



Marketplace Moments

Bibliophoria

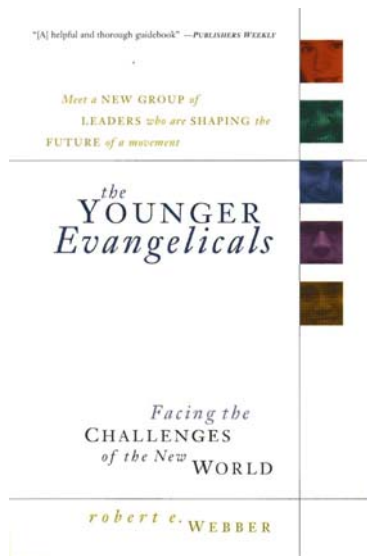
The Younger Evangelicals

We live in a different era than our parents. The struggles are different. What are the concerns of young leaders today? More precisely, what are the concerns of young Singapore Christian leaders today? In the recent telecast of Singapore's minister mentor, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew in conversation with younger voters is telling in bringing forth the gap in world views, underlying assumptions and approach to current issues and problems.

Are younger evangelicals today a materialistic bunch or an idealistic bunch? What has shaped our world views. Are we truly rooted in a post-modern paradigm or are younger evangelicals street smart enough to know the difference, both the strength and weakness of a modern and post-modern era? What are the symbols or icons that are representative of this people group?

Although set in the context of North America, Prof Robert E. Weber has done his research and is well versed with the global trends. This book, I believe, is more than a book from the perspective of an observer in academia looking in from outside. Rather, Weber attempts to follow the example of Christ incarnate, to understand from in and within the community of the new generation.

His clarity of analysis through his years of experience and wisdom have not joined the common moan and groan of evangelicals with respect to younger Christians. Rather, he sees our strength by understanding their ethos, challenges and struggles.



As Robert C Greer in his book Mapping Postmodernism puts it, there is a 'dark side' to modernist thinking and the pervasiveness that exists in modern Christian thought. What we need today is to harness the strength of both and critically evaluate them according to the Word of God.

For one who feels stuck in between the two 'paradigms', I find this book refreshing and touches a heart string. Not only that, but it maps out the struggle of a very neglected and hopeless generation, trying to find hope of Christ in communities. Equipped with this understanding, we realize that God is reclaiming something that is lost in our sincere efforts to evangelize the world. We have at times forgotten a similarly important 'Great Commission' of Christ, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)

By Timothy Liu

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Google Plus

Beneath that Smile

Ok. Since there are so many available resources already on the DaVinci Code movie, we are not going to add to an array of already Christian voices. There is a great web-site that is provided by Singapore Campus Crusade for Christ and in partnership with Covenant EFC.

At this site, you will find events and talks related to the DVC movies, articles and reviews, book resources, other web-links etc. Downloads for IPODs are also available. Wow. Cool! Also available are additional information relating to the Gospel of Judas. There should be enough 'ammo' from this site to 'give an account of our faith' with respect to the DVC book and movie.

There are also publications that you can request from Lindy at 64795856 or e-mail davincicode@sccc.org.sg. Visit the site at www.davincicode.org.sg.

I want our readers to realize that beneath this waves of DVC and Gospel of Judas, is a wake up call for God's people from three perspective.

1) We need to go back to a solid understanding of the bible; what it

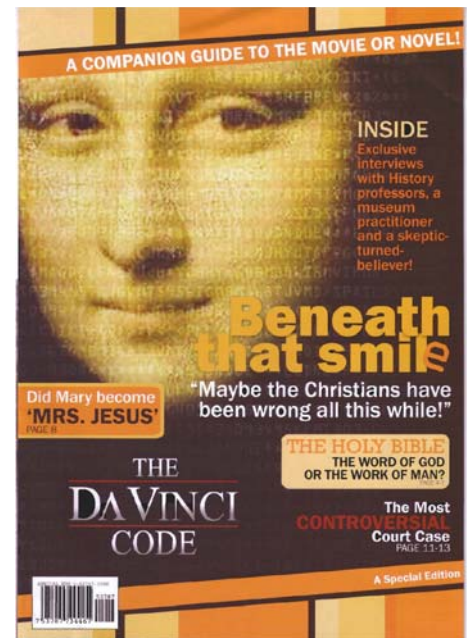
says, its' origin and its' authority. In a postmodern concept, it only seems as if one 'gospel' is as good as another. It fundamentally challenges us to learn why we as Christians believe that the word of God is true. Not only true but REAL; that it changes lives and makes an impact in the world. We need to know why are some books of the bible included and others are not. Many bemoans the low level of biblical illiteracy among Singapore Christians. Take this opportunity to teach and thereby strengthen the church, so that we are not 'tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.' Ephesians 4:14b.

2) Take this not as a threat but an opportunity. We cannot stop the barrage of attacks on the Christian faith. Our God is a God of miracles. While the world is sitting up questioning the Christian faith, let the REAL Jesus stand tall among other gods.

3) Reclaim a true understanding of what it means for God to become flesh. This is usually a footnote in many sermons but is now central against the backdrop of the challenge from a Gnos-

tic gospel. There is no spiritual / material divide as one (the spiritual) being superior over the other in the bible. There are significant implications in our perspective of heaven, importance of our daily work with the material world to God and the unfortunate sacred / secular divide that exists in the Church today. God is indeed gracious.

By Timothy Liu



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Of the Heart and Mind

His Embrace

Every hand that grabs a tool for work finds itself with some calluses or hardened skin after awhile. So too our hearts as we grapple with life. We harden ourselves to deal with life. We hide in our ability, and garb our insecurity. We distract ourselves with purposeful projects and meaningless mon-

tages of senseless sketches of a visionary virtuality. We alliterate ourselves to death, and yet find no rhyme in our reason, nor soul in our poetry. It is all about the presentation, and so we forget that the most beautiful warm and living things don't have to be shown. They just are. But the front, the show, the garb, always has to be pushed to the fore.

The unnatural forcing of our thoughts to articulate and present soulless things renders us more resoundingly empty. Surely we can stop showing. We have nothing to show before Him. We don't have to come up with clear guiding principles or key considerations before our Diving Lover. We are free to fall into His embrace. Just as we are.

By Gabriel Koh

Eyes in a Darkened Room

84 Charing Cross Road

The dust-cover reads:.....

"A story about love and the love of books, 84 Charing Cross Road features Academy Award winners Anne Bancroft and Anthony Hopkins in stellar performances. Helene Hanff (Bancroft), a feisty New York writer, mails a letter to a small London bookshop requesting some rare English classics. Frank Doel (Hopkins), the reserved English bookseller, answers her request, beginning a touching and humorous correspondence that spans two continents and two decades.

Hanff's acerbic wit starkly contrasts Doel's aloof British demeanor, but their mutual love of books forms a bond that deepens with each passing year. Their intimate, richly detailed letters draw us into their lives as Helen and Frank share their dreams, hopes, sorrows and joys - and in doing

so, develop a lasting and extraordinary friendship".

Recently, (February 22, 2006 to



be exact!), The Straits Times ran a little review of Helene Hanff's other book of correspondence entitled "Letter from New York" wherein "she muses on something close to the heart of most Singaporeans - apartment living". It is a heartwarming description of "community living at its finest".

Questions to ponder:

1. What, if anything, is winsome about the stories that the movie and the author Helene Hanff tells?
2. How do these qualities and/or themes that are discussed or demonstrated echoed in what we know of the Christian faith?
3. Would you share this movie and/or book with another friend (believer or non-believer) and use it/them as basis for conversation?

By Yap Vong Hin

Of the Heart and Mind (2)

A Spirituality for Activists

"Elected officials should not be using their influence for personal gain." "There are issues that are bigger than partisan politics." "People need to know their rights under the constitution and not allow themselves to be slowly shunted into a de facto Islamic theocracy." "Elected officials need to be accountable to the people." "Bribery and corruption will no longer be tolerated."

There seems to be a flowering of activism in the public sphere here in Malaysia. And Christians are right there at the front lines.

I am excited by this development. This is no manifestation of the old "social gospel." Many of the new generation of Christian activists were not yet born when the term was coined. Many of them come from churches committed to evangelism.

But there is a new generation emerging that intuitively recognizes that you can't separate evangelism from social concern. They realize that you can't just preach the truth. You must live it out as well, and live it out in every sphere of life.

My concern is this. If they are to last the long haul, and remain Christian doing so, they need to be nurtured by a biblical spirituality. Let me suggest a few components of such a spirituality.

1. They need to remember the primacy of prayer. The danger of activated activists is that they think the fight for justice and compassion rests purely on their shoulders and their shoulders alone. But the battle is the Lord's. And prayer is not just a supporting act to civil action. God is not a bit player in our production. God must lead the way. We battle against principalities and powers. Moses must pray on the mountain if the

troops on the ground are to have any chance of success (Exodus 17:10-13).

2. They must be motivated by love. In the face of injustice it is so easy to hate. There is a place for righteous anger in the face of the perversion of justice and the exploitation of the innocent. But righteous anger can easily turn self-righteous and holy anger can so easily become hatred. But the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God (James 1:19-20). Without the leavening power of love we have nothing unique to offer the human situation (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Folks like Martin Luther King understood that.

3. They must be gracious. When I am angry I note cynicism and sarcasm creeping into my speaking and writing. There is a point where righteous anger passes over into resent-

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ment and bitterness, and I see it in my language. At such times I just want to hurt people. My reasons for speaking up have been forgotten. Truth has a power all its own. Sarcasm and cynicism belong to another spirit. How we say things is as important as what we say. At all times may I speak as one who knows that he too is a sinner saved by grace (Colossians 4:6).

4. **They must be consistent.** If we are people who are truly committed to combat evil wherever it is found we must first fight the darkness within us. Indeed Jesus calls us to first deal with the planks in our own eye before we embark on campaigns to remove the specks from the eyes of the world (Matthew 7:3-5). It is so much easier to fight the evil out there. It is so much more difficult to deal with my own pride, insecurity, unforgiving spirit, etc. But if my fight against evil is to have any integrity, I must also work on the man in the mirror.

5. **They must be prepared to be patient.** The battle against injustice is a long one. Often it takes generations. Many will see this new activism as merely a manifestation of youthful idealism. They may well be right. We need the uncluttered eyesight and energy of the young. But the bible's constant call is for patience. We are to wait for God to work in His time like a farmer waiting for the day of harvest (James 5:7-11). 5. They

must be prepared to be patient. The battle against injustice is a long one. Often it takes generations. Many will see this new activism as merely a manifestation of youthful idealism. They may well be right. We need the uncluttered eyesight and energy of the young. But the bible's constant call is for patience. We are to wait for God to work in His time like a farmer waiting for the day of harvest (James 5:7-11).

6. **They must function in community.** The Christian faith was never meant to be championed by heroic individuals. God's programme was always meant to be carried out by communities. If we are to last the long haul we cannot walk alone. We are meant to live and function in intentional communities. Some may be specially called to pray. Others will continue to struggle to provide us with the scriptural basis for our actions. Some will be at the barricades. And some will bring the Coke. But we will encourage one another to press on till the dawning of the Day (Hebrews 10:24-25).

7. **They mustn't forget evangelism.** If we are to "speak truth to power" we also need to say that the ultimate source of humankind's problems is sin and the fact that we are

estranged from a holy God. And that the only final solution is to repent and to turn back to God through Jesus Christ (Luke 24:45-49). This aspect of our mission may separate us from activists who operate with different ideologies. But we take our cues from God. We live in difficult times. God calls us not to be defeated by evil but to defeat evil with good. We need to preach the gospel. But we also need to demonstrate gospel values by how we live. And we need to know how to do that. If we are to "speak truth to power" we also need to say that the ultimate source of humankind's problems is sin and the fact that we are estranged from a holy God. And that the only final solution is to repent and to turn back to God through Jesus Christ (Luke 24:45-49). This aspect of our mission may separate us from activists who operate with different ideologies. But we take our cues from God.

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By Dr. Tan Soo Inn
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Coming Events

03 Jun – Reality Café. Discerning God's Will

24 Jun – Reality Café. Who is calling please?

2pm–5pm at 03-05, Bible House, 7 Armenian Street. Register with Elaine, info@marketplacechristian.net. Drinks and Snacks provided (RSVP)

07 Jul – Rick Warren on *Stewardship of Affluence and Influence*. Trinity Christian Center. 7pm, 21 Adam Rd.

For more information check our web-site.