

# The End of World Religion

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TO BEGIN WITH I would like to clarify the implications of my title. The word "end" has at least two meanings: it means "limit," "boundary," or "ceasing to be," and "aim," "objective," "purpose," or the "reason for being." In the first sense, it is somewhat negative, referring to a spatial, temporal, or existential limit of some kind. The second, more positive, meaning signifies a direction to move toward, a final goal to be attained, or an ultimate reason to be realized. This double implication gives a dynamic ambivalence quite appropriate to the present purpose, for I wish to discuss the limitations of "world religions" in their present forms and the authentic form of the "world religion" to be realized in the future.

Thus, "The End of World Religion" means on the one hand that world religions in their present form, largely because of recent radical changes in world conditions and the human situation, are coming to an end, reaching their "limit" in the sense they no longer genuinely deserve to be called "world religions." On the other hand, it signifies that, therefore, a genuine form of "world religion" must be now sought and actualized as the end, that is, as an "aim" to be achieved in order to cope with the present and future world situation and human predicament.

With this double connotation in mind, let me begin with an explanation of the term "world religion."

The term "world religion" is generally employed in contrast to "ethnic or national religion" and to "primitive or nature religion." Gustav

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Mensching, for instance, classifies religions into three categories: nature religion (*Naturreligion*), ethnic religion (*Volksreligion*), and world religion (*Weltreligion*). In the long ages of prehistory, human beings were in the stage of nature religion or primitive religion. Involved in the adventure of life, man felt in nature something divine which was sometimes helpful, sometimes destructive, and he worshiped natural powers with a feeling of gratitude and fear. Nature religion is a type of religion which arose spontaneously among primitive people living in close contact with their natural environment, and was supported by a family, kinship group, clan, or tribe. In this type of religion there was an almost total interfusing of man, nature, and gods. "Undifferentiation," a term to be discussed below, was its fundamental characteristic. On the other hand, ethnic religion, which generally may be said to have appeared with the dawning of human "culture," is a type of religion in which a separation between man and nature, and between man and gods, was consciously realized, and various ritual forms were developed largely to overcome that separation. Thus, ethnic religion is a relatively developed form of religion in which man, being aware of something "transcendent" or "supernatural," is to some extent freed from nature. It is supported by a much larger body of people, such as a racial group or a nation. Some examples of ethnic religion may be mentioned here: the religions of ancient Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, India, and, in its larger and still existing forms, Judaism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Shintoism. Despite the differences in *form*, however, ethnic or national religion is not essentially different from primitive or nature religion in *structure* because it also can be said to occur spontaneously within a particular living community characterized by geographical or cultural and blood relations. Still, both in primitive and ethnic religions, with some difference of degree, the principle of community is stronger than that of individual or personal consciousness.

World religion, however, is essentially different from both primitive and ethnic religions in its *structure*. Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism—these three great religions can be rightly called "world religions." Each of them emerged from an ethnic or national religion. But they are different in structure from their mother religions in at least the following six senses:

- (1) A world religion, such as Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism, has universality. It is able to spread beyond a particular race or nation without being forever confined to that social and historical community in

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which it was born. In this sense, a world religion is free, not only from dependence on nature, but also from all forms of nationhood.

(2) The ethnic religions came into being more or less spontaneously in and through the tradition of community formed by a particular ethnic group, and consequently, all members of the given group automatically and almost unconsciously belong to that religion. But each of the three world religions had a unique religious personality—Jesus, Muhammad, and Gautama—as its founder. They each proclaimed a universal salvation for mankind and a universal religious truth which they realized through a particular, decisive, and personal experience. The followers or the members of a world religion are each required to consciously and deliberately accept the truth expounded by their founder.

(3) Ethnic religion develops a religious life basic and common to the particular group in which it originated. It often emphasizes the particularity of its religious life as different from that of other groups and, therefore, tends to be closed and exclusive. A world religion, on the other hand, is a special religious body whose members participate not automatically by virtue of birth, but voluntarily, by the conscious option of each individual. In stressing the universal nature of its religious truth for all mankind, it is open and all-inclusive. Eventually, proselytization becomes essential to it.

(4) Ethnic religion has usually penetrated into the political, legal, economic, and moral life, and also the social customs of the community in which it originates and thus provides a principle of social-cultural integrity for the group. In this case, a political and military ruler is often at the same time a religious leader, and may be regarded by his followers as a high priest or prophet. Contrary to this, a world religion tends to reject or go beyond secular authority and this-worldliness, and thus to emphasize transcendent truth and other-worldliness in such forms as the "Kingdom of God," or the "Pure Land." Separation from politics and freedom of faith are the ideals of world religion.

(5) Due to its generally spontaneous and natural origin within a given community, ethnic religion is often lacking a canonical scripture, articulated dogma, and organized religious order. In contrast, world religions are based on the scriptures and systematized doctrines originating in the teaching of the founder. They also have well-organized religious

bodies in which the founders are worshiped as divine beings, prophets, or ideal personalities who are imitated as models.

(6) In the religious life of ethnic religions, the community has priority over its component individuals. But in world religion the personal and internal realization of each individual member is emphasized as essential, though consciousness of community is, of course, not altogether lacking. Thus, its beliefs and values take root in the innermost core of human existence. Here, the universal nature of world religion, as inclusive of all mankind, is inseparably connected with the individualistic emphasis and internal self-realization of its members.

While the religions which typify any one of these three main types may have characteristics belonging to the other, I am using the categorization which pertains to their underlying structure. These three categories may be said to have emerged in human history in correspondence with three stages in the development of human consciousness. In nature or primitive religion, man and nature were almost completely one; man was un-self-differentiated, with little awareness of his separation from nature. "God" was at this stage more or less identical with nature. Thus, at the primitive level, "nature" was the most basic and all-inclusive notion, and "undifferentiation" was its fundamental characteristic.

In ethnic religion, man's separation from nature and separation from God came to be consciously realized. This set him free from nature and, to some extent, over against God. Rituals and ceremonies developed to overcome this sense of separation. In ethnic religion, however, man realized himself as a member of some community, a family, clan, tribe, or nation, with ceremonies and rituals common to that community. Not nature on the one hand or individual consciousness on the other, but human community is basic. In this connection, though, we should not overlook that such notions as will, self, and soul are important in the more developed forms of ethnic religion, national religions such as Judaism and Hinduism.

By contrast, in world religions, man is realized himself as an individual existence. He is realized as a being who is free, not only from nature, but also from community. The separations between man and nature and man and God are deeply felt—yet these separations are conceived as capable of being overcome, not simply by means of those rituals common to the community, but, more essentially, through faith or

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awakening in the depths of the individual's inner spirit. Thus, not man as a member of a community, but man as an independent, individual being is basic in world religions. Without such an individualized consciousness, neither nature, community, nor God can be truly realized. Hence, world religion may be said to correspond to the most advanced stage of human consciousness, in which nature, man, and God are all dynamically included.

### II

Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, respectively, have spread well beyond their motherlands to cover vast areas of the earth. With Judaism as its matrix, Christianity was born in Palestine and has been propagated to all parts of the earth. Islam arose in Arabia, but has gained large numbers of followers among the peoples not only of Arab countries but also those of Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. Originating in India from its mother Hinduism, Buddhism has spread into almost all of the countries of Asia, including its more recent transmission to Hawaii, the American continent, and, to some extent, Europe. As the aim of each of the three religions is the universal salvation of mankind, they are called "universal religions" as well as "world religions."

Here I should like to focus on the two world religions with which I am most familiar. Although Christianity is undoubtedly one of the great world religions, in its present form it has what must be called an "occidental" character. As we know, the Judaic form of primitive Christianity was blended with Hellenism almost from its beginning and, subsequently, was Romanized, Germanized, and, predominantly in Europe and America, finally "modernized." Throughout the course of its long history, Christianity has thus come to be embodied in the very foundations of Western culture and civilization. This embodiment is so deep and so fundamental that without a sufficient understanding of Christianity no aspect of Western culture and civilization can be properly understood. At the same time, Christianity itself has thereby developed both in terms of faith and thought in response to the needs of Western man. Christianity in its present form, then, is primarily the historical result of an intertwining of Christianity, Western culture, and Western ways of thinking. On the other hand, as Western culture has also come to be embodied in Christianity, can we not say that the interfusing of Christianity and

Western culture throughout their long history which has provided Christianity with a rich legacy as a world religion, has also limited it as an occidental form of world religion?

This becomes quite clear when Christianity is introduced to non-occidental countries. It appears as foreign to the Easterner as it is familiar to the Westerner. In non-occidental countries, Christianity is often accepted or rejected not necessarily because of its essential nature as a religion, but because of its Western character. In order for Christianity to become a world religion in the genuine sense, it must break through the limits of its present occidental form.

The same may be said of Buddhism. Because of its universal nature, it deserves to be called a world religion. It has spread throughout Southeast Asia, Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan, far beyond the boundaries of its native India. In its long history, Buddhism has taken root deeply in Asian countries, and has thus come to embody the oriental cultures. Although the Buddhisms of India, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan each have their own regional characteristics, the present forms of Buddhism are all strongly colored by Eastern cultures in general. Hence, just as in the case of Christianity, Buddhism, through its closely inter-related association with various Eastern cultures, has been provided with the qualitative richness of a world religion, and yet, in doing so, has developed the limitation of becoming an oriental form of world religion. Recently, Buddhism has been introduced to the western world and it too seems to be accepted or rejected often just because of its non-western, oriental character. As a world religion Buddhism must not be limited by its oriental character.

I have said that Christianity and Buddhism have developed as world religions through their associations with the western and eastern cultures respectively and that, as a result, they go no further in their present forms than being occidental and oriental forms of world religion. This is a historical fact and must be recognized as such. Further, there is no such thing as the "essence" of Christianity or Buddhism in history. It can only be a non-historical abstraction. However transcendent it may seek or believe itself to be, a religion must of necessity take a particular historical form. It can develop itself only under certain given historical and cultural conditions. The result of this undeniable fact, for both Christianity and Buddhism, is that in their present forms, Christianity is an occidental, and Buddhism an oriental world religion. While recognizing this histor-

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ical necessity, I also believe that we are coming to a point in history where we can no longer accept Christianity and Buddhism in their present historical forms as representing their *final* development. This is because the meaning of the concept of "world," and with it the human situation and human spiritual needs as well, are now all in the process of radical change.

### III

The world, we are all aware, is shrinking. With the extraordinary development of scientific technology, especially in the areas of travel and communication, geographical distances are largely overcome. No nation can now stand isolated from the rest of the world. Political, economic, and cultural interrelations between nations are drawing them increasingly closer and closer together. We are rapidly becoming "one world."

That is not to say, however, that this "oneness" is therefore harmonious. As technological advancements shrink the world, the interrelating ties between nations are drawn tighter and tighter, in a negative as well as positive sense. On the positive side, mutual understanding and cooperation among nations heretofore isolated from each other are gradually increasing. Negatively, as the differences and oppositions among nations in quest of their national interest become more conspicuous and acute, new forms of conflict arise taking on greater scale than ever before. But these positive and negative aspects together signify that every nation in the world now comes to share a common destiny. This appears with growing clarity when we see that none of the important issues, population explosion, use of natural resources, energy, food, pollution, disarmament, prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and so forth, can be solved without worldwide cooperation. How often we are told of the real possibility of the total destruction of mankind by nuclear weapons. "To be or not to be" is now a question for the world as a whole. All mankind now shares a common fate.

Until recently the term "world" has been generally understood as a collection or gathering of various nations. In this context, the world has been apprehended from the quantitative point of view. The League of Nations and the United Nations typify this view. A nation is the basic unit from which the world is made up. "International" has been used in its broadest sense interchangeably with the term "world." An "international exposition," for instance, is often called a "world fair." The world

is thus being apprehended from the side of the component nations, not from its own side.

I believe this understanding is now out of date. We must go beyond it, because our world is now becoming something more than a mere collection of various countries. We are now, in actuality, one single community sharing one and the same destiny. All mankind, as a qualitative whole, above and beyond particular nations or a particular group of nations, is now facing the common risk of uncertain survival. At least, I think the world is moving undeniably in that direction. In such a situation, it must be repeated, the meaning and character of the "world" is radically changing. I would like to maintain, therefore, that the term "world" should now be grasped qualitatively rather than quantitatively—that is, not as a mere gathering of various nations, but as one single human community participating in a common life and sharing in the same fate. The nation is no longer the true unit for understanding the world; the world itself is the one basic unit. Accordingly, we should not seek or comprehend or apprehend the "world" from the side of the "nation." We should deal rather with the nation from the standpoint of the world. In this sense, the term "international" can no longer be synonymous with the term "world." The world is now "trans-international."

In the same way, it is no longer sufficient to talk about East and West as if the world consisted of a collection of two parts. Although the world can be so divided two-dimensionally the East and the West and their relation needs to be grasped three-dimensionally, dynamically, from the standpoint of one world.

If, at present and in the future, the term "world" is to be grasped qualitatively as one single human community sharing the same destiny in which the East and the West and various different nations are dynamically included—and I believe this is the reality of our situation—then we cannot simply accept as definitive the historical fact of Christianity as an occidental and Buddhism as an oriental world religion. Instead, if both Christianity and Buddhism are indeed "world religions" in their essence, they must break through the limits of their respective occidental and oriental characters and, thereby, become *universal forms of world religion*, that is, world religions in the genuine sense. By a "universal form of world religion," I do not necessarily mean a world religion which spreads on a worldwide scale, for that is "worldwide" merely in the geographical and, therefore, quantitative sense. This quantitative approach has to be



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transcended because we are coming to a point in history when the world must be grasped from a qualitative point of view.

Instead of seeking to spread Christianity and Buddhism all over the world in the geographical sense, we must try to regrab their universal nature as genuine world religions. It is only through the re-realization of their conceptions of universal salvation in the deepest sense that Christianity can become truly indigenous to the East and become an oriental form of Christianity, and that Buddhism can take root in the soil of the West as an occidental form of Buddhism. These will be the concrete forms taken by the two religions when they become truly universal world religions.

However, this is not to suggest that Christianity should simply put on eastern robes and become an oriental world religion or that Buddhism in the West should assume occidental dress. Just as Christianity has been both positive and necessary for Western man through its expression as an occidental world religion, should it express itself as an oriental form of Christianity, it will certainly be able to become something positive and necessary to Eastern people as well. As I mentioned before, however, the present limitations of Christianity even as an *occidental* world religion must be seriously called into question. Accordingly, an "expansionist view" with regard to Christianity, the hope that it will merely broaden itself so as to become an oriental world religion as well, would be not only inadequate, it would also be somewhat of a mistake. Rather, for Christianity to become a universal religion in the authentic sense for all mankind, it must, first of all, go beyond its present occidental form and regrab its spirit of universal salvation, regrab, that is, its universal essence as a world religion which has become obscured and even somewhat limited as a consequence of its close interassociation with western culture. Only if its universal essence as a world religion is truly regrabbed, will Christianity have a sufficient basis from which to freely express itself in the East as an oriental world religion. As an essentially universal religion, Christianity itself is *neither* an occidental *nor* an oriental world religion, and yet, in the process of history, in accordance with geographical and cultural circumstances, it can become both an occidental *and* an oriental world religion. This entails more than a mere change of garments. Since through its embodiment of western culture the occidental garment Christianity now wears is so tightly interwoven with the Christian notion of salvation, even the "body" of Christianity has come to be limited by an occidental

character and must be changed to meet the spiritual needs of contemporary man, Easterner included.

And precisely what has been said in the previous paragraph about Christianity can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the present situation of Buddhism.

In short, both Christianity and Buddhism must break through the traditional forms of occidental and oriental world religion and become equally indigenous to both East and West, and yet must be free in essence from both occidental and oriental forms. Herein lies the real meaning, given the present historical situation, of the re-realization of the notion of universal salvation implied in these two religions. To become a "universal" world religion does not imply a monolithic religion common to East and West, but rather calls for a dynamic structure capable of freely assuming any form, oriental or occidental, according to the area in which it develops and yet without being confined by any limitation of that area. Such a *dynamic* realization of the "universal" world religion may become possible for Christianity and Buddhism should they genuinely regrasp their respective notions of universal salvation for all mankind.

This regrasping of their universal nature as genuine world religions has become equally necessary for Christianity in the West and Buddhism in the East. Both religions have been so deeply assimilated in the western and eastern minds respectively, that, having lost their freshness and vitality, they appear quite obsolete and outmoded in their own societies. Here again, the need is urgent for the two religions to overcome their age-old, worn-out frameworks, to reconfirm their universal natures as religions truly applicable to all mankind, and to revitalize a genuine religious spirit on their own homegrounds.

In these two senses, that is, in order to become indigenous in the new spheres, and to be revitalized in the old, both Christianity and Buddhism must now overcome the limitations of their present forms which have been historically and parochially developed. In the light of this new meaning of the term "world," neither Christianity nor Buddhism in their present forms can be properly called a "world religion" in the genuine sense of the term because their universal nature is still largely limited by an occidental or oriental character. Here I refer to the first implication of "The End of World Religion," that is, the *final limit* or *cessation* of the present form of world religions such as Christianity and Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>

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### IV

The next question is of course: How can Christianity and Buddhism overcome their present occidental and oriental characters and regrab their universality as genuine world religions? This takes up the second implication of my title, "The End of World Religion," the *aim* to be attained and realized by world religions.

In his Epistles to the Romans, Paul said, "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek. The same Lord is Lord of all." In his days, the distinction between Jew and Greek was, if anything, more fundamental than that between Easterner and Westerner in our time. This is not so difficult to imagine when we are reminded of the question of circumcision and non-circumcision in his day. Nevertheless, Paul insisted that there was no distinction between Jew and Greek. Surely this must have been due to his profound insight into the religious truth universal to human existence beyond the difference between Jewish and Greek ways of life. Following Saint Paul, we must now say "there is no distinction between Easterner and Westerner," and see that religious truth which is common to Easterner and Westerner alike transcends oriental or occidental characteristics. The need for us all to awaken to universal salvation in its most universal form is of pressing urgency, for the world is now becoming one single community with one common destiny: to perish or survive.

Christianity emerged from a Judaic background. Buddhism was born from ancient Hinduism. Although both propound a universal salvation and can in that sense be called "world religions," their basic natures are quite different. This is due at least in part to the different characters of their parent religions and in part to the different personalities of their founders.

Judaism is an ethnic religion in which the obedience or disobedience of the human will to the will of God is the crucial issue. It may be said to have gone beyond its original primitive stages, in which everything was undifferentiated, by means of an intense realization of the divine-human separation. In Judaism God is the One, the transcendent, personal God who creates, sustains, and rules man and the world, and above all,

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<sup>1</sup> See the author's "Buddhism and Christianity as a Problem of Today," *Japanese Religions* III, 2 (Summer 1963), pp. 11-22 and III, 3 (Autumn 1963), pp. 10-31; see also "Man and Nature in Christianity and Buddhism," *JR* VII, 1 (July, 1971), pp. 1-10.

commands men to achieve righteousness. Hence it is a highly ethical religion in which the separation or unity of man and nature becomes a peripheral issue. Christianity, which became a world religion by breaking through the ethnic framework of Judaism, places its emphasis on Jesus Christ as the means of reuniting man and God, and preaches the universal salvation of mankind through the sacrificial love of God manifested in Christ. Just as in Judaism, however, so too in Christianity man's obedience or disobedience to the will of God is crucial, and although here also divine justice or righteousness is emphasized, it is seen as included in God's love. The issue of the separation or unity of man with nature is of course peripheral. The problem of evil and sin is more profoundly felt than is the problem of life and death, as typified in Paul's "the wages of sin is death." Death is realized as the *result* of sin and not the other way around.

On the other hand, Hinduism, from which Buddhism emerged, is an ethnic religion in which some awareness of a separation between man, nature, and God does exist. A pantheon of transcendent deities and various forms of ritual practice exist to overcome these separations. Although the problem of human will takes the form of karma, the concept of karma is cosmic as well as human. Therefore it is not primarily an ethical religion. It is a nature- or cosmos-oriented religion, in which the problem of life and death, a problem common to man and other living beings, is more seriously coped with than the problem of good and evil. Breaking through the ethnic character inherent in Hinduism, Buddhism became a world religion by advocating a universal salvation through awakening to one's true nature, which is possible regardless of caste differences. Just as in Hinduism, however, in Buddhism the problem of life and death is taken more seriously than that of good and evil, and an absolute God who commands justice is absent.

Thus, Christianity and Buddhism opened up new ways of direct contact with the ultimate reality available to all people by breaking through the frameworks of their ethnic communities. They realized spiritual freedom from subordination to nature and community, and attainment into individual consciousness in its deepest dimensions. It must be emphasized, however, that the ways in which Christianity and Buddhism have overcome their original ethnic frameworks are not the same.

Christianity broke through the ethnic limits of its parent religion in a more personalistic, more trans-natural direction, a direction in which

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divine will and word are basic. On the contrary, Buddhism overcame its original ethnic framework in the direction of a primordial naturalness that returns to the undifferentiation of all things, the original "suchness" prior to will and word. It is the direction of a radical reaffirmation of that undifferentiation implied in nature religion.

This difference may be explained in the following three ways:

(1) In Christianity the separation between man and God, which was already realized in Judaism, came to be more deeply and thoroughly realized, to the extent that, finally, man's separation from God could be overcome only through Jesus Christ, the embodiment of unconditional, self-sacrificial love. Thus, in Christianity the divine-human separation is more strongly emphasized than the primordial oneness, and the reunion of man and God which must be attained is more essential than any type of direct awareness, here and now, of that oneness. In Buddhism it is this primordial oneness, rather than any divine-human separation, that is primarily emphasized. It aims at the immediate return to original naturalness rather than toward some ideal trans-natural state.

(2) Accordingly, Christianity is more value-oriented, norm-oriented, future-oriented, and tends to be ethical and teleological. The holy is to be experienced in something normative, in the ought to be, and the absolute is regarded as something authoritative, embodying absolute righteousness. Although God's unconditional love is perhaps most basic here, the issue of obedience or disobedience to the divine ruler and judge is never neglected.

Buddhism is nature-oriented, present-oriented rather than future-oriented, and tends to be mystical and ontological. The holy is realized in something natural, something already present here. The absolute is regarded as something intimate, a harmonious unity. The ideas of judgment and punishment, although not lacking, are much less central.

(3) The divine-human relationship in Christianity may be better compared to the father-child relationship. Fatherhood represents norm, order, and justice. Sonship is ambivalent toward fatherhood. The son loves and hates the authoritative father at the same time. As the son's separation, independence, and autonomy in relation to the father is thus inevitable, an objective of reunion is sought. As Christianity

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is paternalistic, divine love always includes the notions of justice and righteousness. Since will is basically important, its exercise produces autonomy but also tends toward individualism.

On the other hand, the divine-human relationship in Buddhism has a better analogy in the mother-child relation. The mother represents acceptance, unity, and harmony. The child originates within the mother. It is embraced by the mother. The more a child struggles with self-estrangement and alienation toward the world after his independence, the more he longs to return to his mother's bosom. As Buddhism is maternalistic, it is receptive, incorporative, and tends toward community, but implies the risk of losing individuality.

## CONCLUSION

Today, many people feel alienated and rootless. They have lost their home, their place of ultimate rest. The prevailing scientific, mechanistic, and objectivistic way of thinking has severed our age-old connection with our spiritual home. The principle of conflict, dominant among nations and social classes, and the individualistic tendency among today's peoples have destroyed the original unity of this home. There is alienation from nature, from community, from the world, and from oneself. "Homelessness" is the symbol of our time, both in East and West. People come and go from East to West, from West to East, seeking new and foreign religions in the hope and expectation of thereby finding their "home." However, an interest in exotic, different types of religion will not suffice. The human situation we now face is too serious and critical for such remedies. As the world becomes a single human community sharing the same concern for survival, each individual in it is forced far more deeply than ever to reappropriate his humanity and his individuality. We can no more be satisfied with mere paternalistic Christianity as an occidental form of world religion, than we can with mere maternalistic Buddhism as an oriental form of world religion. Both father and mother are needed to provide a real "home" for us. Yet this should not be seen only as a mixture of Christianity and Buddhism. Christianity, we can see from its mystical tradition, is not totally lacking the maternal, receptive aspect, nor is Buddhism, judging from Nichiren, entirely alien to the paternal and justice-oriented aspect. However, neither in Christianity nor Buddhism have these two essential aspects been thoroughly and

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harmoniously realized. But, to cope with the radically changing meaning of the "world" and the resultant human predicament, Christianity and Buddhism must break through their respective occidental-paternal, oriental-maternal structures. Each must develop and deepen itself to achieve a universal form of world religion. It is for this reason that the encounter and dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism is now urgent. By deepening themselves to realize universal forms of world religion, Christianity and Buddhism can become religions in which both the paternal and maternal aspects are fully actualized in unique ways. Furthermore in a Christianity, or Buddhism, in which freedom of spirit and a deep individual inner consciousness are, in principle, already realized, the notion of the undifferentiation of man, nature, and God found in nature religion, and the principle of community realized in ethnic religion, will be fully embodied. In this form of Christianity and Buddhism, man, nature, and God are clearly differentiated from one another and yet harmoniously, undifferentiatedly, interfused. This is the *end* of world religion to be achieved for the salvation of the one world of the near future.

Some may say that both Christianity and Buddhism are now very old, perhaps too old for such a transformation. Certainly, Christianity was born twenty, and Buddhism twenty-five centuries ago. Their doctrines and church systems in their present forms are lifeless and antiquated. Personally, however, I would like to say that Christianity is *only* two thousand years old. Buddhism is *just* two thousand and five hundred years old. They are still quite young! Who can say with justification that the Logos actualized in Jesus and the Dharma realized by Gautama have already been exhaustively developed? Both are inexhaustible and full of life. If one comes to have immediate contact with the Logos and the Dharma in one's own being, how could one say that Christianity and Buddhism are too old?

The problem of "The End of World Religion," in the double sense above mentioned, is not merely an objective and historical issue. It is our very own personal and existential problem. Whether or not you believe in the possibility of Christianity and Buddhism as future universal forms of world religions, is entirely dependent upon whether or not you yourself have direct contact with the Logos and the Dharma.