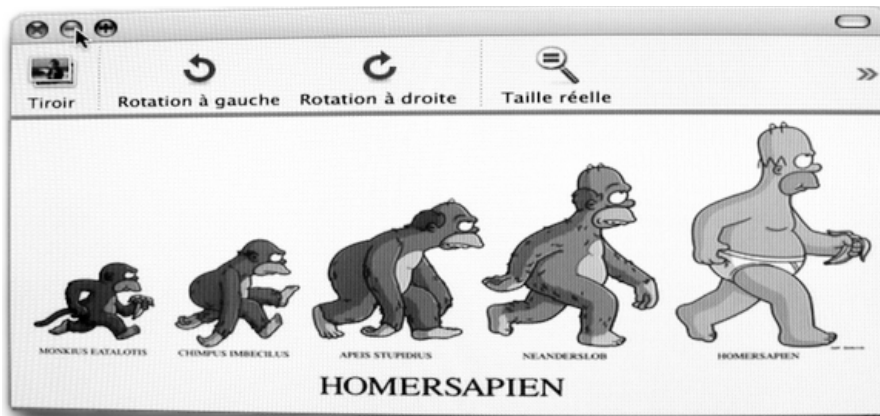


ALMOST TRUE

Worshipping at the Altar

Peter Bentley's imagination runs riot



PHOTOQUANTIQUE/flickr.co

I was meditating on the worship which had just finished on United Internet TV. It was the opening service for the annual meeting of another Church and its use of dynamic interactive technology had caught my attention and caused me to reminisce about the recent meeting of my own church, the Church of the Last Web Frontier.

We celebrated our Twentieth Anniversary at that meeting, but it was my belief that we faced more difficult challenges in the future, not the least being our survival as a true church. More than ever before people were leaving us for new and supposedly more exciting faiths, ones which provided a seemingly never-ending range of bonus added-on extras.

I pondered would we survive these challenges, and also would there be moves toward another union? Unions with the Church of the DVD and the Cable Network Church had proved to be very beneficial for all, but we could not be sure of these new groups as some did not even have a manual for meetings.

The annual meeting still had

the same format, but this was the fifth year since we had converged at the same casting location. Now as delegates we could simply sit in comfy chairs and enjoy the debates, groups, discussions, significant rituals and gatherings from our own homes.

There were a couple of surprises at the meeting, mainly due to unforeseen problems with the process for voting. All members now had the ability to communicate directly using their remote controls, which also how delegates indicated their agreement or disagreement with each proposal.

At one stage the meeting was held up because two members had not recorded their position; there seemed not to be any connection at all, and they had not indicated they were on a rest break. Certainly one could disate a position.

The business controllers kept sending messages, and eventually the Most High Meeting Host asked the local station security to visit their homes. Upon personal contact they found that the members were no longer able to participate in the meeting, nor even able to watch TV. Anyway, we were able to have a

moving memorial service, including scenes from that immortal classic 'Weekend at Bernies', culminating in the shutting down of the main Web server for a minutes silence.

Unfortunately, this event prompted a group of rabble rousers to attempt to disrupt our proceedings by introducing a provocative motion to change the name of the church to 'The Web of the Living Dead'. After furious debate and several amendments it was agreed that a shorter version, namely 'The Web Lead', could be used in common practice, but not on official documents.

Suddenly I was brought back to reality as my Internet TV set flickered and then provided a less than stable picture

Another striking change in our practice was the introduction of the new 'closed session', when all the members of the church meeting had to turn off their web connection. Those visitors who were watching our proceedings at the time were then invited to decide a controversial matter for us by submitting a vote without any further discussion. While perhaps slightly unorthodox, it certainly streamlined the proceedings.

Other parts of the meeting proceeded as normal, including the liturgical events which provided beautiful sacred readings from the Holy Guide Book, 'Logies for Ever', as well as some wonderful singing by the choir from an early book, 'Australian TV Themes'.

As usual there were reports from programme areas highlighting new game shows, lifestyle and travel events, and our endearing soap operas. The programme highlight was the anniversary edition of 'This could have been your life'. This received a standing ovation, as members realised what this past member could have achieved if they hadn't been a bloodsucking backstabber.

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The Bible created 'The West'

Must the Sun Set on the West? The Book That Made Your World.

Vishal Mangalwadi.

www.revelationmovement.com

Pasadena

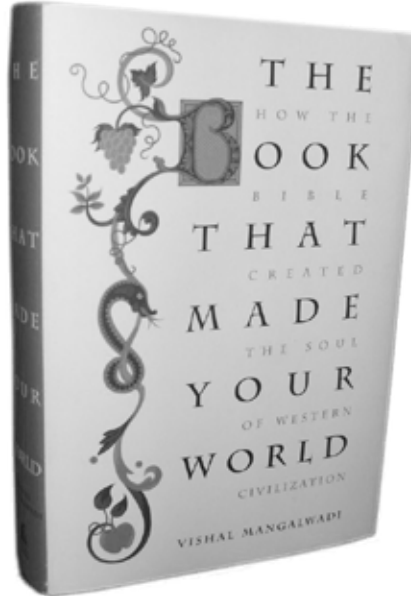
Reviewed by **Anneke van de Loo**

In short: A timely Eastern voice to jolt Western society back to reality.

In casual conversation recently, you may well have been surprised by attitudes and opinions being expressed on topical issues, be these social, religious or political. Or, have you been startled by vicious criticism of Christian values on talk-back radio or in the press?

Vishal Mangalwadi's book opens our eyes to what is happening in Western society today. He bases his findings on extensive research into the history of the Western World and the centuries of influence of God's communication through the Bible.

He describes the development of a free and thinking civilization, following the Word of God becoming available to ordinary people through translation and the inven-



tion of printing in Europe (15th Century). This then underpinned the education and social development of first Europe, then America and any country where their influence was felt. The book makes history come alive and relevant!

Vishal's observations are valuable and unique, seeing that he was born and educated in India and can look at today's world through

Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim eyes. Moreover, his studies in the West have given him insight into western culture.

This access to the thought of east and West has brought him to the conclusion that all true progress, leading to a society where freedom and equality, compassion and education are valued and experienced, must be Bible-based. Vishal proceeds to speak to the crisis of our time with clarity and courage. In the final chapter he poses the question: Must the Sun set on the West?

This timely book is a must-read for all who seek to impact the present culture in countries like Australia. This book encourages and challenges all who are intimidated by loud voices which denounce the very foundation on which the western world was built.

Anneke van de Loo is an ACC member and active in the SA ACC Movement. Anneke suggests that members may consider requesting their local library to purchase this book. It can be ordered at www.revelationmovement.com

Worshipping

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Of course, one of the highlights was the presentation of awards at the end. Many categories were hotly contested, but none more than the one for "Member displaying the most self-righteous indignation" (separate awards for those from the left and the right).

One member scooped the main prize pool, capturing both these awards (he liked to take both sides), as well as "Most emotionally manipulative speech" and "Most incoherent speech". The award for saying the most times "I will stay in this church until I die" was presented posthumously.

We even showed our respect for the official guests by introducing

a new category: "Best Attempt at making a political point by a guest who should have known better". This was indeed a difficult one to judge and so it was given to all the guests as a group.

As usual, the awards ceremony provided the suitable closing note to another year and people disconnected on a brainwave high. I had made a mental note at the time to write a letter to the Most High Meeting Host to express my thanks for another excellent meeting with wonderful programming content, but this may have meant writing more than 160 characters.

Suddenly I was brought back to reality as my Internet TV set flickered and then provided a less than stable picture, with even the beginnings of double lines. How could this happen with new technology?

Anyway, just as I began to re-boot (and I was considering getting new steel-capped boots to do this), the door bell rang. I opened the door cautiously to reveal two representatives of that new sect, the Local Church.

I had heard much about this group, but had never personally experienced the offerings of this church. Was this a sign? I was challenged to speak to them, to learn more about their faith. Where they perhaps the church of the future?

Peter Bentley is the ACC's executive consultant and has a keen interest in media and new technology. Any resemblance to any official church meeting is purely coincidental.

Note: A Version of this was originally written in 1997. It has been revised for a new era.