

This week is first-term break for our students and, of course, for parents, it's that time again... children running underfoot and routine gone asunder. I wonder if any of us has actually taken the time to consider the theology of vacation-taking. If you haven't, well, someone has done it in *The Complete Book of Every Day Christianity*. We give a little excerpt on the subject this week.

We continue to our focus on Marva Dawn with another book review and more information about her. The library has some of her books on special display so if you happen to drop by, do take a look. (PK)



Marva Dawn

... some facts

Education:

Ph.D and M.A in Christian Ethics and the Scriptures, University of Notre Dame (1992, 1986)

- * Th.M in Old Testament, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley (1983)
- * M.Div in New Testament, Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland (1978)
- * M.A in English, University of Idaho (1972)
- * B.A in Theology/English, Church Music/Secondary Edu, Concordia Teachers College, River Forest (1970)

Professional Experience:

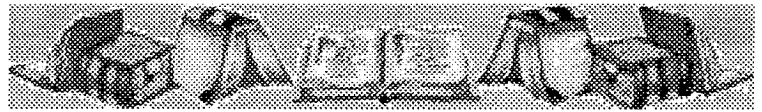
- * Adjunct Professor of Spiritual Theology, Regent College, Vancouver (1998 - 2002)
- * Theologian, Author, Educator with *Christians Equipped for Ministry* since 1979 with experience serving seminaries, clergy conferences, congregations, assemblies, colleges throughout N. America, in Madagascar, Australia, E. & W. Europe

Areas of Teaching Competence:

- * Worship and Community Life
- * Christian Ethics
- * Homilectics
- * Pastoral Ministry,
- * Spiritual Formation
- Hebrew Bible and New Testament

Other distinctions:

Author, musician and committed to issues of social justice and peace (among other things)



Reading Marva Dawn's

I'm Lonely, Lord - How Long?

Sub-titled *Meditations on the Psalms* this book by Marva J. Dawn (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998) was originally written in 1983 when the author was in the throes of deep, personal heartache. Thankfully that was mostly gone when the book was written.

This is no ordinary book. With thoughts firmly anchored on the biblical text – specially selected Psalms whose combined message hit us, or rather, knock us down from our high pedestal – Marva Dawn intertwines her tragic life experiences with a rare brutal frankness. Not too many would want to rake up anguished feelings long gone and hold them before the public eye. But the firm, daring, and sometimes shocking conclusions drawn from the biblical text cause us to sit up and ask afresh after the meaning of the biblical author as he poured out his heart before God. Sometimes this is done in anger, sometimes with a resignation that is familiar to many fellow sufferers. But always there is a trusting heart that defies logical, facile conclusions. When all the chips are down, and one might be pardoned for venting his anger against the Unseen Hand that seems to push a person down, a glimmer of hope shines through the misty feelings.

Marva Dawn shuns the conventional. Her words are not the filtered expressions that pass muster and the reader nods approvingly. They pour out of her heart, like a rag rung dry. We become uncomfortable but hang on because we are aware that somewhere behind the chastened logic of her thoughts lies biblical truth that are so profound that we are glad someone had the courage to say all the things that we were afraid to voice out.

From the standpoint of more than thirty-three years of pastoral experience, counselling the depressed, visiting the sick, caring for the terminally ill, burying the dead, and comforting the bereaved, I can affirm many of the ideas thoughtfully expressed in this book. I recommend this book highly, especially for those who can readily identify with Marva's struggles. And if the mind sometimes go blank and the heart is hurt too deeply to think properly, one might find the questions and suggestions after each chapter helpful. Happy reading? No, honest and heartfelt reading. Beware, if you actually read this week's Good Book as well as last week's (*Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*) you might become hooked on Marva Dawn's books! (QSH)

News Bits

Chapel this week – Dr Philip Satterthwaite will be the chapel speaker on March 14th.

Course Registration – Do not forget that BGST courses cannot run if students consistently register at the last minute. Be responsible and considerate to the lecturers who have invested much time and effort to produce their courses. Register NOW for Rev Edmund Chan's *Preaching Practicum*, Marva Dawn's two courses, Dr Quek's *New Testament Textual Criticism*, and other courses. Don't wait till the last minute to decide.

Bible Lands Study Tours – You must indicate your interest now for the TWO TOURS this year before they are either cancelled for lack of sufficient response – which is the case with the May 26-June 7 tour (dates tentative) to Turkey and Greece – or closed as far as registration is concerned. Surprisingly, the end of the year (Early December) tour to Israel and Egypt may not have any more vacancy if you cannot make up your mind NOW to indicate your interest (one church has asked to book Dr Quek's services for the entire tour). But we would like to open the tour to early bird registrants. Email Dr Quek at the following if you are interested:

bgstdean@cyberway.com.sg

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

Mr Yap Kian Hua Matthew	14/3
Ms Ng Hua Cheng Bessie	16/3
Mr Yap Beng Huat Paul	16/3
Mrs Tang Wai Ching Joyce	17/3
Rev Wong David	18/3

A PRAYER FOR THE HOLIDAYS

God of the seas, to you I pray:
Bless unto me this holiday.

From these wide seas give unto me
A larger heart of charity.

May these strong tides wash out my mind
From all that's bitter and unkind.

With the broad beat of seabird's wings
Lift up my soul to heavenly things.

By the far sight of hills untrod
Call me to undared ventures, God

Grant that these holidays may be
Your holy days indeed to me.

- Lilian Cox

Jerusalem Update

... S.M. Peck

One of the amazing things that strike you here is the number of countries represented by any group that meets together. The Ulpan is probably an extreme example. In our class countries represented included Romania (2) Germany (2) USA (2) and one each from Japan, Korea, Scotland, Norway, S. Africa, and a few others whom I have not sorted out yet. The bible study in the Baptist Church that I attend has people from New Zealand, Australia, Germany, USA, and of course, myself. It's like every member is from a different country. A first impression and a very general statement would be that people from every nation have indeed come to Israel.

Why they come would make an interesting study too. Among the inexplicable reasons would be what a friend of mine here called the 'Holy Land Syndrome'. I think of an English-speaking Romanian lady who appeared in church one Sunday morning. She had asked for financial help towards her living here. Her anger was expressed by her words, "You are of the devil, because I know that God has told me to come here and you tell me to go back to my country". The deacon who had known of her visits to a number of other churches had counseled her to return to her own country as she cannot take a job here. Evidently she had, like many others, sold all her possessions to come to the Holy Land in obedience to God's command.

Then there is the family with five children, aged 6 to 15, who have been here for about half a year. The man of the house is still not able to find a job. One wonders for how much longer supporters back home will continue to send support. They too have been called to come to the Holy Land. So the stories go on.

A regular question I face is, "Where are you from?" I have discovered that Singapore is held in rather high esteem, at least by those whom I have spoken with. Their impressions range from cleanliness, good government and absence of corruption to friendliness. A shopkeeper I struck a conversation with couldn't stop repeating what his brother who visited our country last year said. His brother had asked for directions and because the place was not easy to locate, the person had actually walked with him to the destination. Bravo for Singaporeans! Let's keep the flag flying. This man said that if people are friendly to strangers, it must be a good country to live in. What do you think?