



Marketplace Moments

Bibliophoria

Sights and Sounds

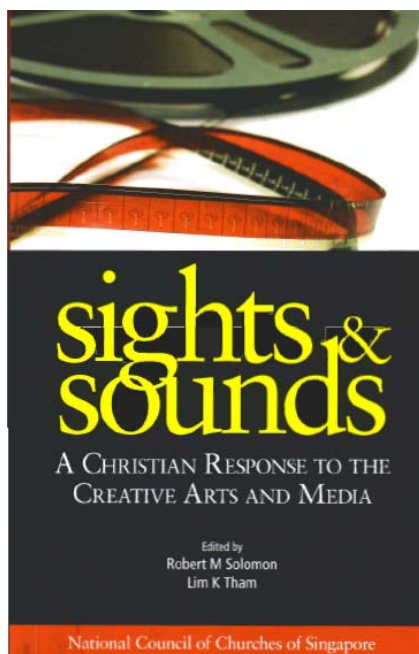
Edited by Robert Solomon & Lim K Tham.

It is unfortunate that with the wealth of experience and intellect among Christians in Singapore, publications on faith and culture, sciences, worldviews are far and few between. Initiated by the National Council of Churches, this particular piece is one of the few works that taps on local Christians on their reflections.

Two responses noted in the preface must be avoided. The first is 'to leave the arts and media scene to itself and hope that we can huddle together and build an impermeable fortress against the changes that are taking place.' The second is to become uncritical consumers.

'We must choose the more difficult path of critical and constructive engagement with the arts, so that we can be in the world and yet be not of it (John 17:16-18). We must also encourage gifted Christians to enter the arts and media world to make significant contributions so that the arts and media can become vehicles for truth and beauty and for whatever that is noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy.' Amen to that.

I have come across Christians who love the arts and media but feeling that



their Christian community will not be supportive of them entering such a 'secular' profession. Rather, they should invest in explicitly 'Christian' music or arts etc.

Christ came to save the world, the entire created order, to redeem it with His every own life. So it is not just the redemption of individual persons that Christians should be interested in, but the redemption of the created order also, including the creative arts and media scene, because God is an artist.

By Timothy Liu

Further reading (Free Download):
Lausanne paper on Redeeming the arts.
http://community.gospelcom.net/lcwe/assets/LOP46_IG17.pdf

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Of the Heart and Mind

Just follow law

In my travel to many countries, Singaporeans are well known to be law abiding citizens. We assume that the law is right and good. After all, Singapore enforce our laws rigorously even in defiance of the United States in the whipping case of Michael Fay. Believe it or not, after all these years, people from the USA still remembers. And also the 'no chewing gum' bit. So just follow law...

Have we recently realized that perhaps a fundamental philosophical change have occurred without much notice of the general Singapore population?

In general there are 3 perspective which laws of a state are viewed.

Firstly, laws are a reflection of what is right and wrong and thus governs the society based on a presumed absolute of what right and wrong is. It is generally grounded in a particular religious or moral tradition such as the Mosaic Law or Sharia Law etc

The second perspective of law is a negotiated compromise of what the general population can accept as being the yardstick, from which laws are written or perhaps re-written.

The third scenario is where the law reflects the ideology and power of a minority group, whether through political power, lobbying or authoritarian regimes.

Singapore legal system has generally been based on our colo-

nial past from the British isle which stems its' roots from generally biblical principles. For the large part, post independence Singapore has based its' principles from Confucian ethics and in parts congruence with Sharia laws. Whatever perspective, there is still some form of a fundamental assumption that it is a reflection of a basis of morality, of what is right or wrong.

Recent development in the penal code debate however, have left me with a sense that there is a softening of a stance that understanding of the role of law has shifted from the first to the second perspective as mentioned earlier. Some laws are not enforced but left to reflect the values of the conservative majority.

Perspective two and three ultimately have their roots in moral relativism. We have seen moral relativism brought to an extreme in examples of how free speech has now become hate crimes in the name of tolerance, consensus of the masses given rise to Hitler and the like. Recent presidential election of the French people recaps the history of the emergence of the 5th Republic, where bloodshed went one after another. Misguided slave masters justifies their ownership using the bible.

In the onslaught of moral relativism and pluralism, what then is the role of Christians in society? How are we to love God and neighbor? I really love Micah 6:8 emphasis to "act justly and to love

mercy" and not the other way around.

In the public square, there needs to be rational discourse, reasoned arguments that are based on a commitment to seeking truth and the greater good of the people of our nation. Freedom of religion is enshrined in the Singapore constitution and a secular state does not connote the exclusion of a religious based dialog. Proponents of pluralism, if they hold true to their beliefs should include various religious traditions.

The irony is that pluralism is itself exclusive because it cannot tolerate exclusivity, which is the basis of all religious and moral traditions, having each a perspective of what is right and wrong. However, in most civil societies, most religious traditions also have similar convictions such as right to life, sexuality, public conduct whether personal or in the business world, upholding honesty and integrity, as virtues rather than plain pragmatism.

Apostle Paul reminds us in the book of Romans, chapter 12 & 13 of the practical aspects of what it means to accept the free gift of salvation and live accordingly.

Singapore Christians and churches needs to wake up from our slumber to the new reality, to engage in the dialog. "The only thing necessary for evil to flourish is for good men to do nothing." - Edmund Burke

By Timothy Liu

Eyes in a Darkened Room

Spiderman 3

The first time my heart kicked in in Spider-Man 3 was when Harry Osborn/New Goblin was rushing to save his friend Peter Parker/Spider-Man. But it was too late to save the movie. Remember Spider-Man 2? It was great. I was engaged throughout. It was easy to care. There was only one main protagonist, Dr Octopus. Spider-Man 3 had, well 3.

All three villains in Spider-Man 3 had story lines that deserved development. In the comics, it took many issues to flesh out their life stories. But three major story lines were just too much for one movie to carry. There was just too much, too fast. My heart had no chance to engage. Till the part where Harry Osborn realised that his best friend had not killed his father. And sped off to save him. But by then it was too late.

"Here's what I was thinking as I left the theater: Raimi, who not only directed but co-wrote the screenplay, must have had half a dozen different story ideas in mind for future 'Spider-Man' movies and couldn't decide which one of them to use for number three, which he figured might be his last. So he used them all." (John J. Puccio, DVDTOWN.COM). Amen.

I have other complaints about Spidey 3. Some parts were just plain silly --- J. Jonah Jameson being buzzed by his secretary; Peter Parker trying to look



cool walking down the street; the maitre d' at the French restaurant --- they bordered on slapstick. I never got that in Spider-Man 1 and 2.

And what's with the giant Sandman? I expected Ultraman to appear at anytime. (The Spider-Man franchise is owned by Sony.) Or maybe police helicopters a'la King Kong. Sandman worked better at human size. And why does Mary Jane Watson have to sing so much? Maybe Spider-Man --- the Musical but surely not the movie. And where has the Osborn's butler been all this time? The bits and pieces of Spider-Man 3 just didn't sit very well together.

This is really a shame because Spider-Man 3 deals with a very serious topic, one that is rarely covered by celluloid --- forgiveness. Again wisdom comes from the mouth of a senior Parker.

Aunt May: "Uncle Ben wouldn't want us living with revenge in our hearts, it's like a poi-

son. It can take you over and turn us into something ugly."

Here is truth but with so much happening it's hard for the truth to sink home.

Compare this with:

Ben Parker: "You've been given a gift Peter, with great power, comes great responsibility." (Spider-Man 1) or, May Parker: "I believe there's a hero in all of us, that keeps us honest, gives us strength, makes us noble. And finally gets us to die with pride. Even though sometimes we have to be steady and give up the thing we want most, even our dream." (Spider-Man 2)

You remembered. You cared. But with all that's happening in Spider-Man 3 did you really hear what Aunt May said about the dangers of not forgiving?

The most spiritual part of the movie had Sandman coming to ask Peter Parker for some sort of understanding for his killing of Peter's Uncle Ben:

Flint Marko: "I'm not asking for your forgiveness. I just want you to understand." Peter Parker: "I forgive you."

Here too is divine truth. We receive forgiveness from God when we take ownership of our sins and realize that we do not deserve to be forgiven.

"But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest

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Kingdom Building at the Workplace

Coming Events

10-14 Aug East Asia Graduates' Conference
Seoul, Korea
Contact Simon at gcfswing@gcf.org.sg to register.

Happy Holidays to Parents and Children.

Pray for Spiritual renewal at various Church camps and retreats.

Pray for many short term missions team going overseas.

For more information check our web-site.



in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." (Luke 18: 13-14 NLT)

And I believe Peter Parker was more ready to forgive because in the black suit he had tasted his dark side and knew that he too was perfectly capable of evil. It's so hard to forgive those who have wronged you if you come from a position of spiritual superiority. This is not uncommon because it is natural for the "hurtee" to feel morally superior to the "hurter." And some wounds in life are very deep, equivalent to the murder of Ben Parker or worse. In the face of such assaults our hearts cry out

for vengeance and justify hatred.

But May Parker was right. An unforgiving spirit is poison that will kill you. And it is very hard to forgive if you feel morally superior to the one who hurt you. Hence these tough words from Jesus:

"...and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:12-15 NLT)

Jesus reminds us that we are all sinners in need of forgiveness. We need forgiveness. How then can we withhold it from others?

When Peter Parker and Harry Osborn finally reconcile our hearts are moved.

Peter Parker: "I never should have hurt you. And said those things." Harry Osborn: "None of that matters, Peter. You're my friend."

Peter Parker: "Best friend."

Deep down we all long for that connection. With each other. With God. Spider-man 3 tells us that reconciliation is only possible through forgiveness. The bible agrees and tells us that forgiveness can only be found at the Cross. So embedded in the pyrotechnics of Spider-Man 3 is a critical message, one that human-kind needs more than ever. Pity it is lost in a film that could have been so much more. Or less.

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