

Ideas & Consequences

**Dr. Johnson C. Philip
Dr. Saneesh Cherian**

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An Ebook By

Dr. Johnson C. Philip

Dr. Saneesh Cherian

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Ideas And Consequences

Dr. Johnson C. Philip
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Almost everyone has heard the statement that ideas have consequences, but very few have taken time to examine how and where this is seen in human society.

Interestingly, all of us meet the consequences of ideas every day. Many of them come as a great blessing to everyone, whereas others create untold miseries which are unnecessary and avoidable. Yet most of us never pause to analyze them. As a consequence, we never exercise our own power to change things through our ideas. This is strange because we now live in a world that is known for its “disruptive innovations” which are novel ideas implemented easily, but which result in changes with such a reach that they can technically be called “disruptive.”

The consequence of ideas is illustrated well by this account from the USA, which took place in the early part of 1900's. Large business corporations were mushrooming everywhere and many of them were starting supermarket chains across the nation. However, they were facing a peculiar problem.

Thieves would strike at night, get into the clothes section, lift loads of clothes from the rails on which they were hung, and flee with them before the police could reach the supermarket. Electronic surveillance

systems did not exist, the alarm systems were primitive, and modern electronics did not yet exist. Each robbery was costing them huge loss and they could see no way to prevent it.

After all their attempts at security had failed, the shop-chain owners turned to their own employees for suggestions. The request was that the employees come up with a strategy against the thieves that would be cheap but also effective. Many suggestions came in that would be very effective, but none was cheap or even affordable. However, there was one suggestion that could be implemented free of cost, and made everyone laugh. Yet the management decided to give it a try.

The employee who made this suggestion said that the open side of all the hangers was always kept to the same side. He suggested that from then onwards alternate hangers should be hung facing opposite to each other. This was secretly done in all their establishments and nobody notice the change.

The next time the thieves hit one of their establishments, they got hold of a bunch of clothes with both hands and tried to pull the bunch off the rails as always. But the hangers could not be dislodged because half the hangers were facing the opposite direction. They tried to pull the bunch in the opposite direction, but to no avail because this time the other half faced the opposite side. Finally they had to pick up the clothes one hanger at a time, instead of the ten or twenty that they were always able to pull out at a time earlier.

No sooner had they started taking one hanger at a time, the time they

needed increased to almost ten to twenty times what it had used to be. This delay in turn forced them to stay in the shop longer, without realizing it. This in turn enabled police to reach and arrest them.

Just a silly-looking idea, with no cost involved! Only a small change in the way things had been done before. The ultimate result was millions upon millions saved in the long run, as well as freedom from fear about the next strike by the thieves! Ideas do have consequences, and some consequences are astronomical in size or effect in comparison to the idea that brought them forth. This in turn means that, depending upon the attitude and goal of the idea-giver, the result can either be massively beneficial or massively destructive.

Ideas come in many types. They may be related to new gadgets, or to new ways of doing things. They may also be related to new ways of manipulating people, or of directing them to highly evil and destructive ways. While all these types of ideas are continually being developed, a change in strategy has taken place in the last four to five centuries.

Here is the change in recent decades: People in general, and Christians in particular, used to weigh new ideas and their probable effect carefully and would generally reject harmful ideas. They would also speak boldly against ideas that seemed harmful to individuals and societies. However, this outlook has been changing in the last few centuries, with the most radical change happening in the last half of the twentieth century.

There used to be times when people thought in terms of their

stewardship and responsibility towards others. That in turn motivated them to speak and fight against everything they perceived as harmful to those for whom they were responsible as stewards. However, increasing individualism and the disappearance of the concept of stewardship have also led to people abdicating their responsibility to examine ideas and oppose them if they may harm society and individuals.

This increasing abdication of stewardship by people in general and Christians in particular has facilitated the rise and spread of harmful ideas, which in turn has been creating a milieu in which malevolent ideas receive greater praise and appreciation than benevolent ideas. Look at the way "it cannot be wrong if it feels good" and "do it" philosophies have received greater welcome than the message of abstinence and delayed gratification have been receiving. Added to it is the systematic public advocacy of evil, which was something not possible at all in earlier generations.

When Lewis de Sade published his writings that advocated the brutal exploitation of women, the whole society rose up in arms against him. But what he advocated looks tame in comparison to what is openly and freely sold in neighborhood shops today. Such offensive material is sold openly. This is because of deficient commitment and concern on the part of people who should be watching and warning the society. On the other hand, those who peddle perverted ideas have been coming together in support-groups, publicity-groups, and even legal-aid groups to protect those who spread these malevolent ideas. This formal gathering by the advocates of moral evil has resulted in unbelievable

synergy among those who spread harmful ideas, while those who ought to oppose these ideas are getting isolated and weaker every moment.

Techno-economy And The Spread Of Ideas

The world population has reached such an astronomical size that mere word-of-mouth publicity is insufficient today to reach a substantial number of people with an idea. The mass media tools that have been making their appearance from the middle of 1900's have, however, given new tools to people who wish to propagate their ideas -- in very affordable and economical manner.

In fact, for the first time in human history, technology and economics have joined hands to make it possible to reach a large number of people in a most economical way. The techno-economy that made its appearance with cheap, mass-produced, paperbacks has finally produced so many cheap tools for communication (such as home-based radio transmission, mass-produced CDs, home-made videos) that today anyone can easily become a media-based crusader. The arrival of the Internet has further accelerated that situation.

The techno-economy of the Internet is so radical that many net-based technologies are now called disruptive-technologies. They have completely altered the way things had been done before. One of these disruptive technologies is the Electronic-communication-group which is a group of people willing to regularly receive e-mails on a particular subject (say, coin-collection) from a particular person. Setting up e-

groups is very easy, and sending messages to everyone in the group, whether there are ten or a million people in the group, does not cost more than the effort it takes to compose and mail a good e-mail. Many crusades have attracted tens and even hundreds of thousands of people to subscribe to their propaganda in this manner. Most Christians communicators have not yet understood the power of egroups while the world exploits this technology with full force.

The time is ripe today for all crusaders to spread their ideas most economically, most easily, and instantaneously, to an unbelievably large number of willing listeners. Many know it and use the new technology effectively. Unfortunately, the number of people who wish to spread deviant ideas is way ahead of the number which is involved in spreading wholesome ideas.

With the above as background, we shall now have a detailed look at the way right and benevolent ideas have changed society in the past few millennia.

Ideas in the World of Knowledge/Science

As soon as humankind had been created it started exploring nature as shown by Adam's naming of animals and later by the invention of coverings made of leaves.

Musical instruments were invented soon after that and then came the massive ark of Noah which was so big that a ship of similar size was made only in the nineteenth century. After that came architecture as

illustrated by the tower of Babel. This was all technology. However, soon science began developing.

"Technology" refers to handling materials to make them useful for mankind. This can, to a great extent, be done without having a scientific understanding of materials and their structure. That is why technology developed before science.

"Science" on the other hand deals with the basic properties of matter, energy and the universe. It asks questions related to the structure of matter and also to the relation of this structure with the properties of matter. Thus science deals with the what, why, how etc. of matter, energy, and the universe. It is this understanding that has advanced the development of modern technological gadgets in which, instead of using the bulk properties of matter, such as in a bicycle, the deeper and non-obvious properties of matter are exploited, as in optical fiber cables.

Science had its origin when people started asking what, why, and how about matter, energy, and the universe, a question which is so deep and broad that ultimately scientists have started making machines that are hundreds of kilometers in circumference to answer these questions! Of course, mankind did not have any machines or any experimental apparatus to begin with. We did not even have a magnifying glass to observe tiny things. All we had was what we saw with our naked eyes, and much imagination to answer the questions of what, why and how.

Obviously all the initial explanations were from human imaginations,

based upon the very limited and subjective information we were able to glean or guess from our observations. Certainly, not all this information was going to be right, because these limited observations gave the impression that the earth is at the center of the universe, that stars are studded in permanent positions and that the sun revolves around the earth. Yet these faulty ideas had good consequences because now mankind had certain ideas to begin with. Since science grows by the route of proposal->examination->Test-->conclusion, this was a good beginning.

The stage of science-through-mental-experiments continued for thousands of years without many problems. Greek and Indian philosophers took mental experiments to new heights after astronomical observations had started to accumulate. They were able to construct a good picture of a geo-centric universe made up of up to five elements (such as earth, water, fire, sky, air). Though they were able to break new ground in science, the main break-through came only when the helio-centric planetary system was proposed.

Ideas have consequences, and this was actually a clash at the level of ideas. The basic question was: should one depend upon one's subjective impression of the Universe, or should one use objective data and observations to make deductions about the universe? As it happens, while subjective ideas might reign for a little while, humankind's rational nature forces us to embrace the objective reality sooner or later. Thus eventually the idea of objective truth won, and with that the heliocentric model gained wide acceptance. It also became clear that "mental experiments" are not the proper approach

to study matter and energy. The acceptance of this idea was both revolutionary and a major turning-point in the history and development of science.

The ongoing developments soon brought forth the concepts of elements/atoms and compounds/molecules and this proved the last nail in the coffin of alchemy, which for centuries and even millennia, had maintained that base material can profitably be converted into gold in the bulk. These developments also helped people for the first time to distinguish between superstition and facts, though both of them claim to be based upon observations. This distinction protected untold millions from witch-hunting, death from superstitious practices, and social stigma due to superstition.

For several millennia people had the habit of hiding any useful scientific and technical information they had, so as to benefit from it, but the changing scientific environment also brought the realization that information benefits everyone, including the originator, if it is shared openly. Thus if a person had so far held on to the secret of making a medicine, now he/she started sharing the information. Thus information gradually started becoming the common property of mankind, and people would charge only for implementing it. For example, the formula for useful medicines was released to all, and people would charge only for manufacturing and making it available. This in turn resulted in improved methods of manufacture that promised better quality at cheaper rates for the buyer, but increased revenue for the sellers because of increased purchase and turnover.

The idea that technology should make life more easy and comfortable eventually resulted in the invention of bicycles, motorbikes and the car. Then came locomotives, buses, modern ships and airplanes, telephones, mobile phones and the Internet, all contributing to comfort and convenience.

For several millennia schooling was equated with apprenticeship. A young man would join himself as an apprentice to a successful master who would, over the course of years, teach his craft to the disciple without the help of a formal syllabus. However, with advances in science, mathematics, and the social setup, it became clear that every child should be given a certain minimum education to make him/her literate and fit for social affairs. He/she should then go on to specialized training to become fit to earn a living. Formal schools and training programmes designed standardized syllabi. It became easy for people to decide what they ought to study. This in turn produced so many people, skilled in so many types of sciences and technologies that great scientific, technological, and economical breakthroughs and developments became possible.

As a large number of people specialized in a large number of disciplines, there was an increased sharing of ideas. This in turn resulted in cheaper methods of manufacture, better quality assurance and effective mass distribution. Income opportunities became widely available and the spread of ideas ensured legal protection to every person to maximize his/her potential.

Mass production of books, periodicals, and newspapers helped the

spread of knowledge and information to aid people further. In turn all of this helped the all-round development of science, technology, economics, commerce, medicine, education and communication. This even influenced politics, and the idea of equality, freedom, and protection for the individual has spread far and wide

While many people feel that we live in very bad times, that is a totally wrong way of looking at things. Actually moral standards have degenerated while scientific, technological, and related areas have improved. This disparity is mainly because on the ideas front there was much work to improve the latter, while there was no corresponding effort at improving the former. In fact, for the last two to four centuries, there have been systematic worldwide efforts to destroy the moral foundation, and those who should have opposed these ideas kept silent. Had they spoken up, had they exposed the viciousness of the moral ideas that are destroying society, and had they promoted, defended, and popularized the right kind of moral ideas, moral development corresponding with scientific and technological development could have taken place in spite of mankind's rebellion and sin. (We shall return to this topic later).

There has, during the last two to five centuries, been an emphasis on scientific and social ideas. The most brilliant young men and women were nurtured and encouraged to come up with the best ideas, whether in science or economics. Research and innovation were rewarded with money, career promotion, and numerous research-fellowships, professional recognition, and awards. Publishing houses came forward to propagate the novel ideas they discovered,

formulated, and propounded. Ideas have consequences, and today we are enjoying the consequences of the good ideas that society has encouraged in the last few centuries.

As a result most developed countries today have clean drinking water, medically satisfactory sanitation, and high control over communicable diseases. Child mortality, anemia, etc, have become things of the past and the average life-span has increased considerably. Most people who are not able to enjoy these things in developed countries are not deprived due to the lack of technology, or due to the non availability of facilities, but rather because of willful carelessness.

Medical care, transport systems, communication systems, supermarkets, quality-control of products, warranties on machines and gadgets, insurance, well-built highways, traffic laws, and most other comforts of life, which people today take for granted in developed countries, and also in many developing countries, became possible only because visionary people were encouraged to channel their ideas into the welfare of society.

Book-burning, suppression of thinkers, and censorship have, in the past, been used by dictators. But the recent products of human ideas, such as the Internet and blogs, now make it difficult for even determined governments to suppress open exchange and sharing of ideas.

For several centuries people placed a premium on those ideas that can make human life more comfortable. Ideas do have consequences, and all those contemporary people who have the good fortune to live in

countries where these ideas were implemented, have a quality of life which, till the recent past, had been the stuff of fiction. We invested in great ideas, and we are reaping wonderful consequences. However, we gradually abandoned one area and today we are facing poverty and the resultant depravity in that area: the moral aspect of human life.

Ideas And Consequences In The Moral Sphere

Morality and ethics create boundaries that guard human society from sinking into chaos, somewhat like traffic rules, traffic lanes and traffic lights do. However, right from the time humans fell into sin, mankind has tried to cross boundaries of ethics and morality.

Immoral and unethical people have always tried to influence society to offer them immunity, and with that aim they have always tried to justify their actions and also their way of life. However, the presence of the Bible-believing community has always kept them under control, and their deviant ways were always labeled as deviant.

In addition, almost all major world religions viewed morality and ethics as important, and therefore non-Christian societies governed by major world religions also had firm moral boundaries. If anyone advocated immoral ideas in public, it created an immediate outrage and both Christians and non-Christians alike spoke against such deviant ideas. Since religion was the strong defender of moral values, people obediently listened to such opposition, and immoral ideas were firmly contained.

However, in the 1800's many thinkers dressed morality and ethics in a totally new garb. They started to present these as components of scientific research, such as psychology, evolution, sociology etc. Many religious thinkers and statesmen immediately realized that neither psychology nor science was the ultimate culprit behind these new pronouncements. They also realized that this was basically a battle of ideas and that it needed to be fought at the level of ideas if one wanted to guard society from the evil consequences of these morally degenerate ideas.

Unfortunately the 1800's was also the time of abdication by many well-known Christian thinkers. They quickly embraced evolutionary ideas of life origins and persuaded their contemporaries as well to accept these ideas. Towards the end of the 1800s this resulted in such a synthesis of evolution and Christian thought that the latter emerged with an evolutionary color and flavor.

Ideas have consequences, and the acceptance of evolutionary ideas by Christians had immediate all-round consequences. The history of creation recorded in Genesis was the first casualty. What had been known for thousands of years and was endorsed as history by the Lord Jesus Himself suddenly lost its elevated status in Christendom. Genesis 1 to 10 was suddenly labeled as poetry, so that nothing recorded there had literal or historical value any more!

Once the moorings are cut off, one can never predict the direction or speed of the drift. The history of creation, fall, and the promise of the

Redeemer as recorded in Genesis had been the anchor and mooring that had given direction to the Christian faith and conduct in all the millennia till then. Bible seminaries were the immediate casualty.

The false idea that the Bible is a product of human wisdom quickly made its way into Bible seminaries and then into pulpits. What had been rightly recognized till yesterday as heresy became sacred today. For these new seminarians, who were now pastors, Adam and Eve were no longer historical persons, but only the poetical symbol of collective human yearnings. Moses was quickly unseated as the divinely inspired author of the Pentateuch, and that credit was promptly transferred to an unknown number of mutually disagreeing anonymous editors, who instead of writing down the divine revelation had been more interested in defending their own philosophical ideas about the origin of the world.

Finally, the lore goes, none of these writers was able to do a good job so that people 3000 years removed from the writing of the Pentateuch could look at their messy compilation and easily separate what each one of these editors had written. Once the seminaries started teaching this, the pulpits yielded to these new "insights". Now the messages were no longer filled with "thus says the Lord". Instead, a new method of expounding the Scripture entered the pulpit, in which one heard much of Moses said, David said, Paul said, etc., but no more "the Lord said" or "God's word says". What the theological radicals had said with caution and fear till yesterday was today being announced with great confidence and conviction from conservative pulpits. Ideas have consequence, and for the first time the so-called conservative Christians

were more loyal to the king of radical theology than the king himself had ever been.

A few conservatives held on to the Bible, but gradually they became a minority because the defection from truth continued to snowball as more and more churches continued to abandon their commitment to the Bible. So powerful has this tide been that by the 1950's even a large number of evangelical Christians opted to abandon their commitment to the Bible so as to embrace evolutionary ideas of everything including the origin of the Bible and biblical morality.

In spite of all the above, today there is a substantial group of theologians, scientists, researchers and scholars who have a revived commitment to the Bible. They publish numerous journals and books, have numerous seminaries, but they are a minority when the Christian population is considered in its totality. Since the majority of seminaries, publishing houses, publications, funds, and foundations are under the control of the radical majority, they are effectively able to control the general direction in which Christendom as a whole has been moving.

Thus as a community, Christians abdicated from their stewardship of morality. At the same time the same thing has been happening in other religions, and today there are very few non-Christian leaders left who are willing to defend the idea that morality and ethics are essential, non-flexible, and objective. A minority is left everywhere, but its voice is effectively suppressed by the cacophony created by the radical thinkers plus the non-committed religious leaders. Worse, anyone who tries to defend moral values is often laughed out of the media and the

academic classroom that is dominated by people who mock at morality.

Radical thinkers have been using all their might and right to spread their ideas. Organizations came up worldwide in the late 1700s and early 1800s to spread the message of radicalism. A good example would be the Rationalist Press Association based in England that published an endless stream of books, periodicals and pamphlets to advocate radical thoughts. No corresponding Christian think-tank existed to expose their false ideas or to spread the right kind of ideas. As a result, false ideas kept spreading, subduing people everywhere, in Europe first (because it was the center of learning in 1700s and 1800s) and then throughout the world.

One of the first ideas spread by the radical thinkers was that one should be free to indulge in sex with any person without the fear of resulting conception. This in turn gave an impetus to researchers to develop contraceptives. A variety of contraceptives have become easily available today, a century after the movement started. While many medically- motivated people spread the contraceptive technology in highly populated countries, the relaxed moral standard now ensures that a good proportion of contraceptives are used for illegitimate sex. A good number of schools in many countries sell them or even distribute them free in school compounds, and so contraceptives and morality have become related.

An idea does not usually appear alone, but rather brings a cluster of developments with it. The original idea of contraceptives-for-safe-sex outside marriage has so sapped people of moral values that now

abortion (killing of the embryo) is routinely carried out as a method of contraception. This led to the relaxation of abortion laws to such an extent that today the self-induced-abortion (morning after) pill is made available almost worldwide. Worse, the self-induced abortifacient is available almost everywhere in the world without medical prescription, so that abortions and the consequent additional loss of moral values is plunging.

In the period from about 1850 to 1950 non-Christian philosophies entered the Christian church. Once the church had decided to reject the uniqueness of the Bible, the door was effectively opened for the entry of non-Christian philosophies into Christian seminaries and Christian pulpits. This flow that started slowly eventually became so strong that by the middle of the 1900s many Christian messages looked more like pagan discourses lifted from Eastern religious gurus.

The influx of non-Christian philosophies into the church also resulted in a desire to “tolerate” all religions because Eastern religions tend to tolerate all viewpoints even if they are contrary to each other. From here the idea moved on to inclusivism, pluralism, and universalism. Inclusive here means that the ultimate truths should include insights taken from all religions. Pluralism here means a willingness to tolerate all kinds of faiths and accepting all of them as equally valid. Universalism here means that the ultimate truths can be found everywhere, not in the Bible alone.

As mentioned earlier, no idea appears alone and the consequences of a given idea often result in a cluster of consequences. As a result, these

three ideas underwent further change so that today in the Christian world inclusivism has become a broad concept with the implication that Christians should be willing to include people of all faiths in the Christian family, and that nobody has an exclusive claim to truth. This is why exclusively Christian movements like the YMCA/ YWCA (young Men's/Women's Christian Association) and the SCM (Student Christian Movement) now toy with the idea of allowing non Christians membership privileges.

Pluralism started with the idea that we need to respect and tolerate all philosophies, but it has now changed to the concept that all beliefs and philosophies are equally valid, and that therefore all of them should be given equal importance and weight. Also that Christians should never claim that Jesus is the only way to salvation.

Universalism, in the same way, started with seemingly harmless premises, but it has now transformed itself to the stand that all philosophies and all religions lead to one and the same God. This has also created the attitude that Christians should not preach the gospel because all religions lead to salvation anyway.

The spread of the three philosophies mentioned above has resulted in the outlook that nobody is wrong and that everybody is right. That being so, evangelism is wrong because Christian evangelism assumes that only CHRIST IS THE SAVIOUR, which is an idea totally contrary to the demands of the present inclusivism, pluralism, and universalism.

These ideas have also heavily influenced sexual morality. They claim

that if all philosophies and outlooks are equally valid, then all systems of morality are also equally valid. Nobody can, therefore, condemn the moral system of another person or label it as wrong, perverted, or inferior. It is this change that aided movements like the hippie movement of late 1960s and the early 1970s to break all social and sexual norms without being challenged. This is also the reason why slogans like “do it” and “it cannot be wrong if it feels good” went unchallenged.

The Current Situation

The arrival of the Internet has, for the first time ever, opened a cheap worldwide medium to every person. What’s more, the evermore easy to use and flexible software has ensured that people with no background in programming can easily harness the power of the net.

Interactive net-based media such as e-groups and blogs have made it possible to interact mutually on the net. These methods are so economical that a person with a computer and much spare time, plus some clever propaganda ideas, can easily build up a worldwide following and influence a large number of people.

Those who spread erratic philosophies always know that they need to convert an ever-increasing number of people to their viewpoint. Thus they have always exploited all kinds of mass media to their advantage. They immediately exploited the current lax moral atmosphere, coupled with almost free access to the whole world, to spread their perversion. It is estimated that today the Internet has billions of pages of perverted graphics and text, whereas the amount of wholesome material is

nowhere near that. Ideas have consequences. They have poisoned the well with their perverted ideas. The net is where our young people spend most of their time and consequently perverted ideas are what influences them most. The consequences are before our eyes everyday.

Conclusion

Ideas have consequences. For the last two to five centuries society has been encouraging the most brilliant young people to develop the best possible ideas in science and technology, and the consequence is a high development that offers the most advanced transportation, communication, medicine, education, and everything else. Material life has never been so good, easy, comfortable and enjoyable before as it is today in all developed nations and in most developing countries.

While great emphasis was placed on discovering ideas that would improve the physical welfare of people, no corresponding emphasis was placed on ideas that would lead to the moral discipline and welfare of society. Whatever emphasis was given to this topic by the Protestant Reform Movements was obliterated by the worldwide radical Christian movement which did not support these sentiments. Meanwhile, those who are opposed to Biblical moral and ethical values kept developing and propagating their ideas, informally at first but soon after in an organized manner.

Within a few centuries of this assault at the ideas level, the whole world has been leavened with the philosophies of inclusivism, pluralism, and universalism. These in turn have created a universal atmosphere within and outside the church, where it is a crime to label a given moral or

religious idea better than the other. All lofty moral ideas and all degenerate moral ideas now have the same value and standing. Calling anything inferior or wrong has become a crime.

As a consequence of ideas, we currently live in a world where the perverts can say anything, propagate anything, do anything with impunity. They do so under the “freedom” born of inclusivism, pluralism and universalism. At the same time anyone who dares to label perversion as perversion or dares to ‘call a spade a spade’ is immediately censored and labeled as a criminal.

The only moral system that can exist in this milieu is Moral Relativism. If this situation has to change, then a prolonged battle of ideas will be needed so that morally sound and wholesome ideas can finally impact society with wholesome consequences.

[You must read "What Can One Person Do" by the same authors to understand what you as an individual can do to change the current situation].

About The Authors



Dr. Saneesh Cherian is a published writer, with numerous books and articles in English and Malayalam languages. His Systematic Theology in the Malayalam language was the first such work in India. He is the Founder and President Logos Divinity School known widely for quality distance programs in theology and divinity. <http://www.LogosTheology.Com>

He is a specialist in Theology (MDiv, DMin), Christian Communication (PhD), and Sociology (MA). At present he is involved in research towards his PhD in Sociology. He has worked on numerous writing, research, and communication projects with Dr. Johnson C. Philip



Dr. Johnson C. Philip is an internationally published writer with technical (physics, electronics, information technology, communication) and spiritual (theology, apologetics, counseling) books and articles. His works have appeared in Malayalam, Hindi, English, Chinese and numerous other languages.

He is a specialist in Physics (PhD, quantum-nuclear physics), Apologetics (ThD in theology and apologetics) and Alternative Medicines (DSc, DNYS). He is also the Founder and President of the Trinity Graduate School of Apologetics and Theology <http://www.TrinityTheology.org>

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