

### *Are America's Moral Levees Breached?*

According to Dr. Vishal Mangalwadi, in the seventh of his 10-part lecture series “Must the Sun Set on the West?”, America’s biblically-grounded moral framework is in as bad shape as the levees in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005. And, said Mangalwadi on Tuesday night, October 30 before a full house, the risks of social chaos are just as great.

America’s biblical moral foundation was well-laid during the First Great Awakening of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, when Jonathan Edwards responded to the moral corruption associated with the western expansion of the American colonies. In England, moral standards declined as the monarchy was restored. And priests increasingly became corrupt as they systematically expelled Puritans. There, George Whitefield rose up as a voice for a return to biblical morality. Both Edwards and Whitefield publicly and vigorously preached against evil in the church because they knew that a morally corrupt church inevitably would lead to a morally corrupt society at large.

Mangalwadi contrasted the fruit of biblical morality with his discovery that business works best when a society cultivates trust. And trust can only be cultivated when there is a notion of morality rooted in transcendence. He talked about his experience at a dairy in the Netherlands (itself also a product of Protestant-inspired biblical morality), where customers took only the milk they needed and voluntarily paid for the milk without any salesperson or security device in sight.

By contrast, said Mangalwadi, a society without morality means one with little or no trust, which means, in turn, that vast amounts of wealth must be spent on security devices and actions that foil the dishonest. This, in turn, is a serious drag on economic performance, and a major reason why some societies thrive economically and others struggle.

But, perhaps, rather than morality grounded in the Bible, one can depend upon dictators for securing morality. Mangalwadi noted that most societies with autocrats are more, not less, corrupt. The exception is Singapore, a small city-state whose founding leader strong-armed corruption out of the society. Even in that case, said Mangalwadi, after Lee Kuan Yew and his son are dead, will the nation remain free of corruption? He also noted that the use of external force to remove corruption has meant a significant loss in Singaporeans’ freedom. By contrast, the biblical vision is of freedom combined with moral self-government.

In the wake of the loss of confidence in biblical teaching and authority, and the intense social experiments of the 1960s through 1980s, the New Age was ushered into Western society. As with all movements that have departed from biblical values, there are several problems. The major problem is that the human mind, absent revelation from God, cannot truly discern whether this is a moral world. When the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper, how can one conclude the world is fair? Even Jesus’ death, apart from apostolic

teaching, looks as if there is no justice. Lacking confidence that the world is moral leads inevitably to social chaos.

Mangalwadi concluded his robust address by declaring that the resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that faith has consequences (eternal life) and that sin also has consequences (death). In other words, there is justice, after all, and this is, indeed, a moral world. Whether education or other means can sustain the earlier biblical morality is very much in doubt, said Mangalwadi. The future is not bright unless the West returns to its biblical moral foundations.