



We thought it might be a good idea to introduce you to Marva Dawn even before she arrives. It is difficult to sum up the totality of a person in words, especially when we use them so inadequately. However, we hope that the little that we can do by way of sharing a personal impression, reviews of some of her books and other related thoughts may go some way towards preparing you to consider seriously taking her courses.

If you have read any of Marva's books and would like to share your own impressions you know we'll be more than delighted to hear from you. (PK)



Reading Marva Dawn's

Keeping the Sabbath Wholly

In this marvelously readable book, Marva Dawn recovers for Christians the full significance of the Sabbath, the keeping of which establishes the rhythmic pattern of six days of work and one day of ceasing work that is ordained by God for human wholeness.

Understanding and observing the Sabbath correctly can change one's entire perspective of life and its priorities. This is the benefit one derives from reading the book: it returns one to a true understanding of what life is really all about and how to live it abundantly.

Marva maintains that the four principles of Sabbath keeping are:

- * *ceasing* (from work, accomplishment, anxiety, worry and tension, possessiveness, enculturation and the humdrum and meaninglessness);
- * *resting* (spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social);
- * *embracing* (with intentionality, values of the Christian community, time instead of space, giving rather than requiring, our calling in life, wholeness and the world)
- * *feasting* (on the eternal, music, beauty, food, affection and festival)

Fundamental to the book, then, is the call to Christians to make a stand to follow after God's standards, to dare to be different from the world for that is what keeping the Sabbath entails. In each of her chapters one is confronted with new challenges to look afresh at the world we live in, the pressures we come under and to find answers for alternative life-affirming practices that will bring wholeness to our souls. In giving her suggestions, sharing her own practices and recounting experiences, Marva speaks with the full heart of one who has learnt to find rest, hope and joy in God, within herself and in fellowship with others, all through the very deliberate and conscious act of honouring the Sabbath. To one unaccustomed to liturgy and ritual her own Sabbath practices which are very much influenced by Jewish traditions may seem strange but they open a window on new

My Personal Impression

by Dr Moira Lee

Strength in weakness, joy in sorrow ... are among the paradoxes that come to my mind when I think of Marva Dawn. The opportunity to drop in on Marva's course "Worship in, for, against, in spite of the world" at the Regent Summer School 2000 gave me a glimpse of her intimate love for the Lord amidst a life fraught with physical struggles (two cancer surgeries, three eye surgeries, a shattered foot ...).

In speaking about "Lament in a world of hype", Marva shared, "great joy comes when we let the Lord crush us" - hers is an indomitable trust in the good purposes of the Lord even when pain and doubt abound. In Marva is a woman who ministers out of a deep intimacy with the Lord.

possibilities in private and family worship.

Marva makes such a strong, convincing case for Sabbath-keeping that I came away regretting that we did not establish that pattern in our home when the children were young and now it seems too late. But of course, it is never too late to put into practice the principles of Sabbath-keeping in our personal devotional lives and to encourage them in our Christian community. (PK)

"I believe that the Sabbath question today is a vital one for the whole country. It is the burning question of the present time. If you give up the Sabbath the church goes; if you give up the church the home goes; and if the home goes the nation goes. That is the direction in which we are traveling."

- D.L. Moody (1837 - 1899)

✠ Chapel

Dr. Bryan Hardman, former Dean of Discipleship Training Centre, addressed us from 1 Corinthians 2. The Corinthian Christians were enthusiastic seekers of wisdom and of spiritual gifts, but their motives were, in effect, worldly and the result was divisions in the Corinthian church. Paul in 1 Corinthians addresses the topics of wisdom and spiritual gifts, but he does so by referring what he has to say to the central gospel theme of Christ crucified.

Paul, when he came to Corinth, chose to 'know nothing... except Jesus Christ and him crucified' (v. 2). Why? Was it because he had attempted a more consciously intellectual presentation of the gospel in Athens just previously (Acts 17), had noted the limited response and had decided on a different approach at Corinth? That seems to go beyond the evidence. Surely Paul's message always focussed on the cross of Christ, whether in Athens or Corinth. This message was bound to be offensive to many. For Jews the idea of a crucified Messiah bordered on blasphemy (cf. Deut. 21:23). Crucifixion was the most degrading death possible in the Greco-Roman world: how could a crucified man be an agent of God's purposes? Yet that is just what Paul insisted on: it is in Christ crucified that God's power and wisdom are displayed as they are nowhere else (1 Cor. 1:18, 24).

By contrast, what did human wisdom make of Jesus? Human wisdom declared Jesus to be a false Messiah and a blasphemer. Human wisdom mocked Jesus as he hung on the cross. Human wisdom even thought it sensible to secure Jesus' tomb (Mt. 27:62-66) – in vain. How, then, may we describe human wisdom? It comes from a mind not renewed by the Spirit, and does not submit to God's revelation. It may be capable of clever speech, but it is not enlightened by God's wisdom. What did human wisdom achieve? In short, it put Christ on the cross (1 Cor. 2:6, 8). Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate were clever men, but their 'wise' scheming led to Jesus' death (cf. John 11:49-53). And yet, all the while, these men were unwittingly accomplishing God's purposes: human wisdom became the instrument of divine wisdom (cf. Acts 2:22-23).

Christians have been granted access to God's wisdom, for it has been revealed to them by God's Spirit (vv. 9-10). The humblest Christian has been granted access into the hidden counsels of God, so that Paul can say, 'we have the mind of Christ' (v. 16). The Corinthians did not come from particularly distinguished backgrounds, yet God chose them in order to shame the wise, so that 'no-one may boast before him' (vv. 26-29).

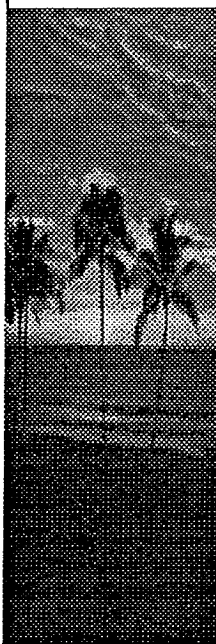
This is where the passage speaks to us, particularly if we are engaged in theological studies. A little knowledge, as the saying goes, is a dangerous thing: those who have a little knowledge are in danger of thinking that they know everything. How dreadful to spend time acquiring knowledge of biblical studies, church history, biblical languages, counselling, etc., and not to have the mind of Christ! Even religious wisdom, we need to remind our-

selves, can be a form of worldly wisdom; a very destructive form of it, indeed, capable of undermining faith. In contrast, we need to seek God's wisdom. We need to learn to marvel at God's wisdom revealed in Jesus Christ. Paul's words at Galatians 6:14 would be good prayer for us: 'May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.' On that that note Dr. Hardman ended his edifying and challenging address. (PES)

CHAPEL THIS WEEK

Our speaker this Wed, 5th March, 12 noon, is Dr Ang Lee Kwang, a former tutor with BGST and now, a missionary pastor in Yangon, Myanmar. Do join us if you can.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK



Lord,
We are
bent and beaten
weighed down and ground to dust,
dispersed and scattered,
no more than wind,
yet we are loved ones.

God,
don't withdraw your heaviness.
Bent, we are close to you
and you are
ground and earth beneath us.
And every bending
and every breaking
bends and breaks us
toward you.

- Ulrich Shaeffer (*Greater Than Our Hearts: Prayers and Reflections*, 1971)

We wish all these who celebrate their birthdays this week God's richest blessings



Mrs Lun Jenny 05/03
 Mr Chia Kiat Say Oliver 06/03
 Mr Leow Hui Ann Wilfred 06/03
 Mr Tan Kang Seng 06/03
 Ms Tan Geok Pek Grace 07/03
 Mr Cheng Kim Liang Benedict 08/03
 Dr Lim Cheng Geok 08/03
 Mr Tan Hock Seng Sonny 08/03
 Mr Yoon Jeong Yong 08/03
 Mr Ng Kai Seng 09/03
 Prof Lim Kian Guan 10/03
 Ms Yap Foon Lyn 10/03