

Thoughts on a Cheon Il Guk Constitution

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The passing last September of Rev. Sun Myung Moon marked the end of an era for the Unification Movement, not unlike the passing of Moses or Jesus. The followers left behind have to fashion a society that embodies the teaching and spirit of the founder. Under the charismatic leadership of Rev. Moon, governance was on the level of a community or tribal society. Now, a new center of new legitimate authority must be established for this community. In addition, the vision for Cheon Il Guk (CIG) also aspires to national and global aspects that transcend the community-level society members have known. The membership now has to define and routinize the authority of the movement after the founder's passing.



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The role of a constitution is to establish the purpose, nature of authority, and distribution of power in a society. Regardless of how the CIG Constitution is developed, it will be an important document related to the rise or decline of the Unification society, because people will voluntarily join or leave it. To expand and solidify a society that embodies the founder's values, the benefits of membership, on the whole, should outweigh the costs; otherwise people will not join or remain members.

Levels of Governance

Societies contain several levels of social organization, with the main levels being: family, community, state, and world. A community consists of several families, a state of several communities, and a world of several states. Each of these levels has different characteristics: the family is intimate and personal, the community is interpersonal, and the state and world are transpersonal and impersonal. Different types of authority and different forms of rules and administrations are appropriate for each level.

At the family level, direct responsibility is taken by the parents for their dependent children, whose initial several years of learning is based on mimicking behavior and habit formation. Young children do not choose their parents or understand the logic of laws, and a good community establishes norms for parenting and supports parents in their task of raising children.

Family and community levels of society embody concepts of "justice" that aim at what is best for a particular person, given their particular circumstances. Families normally belong to communities that promote a desirable set of collective values. Some communities formally organize and establish rules that provide structure to their values.

States are large, impersonal, and treat people with "equal justice" based on concepts of reason and human rights. They do not provide personal care, but rationally administer the law and, if they are not corrupt, treat all citizens equally rather than according to personal needs. World society governs the relationship

between states and does not efficiently deal directly with individuals or communities; its members are states and nations, not individuals.

A serious problem exists because of the confusion of levels of governance, and the assignment of social responsibilities to inappropriate levels of government. This occurs, for example, when irresponsible people defer their responsibilities to the state, or when power-hungry rulers seek to use the people to further their own personal goals. These two “fallen natures” tend to reinforce one another, causing the saying “a people get the government they deserve.”

The Fundamental Characteristics of a Good State Constitution

We normally think of a Constitution as the foundation for a state-level society. And, there is much confusion between the concepts of “nation” and “state.” A nation is a cultural unit, composed of many communities that share general values. A state is a territorial unit that provides security and infrastructure to a defined area of land. It is unwise to ask a state to impose the particular values of a community, or a nation, upon all the people in its territory. This is the reason for the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees freedom of assembly, religion, speech, and the press. The attempt to impose the cultural values of a particular group, rather than universal human values, at the state level, leads to ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, classism, or even “partyism” and other forms of discrimination.

A good state constitution will:

1. Create a mechanism for individuals, communities, and nations to freely pursue their ends so long as that pursuit does not interfere with the rights of others to do the same. In accomplishing this goal, it needs to set forth the rights of people and groups, and mechanisms for the prevention and prosecution of those who violate these rights.
2. Create a mechanism for the protection of the state as a whole, based on a form of taxation that least oppresses the freedoms to pursue human goals in point number 1.
3. Create a mechanism that inhibits the takeover of the mechanisms of government to serve the interest of individuals or groups, at the expense of the whole, creating a ruling class with advantages and legal rights common citizens do not have.

It is important to note that conflating the roles of nation and state is a fundamental flaw in modern societies and social consciousness that leads to great social dysfunction, genocide, and oppression. It is easy recognizing the evil of such conflation when one looks at the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and the horrific effects that resulted when one national group, the radical Hutus, controlled the state, and promoted genocide against the Tutsis and moderate Hutus. However, it is less easy to see the evil in a so-called “democratic” state, like the United States, when certain political parties use their factional power of government to organize protections or financial distributions to certain special interest groups.

Legitimate functionality in a modern state is most possible when all people are treated as equals before the law. This means that “nations,” like the CIG, should not be in control of states, but should be accorded the freedom to live and associate according to their particular values, so long as they do not oppress other nations, particularly by co-opting the power of the state.

The Proposed Draft CIG “Constitution”

Last month, I was invited to participate in a conference at Cheongshim Graduate School of Theology in Korea to discuss a draft Constitution of CIG. This document was rooted in theological statements and articulated basic structures of church authority, centered on the authority of “True Parents” and a Supreme Council.

Despite problems related to definitions and succession, the purpose of the document was appropriate to the role of “nation” as defined above regarding the separation of “nations” from “states.” A nation, like CIG, can be global and transcend the territorial span of a state, but it should not exercise power over territorial resources like water that all people equally need to live. The draft CIG Constitution set forth values related to God, morality, and family life and proposed an organizational structure to support these goals. This “Constitution” was organized more like the articles of a non-profit corporation with bylaws more like those of a church, and was designed to function within “states,” rather than as an instrument of state power. It is organized in a way that need not threaten the authority of any state with a good constitution that separates culture and state in the way the U.S. founders originally designed the U.S. to function.

A Proposal for a Future CIG Constitution

The proposed draft CIG Constitution I read was developed by individuals close to True Mother, who are concerned to see the continuation of her authority in her remaining years on earth. However, I did not see an adequate relationship between this document and the concepts of an ideal society and fallen human nature outlined in the Divine Principle, the foundational teaching of the movement:

Chapter 1 is on the Ideal. I recommend a CIG Constitution that best supports the creation of such an ideal society, with an explanation of how it does so. Key points of Divine Principle, particularly in the “Principle of Creation,” would be analogous to the “self-evident truths” in the U.S. Declaration of Independence that serve as the values behind the U.S. Constitution. This way, people learning the Divine Principle in workshops would be able to connect the ideals they are learning with the rules of the society they are being asked to join. First generation members experienced a disconnection between the ideal society as they were taught and the life they experienced in the movement’s “wilderness” phase.

Chapter 2 is on Fallen Nature. An understanding of the human fall and fallen nature can establish the basis for the checks and balances on power in the CIG Constitution. For example, efforts should be made to prevent “reversal of dominion,” in which an unqualified person would be in a position of power over the citizens of CIG.

The principle of restoration is a history of social expansion. It describes the process of expansion from individual to family, tribe, nation, state, and world. A world-level CIG Constitution should be based on an understanding of the types of administrations and laws appropriate for (1) different levels of governance, and (2) the three social spheres: political, economic and cultural. The CIG Constitution is the foundation of a cultural sphere in an ideal society. It should also have, at its core, an understanding of why the cultural sphere should not attempt to acquire political or economic power, and why these other two social spheres are based on different governing principles.

Conclusion

The creation of a CIG Constitution is an appropriate development related to the passing of Reverend Moon and as a framework for a cultural organization based on the teachings of True Parents. The Divine Principle can describe the values that the expanding Unification community believes to be universal, but these values should be promoted in ways that allow others to voluntarily grasp and accept them. The constitutions of good political states should protect the security of those seeking to pursue an ideal society like CIG, and allow members to promote their ideal and generate resources that would enable the actual pursuit of their vision of the ideal society, so long as this pursuit does not cause harm to others.

Space restricts me from describing detailed articles of a constitution related to checks and balances, methods of election, appointment, and succession. However, answers to all of these issues will be enhanced by ensuring that the articles of the CIG Constitution are compatible with the ideals of society taught in the Divine Principle.

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