

# How Protestantism Built Modern India

**Vishal Mangalwadi**

[VM1212@gmail.com](mailto:VM1212@gmail.com)

June 8, 2012

Dear Friends,

It is a year since *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization* was published. During these 12 months I have travelled around the world presenting the thesis of the book, which already has over 200 reviews on the internet. It is being accepted as a text book in many universities and educational institutions.

Today, with a Day of Prayer at British L'Abri, in Greatham, I begin a season of retreat, waiting upon the Lord for the next phase of my ministry. Andrew Fellows, the head of International L'Abri, is personally supervising my retreat, for which I am very thankful.

Last month, in India, I was humbled to discover that a businessman had flown from Mumbai to Delhi three times to personally hand over the above book to key national leaders. Because of the enthusiasm of people like him, a special edition is now being considered for India. Please pray that it may open the doors for a nationally televised discussion of the thesis that the Bible created modern India.

While in India, I wrote a short essay, "The Suppressed History of Hindi." It's abridged version has been published, in Hindi and English, in the June edition of FORWARD Press. The full version has been posted on [www.RevelationMovement.com](http://www.RevelationMovement.com)

Protestant missions blessed India (among other ways) by turning our dialects into literary languages. They followed a God who had given a text to illiterate slaves – to oral learners. That made it possible for His word ("*It is written*") to become the solid foundation for truth-based freedom. The oppressive kingdom of Satan could be opposed because God had revealed the truth.

I am sending the following extract to you because, sadly, evangelical missions are now pushing our literate cultures back towards "*Orality*." This is being done in the hope of speeding up the Second Coming.

Protestantism built history's greatest nations because it took seriously God's promise, "I will make thee a great nation." As my book and this article document, Protestant missions fulfilled God's promise

by cultivating the languages of the people, from German and English to Bengali, Urdu and Hindi.

In contrast, many evangelical missions are losing interest in languages and literature because they are not serious about nation-building. They don't seem to think that God is interested in "healing" or "blessing" nations. They assume that the nations are about to be burnt up along with the planet itself. They believe that the New Jerusalem is being built beyond the blues and that that it will descend like a gigantic UFO. Then there will be no nations in darkness that will need to walk by its light (Revelation 21) or will need the leaves that are for the healing of the nations (Rev 22). In due time, I will discuss these faulty eschatological ideas and their impact on missionary strategy.

For now, it is enough to say that the contemporary loss of Christian interest in language and literature is a consequence of the Post-Christian loss of interest in "true Truth." As Francis Schaeffer pointed out in 1960s & 70s, without *Logos (The Word, Sense, or Reason)* the secular worldview has no option but to usher in the "Age of Non-Reason." It has to replace Truth with myth. It has to turn "witnesses" of Truth into "story-tellers."

Neither the following extract nor the full essay discuss Protestantism's decline into contemporary Evangelicalism, which is undermining the West's great Christian heritage and marginalizing the Gospel from what it used to be – a powerful culture-shaping force. The purpose of the extract is to encourage you to read the entire essay and, thereby, increase your appreciation of the power of the now eclipsed Protestant Biblical worldview.

### **Protestantism and the Birth of Modern Hindi**

Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-1885) became the father of Modern Hindi Literature, because he understood Lord Macaulay, better than Hindu intellectuals of today, who condemn the Macaulay Minute (1835) without having read it. Bharatendu grasped Macaulay's Protestant view that a mother-tongue is far more important a tool of nation-building than a sacred but dead language, such as Sanskrit. He agreed with the Vernacularists<sup>[1]</sup> in his time that dozens of dialects collectively called "Hindi" could to be enriched by ideas adopted from more developed languages such as English and French. Therefore, he was transmitting the Christian view on nation-building to his fellow countrymen when he said,

*Nij Bhasha Unnati Ahe, sab unnati ko mul.*

*Bin nij bhasha-gyan ke, mitat na hiy ko sul. Vividh kala shikha amit, gyan anek prakar*

*Sab ddesan se le karhu, bhasha mahi prachar*

*Progress is made in one's mother tongue, the foundation of all progress.*

*Without the knowledge of the mother tongue, there is no cure for heart's pain. Many arts and education, infinite knowledge of various kinds,*

*Should be taken from all countries, but propagated in one's mother tongue.*

Sadly, until Bhartendu's time, caste prejudice and cultural arrogance had prevented Hindu religio-intellectual aristocracy from developing the language of the people that we now call "Hindi." It was the painstaking toil of the Christian movement that gave us what has become our unofficial "national language." Protestant Christianity, with help from some Roman Catholics and many enlightened Hindus created Hindi *because* it was committed to moving the "Backwards" forward.

### **The Older Meaning of "Hindi"**

During Bharatendu's time, the term "Hindi" was a generic name given by Muslims to dozens of languages.

...Hindu sages did not lack linguistic abilities. They had already done a superb job in refining Sanskrit and its grammar. Their problem was that their religious worldview prevented them from sharing Sanskrit. The secret of their cultural power over fellow Hindus lay in keeping the common people ignorant of the language of the gods. The secrecy or monopoly of "knowledge," turned Sanskrit, an otherwise scientific language, into a vehicle of religio-magical mumbo-jumbo.

Nor did Muslim Maulanas lack talent. Their difficulty was that their theology and religion also prevented them from developing the dialects of the downtrodden. Islam was as interested in converting Hindus as was Christianity, yet Islam did not develop our dialects because Islam's culture values submission, more than intellectual freedom, to pursue truth.

It is estimated that a relatively weaker European country such as Spain publishes more books in a year than the whole of the Arabic world has published in a thousand years. The West's vibrant literary tradition emerged because the Bible said that the Lord Jesus brought *grace and truth* (John 1: 17). The first two of the Ten Commandments required Jews and Christians to refrain from making myths and idols but seek and believe only what is true. Those Commandments became the seed which produced a passion for truth, enabling Christian culture to cultivate languages, libraries, schools, universities, and research labs, as it developed technology and modern science. This intellectual tradition made the West powerful.

### **Christ's Spirit**

Why did the West empower our languages and share its secret of power so liberally and sacrificially? The Bible said that the Lord Jesus came from heaven to save this world, enslaved by sin and suffering. His incarnation inspired Christian scholars and saints to also dedicate their lives – leaving the comforts of home, to go to the remotest parts of the world, live with Stone Age tribes and develop their mother-tongue. They gave to the marginalized of the world the opportunity to acquire the secrets of intellectual power – including the power of truth – generated in more developed parts of the world.

The Macaulay Minute, so hated by our bigoted elite, asked the East India Company to prepare a class of Indians, who would learn English, in order that India might acquire access to European sciences, arts, laws, governance, organization, values, and management. Understanding the nobility of this mission, writers and poets such as Bhartendu tried to make Hindi capable of receiving Western knowledge.

### **The Birth of Modern Hindi**

... In 1875, when Bhartendu was 25 years old, Rev. S. W. Kellogg published ***A Grammar of the Hindi Language: In Which are treated The High Hindi, Braj, And the Eastern Hindi of the Ramayan of Tulsī Das, and the Colloquial Dialects of Rajputana, Kumaon, Avadh, Rewa, Bhojpur, Magadha, Maithila, Etc.*** It was Kellogg's labor that made it possible for "Hindi" to become one language – the *Lingua Franca* of "North India." . . .

The "High Hindi" or *Khari Boli* was the dialect spoken in and around Delhi. *PremSagar*, was its standard text. The suffix "high" was transported from "High" German, the language created by the Protestant reformer Martin Luther, through his translation of the Bible and Hymn-book. Luther's literary effort enabled the German speaking masses to free themselves from a bondage to Latin and an unscrupulous religious hierarchy that kept Europeans in the darkness of ignorance. By translating the Bible into German, Luther gave his people the Bible's liberating message in their own heart-language. This transformed their dialect into a language of learning and governing. Luther's literary work became the linguistic foundation that made it possible for Germany to become a great power. Following his example, missionary grammarians-translators empowered Indian languages so that the Bible and other history-changing books could be made available to us. . . .

... Without Kellogg's effort at integrating different Hindi dialects into one Grammar, Bharatendu would not have had a Hindi language capable of uniting North India emotionally and intellectually through one mother-tongue.

### **Why Did Christianity Develop Hindi?**

Did western traders, diplomats, civil servants, judges, military officers and missionaries develop Indian languages in order to just "convert" Hindus, as is claimed by our elites?

All these Christian linguists, whether missionaries or not, wanted Hindus to be delivered from Brahminical idols, myths, superstitions, and social evils such as the caste system. These myths and evils have corrupted Indian character and enslaved our minds. Indeed, to *convert* means to turn from sin and falsehood and seek truth and righteousness. But how, you might ask? Well, language is the software that enables us to think, learn, and communicate. Remarkably, the Bible says that when we come to God, we must take with us an offering of words – words of repentance for our sin as well as

praise for God's goodness: "Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: 'Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips [i.e. praise].'" (Hosea 14:2)

The Hindu-Buddhist traditions have emphasized meditation and silence. In contrast, Christianity has been interested in language because the God of the Bible has revealed Himself as a person who communicates. The Bible also makes clear that He made us in His image so that we may know and love him – and, love includes communication. Words are important because they express our hearts: and our hearts need to seek truth, including truth about our own moral corruption and our need of redemption and spiritual rebirth.

The sixteenth century Protestant Reformation, started by Martin Luther, used the Bible to free much of Europe from the religious tyranny of a corrupt church and more importantly from sin's tyrannical control over individual sinners. Likewise, the makers of modern Hindi followed European reformers in using the Bible to free the Indian mind from the tyranny of sin and corrupt Brahminical socio-religious order.

Contrary to what the suppressors of India's history tell us, missionaries empowered our mother-tongue because they wanted us to *think*. They wanted us to *study* Brahmanical Scriptures along with secular and sacred literature that had turned England into a mighty nation. Unlike our corrupt elites, who are obsessed with power, Christian reformers were concerned about helping us grow into a freedom with justice and morality. Reverend Kellogg explained his reason for preparing his grammar for missionaries as well as for magistrates. He wrote, "Still it is very desirable that the magistrate in his court should be able to understand the rustic witness ... Without the aid of a third, and not always disinterested party." (Kellogg, *A Grammar of the Hindi Language*, Second Edition, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trunbner, and Co., 1893, p xvi). A poor peasant is unlikely to get justice if he can speak to his British or South Indian or North-East Indian judge only through a translator. After all, what if the translator misinterprets witnesses because of bribes, caste-connections, or simple misunderstanding?