

Church of the Seventh Coming

One of the major religions amongst the Venerian systems, and probably the main reason for their being a Venerian identity long before the polity came into being.

Origins

The exact origins of the Church are unprovenanced, however it is certain that it dates from the early (pre-superluminal) days of space-flight. The Church's official line is that the crew members on the original manned voyage to the planet Venus were subject to visions and revelations from God that allowed them to correctly interpret the various Abrahamic holy scriptures and also gave them a drive to proselytise on their return. There is certainly a strongly scientific basis to the Church which is unusual amongst the religions.

What is certain is that by 2830 they were sufficient resource-rich to be able to launch a mission to attempt to terraform and colonise Venus. As one commentator at the time said of them "Church of the Seventh Coming (Marxist-Lemmingist). Some call them mad, but these deeply religious scientific people really have no place on Earth and are looking for that Promised Land in space. Allegedly."

Main Beliefs

The church is Abrahamic and believes in the same god as the Jews, Christians and Muslims. However their gloss is that Professor Mek Semaj was also a prophet and that God was the mysterious entity that spoke to him and revealed the location of suitable Earth-like planets and also the means to conduct superluminal travel that we might reach them.

They certainly go for a fairly non-literal translation of most of the holy writings and see these as an attempt by God to give people rules that would improve their living conditions and allow them to prosper. An example cited being the dietary rules on both Jews & Muslims, these make perfect sense when viewed in the historical and geographical context of low technology and a very hot climate in which food would spoil rapidly.

Broadly speaking the Church holds the following to be most likely true:

- man has free will to either embrace God's grace, or to resist it;
- all believers have full assurance of salvation, so long as they continue to believe;
- justification is by faith alone, good works of those who do not believe are not sufficient to gain salvation;
- apostasy (i.e. total unbelief) is irredeemable, and the fallen are lost forever if they cease to believe in the existence of God.

The Seventh Coming

The name refers to the seventh and final coming of God to visit humanity, which will be presaged by

the end times of tribulation. After the seventh coming the Elect will be saved and raised up to live forever in grace.

The first six comings of God, after he had finished the creation, to give his message to humanity are as follows:

1. Noah's warning and directions to build the Ark;
2. Abraham's covenant with God and promise that his descendants would be multitudinous and of all nations of earth;
3. Moses ten commandments from God on how to live;
4. Jesus message and the founding of Christianity;
5. Muhammad's message and the founding of Islam;
6. Semaj's message and the opening up of new worlds for the faithful

These are the six major visitations where God has provided substantial messages to his people, but there are also thousands more instances where he has intervned to ensure the continuation of his message or to support the faithful. There are prophets in every generation to remind us of his presence and ensure the message stays on course.

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