



WINDOW TO BGST NEWSLETTER



NOV 2019

WTB 2019-11

FINDING MY GROOVE IN GOD

BY ANTHONY SIOW



If you look back on your life, what would your soundtrack look and sound like? Have there been popular songs that resonated with where you were at key moments of your life? And looking ahead, which songs speak your heart's desire?

One of the defining characteristics of Ignatian spirituality is "Finding God in All Things." And I do mean ALL. Jesuit Pierre Tielhard de Chardin suggests that "... by virtue of Creation, and still more the Incarnation, nothing here is profane for those who know how to see." Saint Ignatius of Loyola (23 October 1491 – 31 July 1556) believes that God reaches out to us through our emotions, and getting in touch with our feelings is key to situating God in a song.

Long before compact discs and digital music, music was produced from vinyl records covered in grooves. A stylus moving through the grooves captures the encoded frequencies, sending currents to produce stereo sounds. The grooves are cut to produce the required sounds.

We are each a song composed by God, waiting to be played in its original form. Our desires and identity are cut into the grooves of our being. Our spiritual life entails discerning what these grooves are saying to us so that we might be in tune with God's desires for us.

The grooves are analogous to the liminal spaces of our lives – places of transition, waiting and not knowing, as we are transformed. These threshold spaces usher in a new chapter of life on our way to becoming the Song we were meant to be. Many songs are about liminal spaces anyway – heartbreak, longing, expectations, uncertainty, and so on. That is why they evoke deep and raw emotions in us, expressing what we truly feel better than we are able to. Sitting with these emotions as they emerge can be an invitation to hearing what God is trying to say to us.

Popular music appeals to generations of people, especially the young, and is one of the most accessible forms of art and expression.

God speaks to us in many and all ways, and the music and lyrics of popular music provide opportunities for enriching encounters with our God who finds us even as we find our God, in all things.

Ignatian spirituality is an affective spirituality that invites us to look at our feelings – because the heart has its reasons and it never lies. At heart, Ignatian prayer invites you to examine where these feelings orientate you. You are in consolation if they draw you towards God, and in desolation if they pull you away from God.

As such, the Ignatian method of praying with popular music is not a superficial exercise in figuring out what the writer is saying, and relating the words directly to your life. Neither is it about trying to ascribe the lyrics to you and to God as if the song is a literal conversation between the two of you. Praying with popular music digs deeper to determine the origin of the feelings that are evoked when you hear the song in order to get to the core of your being. Many listeners react negatively to a happy song, or joyfully to a dark piece of music – prayer involves discerning what these responses are saying to you.

***And all my plans
Keep falling through
And all my plans they
Depend on you
To help them grow
I love you
And that's all I know
- Five for Fighting, All I Know***

Our lives may fluctuate, but we carry with us certain constants, spiritual bearings that keep us firmly and safely moored.

Five for Fighting's *All I Know*, a simple but evocative tune from the movie *Chicken Little*, is one song that keeps me centred. As a musician, I believe it contains one of the most beautiful chord progressions in its introduction. The lyrics themselves capture a simple truth for me as a Christian – my dependence on God in all circumstances of my life, and the truth that I love him, even if my struggles in life cause me to feel otherwise.

It's a simple song of a relationship rooted in love.

The music we hear resonates with the music within us. Getting in touch with this resonance awakens us to the God who dwells in us. We only need to listen very carefully, with our ears and especially with our hearts.

No matter where the currents of life may take me, from the deepest doubts to the highest highs, I love God.

And that's all I know.

That always keeps me going.



Anthony Siow is a spiritual director trained in the Ignatian tradition. Like Peter, Anthony left behind a successful advertising career to follow God's call to cast the net elsewhere. Making use of his skills and creativity in

advertising, Anthony incorporates the arts and popular culture into his work as spiritual and retreat director. Anthony conducts retreats regularly for BGST and serves as a mentor for the school. He also leads silent retreats to Thailand and Australia.

GROOVED

FINDING GOD IN POPULAR MUSIC

Anthony first presented GROOVED: FINDING GOD IN POPULAR MUSIC in 2014. This program enjoyed several runs, and was well-received among those who enjoy popular music but especially for those who journey with the young. He will be presenting this one-day workshop and retreat for BGST on 30 November.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF DR BOBBY SNG

When BGST first started, different people were roped in to help teach courses. One of them was Dr Bobby Sng who would speak on the history of the church in Singapore. Dr Sng passed away on 15 October 2019, having spent a lifetime in Christian ministry - teaching and leading in student ministry in the tertiary institutions, and later in leadership the Bible Society of Singapore. His ministry made an impact on many, including BGST lecturers Quek Tze-Ming and Kwa Kiem Kiok who were involved student ministry under Dr Sng's leadership. Here are Kiem Kiok's reflections.

Many of us know Dr Bobby Sng for his Bible teaching. For me, as a student in the 1980s, and then working with him as a staff in Graduates' Christian Fellowship (GCF) in the 1990s, I saw that he was not just a 'solid' Bible teacher. He lived out in his life what he read and studied in Scripture.

First, "Let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no'." He often reminded us that our word must be truthful. We must keep our word. We must be people whose word can be trusted. Our word, not just what we say, but in what we do and how we live. Whether it was in giving talks to a few people or to many, he would prepare well. Dr Sng was known as a man of integrity who kept his word. He did not need to use superlatives or exaggerations, because we knew that everything that he said was truthful.

Secondly, "To whom much is given, much is required." This is now the tagline for GCF, and this was Dr Sng's deep conviction about graduates. He was one of the early batches of medical doctors in Singapore, and first practiced medicine in rural Malaysia before coming back to Singapore to lead the Fellowship of Evangelical Students. He always saw this training as a gift that he was a steward of. He deeply instilled in us as students that being in university was a privilege, and a time for us to grow our Christian faith beyond the Sunday School level to the tertiary level. Thus, the professional groups that GCF started, among the medical and dental professionals, lawyers, and teachers, was for us to see how we can use our training to serve others. It was not

so much fellowship to sit around to encourage one another. Hence our responsibility was to study what were the issues in society and to bring our Christian thinking and reflection to bear on them.

Thirdly, the Church is the body of Christ. In the 1980s there was a season when there were a number of disputes within the Christian community, some of which spilled out into the public. Dr Sng was troubled because he saw these disputes, not only that the church was not settling her matters internally, but also as a negative witness of Christians in public. He set up the Christian Mediation and Arbitration Centre under GCF as a place where disputes between Christians could be resolved within the community. He put in place respected Christian leaders from across churches who could be called upon to be mediators and arbitrators in conflicts. When he first had ideas of St Luke's Hospital, Dr Sng also suggested inviting ten churches and para-church organisations from across the denominations who would be the Foundation Members to set up and run this Hospital. This would set the Christian presence, and indeed foundations, on which the Hospital was built.

In the 1990s, I was an inexperienced staffworker and in God's providence I worked with Dr Sng. I have grown up since then, but these lessons have sunk deep. Now he is in the cloud of witnesses cheering us on as we too continue to live out the Word of God.

- KWA KIEM KIOK



MESSAGE FROM ART CHAIRMAN

I first heard of Biblical Graduate School of Theology in 2011, when it was still situated in Jalan Pemimpin. However, my work schedule always seemed to get in the way of me signing up for courses. In addition, I was not sure whether I was ready to study again. After another four years, I finally took my first module, which started on September 2015.

Two years later, Dr Philip Satterwaite asked if I was keen to join the Alumni Resource Team (ART), while I was still pursuing my final lap of my Graduate Diploma in Christian Studies. I joined ART on 18 September 2017. My journey with ART has indeed been enjoyable and meaningful, through connecting me with my fellow classmates.

I am now in the midst of completing my Masters in Christian Studies, since starting in January 2018. My family and I attend New Creation Church and my theological education at BGST has enriched my appreciation of grace through a better appreciation of the Trinitarian approach as well as Laity. As I take over from Dr Andrew, I am excited to review how ART started and how we can shape the future of ASN.

History of ART

Twelve years ago, in 2007, Dr Kenny Tan, Wong Choon Yew and Ng Boon Thian organised the first BGST Family Day; this brought the Alumni Resource Network into existence. In January 2014, the Alumni Resource Team (ART) was created, under Ms Alvina Ng's leadership. The vision of ART was to help students serve a dual-function role, establishing a bridge so BGST could benefit the Alumni, as well as providing a platform for Alumni to support BGST endeavours.

Two years ago under Dr Andrew Lim's leadership, ART began to include not only alumni of diplomas and masters programmes, but students who had completed 12 credits. With their inclusion, the goal was to (1) continue our predecessor's vision to build a Communal Life within BGST, extending this dream

towards greater interactions and links between Alumni and BGST Students so that life is shared between the two groups; (2) create platforms for intentional interface amongst Alumni and BGST Students that emphasises BGST's goal to integrate faith, life and work; and (3) provide platforms for Alumni to be mentors to BGST Students.

This year, 2019, marks two key milestones. First, BGST celebrated its 30th anniversary, and second, on 29 July 2019 Dr Lai Pak Wah was inducted as the 3rd BGST Principal. At his induction, Dr Lai shared the need to contextualise the Gospel and theological education that addresses cultural issues and concerns so that Christians are better equipped to engage the world outside their respective church walls. He also spoke about curative approach to develop courses and programs as well as incubating innovative ideas towards a community of lifelong learning.

Future of ASN

Reflecting on Dr Lai's vision and what ASN could do, I see that ASN has a rich community of Christians from all walks of life and a variety of experiences. Both ART and ASN can be BGST's extended arm to equip a community of lifelong learners. Curation and incubating innovative ideas could see the partnership of ART, ASN and BGST to serve the wider Christian community of God's people or our Christian laity. As we share, we will effectively love as a community. How exciting it will be when ASN members voluntarily contribute towards untapped, unexplored areas of cultural issues and pastoral issues.

As we look towards the years ahead, my endeavour is to find ways to connect with our community through meaningful events so that our members find a sense of purpose in joining BGST's cause, just as I found purpose through this two years ago.

ROYSTON ONG
ART CHAIRMAN

2019 2020

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BGST'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER (FRI)

1
NOV

"HUMAN FLOURISHING AND THE ARTS"

Dr Jeffrey Greenman, Constance Fourie,
Aaron Lee, and Wendy Wong

6:30pm - 10:00pm

CONFERENCE (SAT)

2
NOV

"THEOLOGY OF FOOD - EAT, DRINK & BE
MERRY"

Dr Jeffrey Greenman

1:00pm - 7:00pm

@ St Andrew's Cathedral

bit.ly/theologyoffood

TCM PUBLIC TALK CHINESE (SAT)

16
NOV

"中医与基督教的对话"

Speakers: 迪亚拉博士, 赖柏华博士, 刘佩菱医师

9:00am - 4:30pm

@ 武吉班让堂卫理公会 (圣殿)

bit.ly/tcmnov16

TCM PUBLIC TALK ENGLISH (TUE)

19
NOV

"CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON TCM"

Speakers: Dr Lai Pak Wah, Diarra Boubachar,
Dr Liew Joanna

7:30pm - 9:00pm @ St Andrew's Cathedral -
Prayer Halls

bit.ly/tcmnov19

www.bgst.edu.sg

WORKSHOP (SAT)

30
NOV

"GROOVED: FINDING GOD IN POPULAR MUSIC"

Mr Anthony Siow

9:00am-5:00pm

@ Agape Village

bit.ly/groovedworkshop

2020

CONFERENCE (SAT)

7
MAR

"LEADING ACROSS GENERATIONS: ENGAGING MILLENNIALS IN CHURCH & MARKETPLACE"

Dr Joanna Williamson

9:00am-5:00pm

@ Zion Bishan B-P Church

CONFERENCE (SAT)

28
MAR

"DISTORTIONS IN DOCTRINE"

Dr Robert Solomon and Prof Tony Lane

CONFERENCE (SAT)

25
APR

"SPIRITUAL RETREAT: A SILENCE AND SOLITUDE WITH GOD FOR GOD'S SAKE"

Ms Seah Chiew Kwan

@ BGST

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

BGST OFFICE HOURS FOR DEC

BGST Operating hours will be Monday-Friday (9am-6pm) for the month of December (Closed on Saturdays). We will be closed the whole day on Fri, December 6th for Staff Retreat.

EBSCO

The implementation of the Digital Theological Library (DTL) over recent months has been a success, with students able to access thousands of materials online! Because library-users now have access to the DTL, we will not be renewing our subscription to EBSCO. Access to EBSCO materials will expire in October; we apologise for any inconvenience caused.

FREE LIBRARY BOOKS

With the launch of the Digital Theological Library, BGST is downsizing its physical library, and **giving away hundreds of books!**

Come browse the titles from Monday to Saturday, 9am to 6pm (closed during lunch).
A love gift would be appreciated.

OUR BOOK CORNER IS CLOSING

Take advantage of our parting gifts! **Book Clearance from 5-50% discount** including course texts. While stocks last.

WHAT OUR STUDENTS THINK ABOUT THE DTL



DTL Digital Theological Library

<http://libguides.thedtl.org/home>

The DTL provides access to a large number of dictionaries, encyclopedias, books, and journal articles. The easiest way to access these resources is via a web browser. Some resources can be downloaded in PDF format. Other resources can be checked out for offline reading.

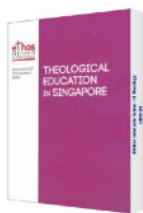
I have found that the DTL provides helpful access to reference materials. If I wish to refer to a dictionary entry or read a section of a book, I can do this easily via my web browser.

BENJAMIN GRANDEY

The DTL has helped me in my studies because it has given me digital access to theological books that I would not otherwise have access to. I would have to travel to the library or spend money to buy those books. But with the DTL, it is easier for me to access those books so that I can use them in my studies for my assignments. This has helped me as I wrote my assignments to be able to quickly access those books which has helped me to shorten the time needed to write those assignments as well as increase the quality of the assignments written.

CLARENCE TONG

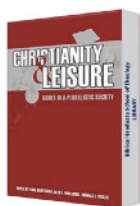
LIBRARY NEW BOOKS



THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

Ethos Institute

Theology-Christianity-Singapore



CHRISTIANITY & LEISURE: ISSUES IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

Heintzman, Paul

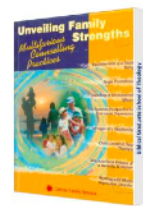
Sports-Religious Aspects-Christianity-Congresses



GOD AND MONEY: REFLECTIONS ON ECONOMIC ISSUES

Lee, Soo Ann

Money-Social Aspects



UNVEILING FAMILY STRENGTHS: MULTIFARIOUS COUNSELLING PRACTICES.

Chan, Yuk Mui, Kwok, Lai Yi Clara, Lam Suk Wah, Canna

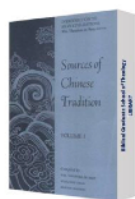
Family Counselling-Christianity



HE LEADETH ME: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Ling, Sing Wong

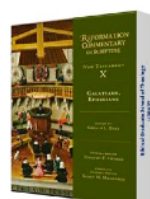
Christian Biography-Singapore



SOURCES OF CHINESE TRADITION

De Bary, Wm. Theodore

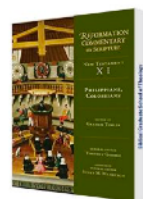
China-Civilization-Sources



REFORMATION COMMENTARY ON SCRIPTURE. GALATIANS, EPHESIANS

Bray, Gerald L.

Bible-Galatians-Commentaries



REFORMATION COMMENTARY ON SCRIPTURE. PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS

Tomlin, Graham.

Bible-Colossians-Commentaries

FULL NEW BOOK LIST AT

<https://bgst.vlibonline.com/images/201910-bull.html>



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OFFICE TIMINGS

Monday to Saturday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

(Closed from 12-1 pm, Wed from 12-2 pm;

Closed Saturdays in June and December)