

ACTS:
A HISTORY BOOK
Living **IN YOU.**

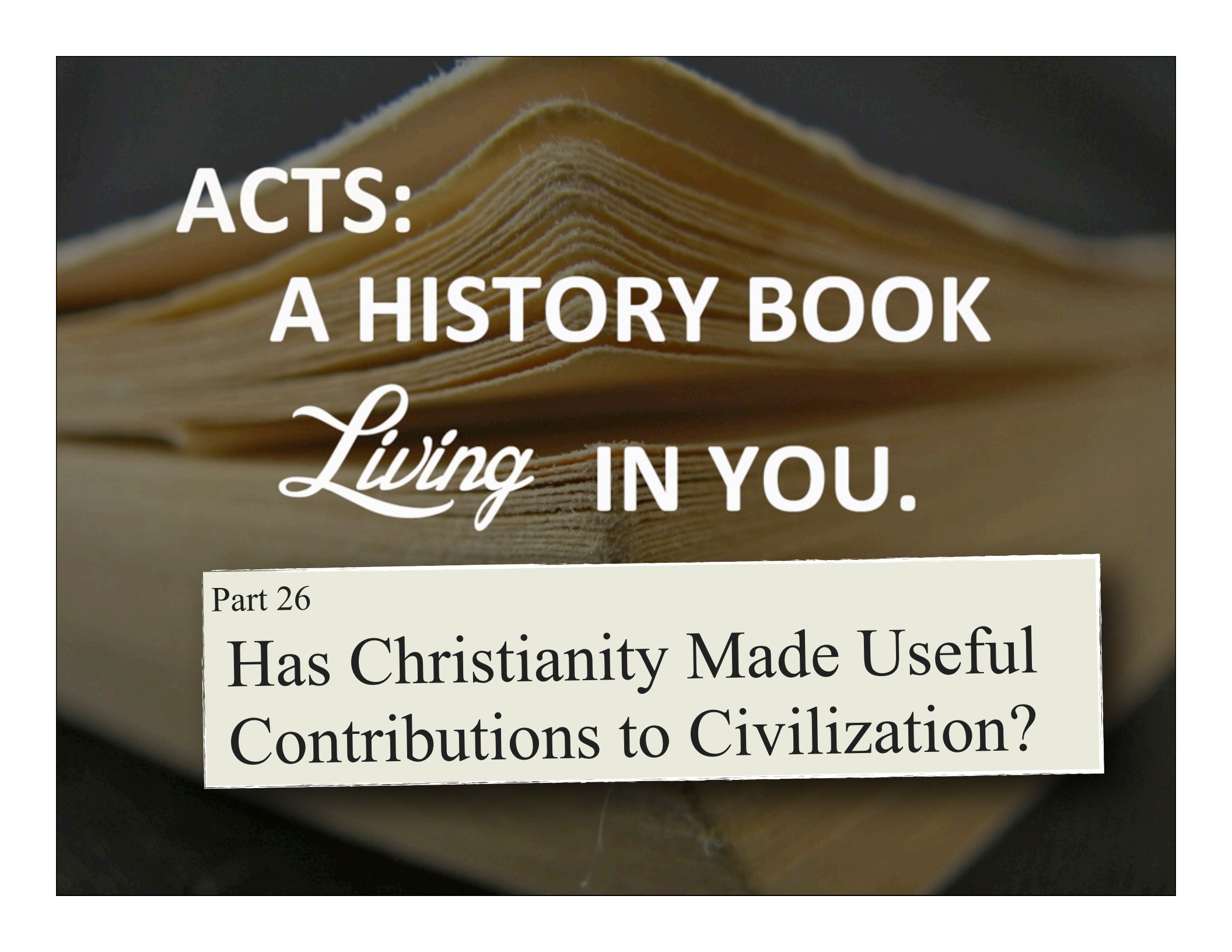
Part 26

Has Christianity Made Useful
Contributions to Civilization?

THE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

MAP 13

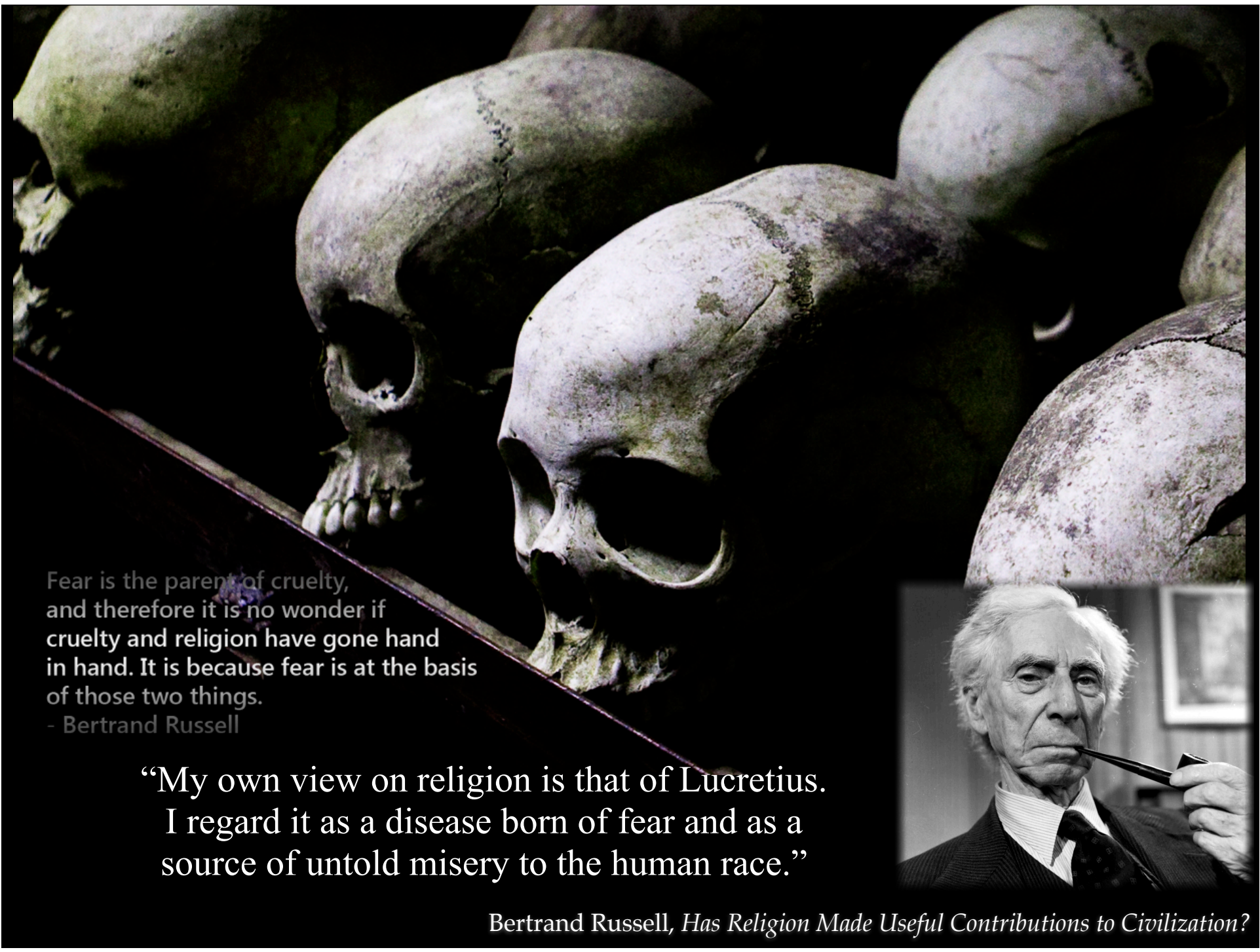




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Fear is the parent of cruelty,
and therefore it is no wonder if
cruelty and religion have gone hand
in hand. It is because fear is at the basis
of those two things.

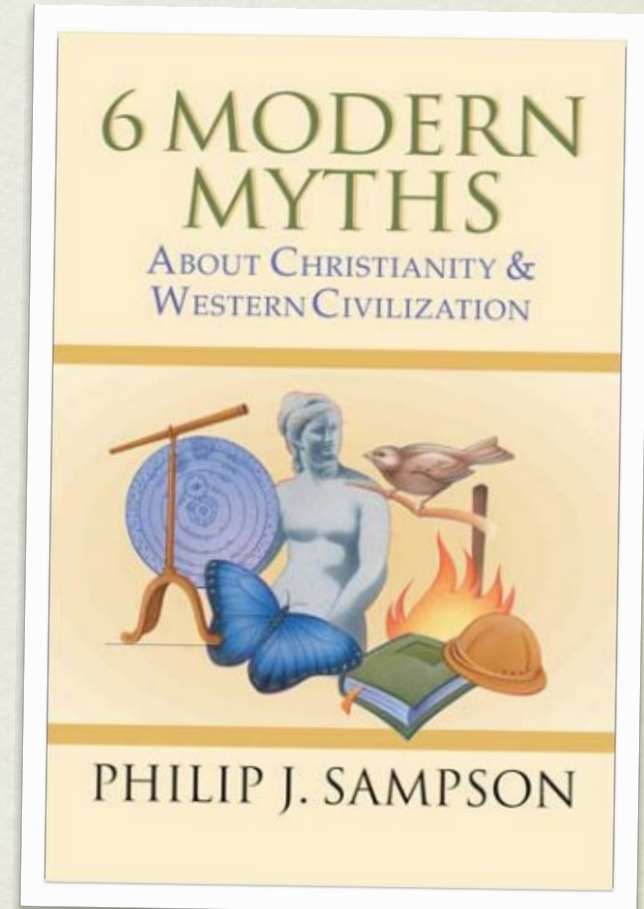
- Bertrand Russell

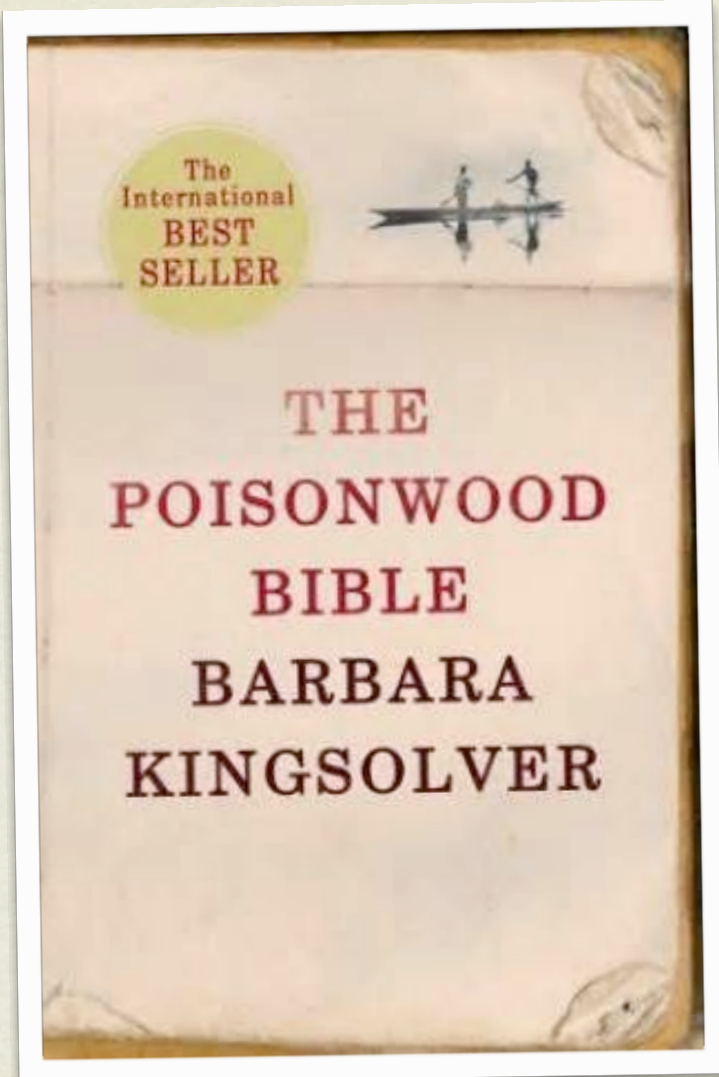
“My own view on religion is that of Lucretius.
I regard it as a disease born of fear and as a
source of untold misery to the human race.”



Bertrand Russell, *Has Religion Made Useful Contributions to Civilization?*

For many people, missionary exploits prove that the Christian claim to have a monopoly on the truth inevitably leads to the oppression of other people and their culture. Meanwhile, the modern mind, enlightened by reason and science, is portrayed as tolerant and humane.









King Khama III



John Mackenzie





Robert Woodberry





Robert Woodberry

“Most of the research I studied was about American religion. It wasn’t my passion, and it didn’t feel like a calling, something I could pour my life into.”

a significant statistical
link between democracy
and Protestantism



Kenneth A. Bollen
Distinguished Professor of Sociology,
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



Robert Woodberry

“That’s me. I’m the one.”

“I found an atlas from 1925 of every missionary station in the world, with tons of data. Including data on the number of schools, teachers, printing presses, hospitals, and doctors, and it referred in turn to earlier atlases. I thought, Wow, this is so huge. This is amazing. This is why God made me.”



Robert Woodberry

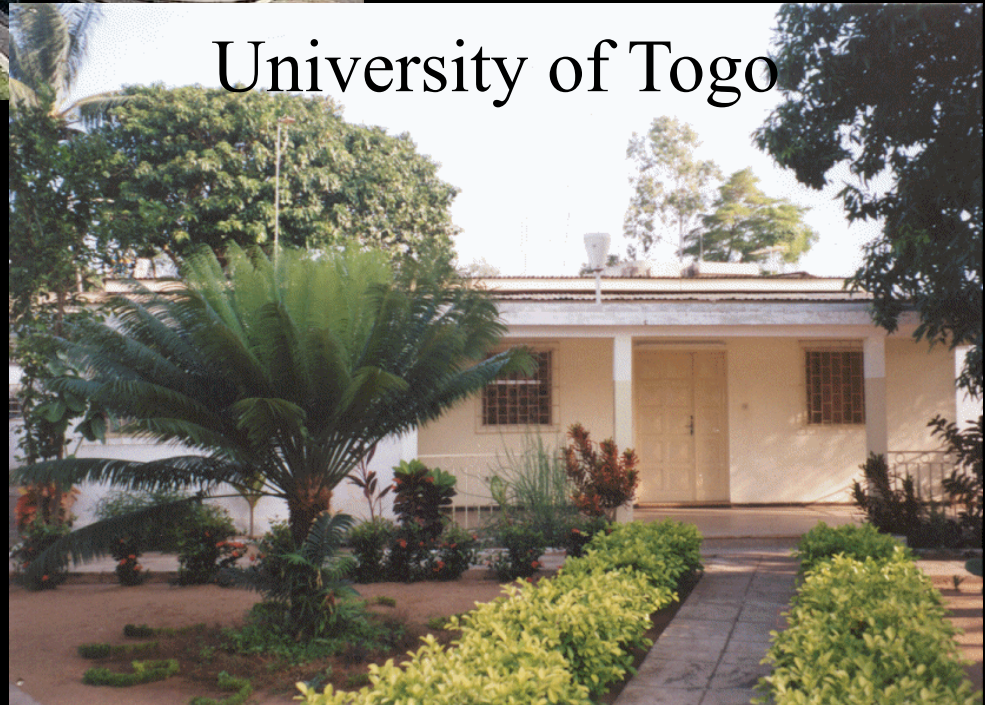
Why do some nations develop stable governments in which citizens enjoy the rights to vote, speak, and assemble freely — while neighboring countries suffer authoritarian rulers and internal conflict?

Why does public health and economic growth differ dramatically from one country to another, even among countries that share similar geography, cultural background, and natural resources?

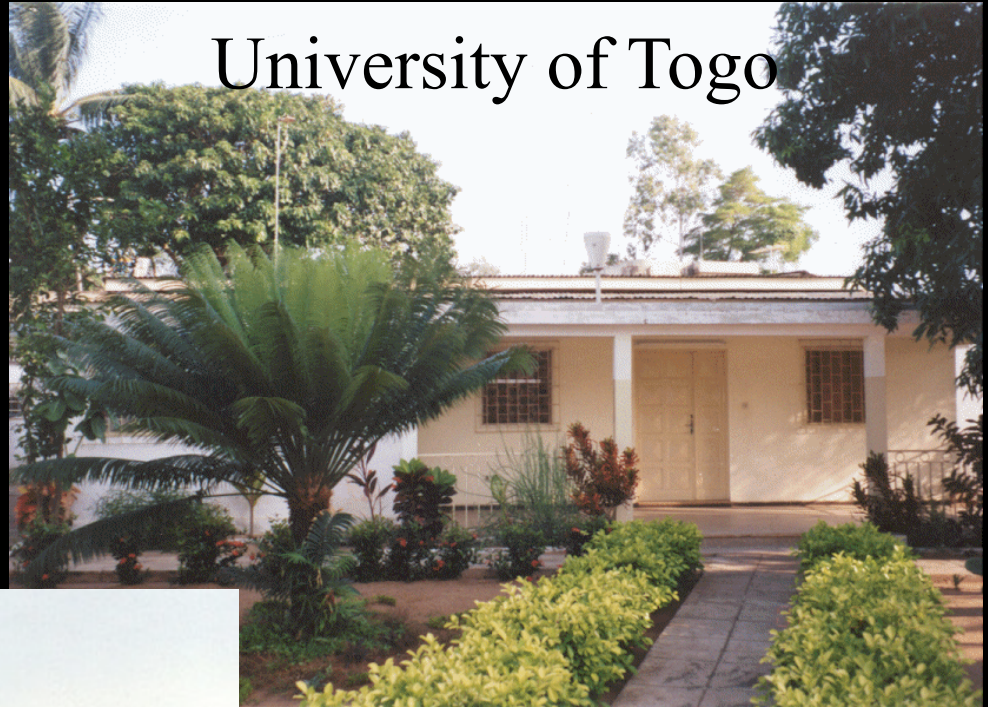
Lomé, West Africa



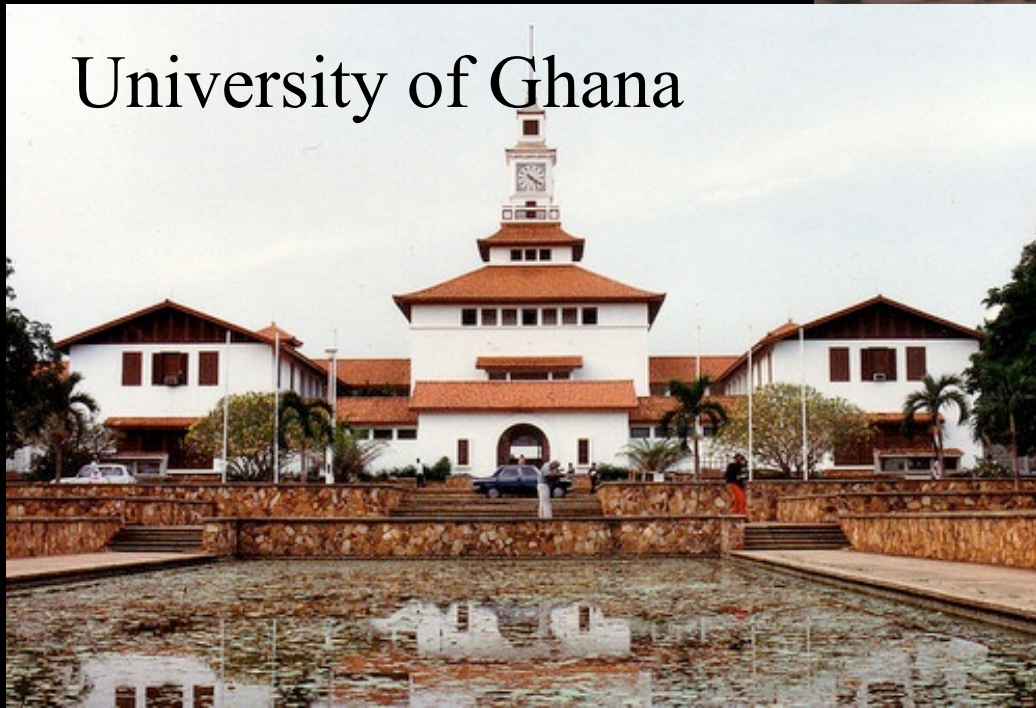
University of Togo



University of Togo



University of Ghana



“He collected really rare, scattered evidence and pulled it together into a coherent data set. In one sense it was way too big for a doctoral student, but he was stubborn, independent, and meticulous.”



Christian Smith

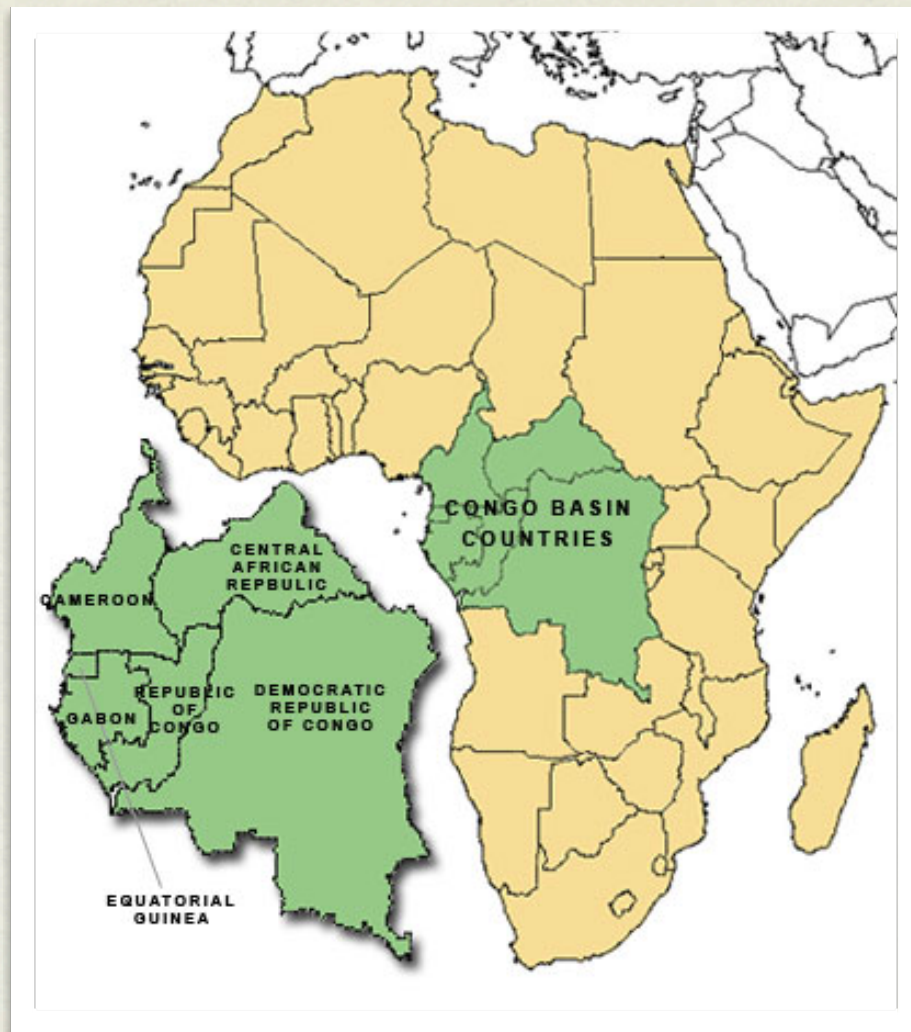
Professor of Sociology and Director of the
Center for the Study of Religion and Society
and the Center for Social Research at the
University of Notre Dame

“I thought it was a great, daring project, but I advised him that lots of people wouldn’t like it if the story panned out. For him to suggest that the missionary movement had this strong, positive influence on democratization—you couldn’t think of a more unbelievable and offensive story to tell a lot of secular academics.”



Christian Smith

William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Society and the Center for Social Research at the University of Notre Dame





John & Alice Harris





Robert Woodberry

“I felt pretty nervous. I thought, What if I run the analysis and find nothing? How will I salvage my dissertation?”

“I was shocked. It was like an atomic bomb. The impact of missions on global democracy was huge. I kept adding variables to the model—factors that people had been studying and writing about for the past 40 years—and they all got wiped out. It was amazing. I knew, then, I was on to something really important.”



Robert Woodberry

“The results were so strong, they made me nervous,” he says. “I expected an effect, but I hadn’t expected it to be that large or powerful. I thought, I better make sure this is real. I better be very careful.”

“My research assistants were entering all these variables, and the missions variable was amazingly robust. The theory kept on holding up.”

“When I started to present on this, no one was interested. I’d get two people in the sessions at conferences. It wasn’t on anyone’s radar.”



Robert Woodberry

Areas where Protestant missionaries had a significant presence in the past are on average more economically developed today, with comparatively better health, lower infant mortality, lower corruption, greater literacy, higher educational attainment (especially for women), and more robust membership in nongovernmental associations.



Robert Woodberry



“Woodberry presents a grand and quite ambitious theory of how ***‘conversionary Protestants’*** contributed to building democratic societies. Try as I might to pick holes in it, the theory holds up. It has major implications for the global study of Christianity.”



Philip Jenkins
Distinguished Professor of History,
Baylor University



Daniel Philpott

Professor of Political Science and
Peace Studies Director, Center for
Civil and Human Rights,
University of Notre Dame

“Why did some countries become democratic, while others went the route of theocracy or dictatorship? For Woodberry to show through devastatingly thorough analysis that conversionary Protestants are crucial to what makes the country democratic today is remarkable in many ways. Not only is it another factor—it turns out to be the most important factor. It can’t be anything but startling for scholars of democracy.”

“I think it’s the best work
out there on religion and
economic development.
It’s incredibly
sophisticated and well
grounded. I haven’t seen
anything quite like it.”



Robin Grier
Professor Of Economics And
International & Area Studies
University Of Oklahoma

“I’m not religious. I never felt really comfortable with the idea of mission work; it seemed cringe-worthy. Then I read Bob’s work. I thought, Wow, that’s amazing. They left a long legacy. It changed my views and caused me to rethink.”



Robin Grier
Professor Of Economics And
International & Area Studies
University Of Oklahoma



Robert Woodberry

“We don’t have to deny that there were and are racist missionaries. We don’t have to deny there were and are missionaries who do self-centered things. But if that were the typical effect, we would expect the places where missionaries had influence to be worse than places where missionaries weren’t allowed or were restricted in action. We find exactly the opposite on all kinds of outcomes. Even in places where few people converted, missionaries had a profound economic and political impact.”



Robert Woodberry

“conversionary
Protestants”



Robert Woodberry

“One of the main stereotypes about missions is that they were closely connected to colonialism. But Protestant missionaries not funded by the state were regularly very critical of colonialism.”

“I feel confident saying none of those movements would have happened without non-state missionaries mobilizing them.”

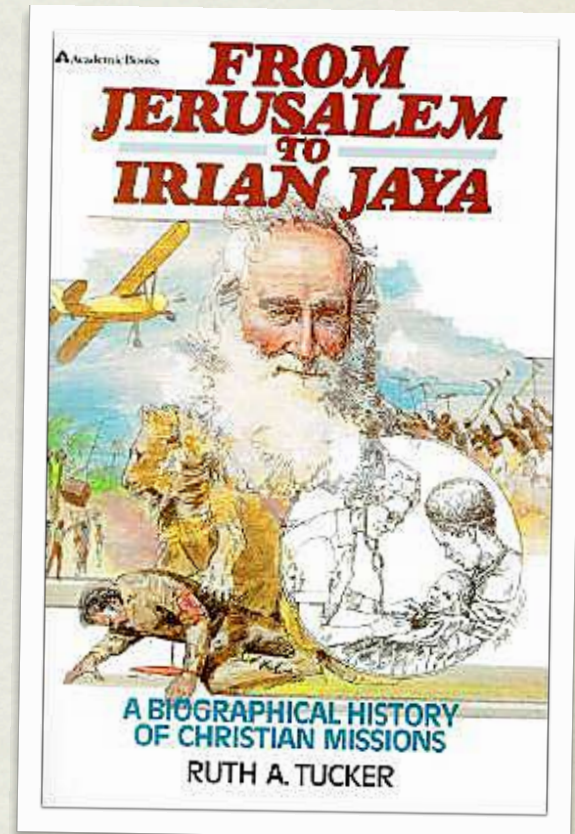


Joel Carpenter

Director of the Nagel Institute for
the Study of World Christianity,
Calvin College

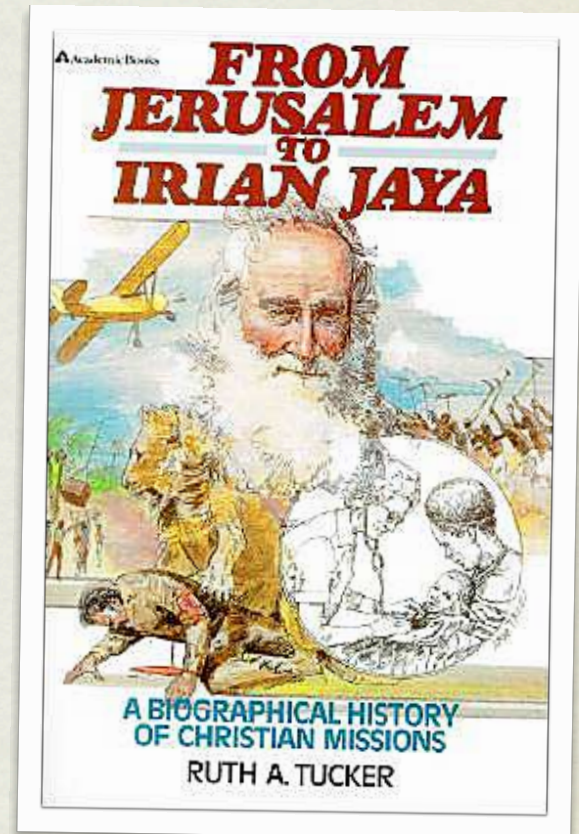
“Few missionaries were in any systemic way social reformers. I think they were first and foremost people who loved other people. They cared about other people, saw that they’d been wronged, and wanted to make it right.”

If missions are associated with the rise of imperialism, they are equally associated with the factors that brought about its destruction. Likewise, they are associated with social progress in underdeveloped nations.



From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya, Ruth A. Tucker. P. 111

“They focused on teaching people to read. That sounds really basic, but if you look worldwide at poverty, literacy is the main thing that helps you rise out of poverty. Unless you have broad-based literacy, you can’t have democratic movements.”



From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya, Ruth A. Tucker. P. 111

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Dana Robert
Director, Center for Global
Christianity and Mission,
Boston University





Daniel Philpott

Professor of Political Science and
Peace Studies Director, Center for
Civil and Human Rights,
University of Notre Dame

“It’s a remarkable testament to his courage and endurance to get his work in a flagship journal. In order to make this article fly, he had to leave no stone unturned and anticipate every hypothesis. It’s an article whose thoroughness outpaces any I’ve seen.”

“It’s an excellent study. I don’t see any particular flaw, but it’s too bold to claim as an established fact. It’s a single study. We have to see if other people can replicate it or come up with other explanations.”

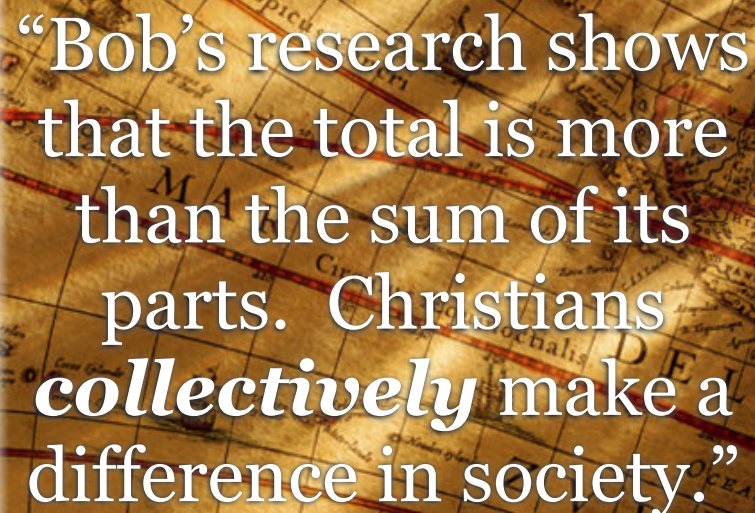


Kenneth A. Bollen
Distinguished Professor of Sociology,
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

HAS CHRISTIANITY MADE USEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION? ABSOLUTELY!

1

Missions matter



“Bob’s research shows that the total is more than the sum of its parts. Christians *collectively* make a difference in society.”

The distortion of missionary influence – that Christianity is the “source of untold misery to the human race” – is
UNTRUE!

HAS CHRISTIANITY MADE USEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION? ABSOLUTELY!

2 The Church matters



We, the Church must remain “the Church” regardless of the opposition or the consequences.

Matthew 5:13 – 15

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.”



1 Peter 2:12

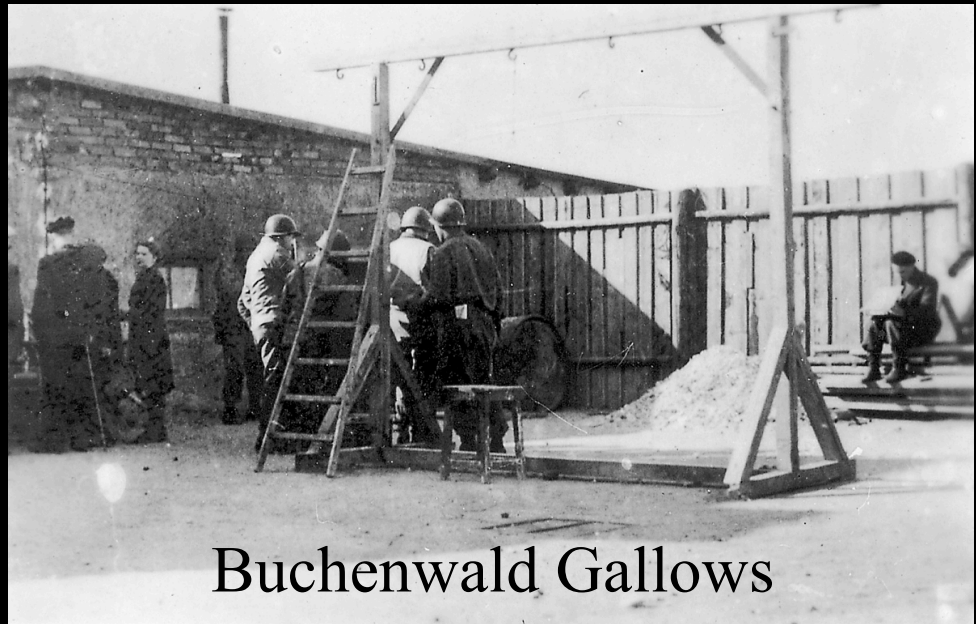
Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Buchenwald



Buchenwald Gallows

HAS CHRISTIANITY MADE USEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION? ABSOLUTELY!

2

The Church matters



The Church must continually hold the State accountable for its decisions and policies

The Church should help the victims of the State

The Church should work against the State if necessary



HAS CHRISTIANITY MADE USEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION? ABSOLUTELY!

3

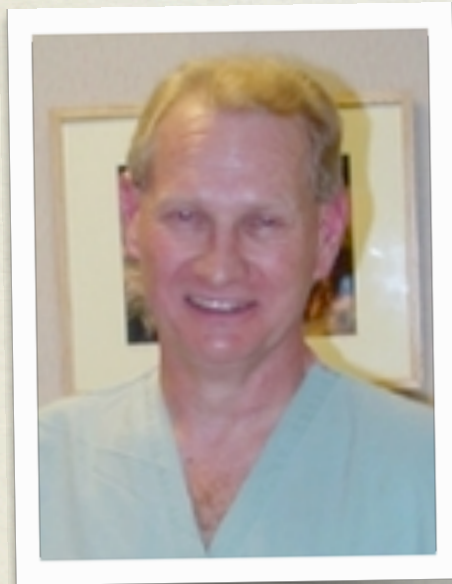
You matter



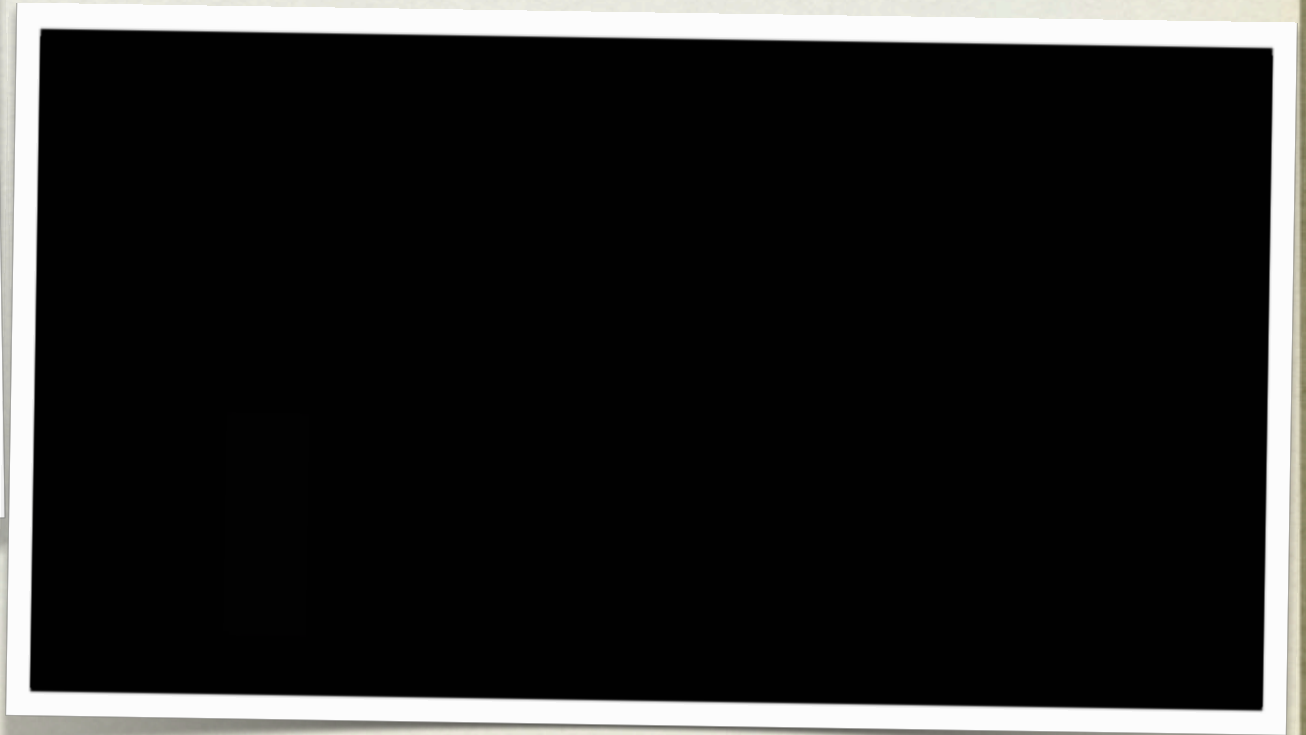
Your giving makes a
difference for good in
the world.

HAS CHRISTIANITY MADE USEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION? ABSOLUTELY!

Dr. Bruce Daugherty



Tarahumara People



HAS CHRISTIANITY MADE USEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION? ABSOLUTELY!

Rigoberto & Claudia Reyes



HAS CHRISTIANITY MADE USEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION? ABSOLUTELY!

Aaron Palmatier



