



Marketplace Moments

Bibliophilia

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The Gospel According to Peanuts Robert L Short

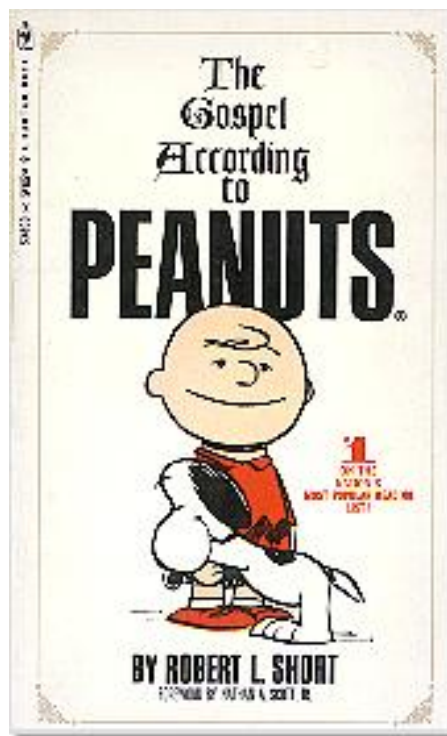
"I have been told that quotations from the Bible should never be used in such a lowly thing as a comic strip. This means, of course, that I was extremely flattered when I first heard that Robert Short considered some of my strips as inspirational background for spiritual thinking. I am always amazed that Charlie Brown and Snoopy can prompt some good theological discussions." Charles M Schulz.

This book was written back in 1965 when Short, a Presbyterian minister, uses the comic strip as part of his lectures about the Gospel. There is a 35th year edition in 2000.

One of the most popular comic strip in history, Schulz takes a number of his characters from his own life, including Charlie Brown as a projection of his own. Schulz father was a barber and mother a housewife. Linus and Shermmy were both names of his good friends.

As Schulz is unapologetic about his own religious back ground, he uses some bible quotes in the comic strip here and there. The characters in peanuts also asks many deeper life issues.

Short has brilliantly taken a few of those which he found in congruence with biblical doctrine and puts them together in this book that talks about church and the arts, "the whole trouble"; original sin, wages of sin is 'arrrrrgh', good grief and the hound of heaven.



Charlie Brown: Nine home runs in a row! Good grief! What can I do. We're getting slaughtered again, Schroeder. . . I don't know what to do. Why do we have to suffer like this?

Schroeder: "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward."

Charlie Brown: What?

Linus: He's quoting from the Book of Job, Charlie Brown, seventh verse, fifth chapter. Actually, the problem of suffering is a very profound one, and . . .

Lucy: If a person has had bad luck, it's because he's doing something wrong, that's what I always say!

Schroeder: That's what Job's friends told him. But I doubt it. . .

Lucy: What about Job's wife? I don't think she gets enough credit!

Schroeder: I think a person who never

Highlights

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Of the Heart and Mind

What makes a Nation?

National day is around the corner. We are preparing for our 43rd. As a very young nation with limited natural resources, the challenges are great for our small island state (the little red dot). How would we Singaporeans evaluate the report card?

It is quite obvious to all that the key index of measuring growth in Singapore is GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Is that the only measure of growth? Is this sustainable without limit from limited resources? Can each person's productivity index keep going up and up without breaking down? I do not know the answers but these are serious questions that we have to ask of ourselves.

Is the ever spiraling inflation just a reflection of our expectations? Mr. Lim Hng Kiang (Minister of Trade and Industry) have asked Singaporeans to opt for cheaper products in face of higher prices. Dare we be contented with a lower standard of living? Does that goes in the opposite of the Singapore Dream, if there is such a thing? How far have we, as Christian subscribed to these kinds of mindset. After all, we are a prod-



uct of our own upbringing.

Senator Robert Kennedy of the US was quoted to have said "Yet if the gross national product measures all of this, there is much that it does not include. It measures neither the health of our children, the quality of their education, nor the joy of their play. It measures neither the beauty of our poetry, nor the strength of our marriages. It pays no heed to the intelligence of our public debate, or the integrity of our public official. It measures neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our wit, nor our courage, neither our compassion nor our devotion to country. It measures everything in short, except that which makes life worth living, and it can tell us everything about our country except those things that make us proud to be a part of it."

I believe that true patriotism comes not from what the nation is able to do for us but from the teaching of the bible. Being true to my own heritage as Singaporean, I complain anything from ERP to PAP, economy to education, toilets to television programs. Boy do we like to whine about everything and anything.

Christian patriotism comes in the form of a calling, through the Cultural Mandate to be stewards of the earth. It is by our active participation in nation building, whatever shape and form that might take, that we are able to become stewards of what God has given us. This is a high calling.



In addition, 1 Peter 2:13-17 says, '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.'

I don't think Peter was under an illusion about the persecution of the Roman state upon Christians in the opening of his 1st epistle. But he exhorted the Lordship of Christ over all authorities and claims the people of God as a Royal Priesthood and a Holy Nation, a People for God's own possession. Let us then live a life of witness as a Christian community, at work, family and community so as Peter also had written, 'Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.' 1 Peter 2:12.

Eyes in a Darkened Room

Battlestar Galactica

This is a remake of the classic battlestar galatica back in the 80s, when I was still a lad. I saw the start of it with the miniseries that sets the stage for 4 seasons thus far.

What I like about a series, if done well, is the ability for the writers to develop and expound on the characters in the story. Frankly, I have yet to watch many of the episodes but the miniseries is enough to get me on this. The reviews overall that I have read are fairly positive.

The story begins with a period of truce between the Cylons, robots that were built by humans to work as slaves and to fight humanity's wars. The Cylons rebelled against their master. Ensuing was a period of war (the main theme of the classic series). It came to a stalemate and there was a period of truce for 40 years. The Cylons did not appear until now, 12 models of Cylons were created but now in human form.

The Cylon, number Six got involved with an egotistical and highly intelligent scientist; Dr Gaius Baltar and breached the defense of the 12 Colonies of humans and in one fell swoop almost destroyed the entire fleet, save the Battlestar Galatica of Commander Adama and the Presidency falling on the shoulders of Laura Roslin (formerly Minister of education).

Knowing that the battle



was lost before it even began, the less than 50,000 survivors on-board the Galactica went in search for a mythical "13th colony" - earth.

There are of course a whole host of other characters such as Apollo, the handsome son of Adama and Starbuck, the wife of his deceased brother. Sharon, who is actually a Cylon whose identity was later revealed and fell in love with Karl "Helo" Argathon and later earned the trust of Admiral Adama. They gave birth to Hera, the first human-cylon hybrid.

It is interesting to note the intentional mix of the series of high tech—sci fi with heavy religious mythical elements. Such things as prayers, public inauguration of the President by a priestess, the legend of the "13th colony", prophecies and revelations.

The key tagline is also revealing as to the overriding theme of the series; "Are you Human or Cylon?" In the launch miniseries, the executive officer of the Galactica, upon knowing that the Cylons who now possesses human form, tells Adama that they now

have to suspect everyone. Ironically, he was later revealed as a Cylon himself.

In a day and age where terrorism takes center stage of an unstable and conflicted world, this question of us and them becomes very much blurred when it is no longer by nationality, language or ethnicity alone. There can be no clear physical distinction between friend and foe. Inherently, it is a battle of ideologies and convictions, a battle of the mind. To further complicate matters, there are those Cylons who are "converted" and humans who are Cylon collaborators, and some truly conflicted ones as in the case of Dr. Gaius Baltar.

It is my hope that watching this series will bring to mind also a number of challenges from a global perspective, given a human / relational element within the narrower context of individuals, friendship and family. The more overt elements of mysticism and religion probably gives us thoughts of our own Christian faith in those contexts, both in public and personal life. Enjoy the series.

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Kingdom Building at the Workplace

Coming Events

For more information check our web-site.

19 Sep – GCF Annual Dinner
Christian Disciplines in Times of
Economic Challenges
NUSS Kent Ridge Guild House



suffers, never matures. Suffering is actually very important.

Lucy: Who wants to suffer? Don't be ridiculous!

Schroeder: But pain is a part of life, and . .

Linus: A person who speaks only of the "patience" of Job reveals

that he knows very little of the book! Now, the way I see it. . .

Charlie Brown: Good grief! I don't have a ball team. I have a theological seminary!

Perhaps not all of us would agree with Schulz or Short's theological

perspective, but we must give kudos for their attempt to bring something as seemingly simple as a comic strip to bring forth the gospel and the deeper issues in live to a more popular audience.

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