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## **Humility and the Unification of Cultures**

by

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# HUMILITY AND THE HARMONY OF CULTURES

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## I.

What does humility have to do with culture? Isn't humility an ethical virtue not directly related to cultural activities in art, music, literature, science, technology, etc.?

The present paper strongly argues, however, that humility is deeply related to culture and especially to the harmony of cultures as long as culture is understood in terms of an expression of God's Heart in human activities. It even argues that humility is needed for culture and for the harmony of cultures, given that kind of understanding of culture. This argument presupposes that God's Heart, while containing divine absoluteness, entails total humility on his part, so that in order for God's Heart to be able to express itself in culture and also in the harmony of cultures, humans need to display their own humility, resembling God's humility.

The present paper will present a Unification view based on the Divine Principle and Unification Thought. Section II will define culture in terms of an expression of God's Heart via his dual characteristics of *Sungsang* and *Hyungsang* in the human activities of intellect, emotion, and will which pursue the values of truth, beauty, and goodness. After that definition is given, section III will discuss the importance of the involvement of our humility in culture and in the harmony of cultures. Section IV will describe what will

result tragically from the absence of humility in culture, and that way we will be reminded of the importance of humility in culture and also in the harmony of cultures.

## II.

Culture results from an expression of God's Heart to realize the values of truth, beauty, and goodness through the human activities of intellect, emotion, and will. According to the Divine Principle, the values of truth, beauty, and goodness are pursued by the human body in its actions as it responds to the mind's intellect, emotion, and will, which in turn respond to God's perfect intellect, emotion, and will, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

Unification Thought maintains that God's Heart is behind his own intellect, emotion, and will and also behind human intellect, emotion, and will as their "driving force," so that it is "the basis for the values of truth, beauty, and goodness."<sup>2</sup> Talking about the results of pursuit of these values, Unification Thought states:

If one pursues truth through intellectual activity, the result will be the knowledge of science, philosophy, and so on. If one pursues beauty through emotional activity, the result will be art. If one pursues goodness through volitional activity, the result will be morality, ethics, and so on.<sup>3</sup>

After saying so, Unification Thought defines culture as "[t]he totality of these intellectual, emotional, and volitional activities."<sup>4</sup> Given this definition of culture and the role of God's Heart as the driving force of intellect, emotion, and will, "culture, in its original meaning, should be culture of Heart."<sup>5</sup>

At this point, some explanation on God's Heart is in order. As "the core of the attributes of God," Heart is the "emotional impulse to obtain joy through love."<sup>6</sup> It is "an irrepressible impulse," welling up "from within God," so that "an object for God to love was absolutely necessary."<sup>7</sup> This explains the reason for God's creation of humans

as his objects of love. This also explains divine absoluteness and the unchangeable nature of God's ideal of creation.

It would be a complete misunderstanding, if we simply think from the above that God is selfish in trying to obtain joy from his objects. In order to avoid this misunderstanding, we have to pay attention to at least two points. First, God created all things for humans as their objects of love from which to acquire joy. In other words, God gave all things for the sake of humans. A second point, which is more important than the first, is the term, "through love," in the above definition of Heart. Joy is to be only obtained "through love." This means that God loves his objects first, before obtaining joy from them. Only after loving them first, can he experience joy from them.

According to Rev. Moon, the founder of the Unification Church, God's act of loving his objects first was such that he entirely gave himself not only at the time of creation but continuously thereafter.<sup>8</sup> Rev. Moon in his sermons oftentimes refers to this as God's "total investment," in which God just gives and forgets as the initiator of give and take action, emptying himself to create a vacuum or nothingness within himself. From this, we can understand that God is never selfish but sacrificial. Here we see God's total humility as a very important component of his Heart. It would be equivalent to the Biblical notion of *kenosis* (self-emptying) in Philippians 2:7 which reads: "... emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (RSV). The law of give and take action in the universe, however, is such that selfless giving naturally results in receiving a positive response from objects of love, which brings joy to the subject. To explain this, Rev. Moon uses the analogy of the atmosphere: if a vacuum or a low air pressure is formed, then the surrounding atmosphere whose air pressure is higher flows dramatically into it,

creating a strong wind or a hurricane as a positive response. This way give and take actin is actualized. *Kenotic* theology (theology based on the notion of *kenosis*), developed especially among 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Lutheran theologians, was a fascinating attempt to explain the relationship of unity between God and man.

How, then, is God's Heart to be substantially expressed in culture? According to Unification Thought, God's dual characteristics of *Sungsang* and *Hyungsang* have a reciprocal relationship centered on Heart (or purpose established by Heart), forming a "harmonized body" (or a "multiplied body").<sup>9</sup> It would be correct to say, therefore, that the dynamic reciprocity of God's dual characteristics of *Sungsang* and *Hyungsang* is the channel through which God's Heart is conveyed to the world of creation. As was mentioned above, God's Heart is loving, sacrificial, and humble, seeking after unity. Therefore, the dynamic reciprocity of God's dual characteristics would represent the divine urge for unity through love, sacrifice, and humility, as it relates to the world of creation. At this point, it should be noted that God's intellect, emotion, and will are located within His *Sungsang*.<sup>10</sup> So, the reciprocity of God's dual characteristics contains within itself his intellect, emotion, and will as stimulated by his Heart as their driving force. And, when this reciprocity relates to the world of creation, it naturally stimulates the human mind's intellect, emotion, and will. Thus the human activities of intellect, emotion, and will to pursue the values of truth, beauty, and goodness result from the stimulation of the divine urge for unity through love, sacrifice, and humility under the dynamic reciprocity of God's dual characteristics. Hence culture as culture of Heart reflects the divine urge for unity, so that it really inspires and touches us. For example,

look at the lyricism of beautiful songs; it is none other than an reflection of this divine urge.

Before finishing this section, we have to know a few more points for our clearer understanding of the subject matter. First, the reason why God can obtain joy from his objects of love is that after his total investment of love for them, they come to resemble him, by reflecting his dual characteristics of *Sungsang* and *Hyungsang*.<sup>11</sup> Second, culture, resulting from activities of humans who are God's objects of love, also reflects his dual characteristics of *Sungsang* and *Hyungsang*. Third, each individual culture is a particular embodiment of God's dual characteristics, which are referred to as the "universal image" of God in Unification Thought,<sup>12</sup> so that each culture has both individuality and universality: "In culture..., there is unity between universality and individuality."<sup>13</sup>

### III.

If culture as culture of Heart is a reflection of the divine urge for unity through love, sacrifice, and humility, then we humans who are engaged in cultural activities are supposed to be loving, sacrificial, and humble, inheriting God's Heart. As was explained above, a very important component of God's Heart is total humility, resulting from self-emptying. Therefore, let me emphasize humility here, by saying that we humans are supposed to be totally humble in our cultural activities. This obtains at two levels.

First, at the individual level, each individual culture needs to involve the humility of humans. Only when humble humans are involved, can each culture truly reflect the divine urge for unity under the reciprocity of God's dual characteristics.

Second, at the level of the relationship of various cultures, their harmony also requires the humility of humans. If humans as cultural activists are humble, each culture reflects the divine urge for unity, embodying the universal image of God, i.e., the dynamic reciprocity of his dual characteristics. As long as each culture goes this way, various cultures will harmonize with each other centered on the commonality of the universal image of God: "Then, what are the commonalities that can become the absolute standard in the appraisal of values? They are God's love (absolute love) and God's truth (absolute truth)."<sup>14</sup> It goes without saying that God's love and God's truth are other ways of describing the universal image of God, so that they constitute "a standard for value judgment ... that will be common to all people, transcending differences in culture, thought, nationality, and so."<sup>15</sup> All this is possible through humility on the part of humans, because the universal image of God urges us to be humble: "The fundamental law of the universe is that beings exist, not for their own sake, but for the sake of others and for the sake of God."<sup>16</sup>

#### IV.

Unfortunately, the human fall happened at the dawn of human history. Because of this, humility on the part of humans is largely lost. This loss of humility means our failure to inherit God's total humility as an important element of his Heart. This failure takes several different forms in our cultural activities.

First, it takes the form of cultural hatred and enmity. In this case, because of the loss of humility, different cultures fail to reflect the divine urge for unity, thus simply

hating each other and even killing each other. Historically, a countless number of wars and conflicts among tribes and nations took place because of cultural hatred and enmity.

Second, as a more subtle version of the first form, even those groups, tribes, and nations which claim to be religious hate each other even more severely in their cultural wars. Jews and Christians have fought severely. Christians and Moslems have quarreled ruthlessly. Even Hindus and Moslems have killed each other in Asia. All this happened in spite of their religious connection with God. The problem seems to be their unjustified idolization of their respective finite stages of connection with God as if they were divine. According to Paul Tillich, this kind of idolatry is very demonic.

Third, the failure takes the form of cultural totalitarianism. This happens, when one particular culture dogmatically believes itself to be far superior to all other cultures. That particular culture usually ends up forcing other cultures to be assimilated into it or to be destroyed. The best example of this is the Pan-Germanism of the Nazi regime, which affirmed the supremacy of the Nordic peoples (so-called pure Aryans) over other races in physical, moral, and mental qualities and also in culture.

Fourth, the failure expresses itself as the obscenity and corruption of culture. If there is no more humility on the part of humans, they simply defy God's Heart, by trying to destroy his plan of creating ideal families centered on true love. Thus they attempt to practice illicit love. They destroy traditional values such as chastity, encouraging free sex, profanity, and decadence. This is reflected in their cultural activities. Their intention is to satisfy people's selfish and fleshly desires only. This is rampant in magazines, movies, photos, arts, lifestyles, etc. These days, the Internet is being very much invaded by obscene pornography.



All the above forms of the cultural failure to involve humility stop various cultures from harmonizing with each other. As a result, the whole world is totally chaotic. Normal parents would hate to expose their beloved children and grandchildren to this miserable state of cultural affairs. As long as God's Heart is absent in culture, God, too, is absent in culture. To the degree that God is absent, Satan is actively present, to use the religious terminology.

From this, we can realize how important humility is in order to create healthy culture and to bring about the harmony of cultures. Therefore, what we learned in section II above on the definition of culture and in section III above on the importance of humility should be taken seriously.

Emphasizing the importance of humility, Unification Thought refers to what it calls "object consciousness" as a mental attitude toward the subject. It is "an attitude of living for others and a heart of meekness and humility."<sup>17</sup> If we have it, then we will be able to have God as our subject, so that we will be able to inherit the divine urge for unity under the reciprocity of his dual characteristics centered on his Heart. This point of Unification Thought is somewhat echoed in Karl Barth's teaching on the need for our humility in receiving God's genuine revelation. Of course, Barth fails to talk about God's Heart; but, according to him, this humble faith centered on the *analogia fidei*, and not the humanistic *analogia entis* in Catholicism, leads us to receive the revelation about the reality of God's dual characteristics.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (New York: HAS-UWC, 1996), p. 37. Henceforth abbreviated as EDP.

<sup>2</sup> *Essentials of Unification Thought: The Head-Wing Thought* (Tokyo: UTI, 1992), p. 100. Henceforth abbreviated as EUT.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> EUT, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> God's Heart in this regard is well explained in EUT, pp. 176-81, where its three forms are presented: 1) "the Heart of hope" at the time of creation, 2) "the Heart of sorrow" at the time of the human fall, and 3) "the Heart of pain" in the course of the dispensation of restoration.

<sup>9</sup> EUT, pp. 28-29.

<sup>10</sup> EUT, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> EDP, p. 33

<sup>12</sup> EUT, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> EUT, p. 244.

<sup>14</sup> EUT, p. 142.

<sup>15</sup> EUT, p. 141.

<sup>16</sup> EUT, p. 142.

<sup>17</sup> EUT, p. 106.

<sup>18</sup> For his doctrine of God's dual characteristics, see the chapter on "The Reality of God," in *Church Dogmatics*, trans. T. H. L. Parker et al. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), vol. 2, part 1, pp. 257-677.

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