

J. Hudson Taylor:

A Man in Christ

Roger Steer



Learning about a great Christian's life is thoroughly uplifting. Their devoted, sacrificial service testifies to God's transformative power and his desire to use us despite ourselves.

James Hudson Taylor was born in Yorkshire in 1832 to faithful Methodist parents but was filled with doubts about God in his youth. However, God raised him up into one of the most effective and pioneering missionaries in history. He founded the China Inland Mission, and worked tirelessly in China for 51 years, often at his great peril. His ministry led to many thousands of conversions, and his strategies still have much to teach about effective missions.

Taylor was famously sensitive to Chinese culture: he adopted the Chinese native dress and hairstyle which caused quite a stir but did much to ingratiate him with the Chinese. He wisely befriended locals and, of course, learnt local languages. Also, his practices were quite forward-thinking: China Inland Mission was a non-denominational organisation, welcoming anyone willing to give up everything for Christ's sake, including, rather unusually for the time, single women.

Though his methods and cultural sensitivity were new, his message was the age-old gospel – a gospel he preached with bold candidness. The book recounts a time when a priest asked Taylor to kneel on a stool before Buddha.

Taylor, without hesitation, proceeded to stand on the stool, denounce idolatry and preach the gospel.

Medical students in particular will find Taylor's life interesting. He had only partially completed his medical studies before he first set sail for China. This would come to cause him difficulty, something which mission-ready medical students should consider.

A Man in Christ describes the life of a godly man who faithfully obeyed God's commands and calling. However, his life was hard; in fact it was filled with danger, hostility, ill-health and heartbreak (Taylor lost two of his children and his wife). Despite these struggles, Taylor persevered and made great headway for Christ in China.

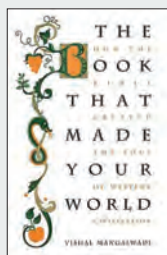
This fascinating book will do much to spur you on to mission. You will be awed and humbled by this great man's faith, obedience and holiness, and you will share in his sorrows and joys. His methods were unorthodox, but the gospel he preached was true, and his legacy persists as the Overseas Missionary Fellowship International.

When alive, Taylor sought Christians who were willing to forgo a comfortable life to reach China's lost. Were he alive today he would exhort us with these words: 'The highest service demands the greatest sacrifice, but it secures the fullest blessing and the greatest fruitfulness'.

Toni Saad is a medical student in Cardiff

The Book that Made Your World: how the Bible created the soul of Western Civilization

Vishal Mangalwadi



This bold and intriguing title immediately caught my attention. Written by Vishal

Mangalwadi, a native of India, I was interested to read an Eastern perspective on the Bible and Western thought.

This engagingly readable book is in seven parts. Part I reviews today's secular culture in the West.

Mangalwadi outlines the ways in which Western countries founded on Christian values no longer comprehend these roots. In place of a Christian understanding of the world and humanity, a secular worldview of nihilism and hopelessness has developed, and the West has lost its soul.

Part II presents Mangalwadi's personal history. He became a Christian as a child, but later, while attending a secular university in India he found himself surrounded by contradictory teaching about the nature of truth and knowledge. Some friends held a pantheistic worldview, but his professors taught that truth was unknowable. He was also struck by the way a fatalistic belief in reincarnation trapped people in poverty. Turning to the Bible for answers, he found a common thread running throughout; God's desire to bless all nations through his Word.

Parts III to VI cover the striking impact of the Bible on areas such as: rationality, technology, languages, education, science, morality, family life, medical practice. Mangalwadi makes clear,

rational points using historical, secular, and biblical sources. He argues that biblical truth has not only *affected* these aspects of culture, it is their source and soul.

The final part of the book examines present day society. Mangalwadi argues that as society embraces moral relativism, biblical values such as equality and universal human rights cease to be self-evident truths. Throughout the book Mangalwadi outlines the Bible's power to liberate through the reality of God's redemption. His final chapter examines the impact of past nations and people groups rejecting God's Word. He concludes by looking to the future and asking which way the West will chose.

One of the extraordinary things about this book is the author's perspective. Born into oriental culture, surrounded by Hinduism and Buddhism, he sees clearly the hope that flows from 2,000 years of Christian history. It is, at the same time, a personal narrative, and a rigorous study of the impact of the Bible on Western civilisation. Mangalwadi challenges the reader to take seriously the claims of the Bible and to examine their impact.

Fiona MacCormick is a palliative medicine registrar in Newcastle