

Discipling & Building Nations

"...disciple all nations..." - from Jesus Christ's Victory Speech (Matthew 28:19)

In President Obama's victory speech following his re-election he asked his nation to join him in his hope that the best for America was still to come. What was required was to "have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting." Essentially, his message was that success is around the corner if you are prepared to work hard and try your best.

British Prime Minister David Cameron recently declared that Britain can rise again and called the country to build "an aspiration nation". His recipe was "hard work, strong families, taking responsibility and serving others" (which are all biblical values). To his credit, he has also acknowledged the nation's Christian roots and invited the Church to help the nation get back on its feet. **The important question is, will we in the British Church take this appeal seriously and if so, how are we to help shape the future of this country?**

It takes more than a high IQ and education from the finest universities to govern a nation. It also takes more than plain hard work and dedication in order for a nation to have lasting success. It takes wisdom. True wisdom comes from the Bible for "the fear of the Lord *is* the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding". Without this wisdom we are building upon a sandy foundation which may look good for a time but will ultimately crash.

If Britain is to rise again, it begs the question: **what caused the nation to rise the first time?** And **what made a tiny island greater than giant nations** such as China and India? Contrary to what a secular education system is teaching as it seeks to rewrite history by ignoring the West's Judeo-Christian roots, it is the Bible and its worldview that created the soul of British and Western civilization.

The West Without its Soul

What we are witnessing in the West today is nothing less than *cultural suicide*, the consequences of nations severing their biblical heritage. Using an analogy from George Orwell,

'...we [have] sawed and sawed and sawed at the branch we were sitting on. And in the end, much more suddenly than anyone had foreseen, our efforts were rewarded, and down we came. But unfortunately there had been a little mistake: The thing at the bottom was not a bed of roses after all; it was a cesspool full of barbed wire...It appears that amputation of the soul isn't just a simple surgical job, like having your appendix out. The wound has a tendency to go septic.'

(Notes on the Way, 1940)

Without the Bible any future hope really has no basis to bring it about. Faith in human efforts and wisdom alone will only result in the rise and fall of material civilizations, one Tower of Babel after another.

For too long the church has focused almost exclusively on the discipling of individual believers in how to function 'spiritually'. Although very important, this should lead on to **equipping and empowering all believers to engage in God's kingdom mission in discipling all areas of society** (business, education, family, media, performing arts, government, etc), resulting in **national transformation**.

Nations—Human or Divine Invention?

Does Jesus save nations? Is the church called to disciple or build nations?

Nationalism tends to be viewed as a dirty word because of the atrocities it inspired during the twentieth century. However, the German nationalism that led to two world wars was a secularized perversion of a biblical value. Within Europe today, Roman Catholics, whose history is based on building empire rather than nationalism, are pushing for a united continent through the European Union. However, it was the Protestant Reformation that originally broke up the Holy Roman Empire into modern nation-states, often defined by language. These languages were developed through Bible translation. Bible translators such as Martin Luther and William Tyndale empowered people who had been ignored and oppressed by the Latin-speaking elite, and fostered an environment in which Europe's modern languages could develop and flourish. As the Bible was translated into German, French, and English, the people's mother tongue became the language of learning and enabled the common man to participate in affairs such as government, law and the marketplace that were previously closed to him.

Beginning with Genesis 11 and all the way through to the last book of Revelation, the Bible teaches that **nations are God's design**. This was not only an act of damage limitation due to human sinfulness and to serve as a barrier to global totalitarianism, individual nation-states also express the uniqueness and diversity of their Creator.

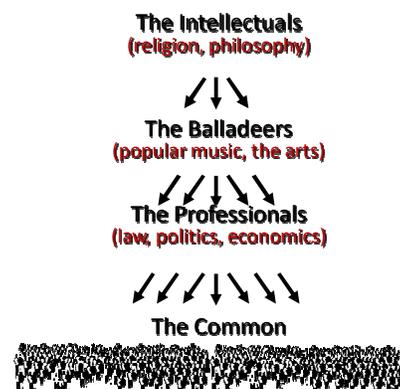
God promises to make Abraham a great nation by blessing him with many descendents, a particular land, authority to govern, and economic prosperity if God's law is obeyed. The Hebrews are delivered from slavery and oppression, and are disciplined on how to be a blessed nation through the law given to Moses. **They are to be an example and a light to all other nations providing a healthy balance between love for one's nation and international concern.** Sadly, many times they departed from God's ways and suffered the consequences.

The Old Testament presents various individuals like Moses, Daniel, Nehemiah, and several of the prophets who for love of God and their nation were prepared to risk their lives to bring about national reform (Interestingly, this also helped teach Western governments to respect the freedoms of their 'prophets' or writers who expose corruption and call for reform. Cultures that have no biblical heritage pay only lip service to a free press). The prophet Jeremiah was called to "build" and through Isaiah, Ezekiel and Nehemiah, God was looking for "re-builders". Indeed, when looking at Isaiah in context we see that rather than addressing individuals, his messages are primarily directed at the nation of Israel that is sick and needs healing. He announces the good news that the Messiah's wounds are for the healing of the nations.

Although "nation-building" maybe out of fashion, it is a fact that **those nations that have been shaped by the Bible became greater than the nations that were ignorant of the Bible or hostile to it.** "In your seed *Great Britain* [all the nations of the earth] shall be blessed." (Gen. 22:18). Through Abraham's seed, Jesus, and his 'children of faith', the British nation has been blessed! Yes, Britain can rise again. Britain can be saved. And it will have to involve reforming education.

It was Martin Luther who said that **next to reforming the church, it was necessary to reform education.** Almost five hundred years ago the biblical reformation was born in European universities. And it was in educational institutions during the twentieth century that secular humanism developed and then spread through music and the arts into the professional spheres, and then into the mainstream of society. **Ideas have consequences** and it is in the education domain that ideas are first birthed and like yeast eventually spread and become the prevailing worldview.

Ideas Spread Through Culture



FOUNDATIONS & RECONCILIATION

"Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and raise up the age-old foundations; they will be called Repairer of the breach, a Restorer of streets to dwell in." (Isaiah 58:12)

As the prophet Isaiah called his nation to reform, he also recognized that restoration would involve re-digging and repairing the foundations laid in the past.

Britain has been a pioneer and missionary nation. As missionaries ourselves, we are well aware of the tremendous contribution many from the British Isles have made in taking the gospel to unreached areas throughout the world. Missionary pioneers such as William Carey, Hudson Taylor, and David Livingstone all came from this country (and there were many others). Unfortunately, as we sought to share the good news of the gospel and be 'a light to the nations', the message was sometimes *defiled*. This was because it was at times accompanied and sometimes directly influenced by a hidden agenda being carried by those sent to explore the world, establish colonies, sign treaties, and build our Empire. **As a pioneer and missionary nation, Britain was a blessing nation. Sadly, at the same time, it was also an oppressing nation.** Although the Empire no longer remains, the resultant legacy and its effects do. Is it any wonder then that there is much resistance to the gospel in certain parts of the world?

Looking back over the past couple of years, it seems that God had to take us to Canada in order to open our eyes and begin to understand His perspective on this! We quickly discovered we had no real understanding about what truly happened when the missionary Pilgrim Fathers arrived in the New World from Britain's shores. Sadly, the sins that had been committed against our own neighbouring nations (and the 'theology' that went along with it) were then repeated elsewhere as we sought to extend our Empire. Oliver Cromwell (isn't he a hero in our historical past?), believing he had a biblical mandate, used military muscle to enforce Protestantism on the Irish (and we know what the repercussions of that have been). From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, the taking of land and the imposition of the Christian faith by force was accepted practice. It wasn't long before the same thing happened with the Native Americans where their land was taken from them by coercion, by conquest, and by fraudulent means.

As we continue to learn how the English white settlers treated the First Nations people of North America, and misrepresented God and His kingdom to these and other indigenous peoples around the world, creating barriers to the gospel and a tragic legacy that continues to this day, we believe God desires to deal with these past sins. He wants **kingdom foundations that cannot be shaken** (much in our world is being shaken today) and is seeking those who will stand in the gap, acknowledge the sins of our forefathers who misrepresented Him and His kingdom, and seek reconciliation so that the barriers to the gospel may be removed and the indigenous First Nations peoples may come to truly know their Creator (2 Sam. 21:1-14; Is. 59:13-16; Ezek. 22:29-30; 2 Cor. 5:18). He also wants to ensure that in re-building for the future, we don't repeat the mistakes of the past.

With this in mind we are developing a relationship with Brian Mills, considered the father of the UK prayer movement who is a senior advisor to the International Prayer Council and involved in many intercessory prayer movements around the world. He has also been involved in corporate repentance and reconciliation initiatives for many years, and seen God move in remarkable ways.

New beginnings usually begin with repentance. As God's people, if we will humble ourselves and pray, seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways (in ongoing acts of repentance), God promises to hear from heaven, forgive our sin and heal our land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Reforming Great Britain

Britain has a rich spiritual and biblical heritage but is now a broken nation as it continues to reject the source (the Bible) that made it 'Great'. The church in post-modern culture is no longer at the centre of society but on the margins and has lost its voice as it has retreated from being an influence across the domains of life and society.



Stuart with Ruth & Vishal Mangalwadi

Since returning to England we have got to know personally Vishal Mangalwadi, whose writings have greatly impacted Stuart's life in recent years. Vishal is considered a modern-day equivalent to the late Francis Schaeffer, and is an international lecturer, social reformer, political columnist, and author of 17 books including *Truth and Transformation: A Manifesto for Ailing Nations*, and *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization*.

Reforming Education

In order to obey the Lord's command to disciple all nations, the church founded and sustained institutions of higher education in Europe and America. This made the church a uniquely culture-shaping force, creating relatively just, free, tolerant and prosperous societies. During the 20th century, the British (and American) church handed over to a secular humanistic educational system its obligation to disciple future generations. Therefore, the world has been discipling Christian youth and turning them away from the very notion of truth (let alone the One, who is the Truth) and righteousness. Secularization is destroying every institution that helped create a Great Britain. Christian education has to rebuild those institutions. The church, once again, needs to rise up and bring reform through a biblical discipling of this nation.

Church-based and Community-centred Higher Education (CaCHE) (www.cacheglobal.net)

Vishal has developed a proposed strategy for transforming nations that involves **equipping local churches to double up as university classrooms and to begin discipling the next generation with an education that combines truth with character**. Using a high-quality wholistic curriculum that combines face-to-face mentoring and online learning made available for free in the form of a Massive Open Online Course, students would be educated in the context of a Christian worldview and equipped to transform their nations for the glory of God. An advisory board is already taking things forward, major funding is being sought, work has begun on curriculum, and we and others are casting vision and building partnerships.

“If the church fails to disciple the nation, the nation will disciple the church.”

We either understand and embrace God's mission and its implications for our lives, joining Jesus on His kingdom offensive, bringing truth, goodness and beauty into every area of life and culture, or we opt out, disengage, and “go with the flow”, allowing the brokenness and disorder of our surrounding culture to shape our lives.

(Disciple Nations Alliance)

God wants to take his church and this nation forward. He will do that as His church responds to his call to **repair the foundations** and **build and reform the nation!** No political party or human endeavour can turn this nation around and cause it to rise again. It will only happen as the church rises up, stands in the gap on behalf of this nation and seeks a restoration of biblical truth resulting in societal transformation. This will have to include transforming education. It will only happen as we disciple our nation.

We are available to share more with you and your believing community, so please don't hesitate to contact us. Also, will you join us with your support as we begin taking steps to move this initiative forward? Please prayerfully consider getting involved and partnering with us as we act as *catalysts...stimulating action and effecting change!*

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