



NEW LIFE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)

Vol. 26 No. 08

LORD’S DAY 20 FEBRUARY 2022

ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i>
<i>Prelude</i>	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>	
<i>Call to Worship</i>	Psalm 118:25-29	Psalm 123:1-2
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Opening Hymn *</i>	RHC 41 – “Before Jehovah’s Awful Throne”	---
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 142	---
<i>Second Hymn *</i>	<i>Psalm 142 verses 1-5</i> (to the tune of Azmon, RHC 61)	---
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Nehemiah 9:17	2 Corinthians 8:5
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>God of Forgiveness</i>	<i>Giving as an Act of Worship</i>
<i>Closing Hymn *</i>	RHC 22 – “When All Thy Mercies, O My God”	---
<i>Benediction/3-Fold Amen *</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Postlude</i>	<i>The Lord Bless You</i>	
<i>* Congregation Stands</i>		

THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE

The Lord is in His holy temple,
The Lord is in His holy temple:
Let all the earth keep silence,
Let all the earth keep silence before Him -
Keep silence, keep silence before Him. Amen.

THE LORD BLESS YOU

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord lift His countenance upon you,
and give you peace, and give you peace;
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you, be gracious,
The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen.

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 103

Q: What do we pray for in the Third Petition?

A: In the Third Petition – (which is, THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN) – we pray, That God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Comments:

God’s *will* means what he wishes to be done. This will is obeyed perfectly in heaven, and in this petition we pray that it may be obeyed as perfectly on earth. This can never be done in our own strength, and therefore we ask that God would help us to know perfectly what his will is, and having learned it, to do and suffer it.

Scriptural Reference:

Psalm 119:34, Matthew 26:39

HOW THE BIBLE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

Introduction

Though most wouldn't want to admit it, the Bible has made the world a better place even for those that don't believe it.

How can that be? Well, it was the worldview taught in the Bible that led to the development of modern science and all its benefits. It was the same worldview that led to the dramatic expansion of educational institutions, as well as the greater political freedom and economic prosperity we enjoy. Most people today enjoy higher standards of living and better medical care simply because the Bible influenced Western culture in a particular direction.

Vishal Mangalwadi, a Christian intellectual from India, explains all this in his 2011 book, *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization*. Mangalwadi was born and raised within a culture dominated by Hinduism, and this experience gave him special insight into the effects of Christianity on the world and particular nations.

So what are some ways a biblical worldview makes the world better?

Monks at work

As a basic principle, the Bible promotes a strong work ethic. The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:10 that "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat."

While there are probably hard-working people in every culture, Mangalwadi explains that Christianity places a unique emphasis on work: "The God who liberated the Jews worked for six days and commanded human beings to do the same. That is the opposite of Hindu tradition, which conceives of God as a meditator or Yogeshwar ('god of yoga')."

The biblical emphasis on work inspired Christian monks to use their time well. Saint Benedict, who is known as the father of Western monasticism, supported a strong work ethic and wrote that "Idleness is an enemy of the soul."

Christian monks in Europe were important to the early development of technology, some of which we still use today. They were, Mangalwadi writes, "the first to begin the widespread use of the watermill for grinding and for developing power machinery."

Clocks and eyeglasses

Another important example is the invention of clocks. As one scholar, David Landes, has argued, "clocks were invented because monks needed them." They had set times for prayer and for particular jobs that had to be done. After sunset, the sundial was of no use. The need for proper time management drove the quest for something reliable, and clocks were the solution.

As Mangalwadi explains, the impetus for creating clocks resulted from a specifically Christian worldview:

"The Bible-shaped culture made time management an aspect of establishing human dominion over the physical universe because the Bible saw time as a part of physical

reality. By contrast, in Indian culture, time was perceived either as an eternal but terrible god (Kal) or as a part of the cosmic illusion (maya).”

Besides clocks, Christian monks also had a role in the invention of eyeglasses. They spent lots of time reading and studying, but that became more difficult as they got older and their eyes became weaker. Eyeglasses dramatically improved the ability of older monks to read and work on manuscripts.

Of course, other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism also have monks, but it was the Christian ones at the forefront of technology. As Mangalwadi puts it, “Christian monks were different because the Bible gave them a different worldview.”

Lots to learn

People who believe that the Bible is the Word of God will be greatly motivated to read it. Thus, especially after the Reformation, there was a strong impetus to increase literacy in Europe. In other words, Christianity was the main driver for the expansion of literacy and education.

According to Mangalwadi, the Bible directly inspired the creation of the first 123 colleges and universities in the United States.

But it wasn't just Christian countries that benefited from this educational impulse. As missionaries took the gospel to countries throughout the world, they also promoted literacy and education so that people could read the Bible and improve their lives overall. As Mangalwadi writes:

“They birthed, financed, and nurtured hundreds of universities, thousands of colleges, and tens of thousands of schools. They educated millions and transformed nations. This gigantic, global mission was inspired and sustained by one book—the Bible.”

Looking for scientific laws

The scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was launched by men who had been strongly influenced by the Bible. The biblical worldview provided the philosophical basis for their quest. In contrast, other worldview see life and reality in ways that often discourage scientific pursuits. There were, of course, many intelligent and capable Hindus and Buddhists. However, they did not have the philosophical motivation to pursue scientific knowledge. As Mangalwadi explains:

“A culture may have capable individuals, but they don't look for ‘laws of nature ’if they believe that nature is enchanted and ruled by millions of little deities like a rain god, a river goddess, or a rat deva.”

In short, people live according to what they believe, and if they believe an erroneous worldview, they will be limited in what they set out to achieve. In contrast to the Hindus and Buddhists, the “pioneers of science believed that the material realm was real, not magical, enchanted, or governed by spirits and demons. They assumed it was understandable because God created it as rational, ordered, and regulated by natural laws.”

Early in the history of India, a certain degree of medical technology developed. In fact, there were people in India who were medical geniuses. However, medical technology could only go so far in India because of certain cultural limitations. For one thing, special knowledge was considered to be something to keep secret, not something to share with others.

Besides that, the Hindu and Buddhist concept of “karma” helped prevent the spread of medical care. Suffering was considered to be punishment for deeds committed in a previous life. Suffering, in this sense, was a form of justice. It was widely believed that alleviating someone’s suffering now would only increase it later, so it was better to leave them to suffer now.

As Mangalwadi summarises, “my ancestors did not lack intelligence, but our genius was expressed in a philosophy that taught us to worship nature instead of establishing dominion over it.”

Honesty

Mangalwadi tells an especially interesting story that illustrates the power of the Bible. Once when he was visiting the Netherlands, a Dutch friend took him to get some fresh milk. They drove to a dairy farm familiar to the friend. They walked into a building with a large tank containing milk. The friend opened a tap and filled a jug he had brought with milk. Then he put some money into a nearby bowl containing cash, and they left.

Mangalwadi was shocked by this transaction, telling his friend, “if you were an Indian, you would take the milk and the money!” However, the Dutch dairy farmer knew that he could trust his neighbours to be honest about paying for the milk they took. Thus they could come and go at will, taking what they needed and leaving an appropriate payment. It was all based on trust because the people were trustworthy.

Later, Mangalwadi recounted this experience to a conference in Indonesia. An Egyptian conference participant told him that an Egyptian would not only take the milk and the money, but also the cows!

In many countries of the world, a dairy farmer who wanted to sell his milk directly to customers would need to hire a cashier because he wouldn’t be able to trust his customers. As a result, he would have to charge a higher price for the milk to pay for the cashier.

But if the customers could not be trusted, neither could the dairy farmer himself. So the customers would want the government to hire inspectors to ensure that the farmers were not adding water to the milk. Therefore, taxes would need to be collected to pay the inspectors, increasing costs even further.

The bottom line is that an economy in a culture that produces generally honest citizens can operate more efficiently and at lower cost than one in a culture of dishonesty. If producers and consumers can trust each other, the cost of doing business is much lower. Such a situation, of course, contributes to overall economic prosperity.

With this in mind, Mangalwadi asks what made the ordinary people of the Netherlands so different from people in India and Egypt? “The answer is simple. The Bible taught the people of Holland that even though no human being may be watching us in that dairy farm, God, our ultimate judge, is watching to see if we obey his commands to neither covet nor steal.”

Corruption

A German organisation called Transparency International creates an annual ranking of countries to compare their levels of corruption. The ranking is called the Global Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), with the least corrupt countries listed at the top, and the most corrupt at the bottom. Countries heavily influenced by Protestantism dominate the top ten. In the 2021 CPI, the only non-Protestant countries in the top ten are Singapore at number 4 (where there

are more Buddhists than Christians), and Luxembourg at number 9 (which is predominantly Roman Catholic). As Mangalwadi explains:

“The CPI confirms what I saw in Holland—that the Bible is the only force known to history that has freed entire nations from corruption while simultaneously giving them political freedom. The most secular nations—that is, the ex-communist, atheistic nations, which teach that when no man or machine is watching you, then no one is watching you—are among the most corrupt nations, not too different from Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim nations.”

The CPI provides empirical evidence that the countries most influenced by the Bible in the past are the least corrupt.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Nineteenth-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was a critic and opponent of Christianity. He saw that Christianity helped the weak and downtrodden to survive and thrive, and didn't like it. In his view, the survival of wretched and downtrodden people weakens society. It would be better for them to perish so that only the fittest would survive, creating a society of strong, able-bodied people. As far as Nietzsche was concerned, Christianity had undermined the strength of the West.

Interestingly, Nietzsche's critique can actually be seen as a back-handed compliment to Christianity. As Mangalwadi points out, Nietzsche was essentially correct about the effect of the Bible on history:

“It drove the movement for the abolition of slavery and promoted care for the weak, such as widows, orphans, the handicapped, and leprosy patients. From liberating and rehabilitating temple prostitutes to reforming prisons and bringing sanity and morality to wars, the biblical tradition has been the most powerful civilizing force.”

Conclusion

The Bible has done much to make the world a better place. Even people who reject it benefit from its effects. The Bible introduced a worldview that initiated technological development, the spread of education, and economic prosperity. Christian missionaries have done much to improve the lives of people in many countries of the world. And these are just some of the material benefits that resulted from the Bible.

Even more importantly, it shows the only way of salvation through faith in Christ. There is nothing like the Bible.

adapted and edited from *Michael Wagner*, Book Review — Worldview (Reformed Perspective — reformedperspective.ca)

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our Lord's Day activities begins with the **Pre-Worship Prayer Meeting** at **10:15 am** followed by the **Worship Services** at **11.00 am and 3.00 pm**. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Worshippers, due to the increasing Covid infection rate within London the Afternoon Worship Service has been moved back to being held online at 3pm until further notice. Morning Worship Service will still be held in the Church Premises. However, please note that there will be strict social distancing measures put in place. Face coverings must be worn in the church at all times out of consideration for all worshippers. For those unable to attend Church in person, we will continue to stream our services online. If you require the link to our online zoom services, or have any questions or require further clarity, please call the church manse, or email us at admin 'at' newlifebpc.org.uk. Tithes & Offerings – There will be an offering box at the entrance to the Church Sanctuary for you to place your offerings in.

Worship Service Collections - Last Sunday: £551.00

**Church Maintenance Fund
Total: £8,290.50**

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

2 Corinthians 2:17

This Week

“...for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10

Next Week

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

2 Corinthians 7:10

Changes introduced to the Worship Services held at the church premises

In compliance with the current Government guidelines, the following changes have been introduced:

- No offering collection during the worship service. Offerings can be made at the offering box when entering or exiting the church.
- Adopt a 2-metre social distancing seating arrangement (household members may sit with each other).
- Face coverings to be worn in the church **at all times** out of consideration for all worshippers. For young children under the age of 11, the use of face covering is optional. **Please ensure you bring your own face covering.**
- No food and drinks will be made available (Fellowship Lunch has been temporarily suspended).
- After Morning Worship Service, you may gather for fellowship inside or outside of the Church premises, but please adhere to social distancing.
- No access to non-essential areas of the church – this includes the Fellowship Hall and kitchen.
- New movement arrangements to be adopted (please follow directions).
- Temperature measurements will be taken for every worshipper and visitor.
- Worshippers and visitors are required to complete the contact details slip for the NHS Test & Trace service. These details will be kept securely in church for 21 days and then destroyed. They will only be submitted to Test & Trace if a Covid-19 case occurs.
- Alternatively, please download the NHS COVID-19 Mobile App and scan one of the QR codes in the Church entrance to check-in.

To join our online services or to obtain further updates, please visit the church website (www.newlifebpc.org.uk) or call the church manse (020 73280869).

With the Lord's blessing,

John Poh & Jonathan Kim, Task Force Members