

What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?

The Impact of Christianity on Civilization

Part III – Education & Economics

August 13, 2004

What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?

The Impact of Christianity on the world – A Brief Review

- sanctity and worth of human life
- dignity for women, children, elderly
- ministries of charity and compassion
- advances science and technology
- advances in medicine and health care

What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?

Today's topics

- Christianity's imprint on education
- Christianity's impact on labor and economics

Christianity's Imprint on Education

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..."

Proverbs 1:7

Jesus the Teacher

- Has been widely acknowledged as a “great teacher.”
 - Teaching was an integral part of His earthly ministry.
 - **Who** He taught: *Groups, individuals, His disciples, Jews, non-Jews, educated, uneducated, rich, and poor.*
 - **Where** He taught: *In synagogues, in homes, and in the countryside.*
 - **How** He taught: *From the scriptures, through parables and through human-life illustrations.*
 - **What** He taught: *Salvation and the forgiveness of sins.*

Jesus Prepares and Commissions His Disciples

- Jesus taught His followers so that they in turn would teach others.
 - The sending of the twelve (Luke 9)
 - The sending of the seventy-two (Luke 10)
 - The Great Commission
 - “¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and **teaching** them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matt 28:19-20

An Early Emphasis on Teaching

- Following Jesus' example and commands, the apostles focused on teaching and preaching the gospel anyone who will hear it.

"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped **teaching** and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ."

Acts 5:42

"Then someone came and said, 'Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts **teaching** the people.' "

Acts 5:25

- The ability to teach was also one of the qualifications for a spiritual overseer (1 Tim 3:2).

Early Christian Education

- Following the death of the apostles, teaching was still a major focus of the early Church.
 - Holy Scriptures emphasized
 - *Didache* (A.D. 80-110) an “instruction manual” for new converts.
 - Oral Teaching - Question-and-answer method.
 - *Catechumens*
 - Newcomers to church who received instruction over a period of 2-3 years before baptism and church membership.
 - Teaching initially done at the homes of the teachers.
 - The Gospel is taught to anyone who is willing to hear it.

Early Christian Education: From the Home to the Classroom

- Catechetical Schools (c.150 A.D.)
 - First established by Justin Martyr in Rome and Ephesus.
 - Spread to other regions including Alexandria, Egypt.
 - Provided theological and *literary* foundation for future Christian leaders such as Origen (185-254) and Athanasius (ca. 296-373)
 - Primarily taught Christian doctrine, but later also taught mathematics, medicine and grammar.

Greco-Roman Education B.C.

- Education available only for the *rich*.
- *Private* teachers were paid to teach *sons* of the wealthy reading, writing, drawing, music and gymnastics.
- No real “schools.”
- *Gymnasia* – primarily for athletics.
- Plato's *Academy* and Aristotle's *Lyceum*
 - Held no classes, but were “hangouts” for thinkers and philosophers.

Adult Christian Ed

- Unlike Greco-Roman education, *both* men and women were taught as *catechumens* as well as after being baptized and made Church members.
- Christians also taught individuals from all social classes and ethnic backgrounds.

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matt 28:19-20

Children's Christian Ed

- Little information on formal education of children in early church available.
- First reference to attending school by St. Chrysostom (5th century).
- Cathedral and episcopal schools (4th-10th centuries).
 - Schools were run by bishops.
 - Focus was Christian doctrine, but also taught the seven liberal arts, the *trivium* and *quadrivium*
 - Primarily existed to train priests, but others could also enroll.
- Monasteries and nunneries.
- Parochial schools (9th century) separate from the cathedral or monastery; taught doctrine, reading and writing.

Children's Christian Ed

- In schools, boys outnumbered girls, but schools were never exclusively just for boys.
- Despite the skew in sex ratio schools produced several prominent, well-educated women.
 - **Lioba** (ca700-782): co-missionary with St. Boniface.
 - **Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim** (932-1002): a canoness who wrote plays, poems, legends and epics.
 - **Hildegard of Bingen** (1098-1179) : founded a monastery, wrote a mass, corresponded with popes, emperors and bishops.
- Christian coeducation, though inconsistent, was unlike the exclusion of women by Greco-Romans, and laid the foundation for modern educational practices.

The Protestant Reformation:

Of Education!

- The practice of catechizing/educating individuals from all social classes and ethnic backgrounds had deteriorated by the time of the Protestant Reformation (16th century).
- Martin Luther (prominent reformer)
 - Dismayed that common people had little to no knowledge of Christian teachings, including many pastors!
 - Believed cultivating the human mind was essential to understand scripture and the nature of the world.
 - Urged a state school system “to include vernacular primary schools for both sexes.”
 - Primary purpose of schools to train pastors, but also for education of lay citizens.

The Protestant Reformation: Of Education!

- John Calvin (reformer)
 - Advocate of universal education
 - He wanted:
 - "...a system of elementary education in the vernacular for all, including reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, religion, and the establishment of secondary schools for the purpose of training citizens for civil and ecclesiastical leadership."
- Idea of universal education stems from two biblical tenets
 - 1. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34)
 - 2. Every individual is responsible for his or her own salvation (John 3:16)

Further Educational Reforms

- Tax-Supported Public Schools
 - First proposed by Martin Luther in Germany as a response to the poor quality of education provided by the episcopal/cathedral schools.
 - Successfully lobbied for by Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560), a coworker of Luther's
 - Organization of schools handled by Johannes Bugenhagen, pastor of St. Mary's Church.
 - Cause again championed by John Comenius (1592-1670), a bishop of the Moravian Brethren.

Still More Reforms!

- Compulsory Education
 - Proposed by...Martin Luther!
 - “I hold that it is the duty of the temporal authority to compel its subjects to keep their children in school...”
 - Wanted the state to pass legislation to enforce compulsory education to counter prevalent distrust of corrupt Church schools.
 - One hour/day for girls and two for boys.
 - Idea slowly spread to the rest of Europe (one hundred years later in France).

And Now Back to the Church...

- Universal, public education theoretically encouraged, but often failed in practice.
- In 18th century, the majority of the poor did not learn to read or write.
- Social and economic forces prevented disadvantaged children from going to school, including the prominence of child labour, and misguided parental values.
- The Church had also neglected the welfare and education of the poor.

We Ask That at This Time the Children Be Dismissed For *SUNDAY SCHOOL*... With Robert Raikes!

- Robert Raikes (1735-1811) - Scottish printer
 - Felt called to serve the children of the poor.
 - He wanted to teach the Bible to children so he held school on Sundays in a rented kitchen.
 - He soon realized the children could not read, so he taught them.
 - Initially the idea was resisted, but it gained support from prominent Christian leaders such as: John Newton, Charles and John Wesley, William Cowper and John Howard.
 - Sunday school soon became widespread and eventually evolved into what we have today.

Higher Learning: Greek Style

- Greece and Rome produced influential and learned philosophers, thinkers and poets, however no formal institutions were developed.
- They had no permanent institutions, no libraries, no research, no guild of scholars or students and certified no one.
- No real “universities” were founded.

From Monasteries to Universities

- Benedictine Order of Monks (founded 528)
 - Greatly valued Christian and ancient literary works.
 - Developed one of the first elaborate library systems.
 - Collected books, copied manuscripts, loaned books to other monasteries, required monks to read a books every day.

Monasteries to Universities

- First universities arose in 12th and 13th centuries and were founded as Christian institutions.
- **University of Bologna**, Italy (1158) credited as the first university and specialized in the study of *canon law*.
- **University of Paris**, France (1200) second university known and specialized in *theology*.
- Going from Bologna, other universities were established in Italy, Spain, Scotland, Sweden and Poland.
- From Paris, universities were established in Oxford, Portugal, Germany, and Austria.

Universities in the New World

- Every university/college in the U.S.A. prior to the Revolutionary war, except U of Pennsylvania, was established by some branch of the Christian Church.
- Includes: Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia, etc.

Universities Mean Research!

- No research/experimentation was done by Greek thinkers, only theoretical ideas.
- Literary research started in monasteries with the copying, translating and referencing of biblical and non-biblical texts and manuscripts.
- Empirical research done in Bologna with cadaveric dissection (1300).
- Lecturers in universities were usually monks, who had long-standing tradition of doing both intellectual and physical work. This led to the proper environment for empirical research to grow.

Christianity's Impact on Education: The Coles Notes Version

- Following Christ's example and His command to teach the gospel to people of every nation (Matt 28:19-20), Christianity has been instrumental in the formation of a universal educational system where people receive education regardless of sex, ethnicity or social status.
- One of the many consequences of Jesus coming to live on earth has been *education for all*.

Labor & Economics - Overview

Christianity

- Upholds the *dignity of labor*
 - Encourages hard work
 - Fosters development of “middle class”
- Tends to foster *economic freedoms* and a free market (capitalist) system
 - Protection of property and individual rights
 - Tends to generate economic prosperity for individuals and societies

The Dignity of Labor

- In Christ's time...
 - a low view of physical work / manual labor in the Greek and Roman world
 - considered suitable only for slaves and lower classes
 - working daily for a living was considered "unbecoming to a gentleman" (Cicero, 1st c. B.C.)
 - "vulgar are the means of livelihood of all hired workmen whom we pay for mere manual labor" - Cicero*

The Dignity of Labor

- In Athens
 - One third of the freemen sat daily in the court of the Comitia, discussing the affairs of state
 - Slaves performed all the manual labor
 - 5:1 ratio of slaves : citizens
 - *"All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas."*

- Acts 17:21

The Dignity of Labor

- In contrast,

- Christians viewed labor and work as honorable and God-pleasing

“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and *to work with your hands*, just as we told you...” - 1 Thessalonians 4:11

“He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, *doing something useful with his own hands*, that he may have something to share with those in need.”

–Ephesians 4:28

The Dignity of Labor

- Why did Christians hold this view?

1. The Jewish heritage of Christianity

- Work considered part of God's mandate to Man in Creation
"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." – Genesis 2:15
- The OT repeatedly condemns laziness and commends hard work
"Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise...
How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?" – Proverbs 6:6,9

"Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.
He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son." - Proverbs 10:4-5

The Dignity of Labor

- Why did Christians hold this view?

2. The example of Christ

- Jesus was a carpenter's son, and presumably worked in that trade until he began His ministry at age 30 (approximately)

"Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?' they asked. 'Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?'" – Matthew 13:53-56

The Dignity of Labor

- Why did Christians hold this view?

3. The teachings of the apostles

- Work is considered service to Christ

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

– Colossians 3:22-24

- Thus, we should work to the glory of Christ

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” – 1 Corinthians 10:31

The Dignity of Labor

- Why did Christians hold this view?

4. The example of the apostles

- Paul was a tentmaker (literally!)
 - “...Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them” – Acts 18:2-3
- Paul and his co-workers worked hard to support themselves
 - “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked day and night, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.” – 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

The Dignity of Labor

- Why did Christians hold this view?

5. The practice of the Church

- The early Church strongly condemned idleness/slothfulness
“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.... For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: ‘If a man will not work, he shall not eat.’ We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.” – 2 Thessalonians 3:6,10-12

“Idleness is a great evil; work preserves us from evil thoughts.”

- St. Basil of Caesarea, 4th century A.D.

The Dignity of Labor

- Implications of the Christian view of labor
 - Work as a “calling” (*vocatio*)
 - Work considered a calling to serve God
 - this idea gained support especially in the Reformation, with Martin Luther
 - thus, there is no low-status or high-status work – no difference, as long as it’s done to the glory of God
 - all legitimate work considered noble and God-pleasing
 - Development of the “Protestant work ethic”
 - a direct result of considering work as a calling to serve God
 - work considered a Christian duty of service to God; thus, need to work hard, *as one serving the Lord*
 - ❖ 8 hours of work means 8 hours of **WORK!!!**

The Dignity of Labor

- Implications of the Christian view of labor
 - Work as a “calling” (*vocatio*)
 - Formation of a “middle class”
 - previously, people either very rich or very poor
 - dignity of labor → encourages people to work in a trade → ultimately fostered formation of a middle class, with resultant decline in poverty
 - Economic prosperity
 - hard work tends to generate wealth (whether or not it’s done for God’s glory) – true even in “non-Christian” nations which have applied Western Christian principles to the business world
 - but with prosperity often came jealousy - and persecution!

Economic Freedoms

Now for the fun part...

Christianity & capitalism

- Christianity upholds economic freedoms
 - Individual property rights guaranteed by Scripture
 - “You shall not steal.” – Exodus 20:15
 - “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” – Exodus 20:17
 - ❖ assumes the right and sanctity of private ownership

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity upholds economic freedoms
 - Freedom of economic activity, i.e. the right to use your money as you wish, is upheld by Scripture (just remember that you'll be judged for how you do!!!)

“Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money?
Or are you envious because I am generous?”

– Matthew 20:15

“Didn't it [your piece of property] belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal?” – Acts 5:4

Economic Freedoms

- In defending economic freedoms, Christianity tends to protect other individual rights & freedoms
 - Individual freedoms and human rights are inseparable from private property rights
 - Erosion of private property rights is usually followed over time by erosion of other basic rights and freedoms...
 - “The right of property is the guardian of every other right, and to deprive a people of this, is in fact to deprive them of their liberty.” – Arthur Lee, 18th cent.

Economic Freedoms

- In defending economic freedoms, Christianity tends to protect other individual rights & freedoms
 - Nations which deny individual property rights usually end up denying many other basic human rights – a complex issue, but consider...
 - Communist nations – bastions of freedom?
“The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.” – *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx & Engels, 1848
 - Socialist nations
 - ❖ Current erosion of free speech and religious freedoms – what’s next?

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity and the free market economy
 - Christianity tends to foster a free-market, or “capitalist,” economic system
 - Scripture doesn’t *directly* endorse one economic system over another, but not all economic systems are compatible with Scripture
 - By encouraging hard work, and by upholding private property rights and individual freedom of economic activity, Christianity tends to favor a free market system
 - Free market system is the most consistent with Biblical principles, in spite of potential abuses

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity and the free market economy
 - Christianity tends to foster a free-market, or “capitalist,” economic system – a trend noticed even by secular thinkers
 - In his classic book written in 1904, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber argued that the spirit of capitalism in the Western world grew out of the Protestant work ethic (and in particular, from the “gloomy doctrine of Calvinism”)
 - “Christianity tends to create a capitalistic mode of life whenever siege conditions do not prevail... [capitalism is not] Christian in and by itself; it is merely to say that capitalism is a material by-product of the Mosaic law.”
 - John Chamberlain, in *The Roots of Capitalism*, 1976

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity and the free market economy
 - When asked whether eastern European countries, where communism had failed, should opt for capitalism, Pope John Paul II replied,
 - “If by ‘capitalism’ is meant an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector, then the answer is certainly in the affirmative.” – Pope John Paul II, in *Centesimus Annus*, no.41, 1996.

Economic Freedoms

- But isn't Christianity socialist in its outlook?
 - e.g. the early Church, it is argued, was socialist in practice
 - “All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.” – Acts 2:44-45
 - “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had... There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.” – Acts 4:32,34-35

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity & socialism?

BUT

- Individual property rights were still upheld
 - “For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.” – Acts 4:32,34-35
- Sharing of wealth was completely voluntary
 - “Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal?” – Acts 5:4
 - “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” - 2 Corinthians 9:7

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity & socialism?
 - Areas of conflict
 - Socialism involves forced (rather than voluntary) redistribution of wealth, usually by government
 - “Robbing from the rich to give to the poor” mentality
 - Christian socialists cite OT laws on tithe, Sabbath year and year of Jubilee as support for forced redistribution; but careful reading shows property rights still upheld
 - Coercion in economic realm often results in coercion in other aspects in areas, with subsequent erosion of individual freedoms

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity & socialism?
 - Areas of conflict
 - Socialism assumes people are basically good
 - only works if one assumes people will always act in others' best interests and never "take advantage of the system"
 - Christianity assumes people are corrupt, and that, as fallen creatures, they are prone to idleness e.g. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 – "if a man will not work, he shall not eat."

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity & socialism?
 - Areas of conflict
 - Socialism assumes people are basically good
 - Example of the Pilgrims of Jamestown and Plymouth in 1600s
 - ❖ Colonists initially organized as socialist communes, with no private property; all produce went into a “common store”
- “It was a premium for idleness, and just suited the drones, who promptly decided that it was unnecessary to work themselves, since others would work for them.” – John Cooke, in *Virginia: A History of the People* (1897)
 - ❖ Resulted in crop failures and economic disaster, which was only reversed once the Common Store system was abolished and each colonist given his own plot of land to cultivate

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity & socialism?
 - Areas of conflict
 - Socialism - a flawed understanding of the concepts of justice and righteousness
 - Justice – concerned with things that people *deserve*; typically not a voluntary matter, but one which is to be enforced by law (e.g. payment of fair wages to employees)
 - Righteousness – involves doing what is right, or what is in accordance with God's character, regardless of whether deserved or not; typically a voluntary act – individual is free to choose to do it or not (e.g. giving to the poor)
 - ❖ If coerced, it no longer becomes an act of righteousness, but *legalism*

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity & socialism?
 - Areas of conflict
 - Socialism - a flawed understanding of the concepts of justice and righteousness
 - Socialists typically frame issues of sharing of wealth as a matter of *justice* – “Justice for all” or “Social justice”
 - The Bible does frame certain of these issues as matters of justice – e.g. not to oppress the poor or take advantage of their lack of power; pay a fair wage to workers
 - But overwhelmingly, the thrust of Scripture in these matters is that they are matters of *righteousness*, rather than justice; thus, cannot and should not be coerced (any more than Christians should coerce people to believe in Jesus Christ)

Economic Freedoms

- Christianity & socialism?
 - Areas of conflict
 - Socialism - a flawed understanding of the concepts of justice and righteousness
 - “The socialist who is a Christian is more to be dreaded than a socialist who is an atheist.” – Dostoevsky, in *The Brothers Kamarazov*

Economic Freedoms

- In summary,
 - Christianity tends to foster a free-market, or “capitalist,” economic system
 - does so by encouraging hard work and by upholding private property rights and individual freedom of economic activity
 - In spite of abuses, this has fostered (together with technological advances – also promoted by the Christian worldview) unparalleled economic prosperity in “Christianized” nations of the West, but also in other nations which have applied its principles

What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?

- **The Impact of Christianity on the world**

In Review,

- sanctity and worth of human life
- dignity for women, children, elderly
- ministries of charity and compassion
- advances science and technology
- advances in medicine and health care
- education for all
- dignity of work, and economic (and other) freedoms

What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?

- **The Impact of Christianity on the world**

Other areas of impact:

- Civil liberties
- Government and politics
- Arts and music
- Literature
- etc.

What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?

- **Above all,**

- **The impact on eternity:**

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved... remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.