

“Developing a Christian Mind” I
“O Lord, please open our eyes that we may see.”
2 Kings 6: 17

Introduction:

One of my favorite films, certainly on *my* list of the top 25 all time great movies, is the wonderfully complex and multi-layered *A Beautiful Mind*. A 2001 Oscar winner, *A Beautiful Mind* was written by Akiva Goldsman, and is based loosely on Sylvia Nasar’s 1998 biography of mathematician John Forbes Nash Jr. It is directed by Ron Howard, and stars the illustrious Russell Crowe as Nash, and Jennifer Connelly in an Oscar winning performance as Alicia, his wife.¹ The film certainly showcases Nash’s awful schizophrenia in realistic ways that have garnered praise from a noteworthy portion of the psychiatric community.

But more importantly, it confronts the viewer with the question about what is real, and with the issue of the ability, or inability, of the human mind to apprehend it. Indeed, the schizophrenia in the story is an ideal metaphor for that arduous human metaphysical quest to grasp the truth of things, to know what is really and truly there.

The story line takes us from young Nash as an entering student at Princeton University in 1947 all the way to his winning of the Nobel Prize. It demonstrates the transition in his life from a fierce individualism to the development of relationships, especially his marriage, and on to his need for the larger human community. It traces the evolution of his thinking about the seemingly exclusive role of intellect on to his recognition of the vital place of the heart and the importance of love in an authentic human life. And it tells the story about how Nash’s imaginary people and plots soon become self-destructive and how he is apprehended and treated by a psychiatrist, a Dr. Rosen who diagnoses his paranoid schizophrenia.

“He has lost his grip on reality,” Rosen tells Alicia. “The only way I can help him is to show him the difference between what is real and what is in his mind.” On one occasion, Nash tells the psychiatrist that he stopped taking his meds and that he can find a different solution to this “problem,” like any math problem he solves, by using his mind. The psychiatrist replies, “This isn’t math. You can’t come up with a formula to change your understanding of reality. *Because that’s where the problem is — [the problem is] your mind.*”

Overview

Now in my two talks today, I want to suggest something very similar, that in our culture today, in our churches, and in our schools, the real problem is our minds, that we, too, have lost our grip on reality, and need to cultivate a new kind of mind, a new way of thinking if we want to know and live out the truth. And that

of which I speak is the mind is the mind of Christ, a distinctively Christian mind! Now I can lay out my agenda for the day in *4 propositions*:

1. The first is that much of our society's conception of reality *is* wrong and in need of a serious overhaul. Like Nash's schizophrenic self-deception, our collective thought style suppresses the truth so thoroughly that we have deceived ourselves into believing a huge lie about reality. This is the *natural, human, mind*.

2. The second is this, that the mindsets of believers in the Church today is woefully reductionistic and off target as well, and in serious need of renewal. This is what I call the *Quasi-Christian mind*.

3. The third is that we must understand *what a genuine Christian mind really is*, distinguishing it from cheap imitations, and ascertaining as best we can its essential characteristics and basic content.

4. The fourth is this, that Christian schools and Christian education, specifically, classical Christian schools and classical Christian education, could and should serve as *a major source for the revival of a genuine, biblically based Christian mind in our era*. We will offer some practical suggestions toward this end. So today we will be taking a look at 3 kinds of minds:

1. The natural human mind
2. The quasi-Christian mind
3. The genuine Christian mind, the very mind of Jesus Christ ...

And classical Christian education should be instrumental in helping recovering number three...for the glory of God, for the well being of students, and for the renewal of the church and the culture. The future hangs upon this matter in no insignificant way.

I. Definition of Mind

Before we proceed any further, I would like to take a few moments to define the concept of mind in the first place. At a bare minimum, the mind refers to various cognitive activities such as thinking, knowing (including self-knowledge), evaluating, conceptualizing, and inferring — all these are functions of the mind, well and good.

I would like to suggest, however, another way to understand the term "mind," one that takes it to a deeper level.

- Intellect, affections, will fused into one.
- Mind is what a person is on the deepest level of his/her being.
- It is the spiritual center and conscious core of the human person.
- Mind sets perspectives, determines judgments, dictates loyalties, establishes actions.

- Mind defines and identifies the person. It is what makes you, you, and me, me.²

This way of defining mind is really what the Bible means by heart, the human heart. In Scripture, the heart is the seat of intellect, emotion, will, and spirituality. Thinking, feeling, choosing, and worshipping all transpire in the heart. According to the Bible, life proceeds *kardioptically*, out of a vision of the heart.³ The content of the human heart, or mind in this deeper sense, determines the course and destiny of one's very life. Several Old Testament proverbs suggest as much.

- As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Proverbs 23: 7
- As in water face reflects face,
So the heart of man reflects man. Proverbs 27: 19
- Watch over your heart with all diligence,
For from it flows the springs of life. Proverbs 4: 23

So when we speak of the Christian mind, or the mind of Christ, we are simultaneously referencing the biblical conception of the heart — that headquarters of consciousness that is the most influential force in human life. So, with this idea about mind in mind, let's now take a look at the character of the natural, human mind.

II. The Natural Human Mind

My primary point is that the natural human is oftentimes as detached from reality and as deceived as John Nash's mind was when he wasn't on his meds. This is true for at least a couple of reasons.

A. First is a sociological reason because of what Francis Bacon in his *Novum Organum* calls "the idols of the mind."

Idols of the mind were what the mind wrongly believes and falsely worships. They are the erroneous ideas and understandings that make it very difficult, if not impossible, to access the truth about reality.

1. **Idols of the Tribe:** *Socially produced idols* that come from the erroneous thinking of the society to which one belongs. In our day, for example, that there is no truth, all is relative, and reality is whatever I conceive of it to be.

2. **Idols of the Cave:** *Individually produced idols* formed by each person in his or her own mind or thinking. Like I am autonomous and free, and can do and be whatever I want to do and be.

3. **Idols of the Marketplace:** *Linguistically produced idols* generated in the public square where certain words and images depict life in false ways. For

example, because I'm worth it, have it your way, I did it my way, image is everything, all is up for sale, perception is reality, etc.

4. Idols of the Theatre: *Philosophically produced idols* derived from various belief systems and science, such as assume nothing beyond quarks, the cosmos is all there is.

As a result, Bacon said that the human mind could be compared to distorted mirrors on the circus midway which impart their own properties to objects, thereby misrepresenting and disfiguring them. Peoples' minds are like plays performed on stage, creating fictitious worlds. Bacon's goal, of course, was to render access to truth less difficult, to purify human understanding, and to dismiss of the idols of the mind by a new inductive way of knowing.

For *reasons sociological*, therefore, the view of reality sought after by the natural human mind is out of focus at best — fuzzy metaphysics if you will — and at worst down right wrong. But this is not the only reason why humanity struggles to get in touch with the real world, for the Bible itself also explains why the minds of men and women are alienated from the truth.

B. The second reason for the mind's detachment from truth is theological in nature, namely the noetic or mental effects of sin.

Christianity has asserted historically that sin has caused a great disruption in the minds of all people, resulting in profound ignorance of fundamental matters of consequence. People think so contrary to reality that they do not know God or themselves, and cannot understand the true nature of the universe and their place in it. Romans 1: 18-32 is a key text on the noetic effects of sin, and it states that people:

- suppress the truth in unrighteousness,
- have become futile in their speculations,
- that their foolish hearts are darkened.
- they profess to be wise, but are fools.
- that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie.
- do not see fit to acknowledge God any longer
- they have depraved minds.

Ephesians 4: 17-18 asserts similarly that unredeemed human beings:

- Walk in the futility of their minds
- Are darkened in their understanding
- Are excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that it is in them and because of their hard hearts.

Indeed, in what Alan Morrison calls their “fallenmindedness,” non-Christian people find themselves corrupted, at enmity with God, having minds that are empty, ignorant, fleshly, and under demonic power.

As a result, *1 Corinthians 1:18-31* teaches that the apparent wisdom of this world (human reasoning) is ultimately foolishness and a stumbling block, inadequate as an authority for discerning truth and reality. As St. Paul says in vv. 20-21.

- 1 Cor. 1:20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
- 1 Cor. 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not {come to} know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

This rather pitiful description of the human condition reminds me of the way *T. S. Eliot* described the empty, death-like, hopeless character of modern people in the first section of his evocative poem, *The Hollow Men*:

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar
Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion.
Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other kingdom
Remember us — if at all — not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

These hollow, stuffed people of the contemporary generation are what they are at least in part because *the world has lost its story* as Lutheran theologian *Robert Jensen* has said. Yes, that is right, the world has lost its true Christian or biblical story which defines and identifies it and puts it in touch with the real and the true. This has come about largely because of the overwhelming modern forces such as secularism, scientism, technologism, economism, consumerism, pluralism, globalism, and so on. As a result the world as a whole

and the contemporary cultural mind has been deprived of its overarching biblical story. Its teachings about the Trinitarian God, humanity as the divine image, of creation, of the fall, and of the biblical history of redemption in the OT and NT have been removed from the center and relegated to the periphery, if not eliminated all together, from cultural consciousness. For the biblical, Christian story rooted and grounded in Scripture as the Word of God was the authentic narrative resource that communicated and carried the truth of things. And in losing its true story, the world also lost its mind, lost its grip on reality, and has substituted a variety of false and often destructive alternatives in its place. As *Harry Blamires* stated in his notable 1963 book, *The Christian Mind*, "There is no longer a Christian mind. It is a common place that the mind of modern man has been secularized." Over time, biblical faith has disappeared incrementally from the cultural scene where it once flourished. As *Matthew Arnold* put it in *Dover Beach*,

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar
Retreating....

As a result, the contemporary natural, human mind is as out of touch with reality as *John Nash* was on a bad day.

The deep irony, however, is that this natural, human mind thinks that it is in deepest connection with reality and the final arbiter of truth. As a result, it is very uncomfortable with its competitors, especially its Christian competitor, and seeks to oppose and censor it. This intense dissonance between these two kinds of mind, the human mind and the Christian mind, was on display recently at the commencement services at the RCC Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

The keynote speaker was *Francis Cardinal Arinze*, the head of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. In his address, Cardinal Arinze told Georgetown's class of 2003 what anyone would expect a good Catholic Cardinal to say, for example, that "happiness is found not in the pursuit of material wealth or pleasures of the flesh, but by fervently adhering to religious beliefs." He also told the graduates and their guests about the importance of the family in Christian life and faith. He asserted that in many parts of the world, the family is under siege because of an "anti-life mentality [that can be seen] in contraception, abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia." He also added that instead of being honored, the family is "scorned and banalized by pornography, desecrated by fornication and adultery, mocked by homosexuality, sabotaged by irregular unions, and cut in two by divorce."

A Catholic/Christian mind was clearly on display, but it prompted outrage from the audience. One theology professor left in the middle of the speech. Seventy other faculty members signed a letter to the Dean, protesting Arinze's

“wildly inappropriate remarks.” The dean quickly apologized for the “hurt” that his address had caused.

The irony is, indeed, thick here, in that we see a solid Christian mind which expresses the moral order of the universe being scorned by a mentality that has few clues about which ethical side is up. But is this not like a lunatic criticizing the clearheaded pronouncements of his therapist? How easy it is to profess to be wise, but in fact be a fool! How difficult it is to tell the truth to a world that wants to be lied to!

The Mason’s comments to Pierre in *Tolstoy’s War and Peace* could just as well be directed to those who think they are in the know, but are egregiously deceived:

I know your outlook, said the Mason [to Pierre], and the view of life you mention, and which you think is the result of your own mental efforts, is [actually] the one held by the majority of people, and is the invariable fruit of pride, indolence, and ignorance. Forgive me, my dear sir, but if I had not known it, I should not have addressed you. *Your view of life is a regrettable delusion.*⁴

How difficult it is, then, for people to know God, themselves, and the world aright! How hard it is for anyone to make contact with the true, the good and the beautiful! But from the vantage point of Christian conviction, this is not impossible! As a matter of fact, the Bible teaches quite clearly that if people are ever to know truth, if they are to ever perceive and understand, then they must be born again. As Jesus states to Nicodemus in the third chapter of John’s gospel, “Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3: 3). Or as St. Augustine puts it in the *City of God*,

“But since the mind itself, though naturally capable of reason and intelligence, is disabled by besotting and inveterate vices...it had, in the first place, to be impregnated with faith, and so purified. And that in this faith it might advance towards the truth....”⁵

Christian redemption restores us to God and the gift of a Christian mind reconnects to the truth of reality. But despite this marvelous gift, all is not as it should be in the house of faith and in the church of the born again. Despite the experience of salvation, the minds of many of the faithful have not matured as they ought. That this is the case, and why we will explore now as we take a look at the undervalued and underdeveloped Christian mind.

II. The Quasi-Christian Mind

I call it the Quasi Christian mind.

“Is there anything worse than being blind?” asked Helen Keller (1880-1968). At the tender age of nineteen months, she suffered an illness that

destroyed her ability to see, hear, and speak. “Yes,” she replied to her own question. “A person who has sight but lacks vision.”

Blindness is a devastating condition. Even worse, however, in Keller’s estimation, are people who can literally see, but who lack the perception of a deeper purpose and meaning in the world around them.

Singer/songwriter *Kate Campbell* acknowledges something similar in the chorus to her song “The Strangeness of the Day” in which she marvels at the mysteries of life surrounding her.

Most of our moments we live unaware,
While miracles happen around everywhere.
No matter what theories you choose to believe,
Still it’s amazing you’ll have to agree (*Monuments* CD, Large River Music, 2002).

Many Christians, unfortunately, are in a condition like the one described by Keller and Campbell. They have gained some spiritual insight through faith in Christ. But somehow, somehow they have failed to develop a deeply biblical vision of life and the world. They have failed to develop a truly Christian mind. They possess, as one observer put, merely a “kindergarten worldview.” I call it “*ankle deep evangelicalism*.” Owen Barfield called this a “*dashboard knowledge*” of the faith. Like most people who all they know about their cars is what their dashboard (instrument panel) tells them, so a Dashboard knowledge of the Christian faith, is simple and superficial, even though many may think it profound and deep.

Such ankle-deep, dash-board level Christian thinking has been rightly labeled *a scandal and a sin*. As Wheaton College professor *Mark Noll* says in his book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, the scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind. And as sociologist/author *Os Guinness* says in his book *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds: Why Evangelicals Don’t Think and What to do about it*, the *sin* of the evangelical mind is that believers have flagrantly disobeyed the Great Commandment to love God with their minds.

Recent evidence suggests that this *scandal remains a scandal, and this sin remains a sin*. Not long ago, the Barna Research Group polled a sizable sample of born again believers in the evangelical church in order to find out how many people have some semblance of a biblical worldview. To measure this, they asked questions about 8 major doctrinal areas:

1. Belief in absolute moral truth
2. Belief that the Bible is the standard of moral truth
3. Belief in the existence and nature of God
4. Belief in the sinless life of Jesus Christ
5. Belief in the existence of Satan
6. Belief in the ability to earn salvation
7. Belief in the personal responsibility to share the gospel
8. Belief in the reliability of Scripture.

Using these very simple intro to worldview 101 questions, they discovered:

- that only 9% of adults have a biblical worldview,
- another 6% have the foundation for a biblical worldview,
- a wholopping 85% of all born again adults have neither the foundation nor the theological perspective for a biblical worldview.

Now why might this be the case? Os Guinness in his book previously mentioned suggests that part of the reason is because the church lives in what he calls an *idiot culture* focused on, among other things, entertainment, consumption, image, the bizarre, the virtually real, the postmodern, and so on. It is no wonder that cultural observer *Todd Gittlin* said that when it comes to things that matter, our culture wields *weapons of mass distraction!*

Now when it comes to the evangelical church itself, Guinness says that it is characterized by a “ghost mind,” which, like a ghost town, though once thriving, is now empty and lifeless. He sees 8 trends in the church which over time have brought about this rather dismal state of affairs when it comes to the Christian mind.

1. **Polarization**, or the tendency to separate, and even oppose, the head and the heart in the Christian life.
2. **Pietism**, or the focus on the devotional life as the sum total of Christian experience.
3. **Primitivism**, or the penchant to exalt and imitate the alleged simplicity of the early church and the faith itself
4. **Populism**, or the goal of reaching as many as possible with the gospel, but at the cost of dumbing down the faith to make it appealing
5. **Pluralism**, or the social fact of multiple religious and philosophical perspectives, resulting in an indifference to truth and a shift from a focus on belief to behavior
6. **Pragmatism**, or the reduction of everything to what works, with a consequential emphasis on methods and techniques most important.
7. **Philistinism**, or taking pride in being ignorant and unsophisticated, a reverse snobbery and elitism that glories in the lowbrow. As evangelist Billy Sunday purportedly stated on one occasion: “I know as much about theology as a jack rabbit knows about ping pong!”
8. **Premillennialism**, or an excessive focus on eschatology and the future that prevents believers from significant social and cultural engagement in the present.

To this rather daunting list we might even add other things as:

- **gnosticism** with its demonic denigration of the material world,

- **dualism** with its egregious separation of the sacred and secular, of faith and reason.
- **angelism** with its false human aspiration to become disembodied, pure spirit beings, and finally,
- **sentimentalism** which is excessively emotional to the point of mawkishness, and fails to take the world in all its fallenness seriously.
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One can help but wonder if the Hosea's words of judgment to Israel and Jeremiah's jeremiad to Judah may not apply to the church today.

Hos. 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Jer. 4:22 "For My people are foolish, They know Me not; They are stupid children, And they have no understanding. They are shrewd to do evil, But to do good they do not know."

Given our current situation, the only right thing to do is to repent. The Greek term for repent, *metanoia*, literally means to change the mind. To repent of the menace of our mindless Christianity, to use a phrase of John Stott's. We need to change our minds about our minds and recognize the God-given role they are to play in the Christian life. We must recognize that a flabby mind is no badge of spiritual honor, as David Hazzard has put it. We need to admit the mind back into Christian fellowship again — a mind that is renewed and enlightened by faith, disciplined in Christ, and passionate for God and His creation and the things of human culture. It is this kind of Christian mind that needs to be let loose in the world! We need to imagine God addressing an intellectually enslaved church in mosaic terminology: "Let my people think!" We need to hear and respond well to the exhortation of St. Paul to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 14:20, "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature." In short, we must commit ourselves to the formation and reformation of a genuinely Christian mind.

But exactly what is a Christian mind?

III. A Christian Mind

Perhaps it might be good first of all to say what a Christian mind is NOT, and then to suggest what it is. We need to eliminate some cheap imitations, and then move on to sketch its essential contours.

A. What a Christian mind is not:

1. The Christian mind is not just thinking by Christians
2. The Christian mind is not just thinking about Christian things
3. The Christian mind is not just categorizing all things as right or wrong morally
4. The Christian mind is not just employing a Christian line of clichés

5. The Christian mind is not just supporting Christian causes and issues
6. The Christian mind is not just asserting Christian doctrine and a correct system of theology.
7. The Christian mind is not a head trip, for intellectuals only, the development of Christian “brianiacs.”
8. Rather, a Christian mind is for all serious and thoughtful believers who desire to love God with their minds (Matt. 22: 37), who seek the mind of the Christ (1 Cor. 2: 16) and who desire to be mature in their thinking (1 Cor. 14: 20), and who seek to grow into the measure of the stature that belongs to the fullness of Him (Eph. 4: 13).

B. What the Christian mind is:

1. In general:

The Christian mind is a way of thinking about, evaluating, and acting upon every area and issue in life on the basis of the assumptions and teachings of Scripture, especially the themes of God, creation, fall, incarnation, redemption, and glorification.

H. Blamires in his work *The Christian Mind*, defines it in this way: “To think Christianly is to accept all things with the mind as related directly or indirectly to man’s eternal destiny as the redeemed and chosen child of God, and to impose divine revelation as the final touchstone of truth.”

David Gill in his book, *The Opening of the Christian Mind*, puts it in these terms: “Having a Christian mind means that in every situation we try to think from the perspective of Jesus Christ, acknowledging Him as Lord, Savior and God.”

2. Specifically: seven traits of the Christian mind⁶

1. A theological mind:

The Christian mind has its focus on the Trinitarian God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and recognizes that He is the ultimate and final point of reference and principle of explanation for all the particulars in heaven and on earth. The study of God, or theology, is really the most expansive discipline of all, entailing a knowledge of the Supreme Being as Alpha and Omega, and all His works of creation, judgment and redemption. Knowing God, therefore, is the basis for knowing everything else. For this reason, Proverbs

9: 10 says: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” And similarly, Colossians 2: 2 says that in Jesus Christ are “hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge.”

Despite its reputation for being closed, rigid, and anti-intellectual, a Christian mind as a theological mind ought to be known for its great openness and remarkable breadth. It is neither this-worldly only, or other-worldly only, but both-worldly! It suffers not from either a naturalistic or supernaturalistic reductionism. It does not divide life into compartments nor does it focus on either a sacred or secular sphere. It embraces both and indeed intertwines them sacramentally!

In its wholism, a Christian mind seeks wisdom and knowledge in relation to such areas as art, politics, journalism, agriculture, social science, homemaking, plumbing, money, clothes, food, etc. It takes within its scope the entire range of reality, the natural, empirical, physical and immanent aspects of life, and the spiritual, eternal, invisible, and supernatural components to existence as well. And it places its focus on God as the center of it all, recognizing that all things exist for His glory and our good. A Christian mind is, indeed, a theological mind!

2. A historical mind

Not only is the Christian mind theologically and cosmically vast, but it also recognizes the importance of time, and what’s happening in creation and culture. It is an historically oriented mind! It recognizes that history is the theatre of divine action, and as a result, knows that it cannot be neglected. It seeks to understand the overall divine plan. It recognizes that God began a good work at creation, that there was a catastrophe called the fall, and now that God is working out a magnificent plan of redemption in history through Israel, Jesus Christ and the church. And that He will carry it all the way through to its completion in the end.

There is a beginning, middle and end to things. God created the world, providentially rules over it, judges and redeems it. Christians therefore care about what has, is, and will happen in history. They are formed by the events of the past. They are informed about and engaged in the activities

of the present. They have a proper perspective on what will happen in the future.

Jesus own range of historical vision entailed the entire purpose of God in history from beginning to end. His view stretched from creation, to the *kairos* moment of his own appearing, and extended into the future when the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of God and of His Christ when He shall reign forever and ever. The Christian mind is truly an historical mind!

3. A humanist mind

The Christian mind not only is concerned about God and history, but also about people! It is a Christian humanistic mind. Contrary to our culture, a Christian mind refuses to view people in merely utilitarian terms. People are not valued on the basis of what they can do or produce, but rather on who and what they are. But what are they? Who are they?

- They are the image and likeness of God.
- They are crowned with glory and majesty.
- They are fearfully and wonderfully made.
- They are worth much more than sparrows.
- The very hairs of their heads are all numbered!

A Christian mind recognizes how the worth and dignity of human life was been confirmed by the incarnation of the Son of God, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. God calls believers to be genuine humanists, Christian humanists who know and care about the whole person. Not just the body without the soul, or the soul without the body. But body and soul together. For a Christian mind realizes human beings are body/soul unities, embodied souls, or ensouled bodies. And it glories in the future fact of the resurrection of the whole person from the dead.

As such the Christian mind is concerned about issues of race, sex and class. And it even has concerns about the places where people live, in the city, in the country, in urban, suburban or rural environments and what makes them livable and humane or not. Nothing truly human is alien to the Christian mind which is, per Scripture, a genuinely humanistic mind.

4. An ethical/moral mind

The Christian mind is extraordinarily sensitive to matters of good and evil, virtue and vice, character and conduct. Despite the moral indifference of contemporary culture, believers with Christian minds realize that a battle between good and evil defines human life, and is at the heart of the history and destiny of the universe. As a result, and according to Romans 12: 9, 21, they hate what is evil, and the cling to that which is good. They seek not to be overcome by evil, but seek to overcome evil with good.

A Christian mind understands the following matters well:

- that the moral order of the universe has been determined by God based on His character,
- that He has disclosed his will for the moral order of the universe through revelation natural and special,
- and that human beings discover what the moral will of God is as it has been disclosed, and are responsible for attuning their lives to it, being obedient to God in all aspects of life.

The 10 commandments in the OT, and the ethical teachings of Jesus, Paul, and the other NT writers are precious to a Christian aspiring to the mind of Christ. The Christian mind as a moral mind is sensitive not only to divinely ordained rules and regulations, but also to virtues and vices, to character as well as conduct, recognizing that there are at least seven deadly sins and at least seven cardinal virtues.

Believers with Christian minds seek by practice and by the power of the Holy Spirit to cultivate a life of Christ-likeness in both attitude and action, aspiring to walk worthy of the calling with which they have been called. For the Christian mind abhors hypocrisy both in itself and in others. Hence, a distinctive disposition toward holiness and godliness is a fourth trait of a ethical Christian mind.

5. A truthful mind

A Christian mind is marked by its concern for truth. What else could it be since Jesus himself claimed to be “the truth”

(John 14: 6). Hence, there are several traits of the truthful minds of believers.

First, a Christian mind recognizes ultimately that truth is personal, embodied in God the Trinity. Second, a Christian mind recognizes that truth is objective, that there is a way that the world is in its natural and spiritual order apart from human belief and action. Third, a Christian mind embraces the unity of truth, that all truth is God's truth, that all truth is one. Despite contemporary fragmentation, a Christian remembers truth literally, bringing together into one whole the shards of truth that have been scattered abroad by sin. Fourth, a Christian mind knows that truth must be obeyed and applied. It is one thing to know that truth is personal, objective, and unified. But a truly Christian mind knows how important it is to be rightly related to the truth subjectively. For truth brings with it responsibility. For to know and not to do, means not to really know at all. As Vaclav Havel has said, "The secret of man is the secret of his responsibility." A fifth mark of a Christian mind is its concern for truth.

6. An aesthetic mind

A truly Christian mind is also sensitive also to beauty as an aesthetic mind. God himself is true, good, and also beautiful. He has stamped His own truth, goodness and beauty onto or into the cosmos He created. Hence, those with the mind of Christ can know the truth, love the goodness, and delight in the beauty of all things as the very will of God. God created trees that were not only good for food, but pleasing to the eye (Gen. 2: 9). Jesus tells us to observe the lilies of the field, to see how they grow (Matt. 6: 28). He instructs us through Paul to think about those things which are pure, lovely and excellent (Phil 4: 8). The tints, textures, tones, tastes, and touches in life tells us that God is a God who delights in the beautiful and that we are to delight in it too! A Christian mind is an aesthetic mind, a mind that rejoices in beauty!

7. A joyful mind

Pervading the Christian mind and as a culmination of the six preceding traits ought to be a deep, sustained experience of joy! This is the will of Christ for His disciples: John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and {that} your joy may be made full.

The Christian mind is certainly not a morose, straight-laced, sober and sad kind of mind. It is not cold and frozen. Not at all. Rather it is a mind afire with passionate intensity and great gladness! It is a great adventure in learning and life, of change and growth, of fruitfulness and glory. Seventh and finally, then, a Christian mind is a mind filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

And not only is it a joyful mind, but as we have seen, the Christian mind is also a *theological, an historical, a humanist, ethical, truthful, and aesthetic* mind. A Christian mind is finely attuned and richly responsible, as Henry James once said of the artist. It knows how to pay attention, and it knows what to do. A C. S. Lewis pointed out, the gospels teach that Jesus wants the heart of a child, but the head of a grown up! We aspire the measure of the stature that belongs to the fullness of Christ, the mind and heart of Christ.

Conclusion:

There are natural human minds, quasi-Christian minds, but the mind we must aspire to is the truly beautiful mind, the mind of Jesus Christ. Thank you.

¹ Taken from Brian Godawa's review of "A Beautiful Mind." Accessed June 9, 2003 at <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/0206/020613godawa.shtml>

² Henry Stob, "Note to a College Freshman," in *Theological Reflections* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 229.

³ David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 270.

⁴ Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, *The Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert M. Hutchins, vol. 51 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press/Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 196.

⁵ St. Augustine, *City of God*, *The Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert M. Hutchins, vol. 18 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press/Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 323.

⁶ These traits of the Christian mind are taken largely from David Gill, *The Opening of the Christian Mind* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), chp. 4.