

The 70th anniversary of the end of World War II

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In marking the close of the War in the Pacific 70 years ago on Aug. 15, 1945, there is an opportunity for a moment of reflection for citizens of all nations that claimed military victory on that day.

Doubtless hundreds of millions in China, Korea, the Philippines, the United States, the United Kingdom and other nations breathed a sigh of relief. The world hung its head at the end of the total war that began in China in 1937. Grievously had nations and peoples suffered. And grievous was the retribution upon the aggressor. Only Japan suffered the impact of the atomic bomb in two metropolitan areas and the firebombing of all its major cities.

But in seven decades, no defeated nation has rebounded with as much passion, energy or willingness to make amends as has the land of the Rising Sun. The nation of Japan has been a model of contrition, peacebuilding and charitable aid to other countries for nearly 70 years.

Japanese immigrants to the United States in the 20th century have distinguished themselves as leaders in commerce, culture and humanitarianism. And perhaps no religious community in America is more aware of the remarkable ethos of the Japanese than the members of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification.

As of this writing Mr. Matsuo Machida, 65, a longtime member of the FFWPU, is walking on a dusty highway in northern Kansas where he is midway in his walk from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. Mr. Machida is walking for a purpose: to declare his personal conviction that Rev. Sun Myung Moon was wrongly convicted of tax evasion and was wrongly imprisoned for one year. But there is another reason for his marathon trek of 2,800 miles over 86 days. Mr. Machida wants to tell the world that Rev. Moon's vision was about reconciliation between former enemies: Japan, Korea and the United States. Rev. Moon's much-reported large wedding ceremonies had this deep purpose in mind.

Since 1970 thousands of Japanese citizens have married U.S., British, Korean and Filipino men and women partly for the sake of building peace in the world. Such peacebuilding marriages were encouraged by the late Rev. Moon and Mrs. Moon. Although controversial at the time, most of these marriages have endured until the present, and they have resulted in tens of thousands of children and grandchildren. The Japanese members of the Unification movement have made extraordinary contributions to peacebuilding not only in the United States but also in dozens of countries where they have done the heavy lifting of building churches, schools and public-minded businesses. Japanese people I have come to know and respect in the Unification movement have a heart that is bursting with compassion, and their public record in other countries testifies to it.

On this day of sad reflection, Aug. 15, 2015, let us pause in silent prayer for the victims of countless atrocities in World War II. Yet, let us acknowledge those citizens in Asia who lost the war that day but truly have shown the world the way to "winning the peace."