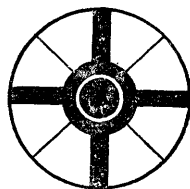


THE CHURCH OF WORLD MESSIANITY

(Sekai Kyūsei-kyō)



Masakazu Fujieda

The Founder

The Church of World Messiahianity* worships the God of Creation, the Almighty God who rules the paradise of our earth. The slogan of the Church of World Messiahianity is the construction of a paradise on earth filled with “Truth, Virtue, and Beauty.” The founder and the first spiritual leader of the Church was the late Mr. Mokichi Okada^a, who is still giving guidance to this movement from heaven. The second spiritual leader is his widow, Mrs. Yoshiko Okada^b.

Mr. Okada was born in 1882 in Tokyo into a family of merchants. During his boyhood he was physically weak, but in the later years his health improved. He wanted to become a painter, so he enrolled in an art school. However, owing to an eye illness he had to leave school, and after some time he entered his father's business. Still he had to contend with many kinds of illness and at times he was at the brink of death. For instance, at one time he suffered from tuberculosis. His case was declared hopeless by physicians. At another time he suffered from pleurisy. Once, he even wrote his will, but he did not die. He married and had two children, but both they and his wife died. His many kinds of illness and his life

* Sekai Kyūsei-kyō 世界救世教 a. 岡田茂吉 b. 岡田良子

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of poverty constitute the background of his religious experience.

Despite these unfavorable circumstances, Mr. Okada had a very strong sense of justice. He wanted to see justice prevail in society. He wanted to create social conditions so that peace and justice would prevail. Therefore, in spite of his poverty he gave money to the Salvation Army and other social welfare organizations. He wanted to do something gigantic by way of social education in order to create some social welfare foundation. Furthermore, he wanted to build schools and establish an influential newspaper. And since such things required money, he became very busy making money in his father's business; but all his fortune was lost in the great Kantō earthquake of 1923. This was a great blow. Everything was lost. About this time he entered Ōmoto^a, a popular religious movement.

Establishment of the Church of World Messianity

Through divine revelation Mr. Okada was able to chart the historical stages of mankind. The world and the universe should be looked upon through divine revelation. Encouraged by his revelation, he decided to establish a new organization, which he launched in 1935. At that time his headquarters was in Tokyo and his followers numbered approximately four or five hundred. The official date of establishment was January 1, 1935, so it was 25 years old January 1, 1960.

After that everything went smoothly, although during World War II he suffered from oppression. For instance, because his movement was not officially recognized as a religious organiza-

a. 大本

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tion, it had to be registered as an organization for healing illness. At the end of the war, however, it was incorporated as a religious organization and after that it made a very speedy recovery because the believers could concentrate on purely religious activity. At present there are about 400,000 believers. The headquarters of the organization is in two places, Hakone^a and Atami^b. Furthermore, the Church has extended its activities to foreign countries.

Before the organization became as large as it is now, that is, not only during the war but afterwards, Mr. Okada suffered many times from police interference. He was called in frequently for questioning, but such oppression and difficulties only resulted in further expansion.

Doctrine

It is not through logic but through emotion and the evidence of doctors that the teachers of the Church of World Messianity try to inculcate its doctrine among the believers. The object of worship is "*Sōzō Sushin*"^c that is, the God of Creation who wills that paradise be built on this earth so that mankind can follow the will of God.

The method that God provides is the elimination of the three evils: sickness, poverty, and strife; but paradise can not be brought about by material civilization alone. A religious civilization must be developed before paradise can be attained. So the present task of the leaders of the Church of World Messianity is the creation of such a religious civilization and its propagation among all the people.

a. 箱根 b. 熱海 c. 創造主神

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The Universe Now one may ask how the leaders of the Church of World Messianity look upon the universe and the world of reality. The basis of their belief is that paradise should be built here. The leaders believe it is the will of God that this be done and consider that everything that has happened since the establishment of the Church and is happening in this world is proof that there is a course for the realization of this divine will. The leaders regard the past as "night." The present time is a moment of transition. Since man was created on this earth, millions of years have elapsed and now we are going to welcome the dawn of paradise on this earth.

Up to now only material civilization has been dominant. Should religious civilization be added to this, then a genuine paradise will come into existence. This is what we are striving for.

Man As for human beings, man is regarded as the "lord of creation," but his soul and mind must be purified and become better. Everything depends on the quality of the soul and mind. Man, being inherently a child of God, possesses in part the divine spirit, which is generally known as conscience. At the same time, man has a side which is bestial, egotistic and shameful. So man is considered to have a dual nature: one side good, the other bestial. One and the same person can be good at one moment and very bad at another moment. Even the most evil human being has in himself the divine nature, so there is always a possibility of salvation, and of doing what is right. Superior effort can always be exerted.

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Happiness As for happiness and unhappiness. If man follows the path shown by God, he is bound to become happy. When he deviates from the divine law given by God, then naturally he becomes unhappy. This unhappiness can manifest itself in various ways but it is always to be regarded as a reprimand from God. In the Church of World Messianity the leaders speak of “spirit first, body second” (*reishu taijū*^a), that is, the spirit must always be the master and the body must always be subservient to the spirit. All the teachers of World Messianity are trying to do their best to educate the thousands of their believers in this direction: spirit dominant; body subservient.

There are clouds in our souls which exist in the same manner as our physical bodies. When the physical body dies, the spirit goes to the other world. All sickness or so-called unhappiness is derived from the clouding of this spiritual body. When the clouds of the spirit are removed, then the spirit becomes healthy and the body naturally follows the spirit. The body becomes healthy when the spirit is purified. It ought to become as clear as crystal. One possessing a crystal clear spirit should be able to always enjoy health. Such a being can be called a “heavenly being” or a being of the spirit.

How to Gain Happiness Next comes the problem of how to get rid of the clouds or shadows of the spirit. There are two ways to do this. One way is by channeling the divine light, which is given from above to purify the soul. Another way is through human effort, through doing good or virtuous things for other people or for the sake of society. The teachers of

a. 霊主体従

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the Church of World Messianity are rendering good service in conveying this light from God to believers. Countless cases of illness have been healed. Countless cases of unhappiness have been overcome.

Gaining Converts The most single powerful factor in making the Church of World Messianity expand is joy—the purification of the spirit, which brings about a kind of miracle in the lives of the believers. This is the very thing that was revealed by God to Mr. Okada. This is the key point in propagating the doctrine and in attracting converts.

It is not only the teachers that receive this divine light from God. Every follower and every believer also receives this divine light. The teacher is blest, and every earnest believer or even a novice, can channel this light or transmit it to other people. The deeper his spiritual concord with God becomes, the higher becomes his future status and the more abundant are the blessings of God.

Religion and Science In regard to modern science, we believe that science came from God. The trouble is that science has not developed as it should. Mr. Okada said that in the end science will be mirrored to a certain extent, that science itself will come to recognize God, that is, admit the existence of God. The ultimate goal of God is to follow to the end the course of development willed by God. It is because scientists are not developed to such an ultimate stage that they tend to deny God; and because of this denial of God the world is taking a very undesirable course and the ethics of material

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civilization are fostered.

We must try to set science in the right direction and make scientific people recognize the existence of God. But to achieve this end by logical methods is impossible and useless. The approach must be through both the emotions and concrete evidence. In this connection there is a great need for spiritual interchange between God and man.

The method of bringing this spiritual interchange was explained a while ago. It is possible to convert an atheist who is sick. Depending upon the degree of sickness, the number of treatments differs. When it is light, then one treatment will be sufficient; but when it is very severe, more will be needed. In any case an atheist, that is, one who does not believe in God, can be healed. Then the atheist will agree that there is something invisible, something very powerful; so he comes much nearer to God. It is through such a method that we bring people nearer to God.

In this connection Mr. Okada said that all the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ and mentioned in the Bible can be believed without any spiritual resistance. We believe all these miracles mentioned in the Bible 100%, because from day to day we observe such miracles among our followers.

Purification How is this purification of the spirit brought about? Mr. Okada seems to have laid special emphasis on the importance of beauty. That is why he established an art museum in Hakone. The purification of the spirit, Mr. Okada said, can always be brought about either through the beauty of nature or through artificial beauty. This is preached today among all

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the believers not only at the art museum in Hakone, but at large tracts of land, which have been transformed into beautiful gardens, where the followers are encouraged to cleanse and purify their souls amid beautiful surroundings. These gardens and art museums constitute a model of the paradise on earth, which is sought after by the Church of World Messianity.

When such beautiful surroundings come into existence in the rest of the world, then the real paradise may be observed.

Food Another point is that care must be taken in regard to one's food, the material food one eats every day. The founder taught that the usual foodstuffs eaten by people nowadays are not pure. Sometimes they are artificially colored. People depend too much on fertilizer or manure. Such things spoil the purity of food. When such contaminated food goes into the body, to that extent the body and soul become contaminated. To achieve purity in food the Church of World Messianity preaches a natural cultivation method just by utilizing every bit of the natural soil given by God, without the use of any manure or fertilizer. Every particle of the soil must be made to produce the best and purest crop it can grow.

Other Religions In regard to other religions World Messianity is very tolerant. It believes that all religions come from one God. There may be very primitive religions, but every religion has come to this earth to meet the need of a certain age or a certain group of people. There may be a natural selection among religions. Those which have to go will disappear in the course of time ; but those that are necessary will remain to

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meet the needs of the time. Religions ought to cooperate for the achievement of world peace. Cooperation among religions must be promoted. Religious circles should take the initiative in giving guidance and leadership for the attainment of peace in this world.

Organization and Activities

In regard to our denominational organization, we have two headquarters : one at Atami and one at Hakone. At these two places the God of Creation is enshrined and worshipped.

Japan is divided into seven districts. Each district has its office and its own staff. There are 95 churches, including those overseas, and 511 branch churches. There are about 2,000 teachers, more than 1,000 of whom are full time. The number of adherents is about 400,000.

Lecture meetings are held twice a month at the headquarters ; but besides these there are many other meetings for the board of directors, teachers meetings, training institutes for teachers, and meetings to train adherents. At the branch offices there are conferences, consultations between the headquarters and the branches, meetings of the youth association, local teachers meetings, etc. At the individual churches there are special festival days, lecture days, training days, and special counselling and guidance days. The small branches conduct house to house counselling.

As for the churches overseas, there are churches in Hawaii with 1,034 members. In Los Angeles we have 712 followers, more than half of whom are non-Japanese. In Brazil the total is 370, and the Okinawa church has 404 members.

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As for our publications, for the church overseas there is a special newspaper. For Japanese believers we publish a newspaper called *Eikō*^a (*Glorious Light*), and a monthly magazine *Chijō Tengoku*^b (*Earthly Paradise*).

Foreign missions were started in February, 1953, when two missionaries were sent to Hawaii. Later these two missionaries proceeded to Los Angeles where the church is thriving. The members there have acquired a tract of land where they are trying to create a paradise for man. Objects of art have been sent to Los Angeles to let people there enjoy the spiritual influence of beauty.

A characteristic of this organization is that the recruiting of new believers is done by the believers themselves. Of course the teachers give some guidance, but the actual recruiting of new believers is done by the believers themselves.

Q: Will any disease yield to this treatment?

A. Yes, gradually. At present severe cases of cancer are not healed. It is possible that little by little, as we purify our souls, we will not need doctors.

Q. Are there cases of cancer being cured?

A. Yes.

Q. Is the faith healing method decided by the Founder or by the followers?

A. The principle method or doctrine does not change. It was decided by the Founder who acted in accordance with revelation.

Q. Could a follower receive the same revelation as the Founder?

a. 栄光 b. 地上天国

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A. There can be no comparison between them. The Founder was given a revelation which is not needed by the ordinary believer.

Q. How long does a treatment take?

A. A treatment takes longer if a person is deep in sin or needs more purification. However, treatments are always positive, even if a person does not believe.

Q. Are there set prayers for healing?

(Two teachers then demonstrated the method used in the case of a headache. As they sat opposite each other, one assumed the attitude of prayer. Ed.)

A. Divine light is channelled through my body as an instrument of healing. It takes about fifteen minutes.

Q. What is the make-up of the membership.

A. There are more young people than old. Those about thirty years old comprise 50% of the membership. There are young people's organizations in high schools and universities.

Q. How do they cooperate with other groups, such as the YMCA, for example?

A. As individuals they would naturally cooperate. As a group we cooperate through the youth section of the Union of New Religious Organizations.

Q. What is the relationship to the medical profession.

A. There is no relationship. Everything is up to the individual. As his faith becomes stronger, there is no need for doctors. I suffered from tuberculosis and even now have spots on my lungs, but I have no need for a doctor.

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