

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart”. Bible, Jeremiah Ch. 29v13

THE UNIQUENESS OF BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

By Guy Kasongo

Athens was the university city of the world where distinguished Romans sent their sons to study. This city was distinguished by cultural and intellectual achievements. It's been the home to the greatest philosophers of the world, including Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Acts 17:18, “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him [Paul]. And some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” *because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.*”

Epicureanism and Stoicism

Epicureanism and Stoicism are competing philosophies with some similarities in their application. *They are similar in that they see human beings as governing their own life through the use of free-will. They don't believe in an afterlife reality but are more concerned with earthly existence. Whilst stoicism emphasises on self-control, Epicureanism is more hedonistic or self-gratifying.*

Epicureanism is a philosophical thought holding an atomistic view of the universe. It was invented by Epicurus (341-271 BC). According to this philosophy, atoms give us free-will and when we die, our consciousness dissolves. Epicurus' followers taught that *pleasures* were the ultimate goal in life.

Stoicism is a philosophy invented by Zeno (330 BC circa). In this philosophy, *coping well with whatever the world throws at us* is the key element, as the world is beyond our control and everyone has to stick to his own belief. These philosophers were *pantheists* who believed that wisdom lays in being free from intense emotion, *unmoved* by joy or grief and submissive to natural laws.

Scepticism in ordinary usage, refers to: (a) an attitude of doubt or a disposition to incredulity either in general or toward a particular object; (b) the doctrine that true knowledge or knowledge in a

particular area is uncertain; or (c) the method of suspended judgment, systematic doubt, or criticism that is characteristic of skeptics. [2 Peter 3:3-4: knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”].

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Epicureanism, Stoicism, Scepticism and Christianity were competitive thoughts [...] Christianity with its hope of personal salvation provided by an appeal to faith as an imminent aid to human understanding and by the beneficent intervention of a merciful God [...]. During the late roman and medieval periods, elements of stoic moral theory were known and used in the formulation of Christian, Jewish and Islamic theories”.

Are these philosophies still influential today? Examples

1. **John Maynard Keynes** was an economist and prolific writer who wrote the *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* and formulated a *Short-run Economic Model*. One of his most notorious quotes is: “*in the long run we are all dead*”. In this economic model, the demand for goods and services must be stimulated in order to maximise shareholders' dividend. The Government, according to this model, should implement full employment policies in order to provide people with *out of savings* money that they can spend. **Keynes was an Epicurean and an immoralist whose work was in reaction against Victorian morality.** This man was also a believer in *melting money* i.e. money that served only for consumption, suitable neither for savings nor for accumulation.

In the long-run we're all dead?

Keynes' economics - like his religion and sexual perversion - are best understood as a reaction against the Christian worldview. At the core of many of Keynes' writings was an obsession with the subject of savings (thrift). It is a prominent part of nearly

all of his economic works, and it lies at the heart of *The General Theory*. He rightly understood that the “virtue” of saving was related to the Christian worldview. That Keynes identified the 19th century advocacy of *laissez-faire* (free market) economics with the Christian worldview is clearly shown by an essay he wrote in 1926 called “The End of Laissez-faire.”¹

Around the same time, most of today's applied marketing techniques were being formulated, including how to make people reject their beliefs while retaining relating values. The difficulty of changing one's belief is proven but some ambiguous and complex social science theories can play on people's understanding and meaning of their beliefs. They can cause people to doubt the foundations of their core beliefs.

Jude v.3, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

2 Peter 1: 16,19,21 “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty [...] 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; [...] 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

2. **Thomas Jefferson**, an American president who was also an Epicurean, managed to get “the pursuit of happiness” included into the American Declaration of Independence.

3. Professor Lord **Richard Layard** who set up the ‘Action for Happiness’ organisation suggested that happiness could become a new ‘**secular spirituality**’ to fill the ‘**God-hole**’ left by **the decline of Christianity**. In the UK debates on defining and measuring well-

¹ <http://www.tkc.com/resources/resources-pages/keynes.html>

being, Richard Layard suggests that like Epicurus did, *well-being should be defined simply as 'pleasant feelings'*.

According to philosophyforlife.org website, **Richard Layard's Action for Happiness** "tries to make people more aware of simple well-being techniques like meditation or the stoic techniques of knowing what you can control and what you can't". On March 19th 2013, the First *United Nations International Day of Happiness* was celebrated in the House of Lords, led by Happiness Economist Professor Lord Richard Layard. 'God-hole' left by the decline of Christianity?

Based on Simon Peter's answer in Matthew 16:16, Jesus Christ said in Matthew 16:18 "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it". 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ". In this passage, arguments mean imaginations or reasoning trying to exalt themselves above the knowledge of God; they include: evolutionism, secular humanism, social Darwinism, pagan religions, humanistic economic philosophies - e.g. 'consumerism'; 'in the long run, we are all dead', aggressive New Atheism, etc.

4. **David Cameron** launched the idea of measuring the '*Happiness Index*' in November 2010. The first annual results were published in July 2012. According to the Independent published in July 24th 2012, "the average Briton rates their life satisfaction as 7.4 out of 10". However, it's fair to say that these results were based on a household survey of 200,000 people only in which, I am sure most of us weren't included unfortunately, thus not given an opportunity to give our opinion on this important issue.

In summary, the so-called 'science of happiness' is being promoted as well as the idea that we need to take a more rational approach to happiness, measuring the actual pleasure and pain that life choices lead to. Writing to the young pastor Timothy, Paul said in 1 Timothy 4:1" Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart

from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons".

2 Timothy 3: 1-5 "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"

1 Timothy 6:1- 2 "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses".

Professing to be wise, they became fools (God is the Creator and made us all of one blood!)

A worldview is a *foundational belief system* for thinking in every area e.g. ultimate reality, one's view of the meaning of his life and his existence in relation to the rest of the universe, including the Creator. It is important to realise that different world views are behind every social issue that is being discussed in various public entities. There is a starting point in any way of thinking, whether you call it faith, presuppositions, axioms, or postulates; these constitute a bias in any thinking system². "If, for example, human beings are the result of mindless processes of chance and time, then another person is of no more value than any other item which is the result of pure chance, for example, a pile of junk. If I believe that others have little value, then I will probably treat them accordingly [...] the cult of rudeness in modern culture; why make the effort to be polite"³!

Sir Arthur Keith (1866 – 1955) in the Forward of the "100th edition" of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* wrote, although some evolutionists are now disputing this quote:

² Chittick, D.E (2006), The Puzzle of Ancient Man. Evidence for Advanced Technology in Past Civilizations. Creation Compass. P.218

³ Ibid.

"Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable."

So, to be rational and sophisticated, according to evolutionists' logic, one must believe that in the beginning there was nothing and that nothing exploded and created everything". Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them". Genesis 2:18 "And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

In his 'Descent of Man' published in 1871, Charles Darwin wrote:

"The chief distinction in the intellectual powers of the two sexes is shown by man's attaining to a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than can woman—whether requiring deep thought, reason, or imagination, or merely the use of the senses and hands. If two lists were made of the most eminent men and women in poetry, painting, sculpture, music (inclusive both of composition and performance), history, science, and philosophy, with half-a-dozen names under each subject, the two lists would not bear comparison [...]. Thus man has ultimately become superior to woman [...].that if men are capable of a decided pre-eminence over women in many subjects, the average of mental power in man must be above that of woman.[...].

In order that woman should reach the same standard as man, she ought, when nearly adult, to be trained to energy and perseverance, and to have her reason and imagination exercised to the highest point; and then she would probably transmit these qualities chiefly to her adult daughters. [...]. Man is more powerful in body and mind than woman [...], therefore it is not surprising that he should have gained the power of selection". (Darwin, 1871,p, 327-29, 71)⁴

⁴Charles Darwin (1871) 'The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex'. V.2, 327, 329. London

<http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Extracts-theme-1.pdf>

Gospel vs. philosophy (wisdom love) – A solemn warning!

Colossians 2:8, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through *philosophy* and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ”. Throughout the Scriptures, Paul makes a clear distinction between the saving Gospel and any other man-made philosophies or religions. He also warns us repeatedly against their deceptiveness and potential introduction in the Church in order to trouble and lead the sheep astray. **1 Corinthians 2: 4-5**, “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the *power of God*.” But what is the ‘demonstration of the Spirit and of power’ [of God]?

1 Corinthians 1: 18, 21 – 24, “For the *message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing*, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God [...]. For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”. **The power of God unto salvation** is demonstrated in Christ’s death and resurrection in contrast to human wisdom and traditions which are but vanity that leads people to ultimate destruction deceptively.

Exousia vs. Dunamis (Romans 8:9), “Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”

Exousia (ex-oo-see'-ah) in Greek means privilege, capacity, competency, freedom, delegated influence, authority, jurisdiction, liberty, right – John 1:12

Dunamis (doo'-nam-is) is: miraculous power, ability, abundance, meaning, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work – Acts 1:8

Contextualisation and consistency but not compromise! – [Paul] “*preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.*”

Christ’s resurrection was boldly preached among both Gentiles and Jews – It’s the foundation of the biblical Christianity’s faith and it’s an historic event – Salvation, Lord’s Supper, Baptism & Newness of life are all obtained in Christ’s finished work! In the Bible, the roman guards were bribed in order for them to bear false witness to the resurrection account and the apostles were repeatedly forbidden to preach to people Jesus and the Resurrection. Christ crucified, is a stumbling block unto the Jews, and foolishness unto the Greeks. Islam denies that Jesus Christ died on the Cross! Christ’s resurrection is attacked in the name of ecumenism and political correctness. In Matthew 12: 39-40, the Lord said: “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and *no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah*. ”For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth :

The core Gospel message was never compromised in Athens – Acts 17:23 – 32

The ‘Unknown God’ is the Creator of all things – v. 23-24

He is the life-Giver – v. 25

He can be found through repentance – v. 27

We live and move in Him – v. 28

He cannot be made nor represented for worship – v. 29; Exodus 20: 4-5

Everyone is called to repentance – v. 30

The Judgement Day is coming – v. 31

Christ’s death and resurrection are the ultimate proof of God’s love and power – v. 31

In conclusion, Paul used the Greeks’ context and mindset to demonstrate that:

– There is a God who created all things – He rules over everything – He is not confined by us in any way nor can He be enhanced by us but we depend on Him – He controls history and destiny and we are all accountable to Him. God overlooked the times of ignorance, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” But the Good News is that this appointed Judge also paid the penalty that was required by our condemnation. In fact, he wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

“Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”

Because God is eternal, any rebellion against Him has eternal consequences. Animal sacrifices, good works, human wisdoms or self-indulgence are all perishable things. God’s eternal punishment requires a perfect sacrifice of an eternal value. Only Himself could provide this for humankind. On the cross, Christ cried out: it is finished! That means ‘paid in full, discharged from debt’!

If you have not done so, please **repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ**, receive God’s forgiveness for all your sins and His free gift of salvation – eternal life with God. Trust Him in leading the rest of your life, receive His Spirit and be strengthened in His Word and encouraged by the fellowship with other biblical Christians. **Be baptised!**

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. All fear is gone, He holds the future and an empty grave is there to prove my Saviour lives!

Other helpful readings

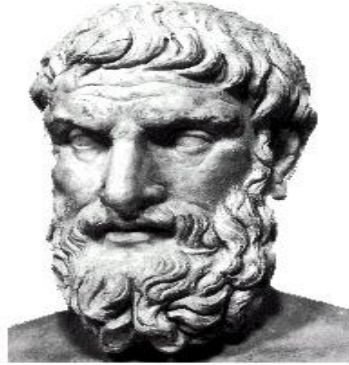
Isaiah 42:8; Psalm 115: 4-7

Not Philosophy but Christ

Now this I say *lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words*. [...] Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. Colossians 2:8-10

Epicurus says:
"Life is good!

Make sure to
enjoy it."



"Death does not concern us because as long as we exist, death is not here. And when it does come, we are no longer here". Epicurus

JESUS

THE WAY

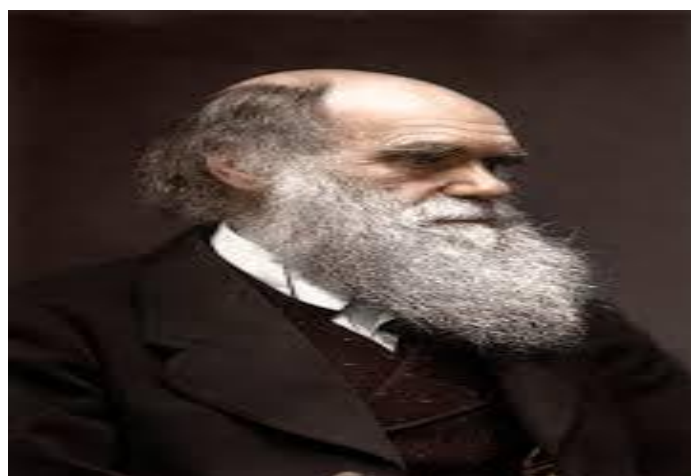
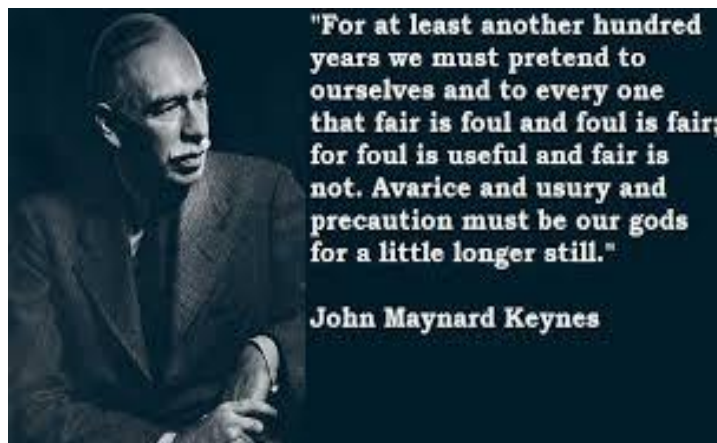
THE TRUTH

THE LIFE

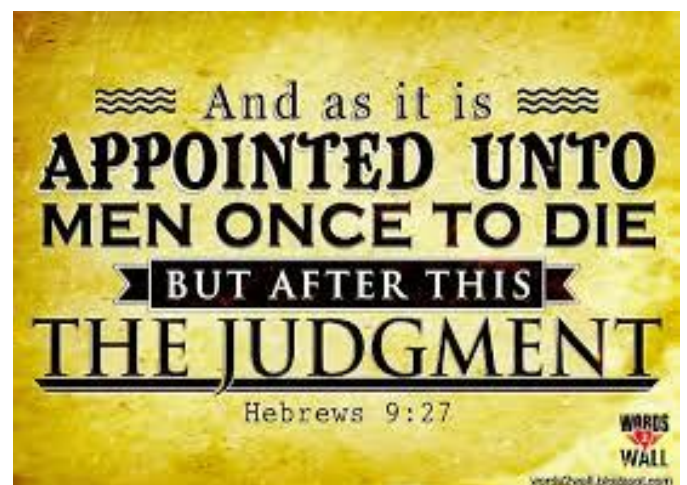
JOHN 14:6

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God says in the Bible:



"Thus man has ultimately become superior to woman [...].that if men are capable of a decided pre-eminence over women in many subjects, the average of mental power in man must be above that of woman." Darwin



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