ABOLITION SLAVERY.

The GLORIOUS 1st of AUGUST, 1838,

When it is confidently expected that the last vestige of NLAYERY will be swept away in all our West India Islands.

A Public Thanksgiving Service will be held in the ENGLISH WESLEYAN CHAPEL, on WEDNESDAY Evening next, AUGUST 1st, 1838, PRECISELY at 7 o'Clock. Addresses in both Languages will be delivered on the amplicious occasion.

The attendance of all, that feel interested in the welfare of 800,000 of their fellow-creatures who will shortly emerge from a state of SLAVERY into that of FREEDOM, is most currently requested.

Carmethon, July 30th, 1838.

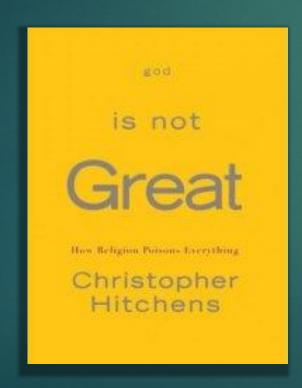
P.S.—A Collection will be made to defray the local expenses of the Carmerthea Anti-Slavery Society, and to aid the General Committee, in London, in their important and habours, to secure to the Negro the passession of ACTUAL, as well as



The Impact of the Gospel in History
Paul Copan

Introduction

"New Atheist" Christopher Hitchens: "Religion poisons everything"?





Martin Marty (U Chicago), an authority on religion: At least 17 distinct definitions of religion; scholars "will never agree on the definition of religion."



Cited in William Cavanaugh, The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 28.

- Everyone—atheist, theist, etc.—has a worldview, and whatever the worldview, it should be <u>justified</u>—not simply <u>assumed</u>.
- Atheism has done a lot of "poisoning" (e.g., Stalin, Mao Tse-Tung, Pol Pot).
- Not all traditional "religions" are created equal (e.g., dhimmitude in Islam, caste system).

Biblical Voices

Genesis 1:27: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Jesus in Matthew 7:12: "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Hindu Voice (Book of Manu): "Not all are created equal"



INDIAN CASTE SYSTEM



Brahmins (Priests)



Kshatriya (Warriors)



Vaishyas (Merchants, landowners)



Shudras (Servants, subordinate to Vaishyas, Kshatriyas and Brahmins)



Icons: Soo Soo

(Cobblers, street sweepers latrine cleaners considered beneath the caste system)

"New Atheist" Richard Dawkins

"There are no Christians, as far as I know, blowing up buildings. I am not aware of any Christian suicide bombers. I am not aware of any major Christian denomination that believes the penalty for apostasy is death. I have mixed feelings about the decline of Christianity, in so far as Christianity might be a bulwark against something



worse."

In Ruth Gledhill, "Scandal and schism leave Christians praying for a 'new Reformation," *The Times* (Apr. 6, 2010):

https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/scandal-and-schism-leave-christians-praying-for-a-new-ref

. 10 50 5

Richard Dawkins (the Hay Festival, 2014)

He said he could describe himself as a "secular Christian in that he has a "feeling of nostalgia" for certain Christian ceremonies and traditions.

"Richard Dawkins talks to Joan Bakewell," *YouTube* (Aug. 8, 2014): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daW8Yz3vbUg. Dawkins' comments start 30:38 in the video.

FOCUS: "What happens when people faithfully follow Jesus Christ, when they are consistently living out their message—not simply wearing the 'Christian' label?"

"ROOTS, SHOOTS, AND FRUITS"

Worldvoice: articulated by a model religious or philosophical spokesperson or even worshiped deity—Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha, Shiva, Marx ("roots").

Worldview: philosophical, religious, intellectual precepts/outlook ("shoots").

<u>Worldvenue</u>: Visible expression of beliefs through concrete social customs and bractices ("fruits").

Abortion, caste system, racism, apartheid, dhimmitude, sexual/human slavery...

Thom Wolf: While <u>all</u> cultures are <u>sick</u>, some are <u>sicker</u> than others.

Why are some cultures more change-prone instead of change-resistant?



Consider the voices we listen to.

OVERVIEW

- 1. Transformation and History: How Faithful Jesus-Followers Shaped Culture
- 2. Christianity and the "Critics":
 Reinforcement from Non-Theistic Scholars

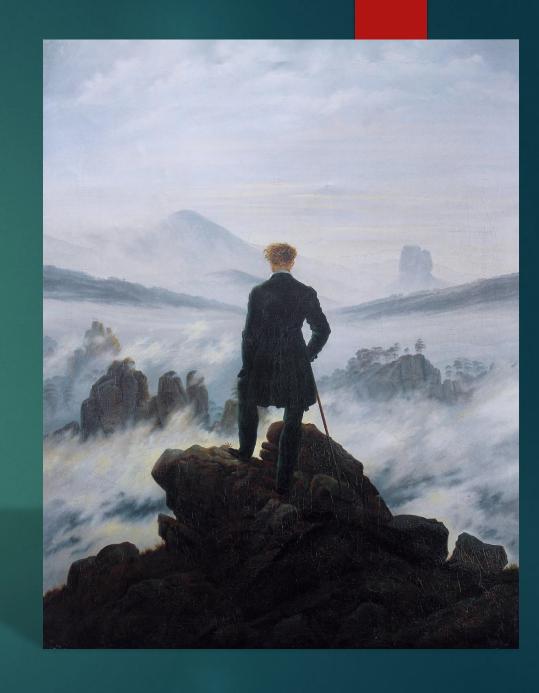


Many of us are cultural trust-fund kids. We are heirs to the hard-fought gains brought to us by courageous, dedicated Christians following Jesus. We are now living on the fumes of what shaped Western culture.

William Butler Yeats "The Second Coming"

"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

Painting: "Wanderer above the Sea of Fog," German Romantic artist Caspar David Friedrich (1818).



1. TRANSFORMATION AND HISTORY: How Faithful Jesus-Followers Help Transform Culture



We take for granted the structures and goods of Western civilization without realizing what led to shaping this culture.

It is like a house whose construction, function, and durability we take for granted. We simply inhabit it without thinking about how it came to be.



Tracking the Transformation

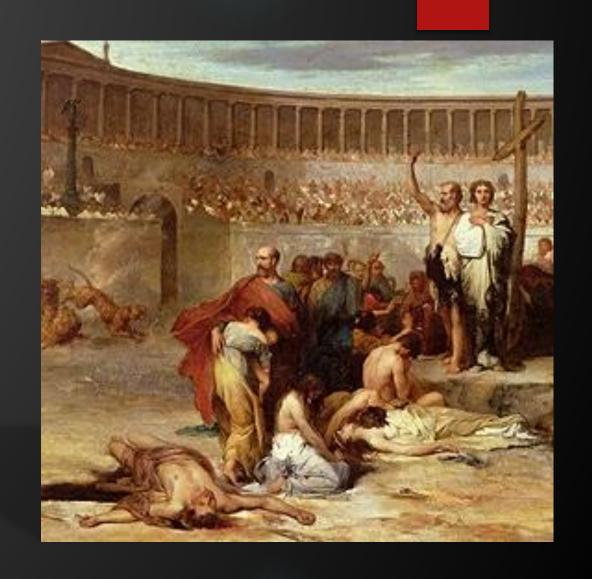
- a. <u>Transformation of Culture</u>: Early Church Era and Middle Ages
- b. Transformation through Reformation:
 Democracy, Education, and Moral Reforms
- c. Transformation in the Modern Era: Science, Bioethics, Economics, Human Rights

a. Transformation of Culture: Early Church Era and Middle Ages

2nd CENTURY: Epistle to Diognetus

"They [Christians] dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners... They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven...

They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are



Emperor Julian "the Apostate" (ca. AD 360)—hostile toward Christians

"Why do we not observe that it is their [the Christians'] benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead, and the pretended holiness of their lives that have done most to increase atheism [i.e., disbelief in the pantheon of pagan deities]? For it is disgraceful that, when no Jew ever has to beg, and the impious Galileans [i.e., Christians] support not only their own poor but ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us."

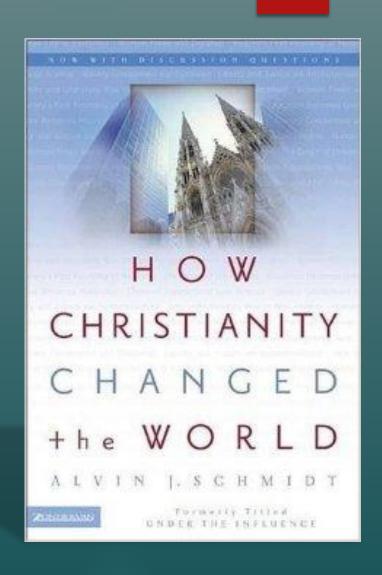
Epistulae 22.429d



Moral/social reforms

After AD 313 (Constantine):

- Outlawing gladiatorial games
- Prohibiting childabandonment/infanticide
- Creation of hospices (AD 325)
- The creation of hospitals (AD 369)—motivated by Jesus' words: "I was sick and you looked after me" in Matthew 25:36.



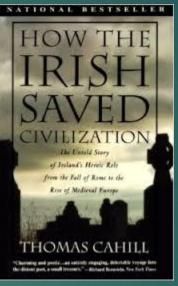
Missionary endeavors and church planting

For example, St. Patrick, 5th century—went back to Ireland where he was once a slave. planting 700 churches, ordaining up to 1,000 priests—with 150 Celtic tribes becoming largely Christianized.



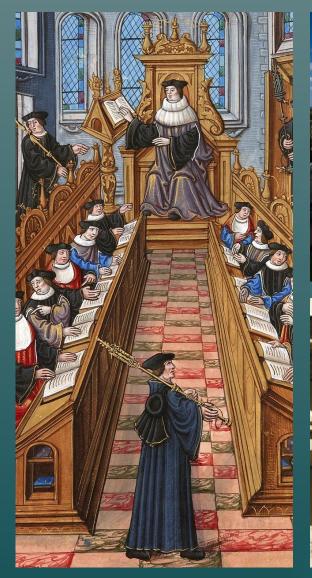
Copying and preserving manuscripts/promoting learning







Establishing universities and centers of learning







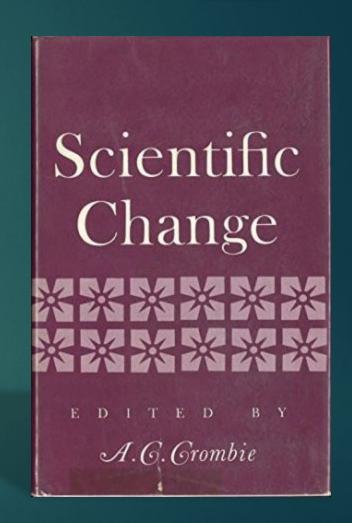
Technological advancement (horse power, horseshoe, harnessing water-power, wheelbarrow, eyeglasses, clocks)

"The chief glory of the later Middle Ages was not its cathedrals or its scholasticism: it was the building for the first time in history of a complex civilization which rested not on the backs of sweating slaves or coolies but primarily on nonhuman power."

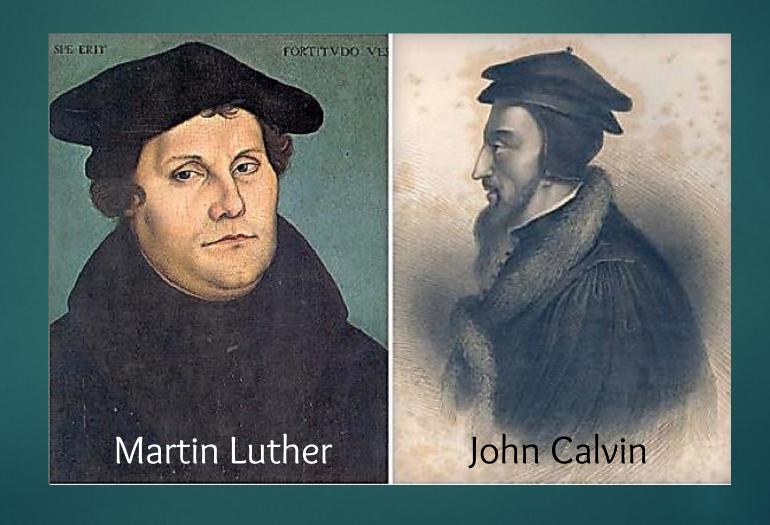
Oxford Symposium on Scientific Change (1961)

"Christian beliefs provided the rationale, and faith the motive energy for western technology" (U. of Marburg historian Ernst Benz).

See Benz, "The Christian Expectation of the End Time and the Idea of Technical Progress," in *Evolution and Christian Hope* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966). White notes that the Latin West had a more "voluntaristic" spirit than the contemplative Greek East, which facilitated technology (*Medieval Religion*, xx).



b. Transformation through Reformation: Democracy, Education, and Moral Reforms



The democratizing roots of the Protestant Reformation (starting in 1517) focused on

- three core, transformative values:
 - (1) PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS ("a kingdom of priests": cp. 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6)—rather than the more hierarchical structures of Catholicism/Eastern Orthodoxy;
 - (2) BIBLE IN THE VERNACULAR: the right of every believer to study the Bible for himself in his own language;
 - (3) GOODNESS OF VOCATIONS: the appropriateness of pursuing any honest vocation to the glory of God.

Various Democratizing Gains for Humanity

("Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy," *American Political Science Review* [2012])

Political scientist
Robert Woodberry
(Baylor University)



"Conversionary Protestant" (missionary) Christians in particular were responsible for these remarkable gains:

"the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education mass printing, volunteer organizations, most major colonial reforms [abolishing slavery, widow-burning, foot binding, female circumcision, pre-pubescent marriage of girls, etc.], and the codification of legal protections for nonwhites in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

"Areas where Protestant missionaries had a significant presence in the past are on average more economically developed today, with comparatively better health, lower infant mortality, lower corruption, greater literacy, higher educational attainment (especially for women), and more robust membership in nongovernmental associations."

European Protestant missionaries (19th/early 20th centuries) sought to <u>protect</u> indigenous peoples from abusive colonial powers:

- were selected as judges to punish or reprimand military officials or magistrates in cases of murder, seizing land, and forced labor;
- applied the same legal standards for whites and nonwhites;
- documented colonial atrocities through detailed information, later through photos

Robert Woodberry:

Without Protestant missionaries and ministers, mobilizing mass protests would have been difficult. These missionaries helped create a kind of "cocoon in which non-violent, indigenous political movements could develop" to press for democracy and decolonialization.

Woodberry's challenge:

Look at any map: where Protestant missionaries have been, there you will find more printed books and more schools per capita. You'll discover that in Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia, "most of the early nationalists who led their countries to independence graduated from Protestant mission schools."



Andrea P. Dilley, "The world the missionaries made," Christianity Today

Statistical evidence indicates a Protestantism-democracy association:

- **Protestantism <u>facilitated the development of</u> modern representative democracy.
- **Stable democracy first emerged in Protestant Europe and British-settler colonies.
- **By World War I every *independent*, predominantly Protestant country was a stable democracy—with the possible exception of Germany.

**Less stable versions of democracy developed in Catholic areas with large Protestant and Jansenist minorities, such as France.

**Democracy lagged in Catholic and Orthodox parts of Southern and Eastern Europe where Protestants had little influence. A similar pattern existed outside Europe.

Woodberry, "Missionary Roots," 245.

Woodberry's thesis that Protestant missionaries were moral and social change agents has held up under rigorous scrutiny.

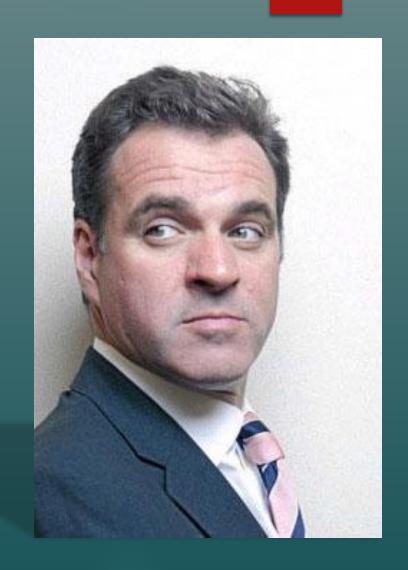
- This theory has been repeatedly tested using all available variables. Noted scholars like historian Philip Jenkins (Baylor) and sociologists Rodney Stark (Baylor) and Christian Smith (Notre Dame) find it convincing.
- The American Political Science Review required an additional 192 pages of supporting documentation.
- His article has received several awards, including the prestigious Luebbert Article Award in 2012 for the best article in comparative politics.

Atheist historian Niall Ferguson

The connection between Protestantism and a strong work ethic is one of the six "killer apps" that propelled the West forward as a civilization.

Other "apps" include civilizational competition, science, modern medicine, property rights, and a free market.

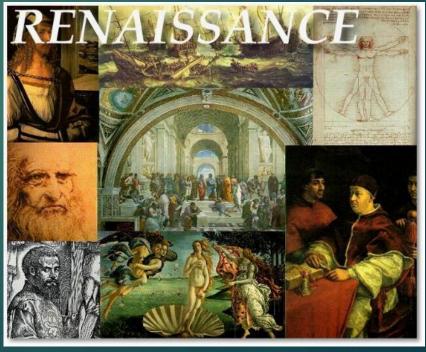
Niall Ferguson, Civilization: The West and the Rest (New York: Penguin, 2012).



EXCURSUS: "But What About Greek Democracy, the Renaissance, and Enlightenment Influences?"





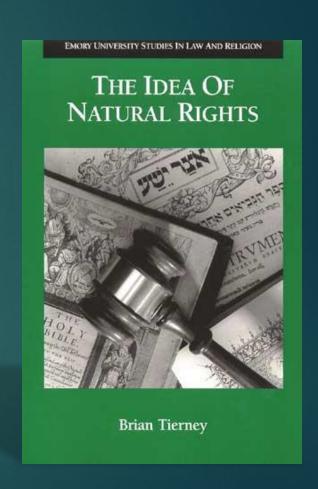


These are all inadequate explanations:

- ► Greek "democracy": The city-state of Athens was aristocratic and founded on slavery. Some were born to rule, others to be slaves (cf. Plato, Aristotle).
- Renaissance: fundamentally Christian ("humanities" [studia humanitatis]—not "humanism"/paganism); cf. Puritan John Milton's appropriation of pagan figures.
- Enlightenment: Many of its figures were shaped by Protestantism (Rousseau, Locke, Grotius, etc.)

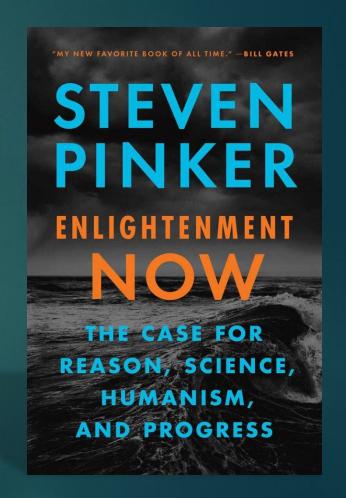
Prof. Brian Tierney of Cornell University (1922-2019), The Idea of Natural Rights

He argued that the concept of human equality/rights was rooted in the language of Genesis 1 ("the image of God") and developed in the 12th century in canon law. It was not the product of the Enlightenment.



The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997).

Steven Pinker promotes the Enlightenment, denounces the Christian faith, but fails to acknowledge its contribution in science, human dignity, democracy, etc.



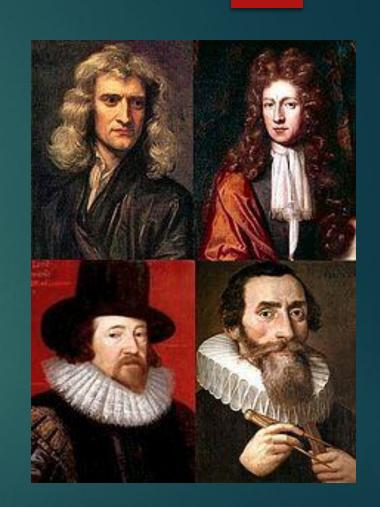
c. Transformation in the Modern Era: Science, Bioethics, Free Market, Human Rights

What are some other distinctively Christian contributions to the world?

#1: Modern Science

Pillars of modern science who believed in the Bible, divine design, and the possibility of miracles:

- ► Isaac Newton (classical physics),
- ► Johannes <u>Kepler</u> (astronomy)
- Nicholas <u>Copernicus</u> (astronomy, mathematics)
- ► Galileo Galilei (astronomy)
- ► Robert <u>Boyle</u> (chemistry)



- Michael <u>Faraday</u> (experimental sci./electromagnetism)
- James Clerk <u>Maxwell</u> (electromagnetism)
- William Henry <u>Perkin</u> (synthetic organic chemistry)
- George <u>Stokes</u> (spectroscopy, fluids)
- Wm. Thompson/Lord Kelvin (electromagnetism, heat)
- ► J.J. <u>Thompson</u> (physicist).

J.J. Thomson: identified and characterized the electron & Cavendish Professor of Physics at Cambridge University.

He placed over his door in the Cavendish Laboratory a verse from the Bible: "Great are the works of the Lord. They are studied by all who delight in them" (Psalm 111:2).



Paul Davies (physicist): "Science began as an outgrowth of theology, and all scientists, whether atheists or theists . . . accept an essentially theological worldview."

Rodney Stark (sociologist): The roots of science have "rested entirely on religious foundations, and the people who brought it about were devout Christians."

Paul Davies, Are We Alone? (New York: Basic, 1995), 96.

Rodney Stark, The Victory of Reason (New York: Random House, 2005), xi.

#2: Bioethics

Daniel Callahan—a founding father of the bioethics movement/co-founder of Hastings Center for bioethics:

"When I first became interested in bioethics in the mid-1960s, the only resources were theological or those drawn from within the traditions of medicine, themselves heavily shaped by religion."



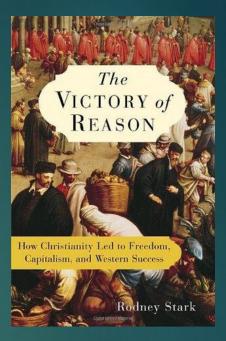
Daniel Callahan, "Religion and the Secularization of Bioethics," *Hastings Center Report* 20 (1990): 2-4.

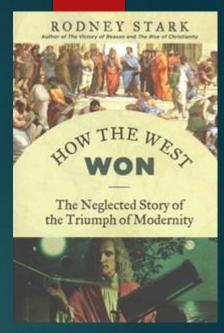
#3: Free Market

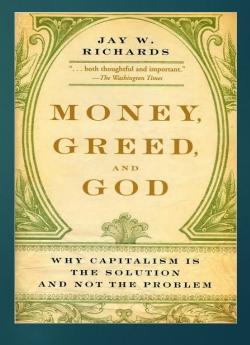
Rodney Stark: Ganitalian waskingtin impressive states solve our party stringers began to lend many attingers and to the limit of the stringers and to

Stark, "How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and the Success of the West," Indpendent Institute (December 2, 2005):

https://www.independent.org/news/article.asp?id=1809







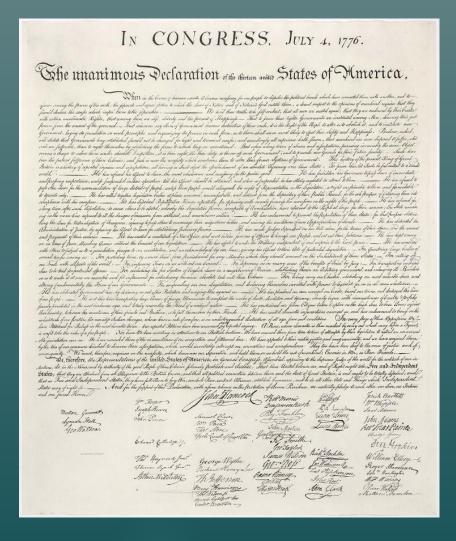
Miscellaneous quotations from Rodney Stark

- Before 1492, the "it was during the so-called Dark Ages that European technology and science overtook and surpassed the rest of the world."
- "Slavery ended in medieval Europe only because the church extended its sacraments to all slaves and then managed to impose a ban on the enslavement of Christians (and of Jews)."
- "Not only did most Europeans eat far better during the Dark Ages than in Roman times, but they were healthier, more energetic, and probably more intelligent."
- "Real science arose only once: in Europe."

#4: Human Rights

The Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights"—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (i.e., well-being and virtue).

France's Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen: Rights affirmed "in the presence and under the auspices" of "the Supreme Being."



United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948): Acknowledges "the inherent dignity" and "the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family... All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

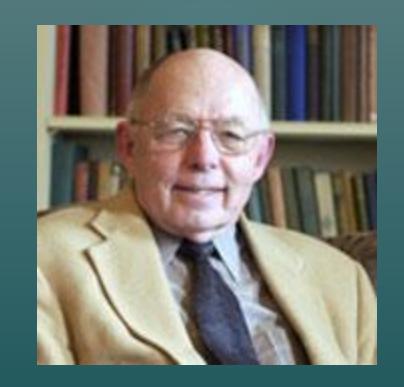
Who Was Behind the UN Declaration?

Harvard legal scholar Mary Ann Glendon: the chief movers seeking to create a "new world order" of human rights—particularly in the wake Nazi and Japanese atrocities during World War II—were primarily church coalitions and individual Christian leaders who worked closely with some Jewish rabbis.



Max Stackhouse—human rights scholar (Princeton)

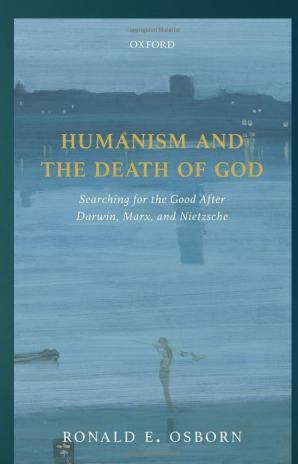
"intellectual honesty demands recognition of the fact that what passes as 'secular,' 'Western' principles of basic human rights developed nowhere else than out of key strands of the biblically-rooted religion."



Max Stackhouse, "A Christian Perspective on Human Rights," *Society* (January/February 2004): 25; see also, Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason* (New York: Random House, 2005), xi.

Ronald Osborn, Humanism and the Death of God (Oxford, 2017)

- Osborn documents human rights/dignity as the outworking of the biblical faith well before the Enlightenment (contra Steven Pinker).
- Philosophical naturalism has led to corrosion of human dignity, rights, and equality (e.g., naturalist Daniel Dennett: the notion of human rights is "nonsense on stilts"—though it is "good nonsense.")
- Genuine humanistic (i.e., human-affirming) values are more adequately grounded in a source of value (God) and find their greatest historical inspiration in the Christian tenet of God



Harvard 20-year study—church attendance improving physical health, well-being:

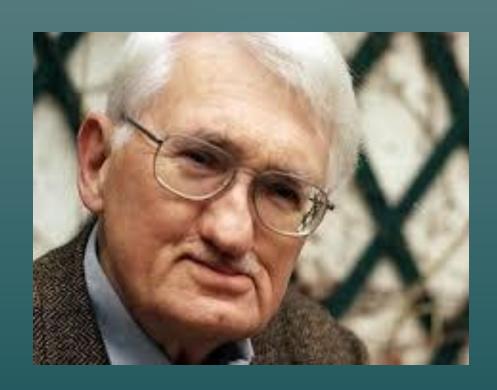
- "If one could conceive of a single elixir to improve the physical and mental health of millions of Americans — at no personal cost — what value would our society place on it? Going a step further, if research quite conclusively showed that when consumed just once a week, this concoction would <u>reduce mortality</u> by <u>20% to 30% over a 15-year</u> <u>period</u>, how urgently would we want to make it publicly available?
- ► The good news is that this miracle drug religion, and more specifically regular church attendance is already in reach of most Americans. In fact, there's a good chance it's just a short drive away."

Tyler J. VanderWeele and John Siniff, "Religion May Be a Miracle Drug: Church attendance is correlated with longer life and a sense of meaning," " USA Today (28 Oct. 2016): https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2016/10/28/religion-church-attendance-mortality-column/92676964/

2. <u>Christianity and the "Critics"</u>: Reinforcement from Non-Theistic Scholars

Atheist philosopher Jürgen Habermas:

"Christianity has functioned for the normative self-understanding of modernity as more than just a precursor or a catalyst. Egalitarian universalism, from which sprang the ideas of freedom and a social solidarity, of an autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, the individual morality of conscience, human rights, and democracy, is the direct heir to the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love...



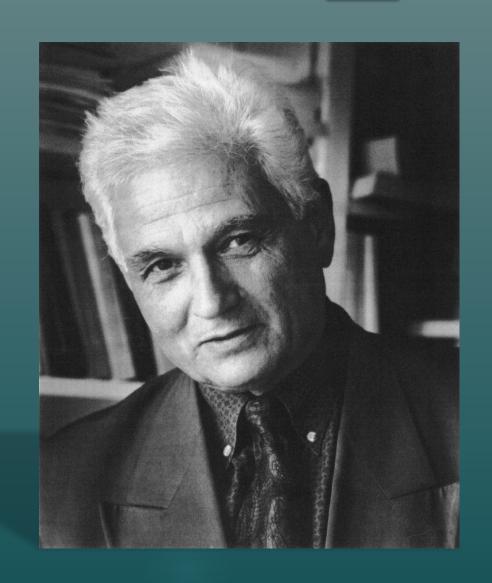
Habermas (cont'd)

...This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of continual critical appropriation and reinterpretation. To this day, there is no alternative to it. And in light of current challenges of a postnational constellation, we continue to draw on the substance of this heritage. Everything else is just idle postmodern talk."

Jürgen Habermas, Time of Transitions, ed. and trans. Ciaran Cronin and Max Pensky (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), 150-1.

Atheist thinker Jacques Derrida

"Today the cornerstone of international law is the sacred, what is sacred in humanity. You should not kill. You should not be responsible for a crime against the sacredness...



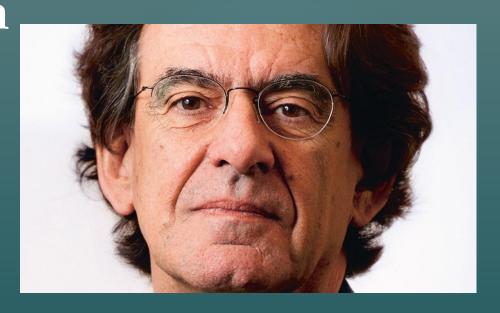
Derrida (cont'd)

...In that sense, the concept of crime against humanity is a Christian concept and I think there would be no such thing in the law today without the Christian heritage, the Abrahamic heritage, the biblical heritage."

Jacques Derrida, "To Forgive: The Unforgivable and Imprescriptable," in *Questioning God*, ed. John D. Caupto, et al. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 70.

Agnostic philosopher Luc Ferry:

The Christian idea of human equality was "unprecedented at the time, and one to which our world owes its entire democratic inheritance."



British journalist, political commentator (and atheist) Douglas Murray



"...after discarding God, all the work of establishing morals is still before you.... it is increasingly clear hat, contra most atheists, ethics are self-evidently not self-evident."

"The more atheists think on these things, the more we may have to accept that the concept of the sanctity of human life is a Judeo-Christian notion which might very easily not survive Judeo-Christian civilisation."

"Would human life be sacred in an atheist world? It's disturbingly hard to say so," The Spectator (19 April 2014)

https://www.spectator.co.uk/2014/04/ethics-for-atheists/?fbclid=IwAR2ZKNxXl4qzbx2qFFflZ2fWZmZDNLiqpOShWBWF0pNpwSnoz9TmF3WZtLl

Murray asserts that "the revolutionary moral insight" Christ showed by calling on people to love and forgive their enemies. This is something so "counter-intuitive and world-changing."

The Christian faith offers the only source for making sense of forgiving one another. The alternative is collapsing into identity politics (what he calls our "cancel-culture" in his book *The Madness of Crowds*).

George Brahm, "Douglas Murray cherishes Christianity. What would it take for him to believe?" Premier Christianity (14 January 2020): <a href="https://www.premierchristianity.com/Blog/Douglas-Murray-cherishes-Christianity.-What-would-it-tak-e-for-him-to-believe?fbclid=lwAR2FrS16auS0x37SaofTOkjpsy-CdLilNC8Rqi2l2nyZEwtVqN6ayRPHyxA

Self-proclaimed "rationalist and skeptic" actor John Rhys-Davies



- 28th Annual Movieguide Awards (Jan. 24, 2020): "Understand, I count myself a rationalist and a skeptic, and I find myself constantly defending Christians and Christianity," said Rhys-Davies. "I find that wonderful. We seem to forget that Christian civilization has made the world a better place than it ever was."
- "One of the great glories" of Christianity was the abolition of slavery."
- "We owe Christianity the greatest debt of thanks that a generation can ever have, and to slight it and to dismiss it as being irrelevant is the detritus [waste/debris] of rather ill-read minds, I think."

Newly-converted historian, author Tom Holland:



His testimony: In 2020, Holland writes about a church service: "My eyes were opened that morning as they had not previously been to this great tradition of Christian preaching—a tradition that has always been particularly fundamental to Protestant Christianity. I had been reading a lot about the Spirit and the experience of grace. That morning I felt that something had descended on me - like a fire, like the dove."

DOMINION

HOW THE CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION

REMADE THE WORLD

TOM HOLLAND

AUTHOR OF RUBICON

"The Preacher Who Brought Me Back to Church," https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/stories-and-features/tom-holland-preacher-who-brought-me-back-church

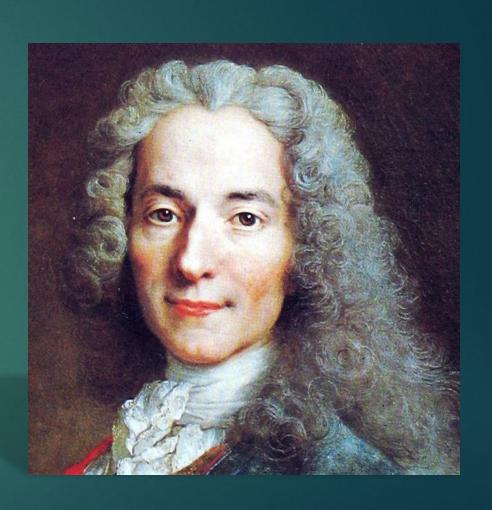
"Why I Was Wrong About Christianity"

"The longer I spent immersed in the study of classical antiquity, the more alien and unsettling I came to find it. It was not just the extremes of callousness that I came to find shocking, but the lack of a sense that the poor or the weak might have any intrinsic value.

"It was not just the extremes of callousness that I came to find shocking, but the lack of a sense that the poor or the weak might have any intrinsic value. As such, the founding conviction of the Enlightenment – that it owed nothing to the faith into which most of its greatest figures had been born - increasingly came to seem to me unsustainable."

"'Every sensible man,' Voltaire wrote, 'every honourable man, must hold the Christian sect in horror.' ... Yet Voltaire, in his concern for the weak and oppressed, was marked more enduringly by the stamp of biblical ethics than

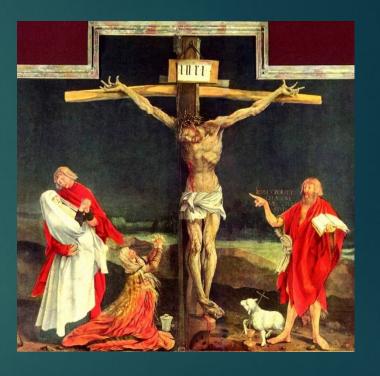
he cared to admit



"'We preach Christ crucified,' St Paul declared, 'unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.' He was right. Nothing could have run more counter to the most profoundly held assumptions of Paul's contemporaries – Jews, or Greeks, or Romans."



THE POLITICAL PROPERTY OF SHIPS OF SHIP



"Today, even as belief in God fades across the West, the countries that were once collectively known as Christendom continue to bear the stamp of the two-millennia-old revolution that Christianity represents. It is the principal reason why, by and large, most of us who live in post-Christian societies still take for granted that it is nobler to suffer than to inflict suffering.

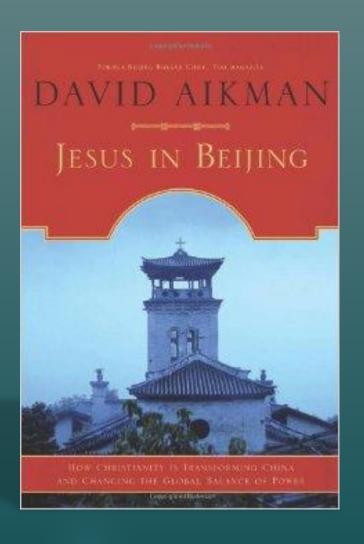
"It is why we generally assume that every human life is of equal value. In my morals and ethics, I have learned to accept that I am not Greek or Roman at all, but thoroughly and proudly Christian."

Tom Holland, "Why I was wrong about Christianity," New Statesman (14 Sept. 2016):

http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/religion/2016/09/tom-holland-why-i-was-wrong-about-christianity

TIME correspondent (David Aikman) re: a Chinese lecturer from CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) speaking to US tourists:

One of the things we were asked to look into was what accounted for the success, in fact, the pre-eminence of the West all over the world," he said. "We studied everything we could from the historical, political, economic, and cultural perspective. At first, we thought it was because you had more powerful guns than we had. Then we thought it was because you had the best political system...



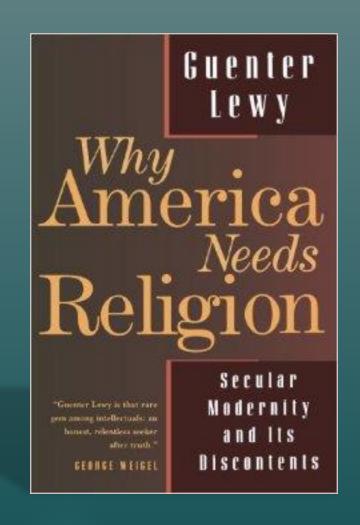
Aikman (cont'd)

Next we focused on your economic system. But in the past twenty years, we have realized that the heart of your culture is your religion: Christianity. That is why the West has been so powerful. The Christian moral foundation of social and cultural life was what made possible the emergence of capitalism and then the successful transition to democratic politics. We don't have any doubt about this."

David Aikman, Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), 5.

Agnostic political scientist Guenter Lewy

"Adherents of [a naturalistic] ethic are not likely to produce a Dorothy Day or a Mother Teresa. Many of these people love humanity but not individual human beings with all their failings and shortcomings. They will be found participating in demonstrations for causes such as nuclear disarmament but not sitting at the bedside of a dying person...



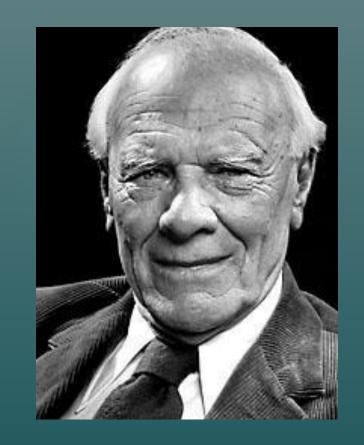
Lewy (cont'd)

...An ethic of moral autonomy and individual rights, so important to secular liberals, is incapable of sustaining and nourishing values such as altruism and self-sacrifice."

Guenter Lewy, Why America Needs Religion (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 137.

Then-agnostic journalist Malcolm Muggeridge:

While in India and Africa, he witnessed "much righteous endeavor undertaken by Christians of all denominations." However, he added, "I never, as it happens, came across a hospital or orphanage run by the Fabian Society or a Humanist leper colony."

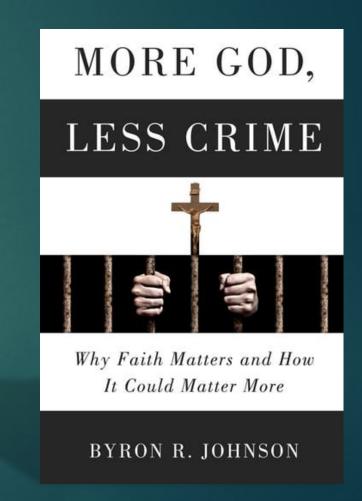


Malcolm Muggeridge, "Me and Myself" in *Jesus Rediscovered* (New York: Pyramid Publications, 1969), 157.

Byron Johnson (sociologist, Baylor U.)

The book describes how faith communities, congregations, and faith-based organizations are essential in forming partnerships necessary to provide the human and spiritual capital to effectively address crime, offender rehabilitation, and the substantial aftercare problems facing former prisoners.

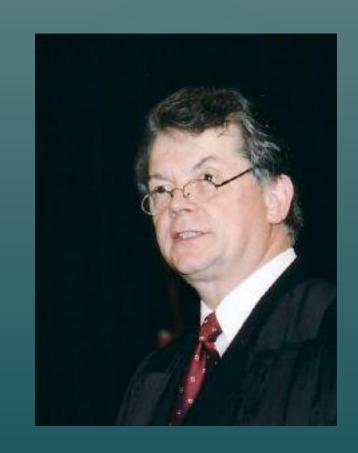
Johnson surveyed every study between 1944 and 2010 that measured the possible effect of religion on crime. Though the authors of these studies used different methods and assessed different groups of people, 90% of these studies



found that more religiosity resulted in less crime

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation journalist Brian Stewart

I've found there is no movement, or force, closer to the raw truth of war, famines, crises and the vast human predicament, than organized Christianity in action. And there is no alliance more determined and dogged in action than church workers, ordained and lay members, when mobilized for a common good. It is these Christians who are right 'on the front lines' of committed humanity today and when I want to find that front, I follow their trail...



Stewart (cont'd)

It is a vast front, stretching from the most impoverished reaches of the developing world to the hectic struggle to preserve caring values in our own towns and cities. I have never been able to reach these front lines without finding Christian volunteers already in the thick of it, mobilizing congregations that care, and being a faithful witness to truth, the primary light in the darkness, and so often the only light.

Stewart (cont'd)

Now I came to this admiring view slowly and reluctantly. At the start of my career, I'd largely abandoned religion for I, too, regarded the church as a rather tiresome irrelevance.

What ultimately persuaded me otherwise – and I took a lot of persuading – was the reality of Christianity's mission, physically and in spirit, before my very eyes.

Stewart (cont'd)

I'm often asked if I lost belief in God covering events like Ethiopia, then called 'the worst hell on earth.' Actually, like others before me, it was precisely in such hells that I rediscovered religion. I saw so many countless acts of human love and charity, total respect for the most forsaken, for all life."

Brian Stewart, "Christians Are on the Front Lines of Compassion," *Canadian Christianity*. Available at: http://canadianchristianity.com/bc/bccn/0607/01faith.html (my italics).

The good news of Jesus—of God who steps into our world, shares in our pain and suffering and misery—has produced amazing, transformative fruits.

The late sociologist Rodney Stark (Baylor University)

"I basically wrote myself into the Christian faith."

