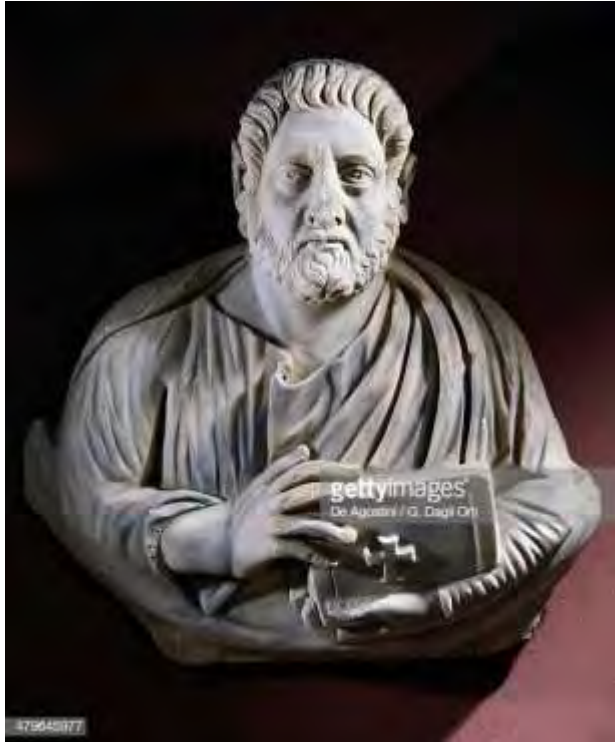


During Crucial Periods, the Christian Church Had a Change of Consciousness

David Rosenblum

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Fifth century bust of evangelist: When sacred books became more important than their lives, it signified a "change of consciousness."

Throughout the history of the Christian church, a certain phenomenon has arisen during crucial periods of time. This is the phenomenon which can be called a change of consciousness.

An example of a change of consciousness is when sacred books become more valuable to Christians than their very lives. Christians would hide their Bibles and holy books, not surrendering them to Roman authorities, contrary to the emperor's orders. They risked facing death if this "treachery" were discovered. When a document becomes more valuable than one's life, this definitely signifies a revolution of consciousness.

The resurrection belief that a physical resurrection would soon occur, where Christians would be raised from the dead to meet up with Christ and find eternal life, is another example of such a change in human consciousness. This gave Christians the courage to risk their physical lives and become martyrs, confessors, rather than give up their sacred writings. This was known as the "resurrection madness" to the Roman emperors and procurators.

A characteristic of a change of consciousness is that between those who are and those who aren't "in the know," communication is very difficult. For example, some of the martyrs spoke very harshly to the Roman officials before their deaths. Although at first this seemed most unreasonable, we can now see that the pagan Romans just could not hear or understand anyway. What really irked the psychologically unstable Roman officials was that these Christians seemed so "together," so contented while flouting

Roman law and tradition, in their willingness to die for Jesus Christ and their one God.

This is how we feel as members of the Unification Church today. Often it seems as if the people we meet just cannot understand what we have to say, when we really speak what is on our minds. Christians had an understanding -- although not an entirely accurate one -- of their imminent resurrection, and were, thus, willing to die for their Lord. We, too, are ready to die -- to give our tears, sweat and blood for Christ. The difference is that Reverend Moon has given us a much larger slice of the Truth Pie than our Christian ancestors knew. What this change of consciousness involves is that our original minds are coming out. Our original minds understand what Jesus meant when he said, "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 10:39)

Our change of consciousness results from a knowledge of our purpose in life -- which encompasses our eternal spiritual existence. Simply put, our purpose in life is to bring God joy! When people see Unification Church members always (seemingly) so joyful -- smiling, enthusiastic, hopeful, content, and just so uncannily happy -- they usually cannot understand why. I must confess that neither would I have understood how anyone could be so bright-eyed and bushy-tailed happy several years ago.

Another aspect of the change in consciousness is our de-emphasis of the physical, material items in life. I was talking earlier this morning with a brother about one common factor which almost all family members seem to pass through: losing many of their clothes or belongings when they first come to the Unification family. We learn to detach ourselves from an overemphasis on material possessions, although sometimes this is initially quite painful.

Most of these changes in consciousness are not new; they are part of our traditional Judeo-Christian heritage. The first people to experience positive changes of consciousness in a historical context were Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and most especially Jesus, who ushered in an age of new and higher consciousness, as God patiently raised up His children intellectually and heartistically. Now is the time and the age of the Lord of the Second Advent. We see a fulfillment of the prophesy of Joel 2:28: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."

Obviously, the members of the Unification Church are not the only people experiencing God's spirit lifting their consciousness to higher levels. Hare Krishnas, Jehovah Witnesses, and Sufis are but a few examples of others. However, ours is of a different level; perhaps we can describe it as a worldwide consciousness, not just an individual or group consciousness in the attempt to find God.

When I went home several months ago, I learned some practical lessons on how to best share my new state of awareness and vitality with my family and friends. On my one previous visit to my home, I blew them away! I came on like, "I have the truth and you'd better listen to me!" That may be absolutely true, but it is absolutely the wrong impression to convey. After all, we don't want to turn people off. The key is to have "a tender heart and humble mind" (I Peter 3:8). This last visit I was able to reach their hearts and avoid seeming as if I were coming out of the clouds descending on them. This is what I see to be the necessary focus of our efforts: how best to share our wonderful change of consciousness.