

Tong-il

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A CENTRAL PROBLEM
IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

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Tong-il is the Korean title of a movement known in the West as The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, or the Union Church (Beckford, Lanczkowski, Lofland).

The movement has published some books and booklets in English and German, thus permitting Western readers to examine a doctrine where the structure of Nature as well as the laws of history are explained and the actual situation of the world is identified with the days of "the Second Coming of the Lord". These publications are of various dates, and it seems that some amendments of statements in the older texts have been made. I will here give a brief summary of the general content in the most recent.

It is stated, for instance, that for the first time in history God's plan for His creation, what He intended when He created Adam and Eve and when He sent Jesus Christ into the world, has been fully grasped by a human being, Sun Myung Moon, the founder of Tong-il. These remarkable insights have, however, been gained under the guidance of Jesus Christ.

All earlier Christian preaching of what is to happen at the end of history is said to be founded on misinterpretations of biblical texts. At His second coming the Messiah will not emerge in a moment of time from the clouds, and the catastrophes of the last days must be understood symbolically, for it is not God's intention to destroy His own creation. God has tried to restore humanity to the state in which it existed before the Fall; but this restoration requires a cooperation between God and man, and man has often failed to make his contribution. For such failures he must make *restitution* to God.

History is the long and sad story of God's disappointment in man's efforts to cooperate with Him and of long periods of restitution.¹

¹ Cf. *Prinzipien*, 253 ff.

Christians have hitherto never rightly understood the Bible, and this is why we find Christendom divided into over 400 denominations and sects.

“God is neglected in the lives of most people. Even Christians are living apart from God’s purpose of creation, compromising with the world of evil.”² In our days this world manifests itself in the shape of Communism. Communism “is the world of Satan’s side”.³

“Christianity was to be the vanguard in the movement to attain the goal of establishing the world of spiritual values and purpose. Throughout history God has worked hard to establish Christianity as His base, and to lead Christians in the direction of goodness. God placed His hope in Christianity. However, if Christianity does not fulfil its mission Christians will be chastized, just as the people in the Old Testament Age were punished whenever they failed to follow God’s will [. . .] Present-day Christendom has lost its purpose, power and zeal and fallen into confusion. Today, Christendom does not know what to do in order to fulfil its purpose of establishing God’s world.”⁴

In this situation God has formed Tong-il as an instrument of purification and renewal, bringing a new truth telling all men about the purpose of life, the responsibility of man, the way to establish a world of brotherhood and love and make the world into one family. This truth will raise Christianity to a higher dimension and give it the power and zeal which it needs to achieve God’s purpose at the time of the second Advent.

These lines will suffice, I hope, as an explanation of why Tong-il operates in the West under the name of The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity.

This appellation, however, conceals the fact that the movement must be regarded as a new religion, and not identified “mit einer christlichen Bewegung” as Günter Lanczkowski states.⁵ G. Lanczkowski and J. Beckford have given us some information concerning this movement: Lanczkowski has presented it in the context of the history of religions, while Beckford has given a presentation of the movement from a sociological point of view, more especially of its manifestations in America and England. A work giv-

² Kim, 119.

³ *Ib.*, 118.

⁴ *Ib.*

⁵ Cf. Lanczkowski, 65.

ing a deeper insight into the specific mentality of Moon's adherents in John Lofland's "Doomsday Cult" of 1966.

Tong-il works to renew Christianity, but its ultimate goal is to unite all religions, with its founder as a centre, as we can see from the following lines.

"The Saviour is one man, and he is called the Lord of the Second Advent by Christians, the Maytreya Buddha by Buddhists, the True Man or the new Confucius by Confucianists, the Immam or Amadhi by Islams, and so on with other religions. Therefore when the time comes the spirit men of all religions /will/ come down to the men of the same religion and cooperate with them, and lead them to come to this central man. [...] all the religions will be united, centering on one Lord."⁶

That this Lord has come and that he is identical with Sun Myung Moon—in Lofland's book called "Chang"—seems to be the firm conviction of the Tong-il adherents. Men from different religions are already inspired from the spirit world to seek membership in the Tong-il,⁷ and since the period when Lofland observed the first missionary work of the movement in the US (1959–63) it has manifested itself in America on a wider scale and in a most remarkable way.

A central problem in the psychology of religion is the nature of religious inspiration and the prerequisite conditions for this, and Tong-il strikingly actualizes the problem, for the founder is thought of as being the Lord of the Second Advent, the Saviour of the world uniting all religions and "giving the world back to God"!

What does Sun Myung Moon think of himself? To what extent is it possible to explain his convictions and behaviour psychologically? On this question I will make some observations in the present paper.

Anthony F. Wallace's biocultural theory of religious inspiration implies that a contradiction between norm and practice in a society is apt to drive individuals into a state of stress. On account of certain physiological mechanisms an additional stress may result in what is called "a mazeway re-synthesis".

"The mazeway is the brain's organized and codified archive of cognitive residues of perception bearing on the characteristics of the extrabodily en-

⁶ Kim, 180.

⁷ Cf. Lanczkowski, 67.

vironment, the body itself, techniques and values. The mazeway thus contains the individual's sociocultural and natural systems, of which he is a part, and the mazeway determines his behavior in it.

When the mazeway is in a state of disorder, as defined by low levels of communication and consistency, the individual experiences stress. The process of mazeway resynthesis, with physiological mechanisms probably playing a facilitating role, re-establishes order by sorting assemblages into two or more systems on the criterion of goodness or badness. This reduces ambivalence and conflict, but necessarily involves a change in the individual's perception not only of himself, but also of the environment, and it may involve his taking action to ensure correspondence between the new mazeway and reality."⁸

In Moon's case we may think of a mazeway where a Christian outlook on the world and his experience of Japanese terror in Korea and China were so incompatible that a mazeway resynthesis had to be resorted to. This resynthesis implied a reinterpretation of the Christian tradition, as well as a change in Moon's conception of himself.

Some lines from a sermon delivered by Moon in New Orleans on October 28 1973 give us in a concentrated form the new interpretation of the Christian tradition:

"Just as Jesus revealed Himself with the new truth, the Lord of the Second Advent will reveal Himself with God's new truth for our time. That truth will not be simply a repetition of the New Testament. The Lord will not appear miraculously in the clouds of heaven. Why? Because God is sending His Son to restore the things that once were lost. The first ancestors lost the kingdom of God on earth. Satan invaded the world and took Eve to his side, and then Eve took Adam away, leaving God alone and separated from man. All mankind has therefore suffered under the bondage of evil. God must send a new ancestor for humanity to begin a new history.

The work of God is restoration, always in the opposite direction from His original loss. This means that God first needs to find His perfected Adam, and Adam who instead of betraying God will become one with God. And then Adam must restore his bride in the position of Eve. Perfected Adam and perfected Eve, united together, will be able to overcome Satan and ex-

⁸ Wallace 1956 *a*, 637.

pel him from the world. In this way the first righteous ancestors of mankind will begin a new history.

God's first beginning was Alpha. This was invaded by evil, so He will restore the world in Omega. Jesus is referred to as the last Adam in I Cor. 15: 45. God wanted to bless Adam and Eve in marriage when they were perfected. As a heavenly couple they could bear children of God. That is why Jesus came in the position of Adam. God intended to find the true bride and have Jesus marry. The true parents of mankind would have begun in the time of Jesus, and they would have overcome and changed the evil history of the world. Since that hope was not fulfilled by Jesus, after 2000 years he is returning to earth as a man to complete in full the mission he only partially accomplished. The kingdom of heaven on earth will be established at that time.

The new history of goodness will thus begin. With the truth of God and the true parents for mankind a new Alpha in God's history will begin and continue for eternity. The ideal of God is to restore the first God-centered family on earth. With this one model as a center, all the rest of mankind can be adopted into this family. We shall become like them, and the first heavenly family will be expanded, multiplying into the tribal, national, and world-wide kingdom of God on earth.⁹

If Sun Myung Moon thinks himself to be the "perfected Adam" sought for by God, let us then try to find out, if possible, how this conviction of his developed.

The first thing we have to observe is that the history of Korea from 1860 and onwards shows us the forming of a milieu where prophets arise, revelations circulate, and where, by the side of native nationalistic religious movements, a great Christian revival occurs in 1906.¹⁰ It began in Pyungyang, the actual capital of the Communist part of Korea, with the Central Presbyterian Church as its stronghold. It then spread in different directions all over the country. All the well-known phenomena of The Acts were repeated, a Christian charismatic milieu with a religious life of great intensity was created.

When in 1910 the Japanese formally annexed Korea the religious movements of the country put so many difficulties in their way that the Govern-

⁹ Moon 1974, 111 f. Cf. Kim, 137 ff.

¹⁰ Cf. Lanczkowski, 59 ff.

ment thought it necessary to resort to more or less terroristic measures to get the situation under control. For the Korean Christians it must have been a source of considerable stress when the American missionaries were obliged to behave in accordance with the official policy of the US supporting Japan, at the same time as the Japanese Government was forcing Christians to follow the cult of the Japanese emperor. The situation must have become still more aggravated in 1919, when religious leaders pressed for the liberation of Korea from Japanese rule in accordance with the declarations of President Wilson. Into this situation Sun Myung Moon was born in 1920, as a child of North Korean parents belonging to the great Christian revivalist movement.

It is very difficult to get information about Moon's earlier years. A visionary experience of his might, according to Wallace's theory, indicate that a mazeway resynthesis occurred in these early years. I think, however, that we had better reckon with such a process in a later period of his life, and see in his first vision something deriving from native visionary patterns.

He has himself told his adherents that at the age of sixteen, when he was praying in the open air on a hillside, Christ appeared to him in a vision. This visionary encounter between Christ and Moon took place on Easter Morning in the year 1936. In a pamphlet written in German we find the following statement about this event.

“Als er am Ostersonntag beim Sonnenaufgang in ein Gebet vertieft war, hatte er eine grossartige Vision. Jesus Christus erschien ihm und teilte ihm mit dass er dazu bestimmt sei jene Mission zu Ende zu bringen, die Jesus zweitausend Jahre zuvor begonnen, aber nicht vollendet hatte.”¹¹

We learn from different texts that Sun Myung Moon studied intensely during the next nine years and “struggled to prepare himself for his responsibility!”.

During these years of preparation he seems to have attained to a synthesis of his meditations over the Bible and what as a student of engineering in Japan he had learned about science (Lofland mentions him as “a young Korean electrical engineer”). Thus he got the conviction that the formulas and models he was acquainted with through his technical studies were a special gift from Providence permitting him to grasp the true nature of God and His creation. Thus prepared, he took action to ensure a correspondence

¹¹ *Mun*, 8.

between his mazeway and the puzzling reality of Korea at the end of the Japanese annexation (1945–46) and the division of the country in two antagonistic territories.

“Nur wenige Monate nach der Befreiung Koreas von japanischer Besetzung wurde Sun Myung Moon von Gott angewiesen von seiner Offenbarung in Pyongyang, der Hauptstadt des Kommunistischen Nordkoreas zu predigen”,¹² we read in the German pamphlet cited above. In the capital of an atheistic country he had to begin his work, whose goal was nothing less than “die Welt wieder an Gott zurückzugeben”, to speak with our German source.

The suppression of religion, especially Christianity, by the Korean Communists is said to have far surpassed even what had been experienced under the Japanese. Christians were expected to conform to the new atheistic society in word and action.

Moon had gained a band of believers. When even Communists were won over to his cause he attracted the attention of the Communist police. He was taken to the Dae Dong Police Department and tortured in the most horrible way. One night when the executioner thought him dead his body was thrown out into the prison yard and left there in the cold of winter. Faithful believers found it there. They are said to have begun the preparations for his burial when after three days he regained consciousness and thereafter made a swift recovery.¹³

He was, however, soon rearrested, and this time he was sent to a labour camp at Huang-nam. Here the prisoners, overworked and underfed, were expected to die after six months. Nevertheless, Moon survived in this camp for nearly three years. What some of his fellow-prisoners have stated about Moon's life in the camp seems at first glance to be only hagiographic exaggeration, but this impression becomes weaker when we look at Moon's future career. To find his new perception of himself and of his world plausible, he had to get some confirmation in intercourse with others; and, if the reports of his fellow-prisoners are to be believed, his conviction of the divine origin of his insights and his message seems comprehensible enough. His liberation from the camp may have served to strengthen still more his

¹² *Ib.*, 10.

¹³ *Cf. ib.*, 11.

conviction that he was being spared by Divine Providence for some great task.

“In June 1950, when the Korean war broke out, American B-29s bombed the industrial area around Hung-nam prison. As the United Nations landing party advanced from the sea the prison authorities began to execute all prisoners. The day before it was Sun Myung Moon’s turn to be shot a naval gun bombardment by the Un forces began at Huang-nam. Under this fire the Communist authorities fled the area, and he, along with the other prisoners, was freed by the United Nations forces on October 14, 1950.”¹⁴

I think that not only the believers in Moon, but also Moon himself must have seen in what occurred a clear manifestation of Divine Providence.

Of the following ten years Lanczkowski and Beckford have given accounts. Let us here only note that Tong-il was founded in Korea in 1954 and that missionary work began in Japan and the United States of America in 1959. Tong-il appears now to be what Wallace has called a “revitalization movement”, and in Lofland’s book we find reports of Moon’s mental state in the 50’s indicating real symptoms of stress. In the light of these symptoms the maze way resynthesis which totally changed the content of the Christian message and represented Moon himself as the Lord of the Second Advent occurred most probably in these years.

It is of interest to note that Moon divorced his first wife and celebrated a second marriage in 1960. On this occasion he must have acted as the Lord of the Second Coming, for with this marriage he is said to have completed in full the mission Jesus only partially accomplished: the restoration of man at the individual level and the fulfilment of Revelations 19: 7–8.¹⁵

In New Orleans 1973 he told his audience that the ideal of God is to restore the first God-centered family on earth, and that all the rest of mankind can be adopted into this family, which will be expanded, multiplying into the tribal, national and world-wide kingdom of God. However, he allowed his Christian audience in New Orleans to believe that this restoration would be accomplished by Jesus returning to earth after 2000 years. In New Orleans he did not speak of his own second marriage as the establishment of the “God-centered family”, nor of the thirty-six Korean couples matched and married in 1961 to effect the symbolic tribal restoration, nor of the

¹⁴ Moon 1974, 119 f.

¹⁵ Cf. Lanczkowski, 68, Lofland, 24, Wallace 1956 b.

seventy-two simultaneously married couples of 1962—representing the national restoration!¹⁶

From Lofland's book we learn that international restoration would require 144 couples from twelve nations, and that it was to occur before 1967.¹⁷ I have not been able to find any report of the marriage of these 144 couples, but from a Tong-il member living in Stockholm I have learned that on October 21, 1970, 777 couples from ten nations were at Seoul given "the blessing", i.e. were married by Moon.

However, the expansion of the "God-centered family" seems to be proceeding, though the "Reverend Moon" prefers to let his Christian hearers think that it is not even yet founded, let alone expanding.

The difference between the "Reverend Moon" and the Messiah presented to American converts by Miss Yoon Sook Lee is rather striking. Miss Lee's past, as reported by Lofland, almost invites the hypothesis that a certain anti-Christian tendency of hers has set its stamp on her version of the message, especially as regards Jesus. If we compare Lofland's statements concerning the christology of Tong-il with its presentation in "The Divine Principle—Study Guide Part I" of 1973, we find that Jesus is spoken of in a more reverent way in the last-mentioned publication than might be expected from the sayings of Miss Lee.

Only some points of the christology will be mentioned here. Christ is not identical with God. Christ now dwells in Paradise, a special sphere of the "spirit world", with all the "spirit men" who have been saved by His resurrection. There He and they must remain until the kingdom of God is established on earth, then He will be allowed to enter the kingdom of God in the spirit world proper, which is not yet opened to any created being.¹⁸

Does Moon believe that he himself is a reincarnation of Christ? I do not think that this question is to be answered in the affirmative. Is Moon guided by Christ in his enterprise? Maybe, but I should like to point out that Moon believes himself to be directly commanded by God in respect to what he should do or refrain from doing, and that Christ has to wait in Paradise until God has fulfilled His plan on earth with Moon as His chosen instrument.

We must remember, however, that Moon has not himself written the texts

¹⁶ Cf. Lofland, 25.

¹⁷ Cf. *ib.*

¹⁸ Cf. *Prinzipien*, 237 ff. Cf. *ib.*, 241 with Kim, 165, 192.

available to us. We know, for instance, that James Nayler, a Quaker, was forced by his followers to take the role of the Messiah for some time, but that he later on changed his mind regarding his own real status.¹⁹ It may be that Moon, the Lord of the Second Advent of the year 1960, has since changed his mind, as Nayler did. As a man restored to “the top of the growth state” he certainly got the revelation telling him “you are the Lord”; but this revelation is to be tested in the light of the following lines in the “Divine Principle”:

“When a man receives this revelation, if he acts as if he were the Lord of the Second Advent, then he becomes a false Christ, because he does not know the ‘Divine Principle’. This is the reason for the prophecy in the Bible that there will be many false Christs in the Last Days. Matt. 24: 3–5 [. . .] what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ [. . .]

If a man is not to make the mistake of becoming a false Christ he must be modest and humble, and examine himself thoroughly. If he finds that he has no such qualifications, then he must have the [strength of] mind to refuse the revelation from heaven, no matter how often and how strongly the revelation comes. Then he will be given the right direction to follow.”²⁰

In Lofland’s book there are some hints of prophecies concerning what was to happen in the sixties, prophecies that have not been fulfilled. We must reckon with the possibility that, such being the case, Moon felt it incumbent upon him to “be modest and humble” and to wait for the right direction to follow. One such direction was shown him in 1968, when in Japan he founded *The International Cultural Foundation* to sponsor annual international conference on the unity of sciences. The first of these conferences, under the name “Moral Orientation of the Sciences” was held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York in November 1972. Here twenty scientists and scholars from eight nations deliberated on the possible moral orientation of science. A second conference in Tokyo in November 1973 convened sixty scientists and scholars from eighteen nations and discussed “Modern Science and Moral Values”. A third conference is

¹⁹ Cf. Sundén, 57 ff.

²⁰ Kim, 166 f.

to be held in London November 21–24 1974. The theme of this third conference is to be “Science and Absolute Values”.²¹

Kind letters from, for instance, Arnold Toynbee and Werner Heisenberg on the occasion of the first conference must have confirmed Moon in his belief that this enterprise of his was in accordance with God’s plan. When the first conference was held Moon had, however, received God’s order to go to America to carry out another special mission.

On Friday, December 21 1973, the Hon. Guy Vander Jagt of Michigan brought a message from the Rev. Sun Myung Moon to the attention of his colleagues in the House of Representatives. This message was published in the Congressional Record of December 26 1973 and entitled “America in Crisis—Answer to Watergate—Forgive, Love, Unite”.

The message begins with these lines: “Ever since I was 16 years old I have constantly encountered the presence of God. I have been able to share with the world numerous insights that He has shown me. On January first 1972 God spoke to me again in my prayers. He told me to go to America and speak to the American people about hope and unification. In obedience to God’s call, I came and began the Day of Hope tour. In 1972 I took this message to seven American cities. The current nation-wide speaking tour began in Carnegie Hall, New York, on October 1 1973 and will go to 21 American cities declaring a message of hope and unification.”

In the following lines Moon broaches the subject of Watergate: “I have been praying specifically for President Richard Nixon. I asked God, ‘What shall we do with the person of Richard Nixon?’ The answer did come again. The second word God spoke to me was: ‘Love. It is your duty to love him.’ We must love Richard Nixon. Jesus Christ loved even His enemies. Must you not love your President?”

But Moon, who has met Nixon and has had a talk with him,²¹ was not willing to identify his own cause with that of the President. If God has chosen Richard Nixon to be the President of the United States of America He has also the power and authority to dismiss him, Moon states in his message to America, adding: “Our duty, and this alone, is that we deeply seek God’s guidance in this matter and support the office itself. If God decides to dismiss this choice of His, let us have faith that He will speak.”

Watergate gave Moon a publicity not to be dreamt of in the early sixties,

²¹ Cf. *Invitation* (s.p.)

and this enabled him to organize a series of enterprises preparing the great change in the life of mankind. Through the *Unification Thought Institute* he has published "Unfication Thought", a book in which his fundamental doctrines are confronted with, for instance, the "Existentialists' Views on the Existence of Man", and in which critical remarks on Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger and Sartre are to be found.

The *Freedom Leadership Foundation Inc.* is another enterprise of his. This foundation has published a translation from the Korean of Sang Hun Lee's "Communism. A critique and counter proposal", 1973. The counter-proposal may also be studied in some articles in the magazine "The Way of the World", which in 1974 is bringing out its 6th year's numbers. It may thus be regarded as another direction shown to Moon in 1968. This magazine is a remarkable illustration of what Lofland once wrote about the Tong-il people: They have not "to barricade themselves from the external world in order to sustain their faith. Quite the contrary, with their transcendent ideology, they happily operate in the midst of ongoing ordinary life."²²

These enterprises seem to be of another kind than the manifestation of the expanding "God-centered family". Has Moon given up the role of the Lord of the Second Advent? Has he felt himself offered by God the more humble role of "Reverend Moon", sponsor of congresses for scientists and scholars preparing a change in the intellectual atmosphere of the world, and preacher preparing a great revival among American fundamentalists.²³

He declares himself: "Somebody must begin, and begin now. Even under persecution somebody must begin. Someone must give himself up for the purpose of God and bring God back home. We must have our churches filled with fiery faith, we must create new homes where our families can be really happy, and we must finally create a new society, a new spiritual nation where God can dwell. America must go beyond America! This is the only way for this country to survive. I know this clearly: This is the will of God. Therefore I have come to America, where I have become one voice crying in the wilderness of the 20th century."²⁴

To this declaration of Moon's I must, however, add a new item I just found in *Hufvudstadsbladet*, a periodical appearing in the capital of Fin-

²² Cf. *Way*, 80.

²³ Lofland, 12.

²⁴ Moon 1974, 66.

land, in the issue of September 14, 1974: "New York is preparing to receive the prophet Sun Myung Moon from Korea, who on September 18 will deliver to the Americans his wonderful message that the Messiah has returned to the earth. This will take place in Madison Square Garden, and placards all over the city are already giving the stressed urbanites food for thought.

On 5th Avenue the prophet's adherents are standing at all the street corners and accosting passers-by so effectively that lectures in a fashionable house on 5th Avenue are always listened to by a motely audience, motely in the literal sense, for all races are represented."

In August I heard from a believer in Stockholm that she was going to New York for this occasion and that 25 000 Tong-il people from all over the world were expected to arrive.

In the above item it is said, it will be noted, that the Messiah *has come*. Is then "Reverend Moon" only a role chosen from a tactical point of view permitting Moon to give his "testimony for Christ" while hiding what he really believes, in the same way as his early American converts when Lofland observed them?

From the texts available to us it may be concluded that this question is to be answered in the affirmative. I presume, however, that Moon himself leaves it to God to reveal by a world-wide victory whether His servant Moon is really the Lord of the Second Advent promoting world unity, and that he is occasionally willing to let himself be reduced by God to only a "voice crying in the wilderness of the 20th century" preparing the "base" for the coming Lord. Such alternations may perhaps explain Moon's remarkable ability to cope with the conditions of modern life, while at the same allowing his followers to believe what *they* think the truth.

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