



DISCUSSANT RESPONSE

by

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to Gene James'

**UNIFICATION THOUGHT AND PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING
AN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

The Nineteenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences
Seoul, Korea August 19-26, 1992

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Response to Gene James' Views on Dr. Sang Hun Lee's Presentation of
Unification Thought and Problems of Developing an
Environmental Ethics

SYNOPSIS

Professor Gene James' essay on Unification Thought and environmental ethics is timely and calls for serious reflection. In the opening section of his essay, James points to the factors which he views as fundamental to the environmental crisis. Foremost among these is spiraling population growth. He holds Western culture significantly responsible for the population explosion because of its emphasis on the biblical mandate for humankind to "be fruitful, multiply and subdue the earth."¹

Citing the exceedingly high standards of living found in North America, Europe and, more recently, in East Asia as a second cause for the environmental crisis, James believes that modern society may have been misled by technological optimism — i.e., the view that science and technology will provide solutions to all human and environmental problems including those resulting from scientific and technological development itself. He describes two types of technological optimism, a materialistic and a theistic variety.

In the second major section of his essay, James discusses how Unification Thought might or might not contribute to developing an ethical system to respond to the environmental crisis. He begins by examining Unification Thought's fundamental assumptions, which he outlines as being (1) the view that God has created the universe and humankind in God's likeness and (2) the position that, by observing human beings and nature, we can know something about God's nature. The third assumption he indicates is that, "in order to solve practical problems, we must begin by identifying God's nature."²

While proceeding to summarize the component parts of the Original Image,³ James also explores the Unification Thought view that God *had* to create because of God's irresistible impulse to obtain joy through sharing love with an object. According to Unification Thought, humans are created in the direct image of God and, like God, have an irresistible impulse to obtain joy through loving an object; and they inherit God's creative capacity. James comments also on the importance of give-and-receive activity in Unification Thought.

In the closing portion of his essay, James mentions certain strengths of Unification Thought that might help in addressing the environmental crisis. These include:

- 1.) Its emphasis on proper dominion, “provided its anthropocentrism can be overcome.”¹⁰
- 2.) Unification thinkers' willingness “to hear and respond to the best criticisms that can be brought against it.”¹¹
- 3.) Unification Thought's emphasis that “love and creativity must be combined with knowledge in order for proper dominion of nature to come about.”¹²
- 4.) Unification Thought's view of the universe as an organic whole.
- 5.) The claim that consciousness can be found at all levels of being.

RESPONSE

Professor James' essay expresses the author's serious concern for the environment and is a welcome addition to scholarly debate about Unificationism. His writing, especially when seen in conjunction with an earlier paper presented in Seoul in 1991¹³, demonstrates that James has given serious consideration to the propositions outlined in Unification Thought. Although praising aspects of Unificationism, such as the notion of creativity based on love and its recognition that not only humans but all things have consciousness, it would seem he nevertheless has great reservations. Unificationism seems to encompass elements such as technological optimism, anthropocentrism, and an emphasis on the biblical mandate to “be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth,” all of which James views as bearing significant responsibility for the current environmental crisis. Thus, while on the one hand praising Unificationism's potential to contribute to developing an environmental code of ethics, he appears concerned that other elements of Unificationism could potentially exacerbate the environmental crisis.

To distinguish between Unification Thought's approach to this problem and other more traditional approaches, it is worthwhile to begin by reviewing some of the ways in which Unification Axiology would approach environmental ethics. Unification Axiology would maintain, first of all, that a long-term solution to the environmental crisis must be based upon a new view of values that must be able to embrace and even guide science¹⁴ and be “centered on the absolute God.”¹⁵ Because of God being eliminated from every field, including economy, politics, education and art¹⁶ and because traditional views of value have

lost their religious basis, Unification Thought would maintain that traditional values were destined to decline¹⁷, with a concomitant increase of family, social, political, economic and environmental problems.

Perhaps even more fundamental than the current collapse in values is Unification Thought's view of the relative nature of value systems due to the tragedy of the human fall. According to Unification Thought, the human Fall made it impossible "for human history to start as principled, normal history; instead it came to be filled with wars, pain, misery and the like."¹⁸ Unification Thought asserts that "the original humans and the original world were lost, and non-principle (non-original) human beings came to live non-principle lives--that is lives of pain and confusion--in this non-principle world."¹⁹ Non-original human beings do not stand in the proper position vis-a-vis God, vis-a-vis their fellow human beings and vis-a-vis nature. Although humanity may have advanced scientifically and technologically, the environmental crisis serves to remind us of the fundamental imbalance within non-original human beings which blights all of our endeavors.

Unificationism maintains that the Fall resulted in non-original or fallen human beings acquiring an archangelic nature. On an individual level, this event resulted in the loss of the original moral standard. On a family level, it resulted in the loss of the original ethical standard. Due to the loss of the proper moral and ethical standard²⁰ and the breakdown of the original hierarchy among God, humanity and creation, the entire universe, with humanity as mediator, lost the Way of Heaven.²¹ The original vertical and horizontal order of Creation has been lost because man, meant to be the central point of all subject aspects of Creation and, woman, meant to be the central point of all object aspects of Creation²², have become separated from God, from each other, and from nature. Unless environmentalists explore the fundamental aberrations resulting from the Fall and the loss of the Way of Heaven, Unification Thought would argue that only patchwork solutions to the environmental problem will result.

In his discussions of philosophy, Reverend Moon has occasionally articulated the position that philosophy should serve as an *entrée* to religious life.²³ Unification Thought would call upon environmentalists, as well as all concerned human beings, to discover the reality of God and to recognize not only, as James points out, that the various aspects of nature have consciousness, but that God also has consciousness and feeling. Attempting to understand God's heart is the starting point for restoring the Way of Heaven.

The God introduced by Unification Thought is a God of feeling with three essential reference points: the heart of hope, as discovered in the Creation process; the heart of sorrow, as reflected in the tragedy of the human Fall; and the heart of pain, as reflected in the whole restorative process during which God has experienced rejection and persecution through the central figures God has chosen, including Noah, Moses, and Jesus.²⁴ The Unification religious experience involves a discovery of God's sorrow and pain and calls for profound reflection upon not only the human condition but the divine condition. Discovery of God's suffering and the recognition of the pivotal role which human beings can play in alleviating that suffering leads the individual to relate to God, humanity and nature with repentance, love and sensitivity.

Understanding Unificationism's view of God's ideal together with its view of the Fall helps to establish how Unification Thought's "anthropocentrism" differs from traditional anthropocentrism. While James expresses concern about the idea of nature realizing "actual rather than potential" value through human beings, it should be clarified that Unification Thought's position is that Creation can only realize "actual" value through original, perfected human beings. From the Unificationist perspective, the creation has not achieved "actual" value in spite of its interaction with human beings because people are fallen. *Fundamentals of Unification Thought* reminds us that the essence of value consists of the purpose of creation of the object and the harmony of its paired elements.²⁵ Human beings as God's object are meant to have fulfilled the purpose of creation and should have realized subject-object harmony between the paired elements of mind and body, husband and wife, parents and children. Because this has not been realized, fallen individuals themselves lack actual value and thus cannot serve as a mediator between God and Creation. Unification Thought would distance itself from the traditional assertion that "all things are made for man," if this implies fallen humanity, arguing instead that nothing²⁶ is made for fallen humanity and that creation, as Paul notes, "groans in travail" because of its interaction with fallen humanity.

In its Theory of Education, Unification Thought first emphasizes education of heart and education of norm, centering on the family. The ultimate goal of the education of heart and norm is to assist in developing a parental heart in every adult human being. From an environmental perspective, parental heart has important practical consequences. A responsible parent cannot act merely on the basis of the desire for quick profits or immediate personal benefit. A True Parent is called upon to act based upon examining whether his or her actions will enhance or hinder humanity's future.²⁷

As we have observed, Unificationism calls for non-original human beings to seek to discover God's heart. It also calls for a new sensitivity to one's spouse, one's children, one's fellow human beings and the Creation. In a speech given in 1977, Reverend Moon observed:

Have you ever had the experience of apologizing to the earth for having to step on it? If you have such a loving heart to want to step softly on the ground, the ground will eagerly respond to you and even push your feet up. When you go to the bathroom, you are just giving dirty things to nature, but if you feel sorry then nature will say, "Don't worry. I will receive it and use it as fertilizer to grow many good things."²⁸

Those close to Reverend Moon know that in his personal life, he makes deliberate daily efforts to be sensitive to the Creation. He himself is meticulous in conserving resources such as water, paper and food. Through his extensive involvement with Ocean Church, he has demonstrated one example of his commitment to curtail the world's depletion and abuse of land-based resources, while also protecting the sea.

The degree of Unificationism's commitment to building a new relationship between humanity and the Creation is also reflected in certain of the rituals and practices of the Unification Church. On March 16, 1960 (lunar calendar), Reverend Moon instituted the use of Holy Salt. Unificationists use Holy Salt to purify all things such as food and clothing which they bring into their households. The use of Holy Salt is symbolic of the Unification view that the earthly environment has been tainted by the Fall, since non-original human beings have not exerted proper dominion over it.²⁹ On May 1, 1963 (lunar calendar), Reverend Moon established the Day of All Things or World Day as one of the church's first major holidays. This holiday reflects the commitment of Reverend and Mrs. Moon and all Unificationists to establish a proper relationship with Creation. It reminds Unificationists that "the desire of all things is to see the day when they can receive the true love of God through human beings."³⁰

The fact that all Creation only finds its value through original human beings should not be viewed in a negative sense. Unification Thought's position implies that human beings are responsible to convey God's love to all aspects of Creation. Conveying God's love to Creation precludes wasting valuable resources or squandering them for selfish purposes. The original human being is truly Creation's priest, at all times responsible to appreciate nature and to act as its mediator before God. If a code of environmental ethics based on this attitude

gained currency, it would help protect wildlife, forests and other natural resources.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In his introduction, James cites overpopulation and technological optimism as the major causes of the current environmental crisis. Unification Thought would tend to agree with James' warning about the danger of technological optimism. It would emphasize that long-range parental concern for posterity, rather than the profit motive, should play the crucial role in technological development. The International Conference of the Unity of the Sciences is itself an expression of Reverend Moon's effort to stress the need for proper dominion in the development of science and technology.

Unification Thought would tend to agree with Gov. Thomas Kean that certain perceived environmental problems, such as global warming — and here I would add the impending threat of overpopulation — remain topics of debate due to the lack of objective consensus within scientific circles.³¹ Assuming that overpopulation is or will be a problem, Unification Thought can help to alleviate it because of (1) its strong emphasis on the need for abstinence prior to marriage, (2) its emphasis on the need for fidelity within marriage and (3) its stressing responsible parenting, which would naturally include family planning.

As a final observation, I would like to recognize that while Professor James' paper challenges Unification scholars to participate in developing an environmental code of ethics, there exists a most serious lacuna in his presentation. In his appeals for Unification Thought to "overcome its anthropocentrism," he fails to offer philosophical arguments refuting the Unification view that human beings are the center of God's creation. Likewise, James fails to clarify whether he accepts or rejects the traditional Judeo-Christian and Unificationist view that human beings are God's children rather than merely another aspect of Creation. In the event that James does not see human beings as God's children, it would seem appropriate for him to critique the position taken by the Judeo-Christian tradition and by Unificationism.³² In *Witness*, Whittaker Chambers laments not that Christianity is wrong but that it has never been practiced. Rather than being the fruit of Judeo-Christian thought, many environmental problems may actually have resulted from a failure to practice the teachings on stewardship found in the Holy Scriptures.

I cannot end without recognizing and appreciating Professor James' effort to broach a

most important topic. His paper represents the first attempt to explore environmental questions from a Unification Thought perspective. In pointing out Unification Thought's potential strengths, particularly in areas such as its recognition of consciousness (the *Sung Sang* dimension) throughout Creation as well as through pointing out Unification Thought's recognition of the need to combine love and creativity with knowledge in exercising proper dominion, Professor James indicates directions which he and other scholars could pursue in future studies on this topic. Likewise, his profound understanding and critique of the foundational aspects of Unification Thought, including the Theory of the Original Image, Ontology and the Theory of Original Human Nature, help Unification scholars reflect and work to continue to improve these pivotal aspects of Unificationism. In these and in other respects I have surely failed to mention, James' paper plays an important role in advancing the theoretical development and the practical implementation of the tenets of Unification Thought.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Is the “commitment to the biblical injunction to be fruitful, multiply and subdue the earth” a “dominant feature of Western culture?” Perhaps James is referring here to the emphasis given to the Roman Catholic Church’s position on sex being especially for procreation, thus placing strong prohibitions on artificial birth control methods. He is possibly also referring to the opposition to abortion by numerous religious groups. Societies such as India and China where the greatest population explosions have occurred do not have the biblical mandate “to be fruitful and multiply.”

² James, Gene, “Dr. Sang Hun Lee’s Presentation of Unification Thought and Problems of Developing an Environmental Ethics,” pp. 6-7.

³ In his discussion of Unification Thought’s view of the development of Logos, James defines Logos as the result of give and receive action between *Sung Sang* and *Hyung Sang*; however, it is actually the result of give and receive action between Inner *Sung Sang* and Inner *Hyung Sang*.

⁴ While it is true that the term “meek” is applied to objects in Unification Thought, one must keep two things in mind. First of all, Unification Thought was originally written in Korean and not translated into English by a native English speaker. Many of the controversial terms surrounding Unificationism may result from this problem. Hopefully in the not too distant future, a number of Unification scholars will have mastered the Korean language sufficiently to ameliorate this unfortunate circumstance. Secondly, the most important responsibility of the object toward the subject is to have “object consciousness.” Such a role cannot always be fulfilled by being “meek.”

⁵ Understandably, James is deeply concerned because of the emphasis in Unification Thought on the male subject role vis-a-vis the female object role. Unification Thought readily recognizes the reality of oppressive male-female relations in the fallen world. The relationship which Unification Thought describes relates only to the original world. In the Unification view of the fallen world, men are not true men. They have inherited the archangelic nature of Satan. Just as Unificationism holds that Satan abused and oppressed Eve, it recognizes that, as a norm, fallen men have abused and oppressed women. Unification Thought would add, however, that women today do not know the true meaning of being a

woman either. A general role confusion has resulted from the fall. Although Unificationism views the women's liberation movement as a providential and necessary phenomenon, it holds to the view that the true and ultimate liberation of women can only result through a solution to the fall itself.

⁶ In his text *The Will to Believe*, William James discusses the emotional rather than rational resistance which causes people to fail to examine data and material pointing to the spiritual dimension of the human being. *Divine Principle's* affirmation of the reality of an eternal human spirit seems in my view to be based largely on such data and revelation, rather than philosophical argumentation. In that respect, Professor James is correct in pointing out the need for Unification Thought to further explore the philosophical dimension of this debate.

⁷ In the section referred to here by James, the reader is encouraged to consult *The End of Communism*. *The End of Communism* (p.88) hardly denies the presence of passages in Engels which refer to cooperation. However, it asserts that such phrases served "as a means to deceive the masses, who abhor bloody struggle and wish for peaceful reform." The view expressed in *The End of Communism* is described as common by Sidney Hook in his work *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*:

A witty Frenchman said that Marxism Like Christianity has its bible, its councils, its schisms, its orthodoxies and heresies, its exegesis sacred and profane. And like Christianity it has its mysteries of which the principal one is the dialectic. This is not an infrequent judgment. There has hardly been a critic of Marx who has not regarded the dialectical principle as either a piece of religious mysticism or of deliberate mystification.

It is certainly possible to produce passages from Engels to establish James' position. However, *Fundamentals'* interpretation of Engels' dialectic is not unique. The same position is held by Sidney Hook, Leszek Kolokowski, Alain Besancon, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse-Tung, and numerous other proponents and opponents of Marxism.

⁸ Unification Thought points out that repulsion in nature serves as a means to encourage the propagation of principled subject-object relationships. In nature, repulsion of two subjects usually does not result in one subject destroying the other but merely in driving that subject to another territory or leading it to seek another object or complement. In the case of fallen

human society, conflicting subjects do destroy each other. While animals do kill and eat other animals, this phenomenon usually results because a lower center is meant to supply the needs of a higher center. For example, creation serves humanity and humanity serves God. In this respect, Unification thought would argue that actual value can be achieved by nature not only through human beings but through serving any higher center, provided that ultimately the process results in give and receive action with original, perfected human beings.

⁹ Unification Thought could argue that the J account should be interpreted as a symbolic affirmation of humankind's role as co-creator with God.

¹⁰ James, Gene, "Dr. Sang Hun Lee's Presentation," pp. 31.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p.32.

¹³ James, Gene, "Axiology: A Critical Examination of Dr. Sang Hun Lee's Unification Axiology," (Seoul, Korea: 1991 International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences).

¹⁴ *Foundations of Unification Thought*, p. 156.

¹⁵ *Fundamentals of Unification Thought*, (Tokyo: Unification Thought Institute), 1991, p. 156.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 155.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 296.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 297.

²⁰ Unification Thought differentiates between morality, which it relates to the individual, and ethics which it relates to the family.

²¹ *Fundamentals of Unification Thought*, pp. 237-238.

22 *Divine Principle*, (New York: HSA-UWC), 1977, p. 38.

23 From an untitled talk given by Reverend Moon on July 8, 1985.

24 *Fundamentals of Unification Thought*, pp. 204-211.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 163.

26 According to Unificationism, God permits fallen humanity's use of the Creation because, in the restoration process, God must work through fallen human beings.

27 *The Way of God's Will*, (New York: HSA-UWC), 1980, pp. 10, 365, 366.

28 Moon, Sun Myung, *The Desire of All Things*, (New York: HSA publications), 1977, pp. 8-9.

29 *The Tradition*, (New York: HSA-UWC), 1985, pp. 47-57.

30 *The Tradition*, (New York: HSA-UWC), 1985, p. 99.

31 *The World and I*, July 1992, "Managing Problems, Assessing Risks" — an interview with former New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean, pp. 47-48.

32 In the event that James does see human beings as God's children, it would still seem necessary to explain here (1) why it is incorrect to believe that all things were created to bring joy to humanity and (2) why it is incorrect to believe that it was humankind's responsibility to represent and convey God's love to nature.