



GOOD BOOKS

Dr Paul Stevens is a frequent lecturer at BGST and we are happy to recommend, over the next few weeks, some of the books he has published. *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity* is jointly edited by Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens (Inter-Varsity Press, 1997). It is sub-titled, "An A-to-Z Guide to Following Christ in Every Aspect of Life."

This hefty volume of 1,166 pages comprises articles by over 90 contributors, with the major contributions by Banks and Stevens. It deals with a variety of subjects, from broad, crucial topics ("Leadership, Church," "Consumerism," and Life Stages") to the routine, yet terribly important, matters that touch everyday life (like "Pets," "Newspapers," and "Coffee Drinking"). There seems to be a preponderance of the latter, which makes this book most interesting. It is not the usual run-of-the-mill, cursory theological treatment of isolated topics; rather it is a serious, glove-in-hand attack against the tendency to float aimlessly, carelessly, and unthinkingly from one moment to another in everyday life. The person who simply "goes with the flow" or absorbs whatever values he comes across, often finds that in the spirit of camaraderie, he is caught up in the swirl of life's events without a firm Christian and biblical anchorage. He has no idea how to fit together the various pieces of everyday living.

The Complete Book answers this need. How successful has it been in achieving its overall aim remains to be seen. In terms of the book itself, however, considering the difficulty of writing about humdrum things together with the danger of trivializing important details of everyday life, I think the writers and editors have done a most commendable job. The line between spiritualising and theologising is often very faint. It is also sometimes subjective. Occasionally one wishes something more could have been written on this or that. But who can quarrel with the usefulness of a book that is a unique, gentle, and a very helpful introduction to the exciting world of theological reflection. BGST students wanting to have an idea how to write a "theological reflection" can use this book as a guide. (QSH)

NEWS BITS

- ✧ We welcome back Mr Walter Edman who has returned from his home/study leave. He will be sharing at chapel this week (April 18) and will conduct the TENT module on "Understanding Culture" which commences on Tuesday, 17 April (7:30-10pm). He will also teach "Cross-Cultural Communication" for 8 Thursday evenings starting 19 April (7:30 - 9:30 pm). This is a useful course for all Singaporean Christians who find that travel and work often give them unprecedented opportunity to communicate the Gospel in cultures different from our own and who may desire to be equipped to do so effectively.
- ✧ Dr. P. Satterthwaite will be giving a series of six lectures on "Interpreting Judges" (OT 355, 1.5 credits), starting Friday, 27th April which will go through the entire book of Judges, particularly examining the questions of character and leadership. For those who have studied Hebrew there are will also be some classes in which we will be reading through some parts of Judges in Hebrew. This will be a good opportunity to revise and/or practise your Hebrew on some of the easier narrative passages in Judges. Suitable for those who have completed BH 111 and 112.
- ✧ The course, "Children in a Changing World" will not be conducted as scheduled because of insufficient student registration.
- ✧ Lee Pin, library staff, will be away to the Philippines from 20 April till 7 May. Do keep her in prayer for blessings on this trip.

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

Mr Chan Chee Chung David 18/4
Dr Lee Soon Tai 19/4
Dr Lum Kah Leong Jeffrey 19/4
Mrs Thankip Vel Zahau 21/4
Dr Wang Su Muh Peter 22/4

† Chapel

In Chapel last week, April 11, Jonathan Cortes, who is one of the lecturers for the TENT courses, and who has been engaged in church work and evangelism in Singapore for a number of years, invited us to consider Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman in John 4:23: 'But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.' Such a verse shows the link between missions and worship. The need for mission arises because people do not now worship God as they should, and the aim of mission is to bring people to worship him.

Not all that passes for worship is true worship, however. God is seeking true worshippers: worshippers whom the Spirit has convicted of sin, so that they have come to long for release from their sins; worshippers who have been brought to recognise the truth as it is revealed in Jesus, the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). More than that: God is inviting *sinners* to come and worship him. An incident recorded in Luke 7:36-50 illustrates this point: a sinful woman who broke down in Jesus' presence and anointed his feet, in effect worshipping him, was told, 'Your faith has saved you'; but Simon the Pharisee, who had looked on disapprovingly while all this took place, and who seemed to feel no need of forgiveness, was merely told that he had little love.

What about worship in the Singapore churches? It is very diverse, often well-prepared and gripping, but is the heart of worship really there? Do we come to worship out of a deep sense of need, or simply as spectators, ready to be entertained? The woman didn't say anything to Jesus, let alone sing anything: but in her brokenness and yearning for forgiveness she shows a true attitude of worship. The question we have to ask ourselves as we look at the way we worship God is: does our worship say to Christ 'I need you' or 'I don't need you'? What is the attitude of our hearts? It's an important question. Another way of expressing the truth of John 4:23 is to say that God is looking for *honest* worship. Is our worship honest? (PES)



MORE ON "CECIL" ...

(Dr Lee Soon Tai's article continues. If you've checked out the website yourself and have some comments to make, do send them in.)

2. COMPREHENSIVE

There is an online Study-Bible with different versions and an encyclopaedia of Christianity. Sermon outlines are available too. For the musically inclined, there is good news. In CCEL, there is a large collection of hymns with 4-part scores and music (in MIDI files). Besides the tune, the lyrics and history of some of the hymns are available on site.

CCEL has MP3 files for some of the notable works. For instance, I downloaded "On the Love of God" and heard Bernard of Clairvaux recited by a lady's voice. If you are tired of reading off a computer monitor, the MP3 files are great alternatives to the normal as well as the visually impaired computer buffs.

3. COMPACT

I downloaded all the stuff required for BGST studies in my hard disk and also burned it into a CD so that I can do some work while travelling. In one CD, I can read the full 40 unzipped files of the History of the Church Fathers (Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene) totaling about 100 MB. There is room in my CD for many more volumes of other Christian Classics. About 10 CDs are needed to burn the 2500 books currently placed on the site. If your Internet connection is slow and access to cyberspace is not available freely, it is better for you to purchase the CDs from recommended E-shops.

Platinga started by putting one book, 'The Imitation of Christ,' when he first responded to this new calling. By 1997 there were more than 300 Christian Classics. It was the vision of Platinga to put up 1000 of the most important public-domain works for theological study. A working list of these books is posted for your information in his site.

3. CONVENIENCE

With help from other staff members, Prof Platinga set up a ThML Markup of the texts in XML to identify theological subject matter, scripture references, etc. The Theological Markup Language adds support for Scripture references, indexes, tables of contents, bibliographic information, and other digital library needs. The information goes into a database for automatic generation of index pages. ThML documents are automatically converted to HTML, HTML zipfiles, text, Open Ebook, Palm DocBook, and Microsoft Reader format for convenient use.

The process of converting ThML books to Microsoft Reader format is almost automatic. The books can be downloaded onto your Pocket PC or laptop computer. A Pocket PC, which is about 3x5", can hold some 200 volumes. For Personal Digital Assistant nerds, Palm Docbook edition is available for some of these works. Now, you can read Watchman Nee's 'Normal Christian Life' while riding in the MRT.

Commentaries, dictionaries, lexicons, and other reference works, classic sermons and sermon illustrations, indexes to the material by scripture reference (World Wide Study Bible) and topic, the Bible and other important works in the original languages, Greek and Hebrew dictionaries and study tools are in the pipeline for the convenience of users.

CONCLUSION

CECIL is my choice if I had introduce a novice to Christian Classics. Here you will find excellent reading material to last a lifetime, if you give each work the time it deserves! So whether you work with a desk-top, lap-top or palm-pilot, CECIL is waiting for you. Happy Discovery!