



DISCUSSANT RESPONSE

by

David A. Carlson
Department of World Religions
Unification Theological Seminary
Barrytown, New York, USA

to John K. Roth's

**HUMAN NATURE IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: REFLECTIONS ON
FUNDAMENTALS OF UNIFICATION THOUGHT**

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Response to: "Human Nature in Theory and Practice: Reflections on
Fundamentals of Unification Thought" (by John K. Roth)
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Professor Roth offers to this committee a paper concerning original human nature which is much to the point. Integrating a summary of theoretical points with a practical agenda, he raises certain questions worthy of profound reflection and discussion by this committee. In the process he highlights what I believe to be some of the central ideas in the text FUNDAMENTALS OF UNIFICATION THOUGHT (FUT).

The central question posed by this paper concerns the credibility of the Unification goal (p 10) as this is set forth in FUT. Dr. Roth seems to have little difficulty with the theoretical aspects, particularly FUT's persistent thinking about family relationships vis-a-vis human nature. He finds them sufficiently appealing to have some relevance to present social problems (p 7). His difficulty has to do with a far more practical issue: Can we achieve our original human nature? Are there grounds for the belief that we can, or is it just a beautiful theory, an impossible idealism? Here I think he shares a concern with many Unificationists. Theory has little value unless people are willing and able to live it, to embody it. To be willing to practice, people must have some reason to feel motivated to live it. They must have some hope that they will, indeed, be successful. To achieve one's original human nature,

however, requires a process and this process entails "indemnity." Unificationists find their motivation to "live the theory" in the idea of indemnity and the way in which they see it being lived out or practiced in the lives of Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon. The basic Unification attitude is: if I can fulfill my responsibility, I can make progress. Indemnity and responsibility are important foci of practice in Unificationism.

Roth's perception of the Los Angeles riots (p 3) accentuates the need for such a theory of original human nature as that proposed by FUT. The problems leading up to the riots, as well as those problems visibly exposed during that time, beg the question of the original human nature. These problems illustrat/ed the breakdown or lack of practice of indemnity and responsibility. Again, what is important, in regards to original human nature, is whether people can become motivated to live or practice the theory. Roth observes that people may, in fact, not be willing (p 16). No other theory, including individualism (or existentialism for that matter), has proven successful Why should we expect FUT to fare any better? It might be expected to fare better because of its accents on indemnity and responsibility.

Roth correctly understands FUT as emphasizing a combination of human initiative/effort, and divinely-guided principles (p 5). When there is failure (as in Los Angeles) to manifest original nature it always comes from human lack, from the human failure to practice indemnity and responsibility. Once such a thing is

realized we can be empowered to make greater effort. When we fail to realize this we are inevitably thwarted. Rodney King, since the time of his well-publicized question (can we all get along?) has had brushes with the police, once for DWI. Is such behavior an indication that he is making an effort to "get along"? Or is it more an indication that he is not a very responsible person?

Roth offers an adequate summary of the ideas in the section of FUT dealing with original human nature. He comments on the Divine Image, the Divine Character, and the Position which FUT argues originally characterize the human being. God originally created a unified human being whose essence and existence are one (p 6). Heart (or Shimjong) is the most essential characteristic. A "being with Heart" is one dedicated to the practice of love. Love brings forth life...individuality, freedom, reason, and creativity. Love entails a relationship which manifests in an emphasis on family (p 8). The proper give-and-receive relationships...have their analogues and correlates in God [and] encompass the multi-faceted spiritual and physical dimensions of our lives. In Original Human Nature these dimensions are perfectly integrated in a functional wholeness where all the relationships are properly ordered. That proper order reflects the love of god...(p 7). In the context of the theory of FUT, one way that can be seen to rectify the dark sides of individualism (p 16) is to make effort to bring about the correct order or

balance between one's spirit mind and physical mind. A person could easily "get along" when his or her spirit mind dominates their physical mind and he or she, as a result, is able and willing to consciously ensure that trueness, goodness, beauty, and love moderate their desire and need for food, sex, etc. But to "get along" is not sufficient. FUT is promoting a full recovery of original human nature as the human mandate. Furthermore, it is setting forth very clearly just what that nature is meant to be. Such a mandate is not easy to accomplish, to be sure, but it is helpful when there exists an example to show that it is possible and how it is possible. Unificationists believe that Rev. and Mrs. Moon are such exemplars. They are believed to manifest a life of true love, the quality of life that every human being is meant to live. Manifested in the lives of this couple is a source of inspiration and motivation available to anyone seeking to practice a life of service to others.

The "religious life," as difficult as it has been to live, has been one which emphasizes, even "coerces," the proper balance between one's spirit mind (centering on values) and physical mind (centering on biological needs). Traditionally such blatant self-coercion (by saints, sages, and prophets) has been necessary because of the influence of evil. The force of evil, and its ultimate epitomization, Satan, has consistently sabotaged human efforts to become better individuals, and so results have come

with great difficulty (as Rodney King knows so well); conflict and lack of concern for others have come easily (as Rodney King, again, knows so well). The Holocaust (and, more recently, the atrocities in/near Sarajevo) demonstrates the potential influence that demonic power can exert over human beings. In such a context it is important, albeit difficult, that people not lose hope or become pessimistic. In the face of something as horrible as the Holocaust or as ugly as Los Angeles there is generated almost a necessity that people sustain their trust that there is justice in the universe and that, ultimately, all can and will be rectified. Without such trust and hope there is a danger that we may become far less than human.

A necessary part of restoring one's original human nature, especially on the practical side, is that of indemnity. This idea is not yet developed to sufficient theoretical breadth or depth in FUT (see DIVINE PRINCIPLE for better elaboration), but an understanding of indemnity is essential to an understanding of the restoration of original human nature. Professor Roth implicitly asks how progress toward restoration of original human nature can be made. The answer is indemnity. One may speak of both personal and vicarious indemnity. This concept of indemnity may be one of FUT's most valuable contributions to the realm of human thought and practice. The understanding and experience of indemnity has the power to motivate people and enable them in making the effort necessary to restore their original nature.

Indemnity may involve suffering (but not all suffering is indemnity!). Nevertheless, there are/were numerous people who have been/were able to endure suffering provided they have/had good (sufficient internal=spiritual) reason to believe that something positive or beneficial will/would come of their suffering.

The view of history in FUT may admittedly seem, on the surface, rather simplistic, even naive, to a trained historian, and yet we must take into serious account recent historical developments. Can they be said to be consonant with theory? FUT does hold that the good side will induce the evil side naturally to surrender and will restore the evil side to the good side, and eventually will save all humankind. As Professor Roth notes, the FUT theory sounds nice on paper (p 16). Consider, however, historical reality: In an historical and seemingly unlikely encounter, Rev. Moon meets President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union and the world witnesses the fall of the Soviet Empire and the veritable end of communism. Furthermore, tens of thousands of Soviet government officials, professors, parents, and students are presently in the process of studying Unificationism, and the government has officially approved the Unification Movement. Certainly, there were many other factors involved in the fall of the Soviet Union, and I would not be so presumptuous as to speak of a direct cause-effect relationship; still, there is a connection on the spiritual level. Consider another development: Rev. Moon meets

with Great Leader Kim Il Sung of North Korea, and the situation in Asia changes dramatically (not to mention the fact that officials in the U.S. State Department are literally flabbergasted by the unfolding of, again, seemingly unimaginable events, and try to comprehend the parameters of the international influence of Rev. Moon). When one practices true love, the essence of original human nature, significant changes can be wrought, both in oneself and in others. Is there not some sense of credibility here? Once again, there are many other factors involved in such developments, and no direct cause-effect relationship can be pinpointed, but on the spiritual level there is a significant connection. These historical encounters have taken place only on the foundation of much indemnity, without which foundation it would truly have been unlikely for them to have happened. The point I want to make is that indemnity, especially in the thinking of Unificationists, is something real and is something that works. It has similarities with the Eastern idea of karma, but it also has some significant, and very potent, differences. What is important here is that when one practices or "pays" indemnity they can become a better person and they can heal broken relationships. In other words they can make progress on the way towards restoring their original human nature.

Economic conditions, crime, and drug abuse (p 16), could all be influenced if people were to put FUT's theory into practice.

Crime and drug abuse are ultimately expressions of the disorder in the human mind, where one's physical mind is dominant over their spirit mind. Economic conditions are a reflection of one's attitude and way of life in general. In this context, art and ethics are closely connected with FUT's theory of original human nature.

Restoration of our original human nature is not understood to be an easy objective to accomplish. It is necessary to practice indemnity. Dr. Kremer (p 21f) obviously had little concern for the value of individual human beings. His life must have become a living hell. And his victims certainly had little chance for a full life, much less for attaining their original human nature. Yet, in the Unification perspective even these individuals must eventually restore their nature of love. How this is possible, and what process is involved, is, again, elaborated in DIVINE PRINCIPLE, and not in FUT. FUT sets forth what the original human nature is, but perhaps some elaboration of how to restore it, that is, some examination of indemnity, may be necessary in future texts.

I would like to close with a comment Professor Roth makes toward the end of his paper. He states: "Could it be that idealistic hopes for a full restoration of perfection are not merely delayed or left in openended suspense but that history itself has scarred them permanently and compromised them forever--even for God?" This is a troubling comment. It is

troubling because even idealistic Unificationists, myself included, have pondered the question. I think there is a certain necessity to the belief (it seems to impose itself on one's deepest, most intuitive sense of how things should be) that all will be fulfilled in the end, because any other alternative, a slightly flawed universe included, leaves one with an uneasy conscience, a sense of discomfort. Still, when one witnesses the magnitude of evil and suffering in the world it is nothing less than a real test of faith and hope. Not all Unificationists are naive. Some are quite realistic. To restore the world to its ultimate perfection may seem utterly like the impossible dream, and beyond all possibility. But it begins with "my" reaching for "my" own perfection, that is, "my" own restoration. From "my" perspective, it is within "my" reach to improve "myself": to focus on spiritual values and to live for the sake of others. And yet, religious traditions teach that victory over "myself" is far more difficult than any other victory. One of my personal favorites is from the Buddhist Dhammapada (8:103-5): "If a man should conquer in battle a thousand and a thousand more, and another man should conquer himself, his would be the greater victory, because the greatest of victories is the victory over oneself; and neither the gods in heaven above nor the demons down below can turn into defeat the victory of such a man." It is our mandate as human beings to make an effort to achieve such a victory. That victory, according to FUT, requires the practice of indemnity. Because it is related to the restoration and

practice of true love, indemnity can overcome even the scars left
by history.