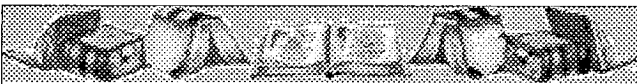




Well, that was certainly a short week! That is, if you happen to be involved with the school system in some way and can give thanks for the regular breather every 10 weeks.

While we are on the subject of times and seasons, I wonder if you're aware of the significance of Lent, an important season in the liturgical calendar of some Christians. You may find the background to this tradition we give here interesting.

Whether or not our church observes such a tradition, it is surely a good practice to give time to deeper reflection about what the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ means to us and to the world today so that we may enter into the joy of Easter a little more prepared and a little more grateful. (PK)



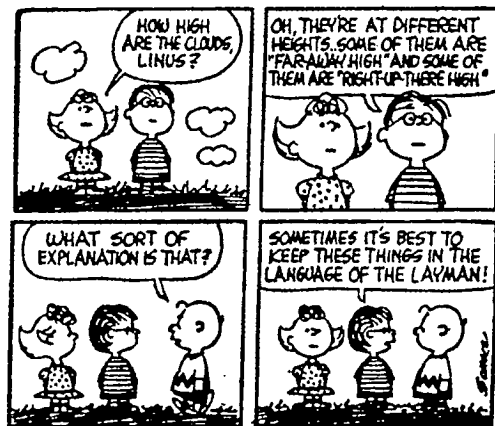
## GOOD BOOKS

For a long time I have been avoiding 'how to' books like the plague. But Marva J. Dawn's *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down. A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) is a different cup of tea. It answers the questions "what is worship?" as well as "why worship?" Rightly so, for these are issues that must be addressed before one can proceed to discussing how to worship.

The title initially put me off: "dumbing down" (the rough equivalent of treating something as inferior) is an uncommon word in everyday speech. This book is not one to be read when one is mentally tired. It is provocative, to say the least. Within the confines of a quick look, which is what "Good Books" is all about, I have to content myself with offering just some choice quotations. Hopefully this may entice you to read this disturbing, but delightful treatment of a highly controversial subject that affects each one of us personally:

- \* "[The root of] the problem of 'attraction' ... is the modern compulsive 'need' to be entertained" (p.47).
- \* "... our society's loss of a spiritual center ... makes life terribly superficial. Lacking genuine intimacy, many people are desperate to 'experience' real life.... [They] live vicariously. They tune into Walkmans instead of learning to play the piano, escape into pulp literature instead of conversing. They don't experience art or nature, but simply take a photograph and walk on" (pp.48-49).

- \* "Whereas in the past Christians rejected popularity for the sake of the gospel, now the gospel is sometimes reduced to popularity ... a church is 'more like a religious shopping mall than a household of faith' (p.66 in Douglas D. Webster, *Selling Jesus*, p.91).
- \* "We must avoid the dangers both of intellectualism and of emotionalism. To focus on the mind alone won't engage people's will and heart so that they act on what they know. To focus exclusively on training the emotions encourages faith without substance. Genuine worship corrects both extremes.... By offering worship that educates instead of entertains, that uplifts and transforms through the renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2), the Church exposes the meaninglessness of our present culture" (p.72).
- \* God must be "the subject of our worship.... Chorale preludes that remind worshipers of hymns about God are especially effective at nudging an awareness of his presence" (pp.77-78). (QSH)



Now, is this what you think of theology for the layperson too? Any comments?



### What? Two Joseph-the-Dreamers?

Who was the Champion Dreamer in the Bible? Was it Joseph ("the Dreamer") son of Jacob, the one with the coat of many colours? Or was it Joseph the husband of Mary? Clue: the final score was four dreams to two.

Both went down to Egypt after having two dreams. One, Joseph came back as a daddy, but didn't the other come back as a mummy? After all, Genesis 50:26 tells us, "So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt".

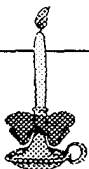
So Joseph son of Jacob was embalmed in the Egyptian way and became a mummy like the dead Pharaohs. But what was brought out of Egypt? his bones only (Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32) or (by synecdoche) his mummified body? I wonder which was the case.

Anyway, the first Joseph the Dreamer went to Egypt and stopped dreaming. Was that because he found life as a slave in Egypt more like a nightmare? The second Joseph the Dreamer kept on dreaming. Didn't he get another dream while in Egypt (Matthew 2:19), and yet another (Matthew 2:22) after he returned to Israel?

But did the two Josephs get the same kinds of dreams? Let's see. Joseph son of Jacob dreamt about sheaves of grain, and sun, moon and stars. Can we say that his dreams were rather grainy, and astronomical? The other Joseph had Appearance Dreams. An angel appeared in his dreams to tell him to marry Mary, to tell him to take Jesus and his mother to Egypt, to tell him to take them back to Israel, and to tell him not to go to Judea. In those days Joseph had no telly; he only had the tell.

But at least Mary's husband Joseph got straightforward dreams. Joseph, Jacob's boy, got allegorical dreams which he had to interpret. That gave him the practice he needed to start a dream-interpretation business. His first customers were palace employees, but he never dreamt that the palace owner, a guy called Pharaoh, would also be his client some day.

By the way, what was the name of Mary's husband again? The answer is in Matthew 1:16? But that verse is about the genealogy of Jesus, and says, "and Jacob the father of Joseph"! That means Mary's husband's name is Joseph son of Jacob? Now where have I heard that name before?



We wish all these who celebrate their birthdays this week God's richest blessings  
 Mrs Leong Yean Yee Lena (19/3) Ms Chio Yee Ming (20/3)  
 Mr Chan Kheng Ping Patrick (21/3) Prof Lee Soon Ann (21/3) Mr Wen Daniel (23/3)

## NEWS BITS

### THE JOURNEYS OF PAUL

BGST is planning a trip that will follow the journeys of the Apostle Paul. It will cover Turkey and Greece, and will last 16 days, from Saturday 26 May to Sunday 10 June. It will be led by Dr Quek and the estimated cost is \$3,900 (or less). This trip will give us a better insight into the spread of the gospel during its early period, and bring to life a large part of the New Testament. Apart from the educational experience of visiting the historical sites where these events unfolded, the stunning scenery and exotic culture of the countries we will be traveling in will make this a truly memorable trip.

If you wish to participate or have any queries, please email Dr Quek at [bgstdean@cyberway.com.sg](mailto:bgstdean@cyberway.com.sg) or leave a phone message at 3538071 for Dr Quek to call you.

### CHAPEL THIS WEEK

Pastor Samuel Kim (Dip CS) will share with us prayer news concerning his future ministry in New York City with his mission, the Korean Seamen's Mission. We bid Godspeed to Samuel, Sarah his wife and their two lovely children, Joseph and Daniel.

### THE MEANING OF LENT

This time of the year was historically the most important in the church year: Easter was a distinctly Christian 'feast' or festival. Whether or not our churches celebrate this period as Lent or simply hold special services to remember both the death (Lent) and resurrection (Easter) of Jesus, we hold these two events as deeply significant in our identification with our Lord Jesus.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, the 7th Wednesday before Easter. The name, Lent, is an old Anglo-Saxon word *Lencten* or *Lenchthen*, which means the lengthening of the days approaching spring.

In the first century, Lent was only a period of forty hours in remembrance of the forty hours that Jesus' body was in the tomb. That forty-hour observance ended with an Easter service at 3 a.m. In the third century, the forty hours expanded to six days, known as Holy Week, and later expanded into thirty-six days, as a title of the 365 days of the year. In the time of Charlemagne, (approximately 731 A.D.) four days were added to the thirty-six to make the present season of forty days. Lent is time when we can pause in the busyness of life to meditate on Jesus' suffering before experiencing a spiritual uplift as we worship our risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. (*Much of the above information is taken from John R. Brokhoff's Lectionary Preaching Workbook.*)