



PHILOSOPHICAL GROUNDWORK FOR THE HARMONY OF CULTURES

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I.

When I was under much pressure because of my heavy ecclesiastical and seminary responsibilities a few years ago, I started to enjoy listening to some popular songs. My heart was moved and comforted especially by the songs sung by Crystal Gayle (an American country musician), Misora Hibari (a Japanese popular singer), and Cho Yong Pil (a Korean singer). These three singers are from different nations with different cultural backgrounds. Also, their tones and ways of singing are quite different from each other because of their own distinctive individual characteristics. Crystal Gayle has an attractive feminine touch and Misora Hibari has some vulgar flavor in her impressive soprano voice, while Cho Yong Pil as a male vocalist conveys strong masculine energy. Nevertheless, it seemed to me that they all had one thing in common: a genuine kind of lyricism. Indeed, this lyricism from them all touched my heart.

I believe that the reason why the three different singers convey the same genuine lyricism is that their songs genuinely describe how serious people in the world are in their efforts to seek true love and happiness in spite of all difficulties they have to face. If human beings tirelessly strive for true love in spite of their status of finitude and imperfection, doesn't this

produce some kind of beauty which they all universally share in common? Here we see unity amidst diversity. We see harmony amongst different cultures. What makes the harmony possible is that each individual singer qua an individual singer attains something universal which in this case is the lyricism which touches us.

The purpose of the present paper is to present a philosophical groundwork for the harmony of cultures. So, before going into the subject of the harmony of cultures, we will discuss in Section II the general philosophical meaning of individual entities and their relationship in the universe. That discussion will focus on what enables individual entities to establish their harmonious relationship. Derivatively, it will also show what prevents them from being harmonious with each other. Also, some solutions to the philosophical problem of disharmony will be introduced. Section III will now apply our philosophical groundwork to the harmony of cultures. We will find out that just as the harmony of individual entities in the universe requires them each to be a genuine individual which embodies the universal truth of God, so the harmony of cultures requires each individual culture to attain within itself universality whose source is the universal truth of God. (Thus the role of God is important in the harmony of cultures.) Regarding this philosophical application to cultures, Unification Thought says: "Just as, in all created beings, the universal image and individual image are united, likewise, in art,

universality and individuality are united."¹ Hence the unity of individuality and universality within each culture is a requisite for the harmony of cultures.

The present paper will basically present a Unification position. Therefore it will occasionally refer to Unification Thought, although it will also discuss some input from thinkers such as Alfred North Whitehead, Karl Barth, and Hans-Georg Gadamer in order to support the Unification position. But I want to go a step further than the actual texts of the books on Unification Thought by further clarifying what prevents genuine harmony from being made. This will explain the reasons for various problems in culture such as conflicts amongst cultures, coercive and false unities of cultures, and obscene and immoral distortions of culture. The present paper will also discuss how the distinction between "central" and "peripheral" cultures emerges in the process towards the harmony of cultures and how the distinction is to disappear eventually.

The harmony of cultures is a trend in today's world, although it is still far from completion. Therefore we need a philosophical groundwork for it to enhance and realize it by avoiding the various problems in culture just mentioned. We do not need any more cultural friction, nor any more totalitarian coercion in culture, nor any more cultural obscenity.

II.

The unity of individuality and universality within each

individual entity in the created universe is well expressed in the Unification notion of "individual truth body"² (or "individual truth incarnation").³ The original Korean term for this is Kaesung-jilli-che, where Kaesung, jilli, and che respectively mean "individual", "truth", and "body". In the term "individual truth body," the word "individual" self-evidently indicates individuality, while the word "truth" represents universality. So the individual truth body means the individual entity which embodies the universal truth of God within itself. It is the individuation of the universal truth.

Unification Thought is not alone in talking about the unity of individuality and universality within each individual entity. Paul Tillich, as a philosophical theologian who believes the Christian doctrine that the divine Logos became flesh, refers to the person of Christ Jesus in terms of the unity of individuality and universality, i.e., as "something which is absolutely concrete and absolutely universal at the same time."⁴ Whitehead sees the unity of individuality and universality within each particular individual, when he maintains that "actual entities," which to him are final particular individuals, exemplify the "ingression"⁵ of "eternal objects" (universals) from God and the actual world. To Whitehead, this unity means to "blur the <traditional> sharp distinction between what is universal and what is particular."⁶

Now the question is: What does universality really mean? It is something which each individual entity is to attain, but what

is it? So far in the present paper, it has been referred to as the universal truth of God. But what is it?

According to Unification Thought, the universal truth of God is God's dual characteristics of Sungsang and Hyungsang and of Yang and Yin. Unification Thought also calls this the "universal image" of God.⁷ So the individual truth body is the particular embodiment of God's dual characteristics.

Then, what is the meaning of God's dual characteristics? Regardless of the definitions of Sungsang, Hyungsang, Yang and Yin,⁸ the real meaning of God's dual characteristics is that within him there is always a dynamic reciprocity between Sungsang and Hyungsang and between Yang and Yin. When this dynamic reciprocity occurs centering on his "heart" of living and existing for the sake of others,⁹ it constitutes his urge for unity through love and sacrifice. 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). It is what Rev. Moon, proponent of Unification Thought, calls "total investment." This urge for unity through love and sacrifice is God's absolute standard which all created beings (individual truth bodies) are to exemplify. If they exemplify it, they will naturally unite and harmonize with each other through love and sacrifice. Hence the harmonious relationship of all individual entities.

One may wonder if words such as "love" and "sacrifice" can apply to the unity of non-living creatures such as stones and

mountains. But the application of those words to non-living creatures is not strange, given Teilhard de Chardin's notion of "amorization" of the whole cosmos.¹⁰ The real reason why it is not strange, however, is that all created beings, both non-living and living, have the dual characteristics of Sungsang and Hyungsang and of Yang and Yin.¹¹ Because they all have the same dual characteristics as God's, under the divine urge of unity they themselves make the same kind of dynamic reciprocity within each of them as within God. Thus they have the same kind of urge for unity through love and sacrifice, although their levels of urge may vary depending on what levels in the hierarchy of being in the universe they belong to. It is in this way that they substantiate God's dual characteristics, thus resembling God. This is how they are led to harmonize with each other centering on God.

The role God plays for the harmony of individual entities has been a well-accepted teaching in the history of thought, although no other school of thought has taught it as clearly as the above-mentioned position of Unification Thought. The role of God in this regard is touched on in the Catholic doctrine of vestigia trinitatis in creatura which maintains that the dynamic Trinitarian relation of the three persons within God is the source of harmony in creation because the created world has vestiges of the Trinity. The dynamic reciprocity within God is acknowledged also by Karl Barth as "a genuine but harmonious self-encounter and self-discovery; a free co-existence and co-

operation; an open confrontation and reciprocity,"¹² and Barth equates it with the image of God, asserting that because human beings are created in this image of God, they are "in encounter" with each other in their harmonious relationship.¹³ Whereas the Catholic tradition and Barth primarily deal with psychological and human relationships, Whitehead's philosophy of relationship has a much bigger scope to cover all created beings, both living and non-living, based on an explicit doctrine of God's dual characteristics. According to Whitehead, God has two poles within himself, i.e., the mental and physical poles, which he respectively calls "primordial" and "consequent" natures¹⁴ and which are respectively equivalent to the Sungsang and Hyungsang of God in Unification Thought.¹⁵ Whitehead maintains that the dynamic reciprocity between the two poles of God constitutes the "initial aim" of God,¹⁶ which is a divine thrust of unity directed to the world of actual entities, each of which has its own mental and physical poles within itself like God does. It is in this way that Whitehead explains the harmony of various actual entities.

Let us now proceed to discuss what would prevent individual entities from being harmonious with each other. As has been seen so far, what enables them to be harmonious with each other is the exemplification of God's dual characteristics within each individual entity. This exemplification means that God's urge for unity through love and sacrifice is inherited by the dual characteristics of each individual entity. So, what prevents

individual entities from being harmonious is the failure on the part of each of them with its dual characteristics to exemplify God's dual characteristics and his urge for unity through love and sacrifice.

This failure usually does not occur in the universe which excludes human minds. Natural sciences such as astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology normally confirm only the harmony of the universe, although they fall short of explaining God's involvement in it except hypothetically. So, the above failure very often takes place in human minds when they try to explain the universe through their philosophy. This failure takes various forms in philosophy. First of all, it takes the form of atheism, denying the existence of God. Second, even if it may acknowledge the existence of God, it takes the form of "monopolar" theism which denies God's dual characteristics, saying that God has only one "pole" or side, like, for example, the Thomistic doctrine of God as actus purus. Third, as a result of the second, it takes the form of "substantialist" philosophy, which does not see any real relationship amongst different substances: "Really the notion of substance is just this -- that which can exist by itself, without the aid of any other substance."¹⁷ This third one sometimes leads to a fourth one, which is the dualism of spirit and matter (e.g., the Cartesian dualism); and it denies the dual characteristics of each substance contrary to the commendable Aristotelian tradition of hylomorphism.

There can still be other forms of the failure. But whatever form it may take in philosophy has the fundamental mistake of setting up a distorted human perspective which cannot see the real dynamism of the making of harmony in the universe. Of course, if we humbly admit of how distorted our perspectives are and how important it is to leave them behind to come up with better ones, then there is hope. But unfortunately what usually happens is that we rather tenaciously stick to them and fixate them as if they were final. Here comes the fallacy of dogmatism, which is really against the above-mentioned urge for unity through love and sacrifice, which arises from God.

Unless this dogmatism is solved, no harmony of individual entities nor the harmony of cultures can be expected. But, for now, let me introduce Hans-Georg Gadamer's solution. As a hermeneutician, he asserts that the perspective of any interpreter, which he calls a "horizon," is finite, limited, and not complete but always flexible and open for further growth and expansion, and that as long as it is not fixated as if it were final and complete and as long as its finitude and limitation are always recognized, it will grow, "rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other."¹⁸ Although Gadamer hardly refers to God, his solution is fascinating because it not only helps to avoid dogmatism but also shows a humble way of reaching universality in spite of finitude in the world of particulars.

Gadamer's emphasis on the finitude of human perspectives is

somewhat echoed in Barth's doctrine of the analogia fidei, although the latter is much more theological than the former. According to Barth, the perspectives of human beings are so limited and tainted because of the fall that they should be given up in favor of faith, through which God reveals himself to them. What comes after the revelation of God, according to Barth, is our deep understanding of the reality of God that God has dual characteristics.¹⁹ In other words, Barth maintains that this humble faith, and not the humanistic analogia entis in Catholicism, brings us to the universal truth of God.

In much the same vein, Unification Thought suggests the importance of 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."²⁰ If we have it, then we will be able to have God as our subject, so that we as beings of united Sungsang and Hyungsang will be able to substantiate God's real dual characteristics of Sungsang and Hyungsang. As a result, the harmony of human beings will be created.

III.

As was explained in the preceding section, the harmony of individual entities in the created world requires them each to be an individual which embodies the universal truth of God, i.e., the dual characteristics of God. If this is applied to cultures, we should say that the harmony of cultures requires each culture

to attain within itself the universal truth of God, i.e., the dual characteristics of God. This contains at least three important points.

First of all, for the harmony of cultures, each individual culture has both individuality and universality. Therefore Unification Thought says: "In culture as well, there is unity between universality and individuality. That is, while the culture of a certain region has the special characteristics of that region, it also has characteristics common to the culture of an even wider region to which it belongs."²¹ Unification Thought goes on to give an example of this:

For example, the statue of Buddha in the Seoggul-am grotto in Korea is a representative work of Shilla culture. It is also known that this work was influenced by the international fine art of Gandhara, which fused Greek art and Buddhist culture. Hence in the Buddha statue of Seoggul-am grotto, both national elements (Shilla culture) and international elements (Gandhara fine art) are united.²²

Of course, this does not equate the universal characteristics of the culture of a wider region directly with the universal truth of God. But, unless there is any very widespread culture of coerced unity or of obscenity, it would be safe to say that the wider the region is, the closer to the universal truth of God the characteristics of its culture are. The reason why we can say that is that any cultural characteristic which involves God's dual characteristics moves people's hearts, thus enjoying more universal acceptance.

This leads to a second point, which is that when a culture attains within itself universality which comes from God's dual

characteristics, it deeply touches people. As was already mentioned in Section II, the real meaning of God's dual characteristics is the dynamic reciprocity between Sungsang and Hyungsang centering on his heart of living and existing for the sake of others; and this reciprocity constitutes God's urge for unity through love and sacrifice. Therefore, to attain universality from God's dual characteristics means to inherit his urge for unity through love and sacrifice. Any healthy cultural activity has embodied this divine urge: "Heart is the driving force of cultural activities."²³ So, when the values of beauty, truth, and goodness are pursued and accomplished by cultural activities which have their own dynamic reciprocity of Sungsang and Hyungsang within themselves with the involvement of emotion, intellect, and will, those values are expressions of God's urge for unity. That is why they deeply touch people. The lyricism of the three singers, mentioned in Section I, is the value of beauty accomplished by them as an expression of the divine urge for unity; the divine urge is expressed through their dynamic reciprocity of Sungsang and Hyungsang, when they show in their songs their serious efforts to seek true love in spite of limitation and finitude in life. No wonder the lyricism was appealing to me.

Third, the harmony of cultures involves God as their center. When God's dual characteristics are embodied in each individual culture, they become the key important commonality of all cultures which are harmonious with each other. "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)."²⁴ It goes without saying that God's love and God's truth are other ways of describing God's dual characteristics. Unification Thought, therefore, does not forget to relate God's love and God's truth to his urge for unity through love and sacrifice: "God created humankind in order to obtain joy through love";²⁵ and "The fundamental law <truth> of the universe is that beings exist, not for their own sake, but for the sake of others and for the sake of God."²⁶ God's dual characteristics in this regard constitute the "absolute standard" to harmonize the values of different cultures, i.e., "a standard for value judgement ... that will be common to all people, transcending differences in culture, thought, nationality, and so on."²⁷

Let us now discuss what hinders genuine harmony from being realized amongst cultures. The hindrance occurs, if each culture fails to embody God's dual characteristics. This failure takes several different forms in culture. As cultural activities, those forms are more effectively destructive than the various philosophical forms of the failure in human minds (e.g., atheism, monopolar theism, substantialist philosophy, and the dualism of spirit and matter), which were mentioned in Section II. I want to suggest three major cultural forms which the failure to embody God's dual characteristics takes.

First of all, it takes the form of cultural hatred. In this

case, because of the lack of urge for unity through love and sacrifice, different cultures just hate each other and even kill each other. Historically, many wars and conflicts amongst tribes and nations took place because of cultural hatred. Cultural gap would be tolerable and even acceptable, but cultural hatred should not.

Second, the failure takes the form of cultural totalitarianism. This happens, when one particular culture dogmatically believes itself to be superior to any other culture. That particular culture ends up forcing other cultures to be assimilated into it or to be destroyed. This was the case with the Pan-Germanism of the Nazi regime.

Third, the failure expresses itself as the obscenity and corruption of culture. If there is no more urge for unity through love and sacrifice, cultures only pursue something which satisfies people's selfish and fleshly desires. They destroy traditional moral values such as chastity and humility, by encouraging free sex, profanity and decadence. This is rampant in magazines, movies, photos, arts, lifestyles, etc. These days the Internet, a new computer information network, is being invaded by obscene pornography.

Whatever form the cultural failure may take, there is one constant mistake. It is the desertion of God. To the degree that God is deserted, Satan is present. When cultures fail to embody God's dual characteristics from which the urge for unity comes, they become selfish with the result that Satan dominates.

Unfortunately, because of the fall which happened at the dawn of history, we have not been able to be totally free from Satan's domination yet. Hence the above problems. The ultimate solution to those problems, therefore, is to cut off our relationship with Satan completely. But it will have to be dealt with by religious leaders. Here, suffice it to say, following the philosophical solutions of Gadamer, Barth and Unification Thought, that we need true humility to make room for the realization of universality centering on God.

The final item the present paper is dealing with is the difference between more and less prominent cultures. For example, the celebration of the Christmas which came from Christian culture seems to be a very prominent event taking place even in many parts of the non-Christian world, although we could complain that it has been commercialized to boost big sales. Compared with it, the Shinto rituals of purification called misogi and harai, which are still practiced in Japan, are not prominent and widespread in the world, no matter how sincere and deep an experience people may have from them. It seems that the reason for the difference is that Christian culture is closer to the universal truth of God than the Shinto culture of Japan.

It seems that some cultures are central and prominent, while others are peripheral and less prominent. The human race has not been able to avoid this difference. For even though the universal truth of God has always been available for every culture in the world, some cultures have responded to it better

than others. The better response, the more universal. This is the reality in the world which is still under the bondage of Satan.

But if a real solution is provided to remove the bondage of Satan, all cultures will now know how to respond to God to embody his dual characteristics. If this happens, all cultures will be able to be equally central and prominent. Thus the difference between central and peripheral cultures will disappear, although it may actually take many, many years until it disappears completely. All cultures will find themselves to be fully harmonious with each other eventually, despite or even because of their differences stemming from their true uniquenesses. When the full harmony of cultures is reached, the whole can even constitute one big "unified culture" which covers all cultures.²⁸ It never means a big culture of totalitarian coercion, for all cultures will still retain their uniquenesses.

All this is possible, because a genuine culture is a "culture of heart,"²⁹ substantiating within itself God's heart of living for the sake of others.

Notes

1. Essentials of Unification Thought: The Head-Wing Thought (Seoul, Korea: Unification Thought Institute, 1992), p.244. Henceforth abbreviated as EUT.
2. EUT, p.42.
3. Divine Principle (New York: HSA-UWC, 1973), p.25.
4. Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), vol. I, p.16.
5. Process and Reality, corrected ed., ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1978), p.40.
6. Ibid., p.48.
7. EUT, p.14.
8. For those definitions, see EUT, pp.2-14.
9. For the definition of "heart," see EUT, pp.17-22.
10. For the word "amorization", see his Let Me Explain, trans. Rene Hague et al (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp.74, 105. For the real meaning of the word, see the section on "Love as Energy" in The Phenomenon of Man, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1961), pp.264-67.
11. EUT, pp.43-51.
12. Church Dogmatics, trans. J.W. Edwards et al (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), vol. 3, part 1, p.185.
13. Ibid. (1960), vol. 3, part 2, pp.250-265.
14. Process and Reality, pp.343-46.
15. For a comparison between Whitehead and Unification Thought on God's dual characteristics, see my article, "Dipolar Theism in Process Thought and Unificationism," Unification Theology in Comparative Perspectives, ed. Anthony J. Guerra (Barrytown, N.Y.: Unification Theological Seminary, 1988, pp.35-48.

16. Process and Reality, pp.244, 344.
17. Descartes, The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1931), vol.2, p.101.
18. Truth and Method, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1991), second revised edition, p.305.
19. For his doctrine of God's dual characteristics, see the chapter on "The Reality of God," in Church Dogmatics, vol.2, part 1, pp.257-677.
20. EUT, p.106.
21. EUT, P.244.
22. EUT, p.244.
23. EUT, p.100.
24. EUT, P.142.
25. EUT, p.142.
26. EUT, p.142.
27. EUT, p.141.
28. EUT, p.245.
29. EUT, p.101.

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