



Marketplace Moments

Bibliophoria

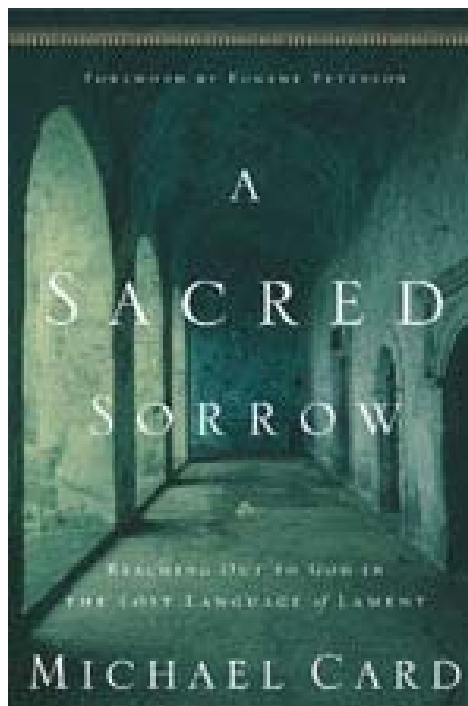
Sacred Sorrow

By Michael Card

There is a lost language today in our churches. It is the worship language of lament. I believe most of us experience it intuitively in times of sorrow or pain or remorse. But probably none of us were instructed explicitly about the use of this language. Having served as worship leader in church, we learn through various seminars about leading worship, to worship with songs of joy and triumph. Sometimes we sing our 'boyfriend / girlfriend' songs to Jesus, 'I want you more, I need you more, I love you, You love me.' Nothing wrong, except when it comes to the part of lament, about the fairness of God, His judgments, our rebellion, our indifference, our sorrow etc, we got stuck. And it is not 'just' about singing.

How do we worship when our loved ones is diagnose with cancer? As a Singaporean, (it may sounds strange but) have we cried and lamented to God for our nation, the injustices therein? The psalmists and prophets did of Israel. Can we worship in the depth of our sinfulness or in the pits of depression? Will He listen? Is He there? Can I be angry and yell at Him? Why? Lord. We question His 'hesed' or loving-kindness.

Michael Card masterfully pieces



not only a theologically sound book, but also illustrates through the examples of Job, David, Jeremiah and Jesus. We feel the depth and nakedness of their relationship with God. Through Sacred Sorrow, we redeem the other side of the same coin. We find that there is a fine line between victorious, joyful worship and sorrowful, contrite worship. They are one and the same in a very paradoxical sense.

Consecrate your tears and despair and find your place in the 'hesed' of God Almighty

By Timothy Liu

Inside this issue:

Bibliophoria	1
Eyes in a Darkened Room	2
Of the Heart and Mind	3
What's Up?	4

Highlights

- Sacred Sorrow
- Babel
- The Grace of Pain
- Events Update

Eyes in a Darkened Room

Babel

One of the more intriguing movies I have seen for a while. There are questions as to why the movie was named as such. One review I read writes that 'Babel came to mean noise and miscommunication,' after the narrative of Genesis 11:9. Where God sent confusion of languages among the nations.

The brilliance of this film has been attributed to the Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu and his screenwriter Guillermo Arriaga. I understand that this completes a trilogy which began with *Amores Perros* and *21 Grams*.

This film is a quilt of four stories, in 4 different cultural settings. As the movie progresses, the four seemingly separate pieces are being weaved together of sort.

The camera shifts from one narrative to another, each a struggle; two Moroccan boys, turning mischief into disaster, a couple estranged and trying to find reconciliation, a Mexican illegal immigrant nanny at wits end, turning a celebration of her son's wedding to her own deportation and a mute Japanese teenager, yearning for acceptance.

When we read newspapers, listen to or watch the news, more often than not, we are presented with the writer's perspective, facts and figures which has been filtered. Issues are also cast in a broad perspective, the big picture



view that is sometimes over simplified. But, we gain a deeper appreciation of these issues when we begin to see the individual stories, the struggles and pain involved. We suddenly realize that prejudices and assumptions becomes 'a priori' to our worldview.

In a review from Rolling Stone's website, it writes that Inarritu 'have applied the concept of Babel to the way we live now, in a world threatened by terrorism and divided by language, race, money and religion. Heavy going? Not if you want to see something extraordinary. In the year's richest, most complex and ultimately most heartbreaking film, Inarritu invites us to get past the babble of modern civilization and start listening to each other.' We need to develop eyes for both the macro as well as the micro.

This film brings pain to the

forefront of life. Since the Garden, tears has become part of the human existence. It narrates the global predicament of the human race, that we are incomplete and fallen. It doesn't matter which nation, ethnicity or creed you belong to. This is in your face 'bad things happens to ordinary people'.

We see in this modern day Babel, problems are ever increasing and not decreasing. And the fundamental needs of fallen creatures hasn't change since Adam.

Jesus cautions in Mark 13:7-8 'When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁸ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.'

Here is the catch; the end will come.

- 1) Can you put yourself in the shoes of the various characters and feel their pain? Describe how you feel.
- 2) What is their various coping mechanism to the pain or crisis they are experiencing?
- 3) What were some assumptions of people in authority that you view were wrong?
- 4) How can the gospel speak into the lives of those suffering pain and brings comfort?
- 5) What is an appropriate respond to pain and devastations, being true to both ourselves and to God and His word?

Of the Heart and Mind

The Grace of Pain?

Many of us have felt it one time or another. Pain is a constant as much as many say 'change' is.

It comes either in the physical or in the emotional. We feel pain when we fall down, when we cut ourselves, when we fall even slightly, desperately or terminally ill. Even more desperately are those who are abused in some form.

We feel pain when we are hurt emotionally; a rejection, abuses, hurtful words, loss of a loved one, our own failures.

Besides Christianity, many other religions also observe and find the human existence in the same predicament. An example is Buddhism, which sees life as having much suffering and Nirvana as the escape from these suffering. In some sense, Christianity also has the same 'escapology', seeing heaven as a 'escape' of this 'ungodly' world. Such a mindset reduces life on earth as nothing more than something to be endured until Christ comes back again. In the meantime, save a few more 'souls' for the kingdom of heaven. Nothing more.

Rather, scriptures portrays pain not as something that drives us to find a exit point, but grace, that drives us to Someone. No, not even just that, but to Worship that Someone, to know that Someone. Pain is a great teacher and guide.

I do not want to make this an intellectual discourse, for such

a discourse does no justification for those who are hurting deeply. Many times, senseless, unjustified pain.

Received a letter recently from a friend who has lost his sister to cancer. And now, the mother, well advanced in age and with other conditions, is diagnose with cancer as well. A God fearing family, but it shouldn't really matter except that some of us feel a greater sense of 'wrongness' about the situation. The seconds ticks away...

I don't know how Job does it. He is a godly man. As for me, I would probably have checked into a mental institution. If the oxen, donkeys, sheep, camels and servants does not do it, having my kids taken away from me in one fell swoop would have done it. Job lost everything, save a complaining wife (and I don't blame her).

JOB 1:20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship²¹ and said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

In such excruciating pain, Job worshipped the Lord.

Many times, in our culture of living victorious Christian life, we often put it in a light more associated with a triumphant life, with cheers and claps rather than with tears and crying. This too, can be victorious and triumphant.

Our Risen Lord Jesus, is also not one who is unacquainted with our pains and suffering. He is described in the book of Isaiah as *ISA 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.*

Pain helps us to realize that this is not the final chapter. There is more described in the book of Revelations. It is also to me the 'Book of Hope'. It drives us relentlessly to something more, something deeper. More than an escapist mindset, pain helps us to embrace this earthly journey more fully, more abundantly, more purposefully.

The grave danger of a fallen world without pain, is that we will never know that it is fallen, it is incomplete, it is depraved. It is liken to someone who has lost his sense of pain and thus also the knowledge that a rat is gnawing and devouring at his flesh while he is sleeping. Substance abuses and addictions takes this form of numbing the pain for a moment, only taking the person deeper into despair.

Pain awakens us, alerts us and drives us to the One who bears our pain and sufferings on the Cross.

Rev 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Come and worship, with your pain, tears and all.

By Timothy Liu

**Marketplace
Christian Network**

Teban Garden Post Office
PO Box 669
Singapore 916003



Phone: +65 6872 4732
Email: info@marketplacechristian.net
Web-site:
▶ www.marketplacechristian.net

**Kingdom Building
at the Workplace**

Coming Events

April 17

Jesus in the Marketplace of Ideas
By Stuart McAllistair (RZIM)
Featuring: Soul2Soul Band
Campus Crusade for Christ.

7:30pm
Kum Yan Methodist Church
Bring a friend

For more information check our web-
site.

