



Good evening. I'm very happy to be here. I wish to thank [Dharma Master Cheng Yen](#) and Tzu Chi for inviting me to speak to you. It is a great pleasure to discuss with you some of my reflections and ideas on Tzu Chi and other religions that have come to existence in the modern world.

I come from United Kingdom. I am a professor in the University of Oxford and I have visited various parts of Asia on many occasions, including Japan, Korea, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore and Taiwan. My interest is in religion. I am a student of religion. I try to understand different religions from the point of view of history and anthropology.

### **Emerging of new formed religions in the world**

We see the development of many new and different kinds of religions in our world today. These new formed religions emerge in Japan, in Korea, in Taiwan, in China, in every part of the world. There are new forms of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and every type of religions. Why are we witnessing the emergence of so many new kinds of religion in every religious tradition in our world today?

Some scholars predicted fifty years ago, by the year 2000, religion will be dead. Some politicians, scientists, scholars believe that science are incompatible. Soon science will replace religion completely in our world. But in reality, religion is getting stronger as science improves, develops and expands on technology. Religion, at the same time, seems to be getting stronger, not weaker. For example, the United States is the most advanced country on earth scientifically and technologically and also the most religious.

This revival of religion is growing interest in religion. We see in Latin America, Japan, and everywhere. What is the role of religion in the modern world? Maybe religion has a very fundamental role to play in saving the modern world from self-destruction. The leaders of the major countries of the world had a meeting concerning global climate change in Copenhagen this week. Some scientists believe that the role of religion in helping to prevent environmental catastrophe is vital. So the modern world seems to need religion and need it for very fundamental and important reasons.

But more than one hundred new forms of religion have been emerged probably today; some of them Buddhist, some of them Hindu, some of them Christian. Japan has probably, as many as five thousand new forms of religion, many of them Buddhist, many of them Shinto Buddhist and so on. The interesting thing is, though there are many new religions born every day, very few survive. Of the hundreds of the new religions born today, less than one percent will be alive in twenty years of time. Very few gain more than a couple thousands of members. So an interesting question is why do some religions succeed, and some failed?

# [Scholar's View] The Globalization of Religions

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