

8 Education for All

I first discovered the Bible as a student in India. It transformed me as an individual.¹

The Indian scholar Vishal Mangalwadi (b. 1949) converted to Christianity when he investigated the Christian holy book and realised that the thread running throughout is God's desire to bless all nations. He went on to study the impact of the Bible on his own nation, and concluded:

My investigation of whether God had truly blessed India through the Bible yielded incredible discoveries: the university where I was studying, the municipality and democracy I lived in, the High Court behind my house and the legal system it represented, the modern Hindi that I spoke as my mother tongue, the secular newspaper for which I had begun to write ... the botanical garden to the east, the public library near our garden, the railway lines that intersected in my city, the medical system I depended on, the

1 Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made Your World* (Thomas Nelson, 2011), p. 23.

Agricultural Institute across town—all of these came to my city because some people took the Bible seriously ... We were always told that India's freedom was a result of Mahatma Gandhi's struggle; it was a surprise to learn that, in reality, India's freedom was a fruit of the Bible. Before the Bible, our people did not even have the modern notions of nation or freedom.²

As Mangalwadi went on to investigate the impact of the Bible on nations beyond his own, he realised that:

The Bible created the modern world of science and learning because it gave us the Creator's vision of what reality is all about.³

We Are Able to Study Because the Cosmos Is Ordered

The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. (Ps. 19:1)

Heaven and earth are full of your glory! (Isa. 6:3)

The cosmos can be investigated, discovered and explored, because it is created by God, who is Himself characterised by order, truth, reason, beauty, love and justice. God has placed us in a world designed to be a dazzling theatre of His glory,⁴ filled with an astonishing array of natural resources to be developed.

2 Ibid., pp. 55-6.

3 Ibid., p. xxi.

4 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 1 *The Knowledge of God the Creator*, Section 8, J. T. McNeill., (ed), F. L. Battles (trans)

We Are Able to Study Because We Are Created in the Image of the Triune God

The Creator has given us the God-like capacity to develop earth's resources by means of reason, creativity, intelligence, and hard work. God has given all human beings the divine mandate to manage the natural world.

So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' (Gen. 1:27-8)

The biblical terms 'subdue' and 'rule over' (sometimes translated exercise 'dominion'), mean that we are to steward and manage the earth on behalf of the great King. To do that we need to study and understand the creation.

We are created beings, but we are not 'mere' creatures, like the animals. Uniquely among creatures, we are created in the image of the Creator, so we are *creative* beings. We are able to reason, observe, experiment, deduce, speak, infer, argue, communicate, love and relate *because* God created us in His image.

In order to be able to fulfil our potential as creative beings, we have to learn of God and of His creation. And because God has endowed every human being with the capacity to reason, that capacity should be developed. Every child's unique gifts

(Westminster Press, 2 volumes, 1960), Vol. 1. p. 61.

and capacities should be nurtured and developed. Every adult should go on learning throughout life, developing the mind that God has given us.

Supremely we are created to know God. We learn of God through His Word. All people, in every place, need to be able to read the Bible, and have access to the Bible in their own language. That is why Christians have been at the forefront of literacy provision worldwide.

Christian Commitment to Education

Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them. (Ps. 111:2)

This verse was inscribed in Latin over the archway to the main scientific laboratory in Cambridge for many years. It is now inscribed in English over the door of the new Cavendish Laboratory, home to the Cambridge Physics department. Science represents our effort to understand God's handiwork. The Bible teaches that a rational being created and sustains the natural world. Human beings, as rational beings, can, in turn, discover the laws of nature, and then act on nature, effectively and rationally.

This was the key to many intellectual undertakings, among them the rise of science.

The Bible places high premium on knowledge. But this doesn't come by means of mystical experience or mere devotion and meditation. It comes from study and hard work, investigating the natural world, and building on the work of others. That's why we need education. Historically, Christians

have been passionately committed to education for all, and in many countries they have been the first to provide schools, colleges and universities.

Jesus Christ told His followers to go make disciples of all nations, *teaching* them to obey all that He had commanded. The early church took this seriously. Converts were carefully instructed in doctrine. Often over two to three years, before baptism, they would be instructed using manuals and catechisms. New converts, both men and women, were often taught both the Scriptures and a useful trade. Instructing women as well as men was revolutionary. Such teaching often continued after baptism. Soon catechetical schools were established. They taught Christian doctrine, but increasingly mathematics and medicine as well.⁵ By the fourth century, **Augustine of Hippo (354-430)** said that Christian women were better informed in divine matters than pagan male philosophers.⁶

Augustine himself, a North African bishop, reflected deeply on the fact that all humans are created in the image of God. Whether or not they are Christians, they are not only rational but also truth-seeking. He wrote:

Has not the genius of man invented and applied countless astonishing arts, partly the result of necessity, partly the result of exuberant invention, so that this vigour of mind ... betokens an inexhaustible wealth in the human nature which can invent, learn, or employ such arts. What wonderful –

5 Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Zondervan, 2004), p. 172.

6 Ibid.

one might say stupefying – advances has human industry made in the arts of weaving and building, or agriculture and navigation! ... what skill has been attained in measures and numbers! With what sagacity have the movements and connections of the stars been discovered!⁷

And what made all this possible? Augustine was certain. It was all because of:

the unspeakable blessing that God has conferred upon his creation – a rational nature.⁸

Augustine believed that Christians can and should learn from all the learning known to pagan philosophers, so they should be taught languages, history, grammar, logic and sciences. He wrote a comprehensive text book of all the various branches of learning to date which became the standard text for European universities through the Middle Ages.⁹ He used his mighty intellect to formulate theology, philosophy and other fields of study, and the impact has echoed down through the centuries. For example, his six-volume work *On Music* built a philosophy of music from biblical, scientific and philosophical foundations (including Greek thought). God placed in us the capacity and ability to praise Him in song and instrumental music. Augustine laid out a theology of music, and showed that God providentially ordained the rational, eternal, unchangeable and objective principles behind it. The scientific basis of music lies in mathematical patterns embedded in the core of

7 Quoted in Rodney Stark, *Victory of Reason*, pp. 9-10.

8 Ibid.

9 Mangalwadi, p. 208.

creation. Our Creator ‘encoded music into the structure of the universe.’¹⁰

Music that can be appreciated by human senses is only the footprint of the divine music of the universe.¹¹

As the Western Roman world disintegrated, Christian monasteries preserved the literary remains of ancient Rome. In the East, it was a Christian civilisation that united the intellectual cultures of the Greek, Egyptian and Syrian worlds, and that preserved Hellenic wisdom in academies and libraries in Greece, Syria, and Asia Minor.

The great medieval philosopher and theologian **Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)** was certain that Christians can learn from unbelievers because the rational Creator God has placed His natural law on their hearts. All truth is God’s truth. We can be confident as we study that God’s general revelation (nature) never contradicts and always harmonises with His special revelation (Scripture).

Universities: Their Christian Foundation

As Christian monasteries and cathedral schools developed into the earliest universities they were not just preserving and passing on the knowledge of the past. Communities of scholars gathered to study and push forward the pursuit of

10 Ibid., p. 12.

11 Junxiao Bai, ‘The Spectrum of the Divine Order: Goodness, Beauty, and Harmony’, *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Volume 102, Number 1, 2019, pp.1-30, p. 5, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/715037/pdf> (accessed 21 April, 2020).

knowledge. They were willing to critique the ancients.¹² The first universities were founded in Bologna (1088), Paris (late eleventh century), Oxford and Cambridge (both around 1200). These were not just small groups of scholars. By the early thirteenth century Paris, Bologna, Oxford and Toulouse each had between a thousand and fifteen hundred students. By the early fifteenth century almost every state in Europe had a university. There were nearly sixty in total, stretching from St Andrews (1412) and Rostock (1419) in the North, to Catania (1444) and Seville (1254) in the South; from Cracow (1364) in the East, to Lisbon (1290) in the West. These universities had generous financial endowments. They encouraged a significant measure of free enquiry and debate. Because of a common language, Latin, the universities in the different European countries were integrated, and scholars moved freely between them.¹³

It is untrue that Christianity suppressed scientific endeavour. After the 'Enlightenment' the idea took hold that Christianity plunged Europe into the 'Dark Ages'. In fact, so much technical progress took place during these centuries that by 1200 European technology surpassed anything in the world. Mediaeval Europe also excelled in philosophy and science.¹⁴

12 Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism led to Reformations, Science, Witch-hunts and the End of Slavery* (Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 140-1; 143-6.

13 David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions* (Yale University Press, 2010), p. 71; Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God*, p. 141.

14 Stark, p. 134.

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Generations of school children were told, wrongly, that the Catholic Church thought the earth was flat, and so opposed Christopher Columbus's voyage of exploration in 1492. But for centuries before, it had been accepted that the earth was round. The Venerable Bede (673-735) taught that the earth was round. So did Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). The most popular medieval textbook on astronomy, by John of Sacrobosco (1200-1256), taught that all heavenly bodies, including the earth, were spherical.¹⁵

Christian theology was fundamental to the rise of modern science. The leading scientific figures in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were overwhelmingly devout Christians 'who believed it their duty to comprehend God's handiwork'.¹⁶

The reformed theologian **John Calvin (1509-1564)** was clear about the terrible effects of sin, but he was equally clear that in common (or everyday) grace God has endowed all human beings with reason. He taught that we should be humble and willing to admire and learn from the wisdom of the past, and that all branches of learning, including science, are God's gift. We dishonour the Spirit of God if we neglect them:

Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let this admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of men, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God's excellent gifts. If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself,

15 Ibid., p. 123.

16 Ibid., pp. 123; 198-9.

nor despise it wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonour the Spirit of God.¹⁷

To those who argued that we cannot learn from unbelievers, Calvin replied that the Holy Spirit works sanctification only in true believers. But the same Spirit gives a measure of light and ability to unbelievers, and we can learn from them in some fields:

What then? Shall we deny that the truth shone upon the ancient jurists who established civic order and discipline with such great equity? Shall we say that the philosophers were blind in their fine observation and artful description of nature? Shall we say that those men were devoid of understanding who conceived the art of disputation and taught us to speak reasonably? Shall we say that they are insane who developed medicine, devoting their labour to our benefit? What shall we say of all the mathematical sciences? Shall we consider them the ravings of madmen? No, we cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without great admiration ... But shall we count anything praiseworthy or noble without recognising at the same time that it comes from God? ... if the Lord has willed that we be helped in physics, dialectic, mathematics, and other like disciplines, by the work and ministry of the ungodly, let us use this assistance. For if we neglect God's gift freely offered in these arts, we ought to suffer just punishment for our sloth.¹⁸

17 Calvin, pp. 273-4.

18 Ibid., pp. 274-5.

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The Puritans also believed that it is a Christian's duty to study and understand God's handiwork, as that brings Him glory. Puritan intellectuals defined science as a religious calling. During the early years of the Royal Society of London, membership was dominated by Puritans.¹⁹

Science still attracts many Christians to study at the highest levels. In the mid-twentieth century a survey of more than 60,000 university professors in America found that the majority of those involved in the 'hard sciences' professed to be religious; unbelief was far more prevalent in the social sciences.²⁰ There are many committed Christians deeply involved in the scientific endeavour. And there are a significant number of scientists, whether Christian or not, who reject a purely materialistic explanation of the universe and the origins of life. For example, the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture in the United States sponsors scientific research in a variety of fields. It affirms that human beings and nature are the result of intelligent design, rather than a blind and undirected process.²¹

Schools: The Christian Contribution

For many centuries teaching children was seen as the job of the Church. The oldest still-functioning school in Britain is King's School, Canterbury, established by Augustine of Canterbury in 597. During the Middle Ages, the Church

19 Stark, pp. 158-9.

20 Ibid., pp. 194-5.

21 The Discovery Institute, <https://www.discovery.org/id/about/> (accessed 22 April, 2020).

continued to provide education. But it was after the Reformation that universal literacy was seen as essential so that everyone could read the Scriptures for themselves. The ‘desire to read the Bible became the fuel that drove the engine of Europe’s literacy’.²² The Reformer Martin Luther believed that it was a crime for parents not to ensure the education of their children. During the Reformation in Europe, there was a surge in the building of girls’ schools in Protestant areas. Anna Maria Van Schurman (1607-1678) was a skilled linguist, with knowledge of thirteen languages. Brought up in the Dutch Reformed Church, in 1638 she published a treatise on the need for women to be educated. *Ignorance is not fitting for a Christian woman*, she wrote.²³

Areas with the earliest mass literacy were those areas impacted by the Reformation: the Protestant areas of Switzerland and Germany, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Iceland, lowland Scotland, the Faroe Islands, Puritan areas of England, and the early American colonies.²⁴

A famous protestant educationalist was **John Comenius (1592-1670)** of Moravia.²⁵ He started schools for poor girls

22 Mangalwadi, p. 213.

23 S. O. Becker and L. Wößmann, ‘Luther and the Girls: Religious Denomination and the Female Education Gap in 19th Century Prussia’, *IZA Discussion Paper* No. 3837, November 2008, <http://ftp.iza.org/dp3837.pdf> (accessed 11 August, 2018).

24 Robert Woodberry, ‘Protestant Missionaries and the Centrality of Conversion Attempts for the Spread of Education, Printing, Colonial Reform and Political Democracy’, in *Christianity and Freedom*, vol. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 367-90, p. 373.

25 An area in the present day Czech Republic.

and boys because he wanted everyone made in God's image to learn of God, man and nature. Because of his reformed convictions, he spent much of his life as a religious refugee. He still managed to write around ninety books on education. His advice was sought at the highest level in England, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria.

Comenius believed that education should be a happy experience for children, that all learning should be carefully adapted to the stage of development of each child, and that children should learn by inquiry. In 1658 he published *The World of Things Obvious to the Senses drawn in Pictures*.²⁶ Many believe this to be the first children's picture book. It started with several pages of pictures of animals, then pictures showing everyday activities like tending gardens and brewing beer. The book went on to cover theology, anatomy, biology and astronomy. It aimed to teach about the whole world *via* the senses. This visual approach was a breakthrough, so was Comenius' decision to publish both a German (i.e. vernacular) edition as well as a Latin edition. At one point it was the most used textbook in Europe for elementary education, and was translated into most European and some of the Oriental languages.

Isaac Watts (1675-1748) is best known as a hymn writer ('Jesus shall reign where'er the sun'; 'Joy to the World'; 'Alas, and did my Saviour bleed', 'Our God our help in ages past'; and 'When I survey the wondrous cross' are some of his best

26 <https://publicdomainreview.org/2014/05/14/in-the-image-of-god-john-comenius-and-the-first-childrens-picture-book/> (accessed 11 December, 2019).

known hymns). He was also a gifted pastor and preacher. Few today realise that he also wrote textbooks on a range of subjects – language, logic, mathematics, science – which were used in Britain and internationally up to university level.

Isaac Watts spent several years as a tutor. He was passionate about the importance of teaching children well from the earliest age. He regarded teaching as one of the noblest occupations.

How lovely it is to see a teacher waiting upon those that are slow of understanding, and taking due time and pains to make the learner understand what he means without upbraiding him with his weakness.²⁷

Watts' textbook on educating children, entitled *A Discourse on the Education of Children and Youth* was enormously popular. Because God has given everyone a rational nature and a soul that will never die, he stressed the need to give girls as well as boys an excellent education. He believed that teachers don't just convey information: they teach by the way that they live. Teachers must be kind and teach children to be kind. Teachers must be cheerful and encourage children to be cheerful. They must avoid being boring: they should use visual aids, diagrams, maps and different colours. Lessons must be based on observation, not just instruction. Youngsters must be encouraged to be curious and to think for themselves, and to think clearly and logically. They should be taken out on trips. As much travel as possible should be encouraged. They should

27 David G. Fountain, *Isaac Watts Remembered* (Gospel Standard Trust, 1974), pp. 36-7.

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be trained to be diligent and to read widely. Above all they are to be pointed to their Creator. Knowing God brings joy, so teachers must demonstrate that joy. As one of Watts' hymns states:

Religion never was designed to make our pleasures less.²⁸

Watts' best-selling work was *Divine Songs attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* published in 1715. It went through over a thousand editions, and sold more than seven million copies in various countries (the population of Britain in Watts' lifetime was about six million). One of the most well-known poems for children was entitled 'Against Idleness and Mischief' with the opening lines:

How doth the little busy bee improve the shining hour!

This was so universally known by children in the nineteenth century that Lewis Carroll was famously able to parody it in *Alice in Wonderland*, knowing that *everyone* would recognise the allusion.²⁹

Isaac Watts' work on the *Improvement of the Mind* was also very popular. This was a textbook on how to increase in

28 Isaac Watts, 'Come we that love the Lord and let our joys be known.'

29 Isaac Watts, 'How doth the little busy bee, Improve each shining hour, And gather honey all the day, From every opening flower! In works of labor or of skill, I would be busy too; For Satan finds some mischief still, For idle hands to do.' Famously parodied by Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland*: 'How doth the little crocodile, Improve his shining tail, And pour the waters of the Nile, On every golden scale! How cheerfully he seems to grin, How neatly spreads his claws, And welcomes little fishes in, With gently smiling jaws!'

wisdom, godliness and usefulness throughout life.³⁰ It contains practical instructions on study skills, wise reading, useful conversation and ways to make social occasions edifying.

During the eighteenth century, those who could not, in conscience, conform to the rites and ceremonies of the Established Church (dissenters) were not allowed to go to English universities. They developed their own academies which played a significant role in educational provision. Isaac Watts' textbooks were hugely popular in these academies. Many eighteenth-century dissenters had a voracious thirst for learning. Many of those who had to leave school at an early age applied themselves diligently to education in their spare time, learning Latin, Greek, Hebrew and other languages. William Carey, for example, came from a pitifully poor background but taught himself Latin at age twelve, and later mastered Greek, Hebrew, French and Dutch. As a missionary in India he learned dozens of languages and dialects.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the voluntary efforts of Christians led to an extraordinary expansion of education for children, including the very poorest. One well-known pioneer was **Robert Raikes (1735-1811)**. He was the crusading editor of the *Gloucester Journal*. Shocked at the conditions in the local prison, he became convinced that 'vice could be better prevented than cured'. Education would be the best prevention. He discussed this with a neighbouring vicar, and they came up with idea of

30 Isaac Watts, *Improvement of the Mind*, <http://richelibretheureux.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/improvementofmin00wattuoft.pdf> (accessed 22 April, 2020).

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schools that could be run by volunteers on Sundays. This was the only day that poor children would be able to attend (they were sent out to work on the other six days). The teaching would include basic literacy.

One Sunday afternoon, in July 1780, a Christian woman called Mrs Meredith welcomed poor children into her home in Sooty Alley Gloucester. The first Sunday school! The idea took off. By 1831 about a quarter of England's 1.25 million children were attending Sunday schools. This depended on the voluntary efforts of tens of thousands of Christians.

Another pioneer of education for all was **Hannah More** (1745-1833). She was a successful writer whose works at one time outsold Jane Austen's by ten to one. One of the stars on the London social scene, she was converted through reading a book by the evangelical John Newton (author of 'Amazing Grace'). After her conversion she poured her writing ability into the cause of the gospel and doing good to the poor.

Modern feminists celebrate **Mary Wollstonecraft** (1759-1797), who argued that women should receive education like men. They rarely mention Hannah More, who also, like Wollstonecraft, wanted to see girls educated. Hannah More wrote the best-selling *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* in 1799.³¹ Unlike Wollstonecraft, she also put words into action. After her conversion to evangelical Christianity Hannah More gave sacrificially of her own time and resources to establish schools for poor girls as well as boys.

31 Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 1799, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ecco/004902140.0001.001/1:6.1?rgn=div2;view=fulltext> (accessed 22 April, 2020)

She established schools for the poor against strong opposition. Her *Common Repository Tracts* (cheaply produced booklets with interesting stories illustrated with vivid engravings) sold widely. They promoted positive family values, as well as the avoidance of drunkenness, violence and debt. Her life and writings resulted in great social good. Many believe that her influence helped avert violent revolution at a time when many feared a re-run of the French Revolution.

During the nineteenth century the work of schools founded and run by Christians had a significant impact. Some children in the rapidly growing towns and cities were so destitute that they felt ashamed to go to Sunday school. Many Christians responded by opening 'Ragged Schools' which not only gave free teaching, but food and clothes as well. These were staffed by thousands of Christian volunteers. One of the pioneers of these schools was a Christian called **John Pounds (1766-1839)**, known as the crippled cobbler of Portsmouth. He taught children reading, writing, arithmetic, as well as skills such as carpentry, cooking and shoe-making. Other schools were set up on what was called the Lancaster-Bell or monitorial principle, where older pupils helped to teach the younger ones.

Many Christians met the needs that faced them in their own communities. During the 1840s for example, Richard Dawes became vicar of King's Somborne in Hampshire. Finding that there was no school in this village, he used £500 of his own funds to start one. He ran it himself, and taught a hundred and fifty-eight pupils. Like John Comenius and Isaac Watts, Richard Dawes wanted to make education pleasurable

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and relevant. He emphasised nature observation, using experiments, and taking the children out on trips.³²

Largely because of the huge and often voluntary devotion to education of so many Christian people in Britain, most of the British working class achieved a basic level of literacy. This was remarkable, given the long working hours for children as well as parents. Researcher James Bartholomew has estimated that school attendance may have been higher before it was made compulsory in 1870 than it is now (given current truancy levels). The incredible levels of committed and often voluntary contributions by Christians led to equally incredible literacy rates. Surveys of coalminers, seamen and marines in England between 1840 and 1865 indicate that between eighty and ninety per cent of adults could read, and that proportion was rising rapidly.³³ By contrast, the Department for Education and Skills found in 2006 that one in five adults in Britain were thought to be ‘functionally illiterate’.³⁴

Education and Mission

Turning to the international perspective:

Western missions ... birthed, financed, and nurtured hundreds of universities, thousands of colleges and tens

32 James Bartholomew, *The Welfare State We're In* (Politico's, 2006), pp. 154-6.

33 'Functional Illiteracy' was not being able to find a plumber in the yellow pages, or not being able to see where a pop group is giving a concert though it is written on a simple poster, Bartholomew, p. 159.

34 Bartholomew, pp. 167-8.

of thousands of schools. They educated millions and transformed nations.³⁵

The reason behind this is that Protestants wanted people to be able to read the Bible for themselves, and in their own language. Wherever Protestant missionaries went, they developed written forms of spoken languages; created fonts, introduced printing, and printed the first newspapers and textbooks, as well as Bibles. They pioneered schools as they aimed for mass literacy.³⁶

Two examples of missionaries committed to educational provision are Ann Judson, missionary to Burma, and William Carey, missionary to India, both of whom have been mentioned already (see chapters 4 and 5). Ann Judson (1789-1826) was one of the first overseas missionaries from America. Following her conversion at around the age of sixteen in 1805, she soon started teaching in school as she had great desire to impart the knowledge of God and His world to others. Aged twenty-one, she and her husband Adoniram left family, friends and all they knew in New England and started a Christian mission in Burma. Ann started schools for girls. She was only one of many Christians to promote female education in cultures where it was strictly forbidden.³⁷

William Carey (1761-1834) came from a pitifully poor background, but educated himself while making a living as a cobbler. He tirelessly researched the situation for the gospel in

35 Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made your World*, pp. 207-8.

36 Woodberry, pp. 367-90, p. 373.

37 Sharon James, *Ann Judson* (Evangelical Press, 2015).

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every country, and was convinced that the Great Commission was applicable for Christians in his day. When this humble Baptist preacher and his young wife left for India in 1793 many thought he was insane. But Carey would prove the gainsayers wrong, and today he is often remembered as the 'Father of missions'. In the face of often seemingly impossible difficulties, he persevered. 'I can plod,' he famously commented. But he also had faith that God could work through his humble efforts, and do the impossible. His motto was:

Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God

Carey translated the Scriptures into many Indian languages, trained Indian ministers, promoted social reforms, began dozens of schools for Indian children of all castes, pioneered lending libraries, published the first books on science and natural history in India, pioneered the printing industry in India, and became Professor of Bengali, Sanskrit and Marathi at Fort William College in Calcutta. He translated and printed great Indian religious classics, transformed Bengali into the foremost literary language of India, and established the first newspaper printed in any Asian language.³⁸

Christians in India still play a leading role in promoting education for those regarded as 'untouchable', but they sometimes still run up against traditional resistance. 'In the

38 Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi, *Carey, Christ and Cultural Transformation* (OM Publishing, 1993), pp. 1-8.

Hindu system, encouraging the poor to learn is encouraging them to sin.³⁹

In a global survey of the impact of Bible translation, it was found that Bible translators ‘had a profound effect on the emergence of national consciousness’. By giving peoples a written language of their own, they provided a cultural asset that is then used to keep written records of the various histories and cultures:

More than 90 percent of these languages have a grammar and dictionary at all only because the Western missionary movement provided them, thus pioneering arguably the largest, most diverse and most vigorous movement of cultural renewal in history. Bible translation has enabled countries to free themselves from colonialism. Often it was the first written form for tribes, giving them the means by which they could put in written form demands and concerns, which for most led to disassociation from their European overlords. Not surprisingly, when one looks at the key moments for decolonization or the recognition of indigenous rights, missionaries and translators are often in the picture.⁴⁰

Baroness Caroline Cox has often visited Burma (Myanmar). She works with local partners, in areas where human rights abuses abound. These partners testify that the Burmese government dislikes Christianity especially because it ‘fosters

39 Darrow L. Miller and Stan Guthrie, *Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures*, p. 68, quoted in Wayne Grudem, *The Poverty of Nations*, p. 255.

40 Brian Stiller, *From Jerusalem to Timbuktu: A World Tour of the Spread of Christianity* (IVP, 2018), p. 63; the quote from Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations* (OUP, 2008).

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genuine democracy by encouraging individuals to think for themselves.⁴¹ That is a powerful tribute to the impact of the education promoted by Christians. Similarly, on a trip to a war-torn region of Sudan Caroline Cox was told by one leader that British missionaries had given his people education, which resulted in the freedom to think for themselves.

You cannot give anyone a greater gift or freedom than that.⁴²

Further Reading

Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made Your World, How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilisation* (Thomas Nelson, 2011), pp. 77-91; 161-245.

Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Zondervan, 2004), pp. 170-93; 218-47.

Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism led to Reformations, Science, Witch-hunts and the End of Slavery* (Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 121-99.

41 Caroline Cox, 'Holding the Line', in Lynda Rose, (ed), *What are they Teaching the Children?* (VFJ/Wilberforce Publications, 2016), p. 342.

42 Cox, p. 343.