

World Theology and the Emergence of the Pacific Rim Culture

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Good afternoon esteemed ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being here for this session on World Theology and the Emergence of the Pacific Rim Culture.

What is world theology? It is the study of God and his relationship to the world. The Reverend Dr. Moon told us that world theology is knowing God to all world peoples. He implied that theology is the divine drama of the ages and is the answer to our deepest needs. It is the discipline that helps us to live and understand concepts such as life and love, and lead lives of obedience to the deities we follow or worship.

So, what do we learn? We learn about critical thinking, clear writing, problem solving and how to analyze social and historical trends. Dr. Moon says that the importance of theology helps us to hear and understand the scripture's message.

In World Theology, one is presented especially with the influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, among others. Each religion is a particular expression of one in the common world of theology. Each religion is centrally concerned with the same basic attempt to define the meaning and purpose of human life and to comprehend a spiritual reality. Each is a culture-specific expression of a universal religious phenomenon and the differing conceptualizations of the spiritual. These religions can be understood as symbolic expressions of one spiritual reality which transcends the bonds of any one religious expression. These religions should be considered mutually complementary rather than contradictory. The world has tried to integrate the religions in a systematic manner in order to arrive at a common world theology.

It hasn't worked that well. The concept of a global theology has begun to move away from the classical "Atlantic" centrism. It appears that in some of the European and middle Eastern areas, a trend began whereas religious persons began to consider their own religions as more important or superior to other religions. Religio-centrism means religiously based sentiments of exclusiveness—beliefs that, for example, one should marry within one's own religion, work with members of one's own religion, and prefer members of one's own religion above others. These believers feel that their religion has a definite outlook on its own value in relation to that of other religions, and believers do not tolerate other religions.

Rabbi Hier from the Simon Wiesenthal Center in New York mentions that many Jews dare not wear their skull caps in certain areas of major cities in Europe for fear of an anti-Semitic attack. Unfortunately, such attacks have occurred very recently in North America. In December 2019, a pair of anti-Semitic terrorists attacked a kosher grocery store in Jersey City, NJ, killing 3 people. On December 28, the last night of Hanukkah, another attacker broke into the home of a rabbi in Monsey, NY and stabbed 5 people. Orthodox Jews in Brooklyn have been the targets of almost daily incidents of physical and verbal abuse in the past several months. Yet on the first day of 2020, some 90,000 Orthodox Jews gathered at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium for a celebration for the completion of the Talmud, the basis of Jewish law. For 90,000 people to be able to celebrate the Talmud, this would not have been imaginable in any country except Israel, where Jews originated, except in the United States.

In the Pacific Rim, there appears to be an absence of religio-centrism with a marked toleration of other religions and a mutual borrowing of influences.

But it would be a mistake to write off the "Atlantic" influence at this time. What will the trans-Atlantic relations with the U.S. feel like in a world focused on the Indo Pacific Rim? When America's urgent foreign policy worries involve smoothing over Japanese and Korean spats or facing down China in the Taiwan strait and South China Sea, just how relevant will Europe be?

The French say that they are a Pacific nation, because of Tahiti and some other outposts. Yet it takes more than a few islands to make one a serious factor in Pacific politics. Militarily, the Atlantic nations and NATO don't want to play a large role in the Indo-Pacific zone. The memories of colonialism are too strong, and many Pacific Asian countries see the slow-growth and high regulation European model as something to avoid.

Yet, as China looms larger, it appears that a new trans-Atlantic consensus is forming. Germany may vote to block Huawei from Germany's 5G rollout since it is believed that Chinese companies cannot be trusted with German data. Many Europeans sympathize with Hong Kong's democracy movements and are horrified by Beijing's treatment of the Tibetans and the Uighurs. During the Cold War, America's main focus was on Europe, but Japan and South Korea were important allies without whose support and counsel the Cold War would have been much harder to win.

If enough Europeans share U.S. concerns about China, the Western alliance will remain a vital force even as the world's political center of gravity shifts to the Pacific Rim.

The Pacific Rim countries have experienced major economic change and growth to become components of an economically integrated trade region and continue to gain strength in the global economy. These countries are seen as an engine of global development.

Reverend Dr. Moon recognized this trend and soon completed a circuit of the world where he studied all religions. He knew that Jesus was sent to save all people and when Dr. Moon toured the Pacific Rim region, he knew that the future of humankind was rooted in the Pacific Rim.

Why is that?

Since reflecting on the development of human civilization, Dr. Moon had made it his quest to determine what the principles of theological restoration were, and how civilization can bear fruit. He then determined that the future of humankind lies in the preservation of the Pacific Rim region, centering on the United States.

The Pacific Rim culture consists of the history, language, and art of the diverse nations and states along the Pacific Ocean. Those nations and states include Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Mexico, coastal western South America, the coastal western United States and Hawaii.

Reverend Dr. Moon visited Hawaii many times, North Korea in 1991 to help end the Cold War era, and knew that China and Russia were pursuing their interests in the small island nations of the Pacific region. Dr. Moon felt that only when peace and security are settled in the Pacific Rim can peace for all humankind be guaranteed. And he viewed the Hawaiian Islands as the center of the East and West and a melting pot of Pacific region peoples.

This is probably why Hawaii has the famous East West Center in Honolulu, which promotes cooperation among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the U.S. The Center helps to strengthen relations and understanding between the East and West.

I can see what Reverend Dr. Moon was referring to when he felt that Hawaii was the center between East and West theologies and cultures.

I was born in Hawaii. I grew up in a Chinese-American family. My parents taught my sisters and me about strong Asian family values. These values included harmony, benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, honesty, and filial piety, alike many of your family values. The family is key to the Chinese civilization. Under Confucianism, the family is as important in value as that of a nation or world. Capable people would level up their family first, then they could lead the nation to prosperity. The Chinese family provides a sense of identity and a strong network of support. In Confucian thinking, the family contains the most important relationships for individuals, and forms the foundations of all Chinese social organizations.

Yet my sisters and I commingled these teachings with living in the United States and being American. We weren't taught the Chinese language though my parents were bilingual, because English was our main language. Yet, I understand Cantonese, a Chinese dialect, and I could always understand enough Cantonese if there was some juicy gossip that Mom and Dad were talking about. I was fortunate to win a scholarship from a Chinese-American social organization to pursue my college ambitions.

In Hawaii, my friends and classmates were of Chinese, Korea, Japanese, Hawaiian, Samoan, Filipino, and many other Pacific-Asian ancestries. When I attended Indiana University on the mainland, I initially had a little problem. When I had dates with my Caucasian classmates, I had a difficult time telling them apart because these great dates of

mine all looked the same to me. But I got better at it and now my husband is of German/Dutch ancestry. I can certainly tell him apart from others.

After college, I returned to Hawaii and was employed at the Hawaii Curriculum Center, an affiliate of the University of Hawaii. I brought with me my family values, the same as what I had learned at school and through Dr. Moon's teachings.

I now live in Nevada. I continued to use my family's values and the teachings from Dr. Moon, when I became a Deputy Attorney General, the Secretary of State of Nevada, and the General Counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.

Reverend Dr. Moon chose to spend his final days in Nevada trying to pull the weight of American vision to face its Pacific horizons, the emerging future. As he strove to propel the American vision as he faced the Pacific Rim and hosted many summits and meetings to talk about this vision, he combined free speech with a safe space. He reconciled these two ideas that have recently come into conflict within academia. In his teaching which centered upon peace in the Pacific Rim, he gave us an intellectual intimacy which improves our judgment and makes us more humane. He gave us a safe enough space for free speech and civil disagreement. This model demonstrates what can spill over from these meetings into life.

And here we are in Seoul, South Korea, compliments of Reverend Dr. Moon, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, their family, and the Universal Peace Federation World Summit. Reverend Dr. Moon, in a 2007 speech in Hawaii, commented that God's providence has spread from the Atlantic area and the North American contentment and has blossomed in the civilizations from South Korea to Hawaii and to the west, the Pacific Rim. He reiterated that we must pull together centering on God's ideal of peace.

We have been given a gift, a gift that reiterates that the future of humankind is rooted in the Pacific Rim. The role of all of us, America, and the UN is to support the Pacific Rim, thus bringing together the nations of the Pacific to preserve and defend that region.

We all have a responsibility to protect and save the Pacific Oceanic realm.