

Higher Purpose Forum: Thomas Ward - Obstacles in a Great Awakening in a Messianic Era

James Edgerly
July 28, 2023



Exploring
important
questions
together

Presentation & Discussion Series Meeting Follow-Up Video Recording & Synopsis from July 28, 2023

Presenter - Dr. Thomas Ward "Obstacles in a Great Awakening in a Messianic Era"

Respondent: Dr. Frank Kaufman
Followed by Participant Discussion

Dear

On July 28 we had an important meeting with Dr. Thomas Ward, Provost and Professor at the HJ International Graduate School. His presentation explored the difference and complementarity between a "great awakening" and a messianic movement. This topic has direct relevance to the current circumstance of Unificationism in the North America.

Dr. Ward's presentation was followed by remarks from Dr. Frank Kaufman and an excellent discussion among forum participants.

Below is a **link to the video recording** and a **brief synopsis** of the meeting.

1) LINK TO VIDEO RECORDING

To watch the video recording, copy and paste this link into your browser:

drive.google.com/file/d/1M1S5UG9JyTTKXqA7sBgpEcFzk9c_houD/view?usp=sharing

2) MEETING SYNOPSIS

**Saturday Presentation and Discussion Meeting
July 28, 2023**

**Presenter: Dr Thomas Ward
"Obstacles in a Great Awakening in a Messianic Era"
Respondent: Dr. Frank Kaufman**

(Synopsis prepared by J. Edgerly)

Dr Thomas Ward

Historian Arnold Toynbee wrote that Christianity could possibly be rejuvenated by a spiritual "elite" entirely unrecognizable to the Christian orthodoxy. Toynbee's statement from 1974 seems prescient today. Unificationism may seem out of step with Christian orthodoxy because of its central emphasis on receiving the Holy Blessing of Marriage from Rev & Dr Moon.

The book by William McLoughlin, titled *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform* that has been guiding our “Great Awakening” discussions explains that in each of the three major awakenings in our country’s history, there has not been a central prophet, nor has there been any displacement of Judeo-Christian tradition. The awakenings did not deflect American culture, but rather improved it and allowed it to progress. Each was a reaction to anti-providential distortions of the culture (Deism, materialism, modernism, discrimination) that allowed the country to advance forward in its millennial direction.

The Unificationist CAUSA initiative may well be considered to be an awakening of sorts. 70,000 ministers attended CAUSA seminars. Significant connections were made with Revs Falwell, Lowry, Minister Farrakhan and others.

However, Rev. Moon explained that a revival of Christian believers would not be sufficient to lift up America. And also that friends and allies of the Unificationist faith do not generate sufficient power to cause a revival. Disciples are needed.

Reference to a sequence of awakenings is found in the Bible, led by Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist. They all had closely related missions and responsibilities. These earlier awakenings were to redirect God’s chosen people. However, John the Baptist was to lead a movement to find, recognize and follow the messiah. If he did not do that, all previous awakenings would come to naught. The story with Billy Graham is not dissimilar to John the Baptist. He met or/ worked with every president from Truman to Obama. Yet, he did not fulfill his central providential responsibility.

In the context of an expected great awakening, will the central figures of the awakening succeed where John the Baptist failed? We must be sure there is a bridge between the awakening and Rev. and Dr. Moon. There is little time for all this to happen. The world’s geopolitical reality could fundamentally change in the coming decade with the emergence of China, led by a political party that is ideologically hostile to basic freedoms including speech, press and religion.

The one whom God sends to bring real change are not the leaders of great awakenings, but the returning Lord in the form of True Parents. How do these two spiritual events come together? That convergence must happen, otherwise one becomes an obstacle to the other.

Dr. Kaufman

The focus of a Great Awakening at this time cannot be to secure individual salvation, but to work sacrificially to build the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. The Holy Blessing of Marriage should be seen not as an end in itself, but as an opportunity to participate in the building of the Kingdom.

Indeed, John the Baptist was the leader of a huge, powerful revival in Israel. Were we to meet a similar figure, that person would become blessed and then work in the role of a Tribal Messiah. We would not want to disrupt their popularity in any way, but rather to help them continue to build their following, leading those who are prepared to the blessing.

Participant Discussion

J. Edgerly– Awakenings have repeatedly been used to get the country over blockages to its providential advancement. More recent awakenings in the U.S. were not focused on individual salvation, but on dealing with “social sin” and cultural dysfunction – The so called “Third Awakening” dealt with plight of the new urban industrial working class, women’s suffering, prohibition and racial injustice. The Civil Rights movement addressed the social evils of “Jim Crow”. The call of this time seems to be to deal with “cultural sin”. The destructive cultural distortions of this time are in precisely the areas of Unification teachings and values: clarification of individual identity, clarification of sexual integrity and promotion of the God centered family.

T. Ward– Awakenings have brought together diverse religious leaders to address an “evil” that was pulling the country away from its Christian path – at first, the “bad guy” was Deism, next it was modernity specifically the impact of Darwinism and evolution. The Civil Rights movement responded to the evil of racism. Around these causes many religious leaders came together and a new spirituality emerged. Something similar happened with

CAUSA regarding the issue of Marxism-Leninism. We can see in the recent reaction to advertising by Target and Bud-Lite that the Christians still become animated in response to forces out-of-line with deeply held personal values.

M. Anderson- The leadership of the next Great Awakening needs to address the powerful social divisions being caused by radical right wing and radical left-wing ideologies and activism.

G. Jones– The nature of the common crisis we are facing with little time left should enable all of humankind to come together. We need to create a universal way of addressing human selfishness, greed and materialism which is causing catastrophic damage.

M. Mickler– There is some confusion about the use of the term Great Awakening. These have not just been religious events. They have been cultural reorientations, efforts to press through blockage to progress in fulfilling a millennial vision.

T. Ward– If there were to be a Great Awakening in our time, it is not clear if and how Unificationism would become part of it. We are in a period of accelerating change, and we are the people to bring that change. The established format of our public events is significant - a summit meeting, a blessing ceremony and then a spiritual event (Pentecost).

D. Steward– Are we sure it is appropriate for us to be waiting for a great awakening? This is the age of our responsibility. We must not be waiting for something to be done by the Holy Spirit. We are the ones to take initiative rather than being reliant on spiritual phenomena.

F. Kaufman– We had the good fortune of participating in the massive foundation that was built, step-by- step, person by person by our True Parents. We like to think that we continue to operate on the national or world level, similar to what we experienced while working personally with them. But that is not at all the reality. Our awareness should be that we must each build our foundation, step-by-step, person by person, just as they did. We will have an influence upon U.S. culture when we can incrementally build a level of public accomplishment as our True Parents did.

R. Wetherall– It seems that a Great Awakening requires a central figure. Where are we to find that person. Will it be from among us, or from another area of Christianity?

T. Ward– Our new National President is special and well prepared. He is very skilled, a good communicator, and has deep appreciation for both spirit and truth. Also, he relates well with both the younger and older generation. He has the ability to bring a lot of growth and credibility to our movement.

F. Kaufman– Yes, awakenings need spiritual leaders and ideally that leadership should come from within Unificationism. That would be much better. Otherwise, we will be on a secondary course.

J. Edgerly– The role of the U.S. in God’s providence is indispensable. Therefore, I am confident that a cultural reform, a civic renewal will happen. We can expect that a response to the highly evident and disturbing cultural distortion is already in process. There is already evidence of that. An excellent example is Braver Angels, a large, impactful, confident movement. As Dr Ward and Dr Kaufman have said, the question is, what will Unificationism have to do with it.

C. Ono –The merit of the age is a very real thing. We cannot underestimate the impact that the efforts of our True Parents and our movement have already had. There is now a lot of other people doing the work of our True Parents. I see it all around me. We can learn to be good object partners to those who embody the Principle.

Upcoming HPF Saturday Meetings

October 24 (new date) - Dr. Gordon Anderson - "Individual Sovereignty and Social Institutions"

October 28 - Alan Jessen - "Economic Democracy Part II - Mutual Prosperity Through Broader Distribution of Ownership"

David Wolfenberger - "High Noon Culture Part I: The Challenge of Establishing a Godly Family & Lineage in a Pornified World"

Beverly Berndt & Leslie Rigney, RN - "The Abortion Controversy: Principled Considerations"

Sincerely,
James Edgerly
Steering Committee
[Higher Purpose Forum](#)