



Good BOOKS

Sng, Bobby E.K. (1998). *I Must Sow The Seed – Liang Afa: China's First Preacher*. Singapore: Trinity Theological College. 90pp.

Christians who are aware of the Biblical mission of the church and zealous for missions will read the book feeling the “heartbeat” of God for Asia. The book vividly demonstrates the sovereignty of God in unfolding His plan to accomplish His purposes through the life and career of an ordinary man, Liang Afa. Dr Sng’s passion and interest in the Asian Christian heritage has effectively used the Qualitative Research method of biographical study to relate the life story of Liang Afa using archival documents and records; and the method of historical study to provide an interpretation of Afa’s life experiences in the context of China that earned him, “China’s most outstanding convert” (p.76).

Afa was born in China but his background in Confucianism and Buddhism was challenged by the truth of the Gospel that led to his conversion experience in Malacca. Interestingly, he received his “theological” education in Singapore and became God’s remarkable ambassador in the making of church history in the Protestant missions in China. From selling pencils for a living, he became the first to write “the first evangelistic tract, first to baptize another Chinese believer (his wife), formed the first Chinese Christian family, supervised printing of the first Chinese Bible, and the first Chinese to be ordained” (p.23). In the context of cross-cultural missions to Asia by the London Missionary Society, Afa was their first fruit and shared vision of William Milne and Robert Morrison that a better strategy to reach China for Christ was to “train young converts who would return one day as evangelists to their homeland” (p.13). A strategy that remains valid today to accomplish the evangelistic mission of the church to fulfill the Great Commission. Other ingenious plans and methods of communicating the gospel can be found in the content of the book and one of which is tentmaking. Communicating the Gospel through preaching and printing was a capital offence and “to solve his {Milne} problems, he

joined the East India Company (EIC) as a translator” (p. 6) and in our understanding, a tentmaker.

Missionaries, would-be missionaries, and churches whose focus is on China have much to reflect on the “seed” of the Gospel sown by Liang Afa on the soil of China. It was a labour of joy but not without the cost of discipleship, “I call to mind that all who preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, must suffer persecution; and though I cannot equal the patience of Paul or Job, I desire to imitate the ancient saints and keep my heart in peace” (p.38). Afa’s will to endure persecution is described as , “He belonged to that generation which knew that to follow Jesus called for a willingness to count the cost and to pay that price.” Is the preaching and teaching of the “cost” of being disciples of Jesus Christ to our present generation missing from our church today?

In a tribute to Afa when he died, Dr Benjamin Hobson described him as one who “has been the longest and one of the most faithful that we have had. His place will not be soon filled, and it may be long before we see his like again” (p. 77). The challenge to the church is, “Who will that be?” Indeed, Dr Sng’s work on Liang Afa is a historical reflection of God’s work in Asia and a mirror of God’s continuing work in Asia,

In Malacca, Liang had discovered who Jesus was and, from then on, nothing could daunt him from serving his Saviour. Like Paul, he knew that God had exalted Christ to the highest place and had given Him, “the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and one earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God and Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

Proclaiming that name is the church’s unfinished task (p. 82).

(Review by Dr. Ng Peh Cheng)

Chapel Notes

Chapel speaker for this week (13 Mar) will be led by the students. We shall have a "Prayer and Song Chapel" Come, join us at the usual time, 12 pm. (Our humbles apologies - lately BTW has been making its appearance on Tuesday or Wednesday. We hope to do better next week.)

Last week, the Dean began with an opening word from the Bible and the rest of the chapel was a sharing by the Faculty and Staff as we sang their favourite songs and they explained why the song is meaningful to them. We enjoyed a change when we allow the message of the songs we sang to minister to our hearts.

GOD LOVES YOU

A lthough things are not perfect
B ecause of trial or pain
C ontinue in thanksgiving
D o not begin to blame
E ven when the times are hard
F ierce winds are bound to blow
G od is forever able
H old on to what you know
I magine life without His love
J oy would cease to be
K eep thanking Him for all the things
L ove imparts to thee
M ove out of "Camp Complaining"
N o weapon that is known
O n earth can yield the power
P raise can do alone
Q uit looking at the future
R edeem the time at hand
S tart every day with worship
T o "thank" is a command
U ntil we see Him coming
V ictorious in the sky
W e'll run the race with gratitude
X alting God most high
Y es, there'll be good times and yes some will
be bad, but...
Z ion waits in glory...where none are ever sad!

"I AM Too blessed to be stressed!" The shortest distance between a problem and a solution is the distance between your knees and the floor. The one who kneels to the Lord can stand up to anything. Love and peace be with you forever, Amen.

(contributed by Ms Chang Siew Nghoh)

NEWS BITS

1. **AT231 (Speech Communication).** Revision Class on March 20th. Students may bring in their oral exam pieces for practice. Final exam date is on March 27th, 7.30-10 pm.

2. **New Courses Commencing in Term 2.** Some of the courses for your prayerful consideration include:

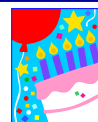
- Qualitative Research & the Christian Ministry (Dr Ng Peh Cheng & Dr Chen Ai Yen, commencing 21 Mar, 7-10pm)
- Christian Comes To Asia (Dr Bobby Sng, commencing 22 Mar, 7.30-9.30pm)
- Communication Skills for Speakers & Church Leaders (Rev Ng Seng Chuan, commencing 3 Apr, 7.30-9.30pm)
- Religions of Asia (TENT module, Dr Violet James, commencing 7 May, 7.30-9.30pm)
- Asian Religions, Part I (Dr Violet James, commencing 7 May, 7.30-9.30pm)

3. **Christian Ethics and Bioethics.** Students looking for the new course manuals to prepare for their tutorials may enquire at the Library Counter.

4. **Bible Lands Study Tour Reunion Dinner.** Last Sunday evening the Bible Lands trippers who went last December to Israel and Turkey enjoyed a delightful evening over a potluck dinner and reminisced over photo albums of their trips. They also saw two video presentations painstakingly done by two trippers. It looks like BGST is developing a 'fraternity' of trippers over the years who have between them built up an exciting store of photos and slides of the Bible Lands.

5. Welcome back, **Caleb and Debra Kang** (Kangil and Mihye), who have returned to Singapore for their furlough, as arranged by Zion B-P Church, their sponsoring church. Thank God their son, **Joshua**, is looking well after having had a bad bout of pneumonia. Debra is presently undergoing medical screening as she needs to recover her physical health. The Kangs (BGST alumni) are presently serving the Lord as missionaries in Africa and are stationed at Nairobi, Kenya.

**Wishing you God's blessings
on your Birthday!**



Mr Matthew Yap 14/03
Ms Bessie Ng Hua Cheng 16/03
Mr Paul Yap Beng Huat 16/03
Mrs Joyce Tang Wai Ching 17/03