



Marketplace Moments

Bibliophoria

Devotional Ventures

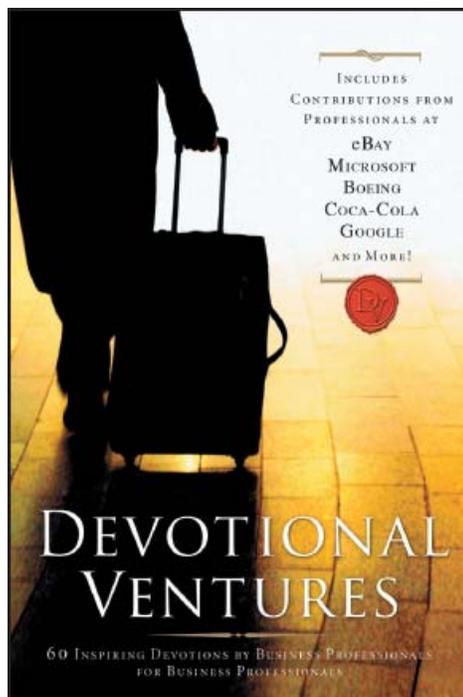
60 Inspiring Devotions By Business Professionals For Business Professionals

Your work matters to God! But how do you integrate your faith at work?

In *Devotional Ventures*, Christian business professionals offer 60 engaging devotional insights on how to integrate your faith throughout your personal and professional life. From maintaining personal integrity, defending your faith, persevering through difficult situations, to dealing honestly and fairly with others, each relevant devotional topic directly applies to a challenge encountered in the lives of business professionals.

You'll hear inspiring thoughts on meeting these challenges from business professionals such as Pat Gelsinger, Senior Vice President at Intel; Jon Venverloh, Strategic Partnerships at Google, Katie McNerney, Marketing Manager at eBay and many others.

An appropriate Scripture and questions for application will help you reflect on and apply the truths of each day's devotion. Rather than compartmentalizing your "work life" and



"church life," you'll be inspired to surrender all parts of your life fully to the Lord. You'll also be invited to contribute your own devotional writing on the Devotional Ventures website.

Come away with a better understanding of how your whole life matters to God! Learn how your faith can influence every aspect of your professional and personal life, and make you more productive, content and a businessperson of character. Transform your life, your workplace—and the world!

By Corey Cleek

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Of the Heart and Mind

Work and the Golden Handcuffs.

Happy New Year to all. After all the festivities of Christmas and New Year, and the 'buffeting' of our bodies (eat and eat and eat), we are now back to the grid-stone of daily work. Feeling the toil yet?

Of course we keep talking about work as a blessing, work is reflecting God's image, work has dignity and redeemed by God. We need to redeem our work as Christ redeems the world (the cosmos) by the cross.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. But we cannot deny that it is more fun to party, joke with our friends and family, shopping euphoria for some than to be back at the work desk with piles of work waiting. (Sigh....)

Then we have the modern day idea of taking leave. Nowadays, taking leave (or vacation days) should be more appropriately labeled as '*delayed work*' days. When we go on leave, people still send e-mails. Despite messages warning people about going on leave, despite auto responses about us going on leave (only providing delayed expectations of a reply the very day you are back at work), the e-mails and work continue to pile.

At the end of the leave period, we actually have to work double time to clear the clogged up e-mail box that has accumulated since the day we left. All

the outstanding issues regarding projects, proposals, POs etc sits waiting to be 'expedited' since we were not around for a few days. And they are now all top priority.

So we take '*delayed work*' days. Sometimes, they are not even off days. Vacation and days off imply that we take a break, a Sabbath of sort. A change in the rhythm. But we don't. We have cell phones and blackberries or PDAs with e-mails. Bosses make sure their people have them just in case. These 'just in case' always happens to happen on our '*delayed work*' days. Call it Murphy's law if you like.

So '*delayed work*' days now become '*actually working while on leave*' days. Or, for some who wants to now manage the backlog better, to actually find time while on vacation, to get connected to the internet, or the phone, to 'clear' some issues. Going on leave now renegades to a statistical blip in the filing cabinet of the HR office without any real significance. We are virtually and literally tied to our work. It is inescapable, undeniable and insatiable.

If you haven't realize yet, welcome to the fallen world. But does this mean no hope for us who are redeemed and who are called into the redeeming work of Christ. Or perhaps from another angle, redeeming Work with Christ?

Ecc 2:20 So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. ²¹ For a man may do his work with wisdom,

knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. ²² What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? ²³ All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.

ECC 2:24 **A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, ²⁵ for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? ²⁶ 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. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.**

ECC 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

ECC 3:2 a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,

ECC 3:3 a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,

ECC 3:4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,

ECC 3:5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time

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to embrace and a time to refrain,

^{ECC 3:6} a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,

^{ECC 3:7} a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,

^{ECC 3:8} a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

^{ECC 3:9} What does the worker gain from his toil? ¹⁰ I have seen the burden God has laid on men. ¹¹ **He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.** ¹² **I know that**

there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. ¹³ **That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil--this is the gift of God.** ¹⁴ **I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him.** (Eccl 2:20—3:14) Emphasis mine.

Perhaps you may consider it strange that our answer comes from such a 'depressing' book as many may find it. But I believe that it is through such pessimistic derivation of life that we begin to emerge to find God in the pits.

There is no easy answer to the modern plight of working men and women. It makes us long for

Christ return. It makes us remember to find satisfaction and meaning in the Lord. It reminds us that there is a time and season for everything, even turning off the mobile phone, laptop computers, blackberries when necessary.

The time has come after the celebration and festivities (and one more big one at Chinese New Year) for a season of labor. As the new year begin, I hope you will see God and sense God's presence at your workplace, The only true motivation to break off the golden handcuffs is to remember our call to stewardship, to love and to missions. Have a great year ahead.

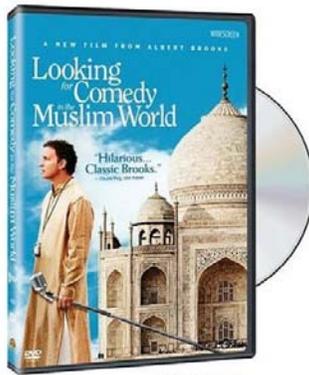
By Timothy Liu

Eyes in a Darkened Room

Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World.

Right from the very beginning, this movie was a controversy just because of the title. In the post 9/11 world, this seems to be a sensitive matter. Albert Brooks, (the director and actor who plays himself) was in the dumps of his career and found an assignment given by the state department to conduct a research project to understand the Muslim world through what makes them laugh.

From the onset, it was bound for disaster. But what I really appreciate about the movie was in reflection to my own journey as a



student in the United States. It took me quite some time to appreciate stand-up comedies such as the David Letterman show or the Tonight show and needed my friends to 'explain' the jokes to me. Sometimes, I did not find it funny while my friends were rolling on the floor laughing uncontrollably. I

was just like the audience of Brooks in the movie.

Readers Digest has a column known as 'Laughter the best medicine'. It was a stark reminder besides studying the language and cultural studies (formal ways of understanding cultures), it is also needful to understand a culture and identify with a culture when one begins to understand what makes them laugh. Frankly, I feel Brooks have satirically portrayed what we ought not to do.

As you watch this movie, it provides a large number of entry points into a cross / local -cultural study.

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Firstly, as the globalized world affords a greatly inter-flow of ethnicity and cultures at urban centers such as Singapore, how can we better understand friends who have come from all over the world to work and live here. How can we show them the love of Christ without first understanding their cultures? Through laughter and friendship, it is one of the best avenues to build lasting and significant relationships.

Secondly, we can ask of ourselves what makes us laugh as a culture? Would movies such as 'I not Stupid' or 'Money not

Enough' or 'Phua Chu Kang' be representative of our culture? What make Singaporeans laugh?

Thirdly, comedies plays on stereotypes, exaggeration of them, differences and biases. But, they are also powerful commentaries which often goes unnoticed because many assume that they are 'not serious' productions. I don't recall of an Oscar that was given to a comedy for best picture.

Fourthly, comedies can also breakdown stereotype (for better or for worse) or push forward a social agenda. Consider the local production of 'A Cha',

who makes comedy of inter-racial differences of a mixed couple and their families. When done properly, it can foster better understanding of culture and acceptance, all in a light hearted stroke. Or it can covertly make an immoral or controversial issue seems more palatable that what it really is.

Whether it is serious or comedy, every movie, drama, TV serial has a message behind it, overtly or covertly. So don't forget to bring in your Christian mind as well as your Biblical worldview glasses into the darkened room

By Timothy Liu