.net. Drinks and Snacks provided (RSVP)

For more information check our web-site.



Of Heart and Mind

General Election is just round the corner. Even before the official announcement, we see a foray of news reports and grassroots activities with the Sunday walkabout by both the ruling and opposition parties. In other nations, we see a great political struggle as the one in Thailand. The drama unfolds on our daily dosage of news reports on TV. When the time comes, many Singaporeans will exercise our civic duty to cast our ballot (if the opposition challenging the incumbent in our constituency).

The public square is an area where God also calls his faithful to serve, in and on His behalf. We see examples of civil servants such as Daniel, Joseph being more prominent, but also Mordecai, Nehemiah etc. God does not only calls His faithful to a service into ministry of the word and church related

work, but also through His providential will to place them in position of service to people.

This does not necessary mean that such service has to be in an explicitly Christian environment. Very often, we see God placing them in so called 'secular' environments, many times hostile to the Christian faith. Consider Babylon. Their service, regardless of people group and religious background, served their host nation well with faithfulness and godly values. One of our contemporary was Justice Lai Kew Chai, who has recently gone home to be with the Lord.

Ultimately, God is the governing authority. He is either God of All or not God at all. Apostle Peter writes, 'Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among

men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority,¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.¹⁶ Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.¹⁷ Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. 2 Peter 13:17.

As good citizens of this city nation, serve the nation well, with the love and humility of Christ. Stand firm to the values of Christ, for the sake of our brothers and sisters in Christ, our neighbours and our children.

By Timothy Liu