

BIG IDEA | Western civilization has progressed through three distinct phases in its relationship to Christianity: the “**positive world**” wherein biblical faith was honored as the foundation of society to the “**neutral world**” where it was tolerated but marginalized to our current “**negative world**” in which biblical truth faces active hostility. This decline parallels the metaphorical removal of the **three books** from Harvard’s shield—first God’s Word (Revelation), and then Reason and Reality—leaving Western culture without any foundation for objective truth, culminating in **cultural Marxism’s** systematic attack on civilization itself.

Paradigm-Shifting Words and Phrases

- **Three books:** God’s Word (Special Revelation), God’s Works (General Revelation through creation), and Human Reason—the three sources through which God reveals truth and which formed the foundation of Harvard’s original shield.
- **Cultural Marxism:** The ideological movement born in the Frankfurt School that seeks to destroy Western civilization by attacking its foundations of reason, reality, and revelation through identity politics and cultural transformation.
- **“City on a hill”:** John Winthrop’s vision of America as a beacon of hope to the nations, based on Matthew 5:14 and representing the Puritan goal of creating a comprehensive Christian civilization.

Applications for Individuals and Groups

Individual Action: This week examine your own education or that of your children. Identify one area in which you can intentionally integrate the “three books” of Truth—Scripture, observation of God’s creation, and sound reasoning. Commit to reading or studying something that demonstrates how these three sources of knowledge work together to reveal God’s truth.

Group Action: As a group, choose one institution in your community (school, government office, business) and research its founding principles versus its current direction. Discuss how you can be “salt and light” in that context and commit to taking one concrete action to positively influence that institution toward truth and life.

For Further Study

Psalm 19:1–4—The heavens declare God’s glory, and creation communicates His truth to all humanity.

REFLECTION: *How does recognizing that creation itself proclaims God’s truth change the way you view science and nature? In what ways can you help others see God’s revelation in the world around them?*

Romans 1:19–21—God’s invisible qualities are clearly revealed through creation, leaving humanity without excuse for failing to recognize them.

REFLECTION: *How does this passage challenge the common belief that faith and reason are incompatible? What responsibility do Christians have to demonstrate that God’s truth is evident in both Scripture and creation?*

Matthew 5:14–16—Jesus calls His followers to be “a city on a hill” and light to the world.

REFLECTION: *How does John Winthrop’s application of this passage to America’s founding inspire you to pursue your own calling as a Christian? In what specific ways can you function as a “city on a hill” in your community and sphere of influence?*

Genesis 12:1–3—God’s call to Abraham to leave his culture and become a blessing to all nations.

REFLECTION: *What parallels do you see between Abram’s call to leave a pagan culture and the church’s calling in our current cultural moment? How might God be calling you to courageously stand for truth, even when it means standing against prevailing cultural currents?*