

The Mission Butterfly of Early Christianity and the Nature of Unificationism

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Looking at history, we see that the rise of democratic societies — some of which even base their constitutions on the ideology of Jesus Christ — has brought about freedom on a scale never before experienced. Yet, we also witness an erosion of those highly treasured values.

Countless people, mainly Christians, died to attain these values that we take for granted today; this includes underground missionaries of the Unification Church in the former Soviet Union and East European countries, whose sacrificial missions sometimes led to imprisonment and even death, and was referred to as “mission butterfly.”

We need to revitalize these virtues as expressed in Reverend Moon’s peace messages in order to not lose them. As a journalist, I discovered interesting aspects of early Christianity that offer valuable lessons from the past.

There is a basilica in Fulda, Germany, which contains the relics of Boniface, given the honorable title “Bishop of the Germans.” I was wondering for a long time how come a missionary from Wessex (England) Christianized the German lands in the 7th century? Geographically, Britain is much further from Rome and the Mediterranean than Germany.

The answer to this riddle dates back to the times of Emperor Augustus, 9 A.D., during the childhood of Jesus. Augustus mourning “Varus, Varus, give back my legions” is still remembered today. Arminius, a Cherusk, caused the annihilation of three Roman legions in the Teutoburger forest. Subsequently, the Romans withdrew from large areas of German lands and never returned. As a result, it did not become Christianized, but Britain did after it came under the control of the Roman Empire at least until the Hadrian fortress fell.



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In fact, Christianity flourished and was nourished inside the cocoon of the Roman Empire in spite of its persecution. Very little has been researched so far about Christianity up until 398 A.D. in the Roman Empire. Findings of Christian worship in Britain from the 4th century give evidence that Christians were active; some believe it already reached Britain in the 2nd century. This type of Christian was a different kind, almost a different species. It aligned itself with Jesus Christ, witnessed by first learning the language of the surrounding people, got accustomed to the culture and introduced the gospels mainly through example. This is how the wild tribes of the Irish were witnessed to, who later played a significant role in Christianity.

Beginning with Emperor Constantine, two types of Christianity were born and eventually came into conflict with one other, even though it manifested on a large scale only centuries later. One type aligned itself with the heart of the founder, the other added the power of the king, using it as a means to justify conquest (e.g., the cross as a symbol of good fortune in battle, from Constantine).

A good example of this is found in the Faroe Islands. Traces of human civilization are found from the 3rd to 5th century. When, in the year 1000, Sigmundur Brestisson, with the support of the Norwegian king, brought the Faroe Islands under his control, justified by the mandate of Christianizing, he left the islanders little choice. Yet, today historians and archeologists tend to argue that Christianity was already on the islands since graves found are not heathen, but simple burials, half of the towns’ names are Celtic, and traces of Celtic prayer houses are found all over the islands. Two Celtic crosses found in an old farmstead dating back before the year 1000 supplement the evidence.

It is quite possible these islands were already trading with the Romans and thus came into first contact with Christianity. These early Christians, who existed prior to the Norwegian mission, were not engaging in war to defend or multiply their material possessions or fame; they just passively endured and were stubborn as they never abandoned their faith.

This is quite different than Iceland, even though the Icelandic Sagas portray almost an identical story of Christianization (the view of the Norwegian king). In Iceland, however, to this day, pagan belief is alive

and well, and Christianity is nowhere as strong as in the Faroe Islands (due to widespread pagan belief prior to the year 1000 AD and the imposition of Christianity by the king). Upon my first visit to the Faroe Islands, I ignorantly asked if they have the same ghosts as Iceland (a variety of different creatures, some of which appear in *The Lord of the Rings*). The reply was swift: “No, we are Christians!” Fascinating, since the Faroe Islands and Iceland are relatively close in both distance and language .

We do not yet know what happened to Christianity when the Roman Empire withdrew from Britain: did it disappear or did it remain and flourish? This is something historians still need to confirm.



The fact that Rev. Moon viewed the Pilgrim Fathers as the founders of the American mission hints that the origins of British Christianity are found in the spirit of the early saints, at least to a certain degree untainted by the Constantinian, Roman church. The Pilgrims were able to engage the Native American tribes peacefully in comparison to the later subjugation of the Indians that caused America to suffer in subsequent decades and centuries (restoration through indemnity; horizontal reappearance of vertical history).

The Franks, a tribe and place in the German lands, subsequently adopted Abel-type Christianity through Boniface and came under the influence of the original Christian spirit in the beginning, but lost its Abel role after Charlemagne employed Constantine’s way of conquest (“become my brother or I’ll behead you”).

Today we can see that Christianity is stronger where it was not imposed by state power (kings) and weaker where it was, e.g., parts of Scandinavia and northern Germany.

One of the strongest Christian spirits can still be found in the Faroe Islands. Korea too came under its influence through American missionaries who practiced the same spirit of Christian love and compassion in the name of Christ.

This conflict of Christianization is also not unknown among Unificationists, namely when aggression replaces defense in order to reach an objective. In the dark age of the Cold War, one could perhaps see military confrontation as the only way to solve the crisis. There are two factors that stand against taking such measures: first, according to Divine Principle, the Cain side attacks first; this is the nature of evil. Abel, in a struggle to survive, has, of course, the right to defend himself.

Second, to win over Cain, one has to employ the way of subjugation through love. For example, when Rev. Chung Goo “Tiger” Park led us to confront communism in West Germany in the 1980s, he did so emphasizing our weapons are love bombs and, of course, the superior ideology of True Parents. One has to defend life if threatened; however, to win over an opponent, the strategy of Rev. Moon, Jesus Christ, and Mahatma Gandhi (inspired by Christ) are the ways to bring lasting peace. By employing this method, True Parents won over communism in Europe peacefully.

Unificationists who were not involved on the frontline may think it was defense programs that brought down communism, such as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and others (Abel has to be strong, not to

invite Cain to find an easy victim). Yet, we have since learned through news reports that on two occasions, in September and November 1983, we narrowly missed a nuclear exchange between the U.S. and Soviet Union, and we are just lucky to still be here.

The butterfly of Christianity released after the Roman persecution met with a perverted and twisted twin brother. Even though Christians knew the true message of the gospels, derived from Christ, they were many times not strong enough to withstand the greed which took advantage of the Christian standard and brought it down. Civilizations inside the Christian hemisphere as compared to those outside often differ in their views of the Western democratic Christian sphere due to their historical experience of slavery, exploitation and today's capitalist system that makes it hard for them to compete with modern infrastructure and sufficiency.

The lessons learned from early Christianity is that true love, nurtured by a superior ideology, if shared without external force, subsequently leads to profound experiences with the living God (Holy Spirit) and will bring lasting change for the better in this world. According to Rev. and Mrs. Moon, it is the only way to bring about a world of peace, freedom and happiness.

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Photo at top: One of two Celtic crosses found in the Faroe Islands, dating back between 770 and 940 AD.