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Unification Thought and the Global
Transformation of Consciousness

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EDUCATION:

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EDUCATION AND THE GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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These reflections on the Unification Theory of Education are based on a study of Chapter 7 of Explaining Unification Thought¹ (EUT) and several other Unification publications and papers on education. My exposition of the theory will be accompanied by questions along the way. I offer my exposition and my questions in a constructive spirit and with the hope that the subsequent discussion will lead to mutual enlightenment.

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EUT seeks to be a philosophical application of the teachings of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. Accordingly, the first three chapters deal with the most basic doctrines, namely, the theories of original image (God), ontology, and original human nature. The chapter on education is so closely connected with those ideas that it cannot be understood

independently. In fact, EUT is distinctive in that it gives greater prominence than do most philosophies to the theory of education. The discussion of education follows the presentation of epistemology, logic, and axiology, but precedes the treatments of ethics, art, history, and methodology. The Unification Movement is grounded in a revelation that seeks to be communicated and put into action. It is not surprising, therefore, that a theory of education is given a place of privilege.

The introductory paragraph to Chapter 7 claims that we are in a time of confusion and decay that requires a new theory of education.² It need not, however, be absolutely original, because it can be based on truths already given about the original divine image and its reflection in original human nature. We thus have the classical model of the prophet calling us move forward by returning to the original path from which we have strayed.

The section on Fundamentals of Education is based on two principles, namely, that there is a relation of resemblance between God and creation and that it is necessary for created things to develop through time.³ A reader schooled in classical Western thought would immediately note that these principles show one of the ways in which humans differ from God. God is eternal and humans are temporal. If they are similar in some ways, they differ in this one. God is, pure and simple; humans exist, come to be what they are.

But the succeeding page shows that things are not that simple for Unification thought.⁴ There is harmonious give-and-take action in God. Temporality, at least of a certain kind, applies to God. "God, **during** the Creation, caused Sung Sang and Hyung

Following on the distinction between animals and humans, the point is made that the physical body grows naturally, automatically, needing only heat, air, food, water, and exercise.⁹ The commandment to be fruitful refers to the growth of the spirit-man. Does this mean that education does not have to do with our physical nature? When the distinction between physical and spiritual is made this way, what becomes of the unity of human nature? We all hope that Unification thought, drawing on West and East, can help us to overcome dualisms rather than to perpetuate them. Moreover, we must remember that all of the items connected with physical growth have become social and political issues and therefore spiritual matters. And also we must take account of what we are learning about the relation between spiritual and physical health.

The Unificationist emphasis on action comes to the fore in this context with the insistence that we have the responsibility to make an effort to grow.¹⁰ Although one of Unification thought's main roots is Calvinism, we see that the branch has turned in a different direction. Humans must judge, decide, plan, act by themselves. God encourages humans to fulfill their responsibility, but God cannot intervene.¹¹ And the encouragement is not only from afar. God has given and will continue to give gifts. I find in this paragraph the suggestion that the gifts come to those who are making the best effort to overcome hardship and trial.

The familiar admonition that children are to obey their parents is put into the largest ontological and historical frame in the succeeding pages.¹² The doctrine seems to be that the first children (Adam and Eve) had the greatest responsibility. If they had fulfilled theirs, the burden for their children would have been lighter, and so on for the

succeeding generations. But they fell, and Jesus' disciples did not make the most of the opportunity that his suffering opened up. Thus, there is a need for a third Adam who will indemnify the heavy burdens of six thousand years of fallen history. His followers will have only to do what should have been done all along, namely, to obey.

In perhaps the most important point so far, the author states that "the parents' guidance of their children is what is actually meant by the word 'education.' . . . This is the starting point of Unification Education."¹³ Education is family education. We have schools only because the diversification and complexity of human life have made the content of education so specialized.

It is time, now, to conclude this discussion of the Fundamentals of Education. When I step back from the specific terminology and distinctions of the theory, I am struck by the importance of two of its features, namely, relationship and responsibility.

If Unification thought departs from classical theism by using temporal language to refer to God, it is because its theology is a thoroughly relational one. Unification theology begins with an account of the relations internal to God and then proceeds to trace the redemptive history of the relations between God and creation. The purpose of this history is for God to have joy because humans perfectly fulfill their nature. This theology is willing to temper the absolute aseity and transcendence of God in order to do justice to the religious experience of persons of faith. Theoretically, I regard this as a great risk; but I hasten to say that classical theism runs the complementary risk of not being able to do justice to the relationality of the life of faith.

Responsibility is the other key term for understanding the Fundamentals. This ontology and this theory of education call for humans actively to pursue their fulfillment. It is not as if they are called to play God and work their own salvation. Rather, their destiny is a gift and a promise, and they are to take responsibility for achieving it. God gives but God also anticipates being able to receive. God can receive, that is, rejoice in human fulfillment, only if we do our part.

I suggested earlier that this activism is a deviation from Rev. Moon's Calvinist roots. But it might also be regarded as an extension of them. Think of it this way. You are a first generation Asian Christian who is converted by missionaries from the dominant nation of the industrialized world who read the Bible straightforwardly, if not literally. You are introduced to a sovereign and provident God who sent his Son to bring on the Kingdom. It is 2000 years later and not much has happened. As my teacher, Krister Stendahl, put it, the Kingdom was promised, but only the Church arrived. Would it not be reasonable to try to discern the way forward, the next step in the coming of the Kingdom? Is this not a plausible way of interpreting what Rev. Moon did? At any rate, it helps me to understand the distinctive marks of the revelation to Rev. Moon. A theology concerned for results and thought out from the human side (and what theology is not?) will be likely to emphasize relationality and responsibility. We will see later how important these factors are in the practice of Unification education.

Finally, I would like to mention a tension that I find in the section on Fundamentals. Put simply, it is the tension between love and obedience. The presentation of the basic point about similarity emphasized harmonious loving

relationships between parents and children. The presentation of the basic point about growth emphasizes obedience of child to parent. How do love and obedience go together? The child is to obey the parent because the parent knows what the child is supposed to learn. Obedience suggests a certain kind of pedagogy, one about which questions can be raised. On the other hand, love puts the accent on mutuality, harmonious give-and-take. With love, one can imagine a pedagogy not based so much on the transmission of content, but rather, oriented to the third divine-human character, Creativity. But which of the two, love and obedience, takes priority in the Unification theory of education? That is what we will discover when we look at the Method of Education, to which we turn now.

Since the method must be correlated with the goal, we must have the goal clearly before us. The goal is to perfect our individuality, our capacity to form families, and our ability to have dominion. We must achieve, respectively, education of heart, norm, and dominion. How do we do this?

One becomes an individual by developing heart, and this occurs through experiencing the Heart of God.¹⁴ God's heart is to be shown theoretically and practically, preferably by a husband and wife team. EUT presents what I take to be the theoretical aspect of God's heart, namely, the account of the three stages of history: creation, fall, and restoration. The God that emerges from this account is a God who both loves and grieves.

Method is treated here only by giving a list of some means of communicating this truth, such as words, pictures, tears, biographies, television, and radio. What is not

developed at all is how these means are necessarily connected to parents and to loving. The emphasis is entirely on theological doctrine. It is as if the author was distracted and did not complete his thought.

What should be added if we are to have an adequate method for the education of heart? There must be careful attention to the complex development of the human individual. Pedagogues of the heart should learn from psychologists. I assume that much that needs to be done for the growth of individuality must be accomplished long before a child can grasp the teaching of the great providential epochs. Moreover, rather than being completed in childhood, education of the heart is a process that will continue throughout life. Therefore, educators must develop methods appropriate for adults.

My brief examination of the materials used by and produced by Unification educators shows that they are in the process of developing the comprehensive method for which I have called.¹⁵ Working within the framework of The Divine Principle, and giving prominence to relationship and responsibility, they have established a conversation with psychologists and theorists of education. Attention is given to the many factors that are involved in education: time, space, language, equipment, development of skills, imagination, creativity, group dynamics, etc.

Turning now to the second goal of education, we see that in order to realize the blessing of multiplication children must learn how to behave, must learn morality. The text states that there are principled duties for a man, a woman, and for family life.¹⁶ All of these matters are dealt with more fully in the chapter on ethics. But there are two things that require special comment.

First, the author asserts that the fundament for everything must be the practice of love. Principles, norms, and duties without love are merely rules and regulations. I detect here an echo of St. Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 13, "If I . . . have not love, I am but a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

Second, there is an astonishing degree of confidence in the success of good education of norm. "When an individual has come fully to embody the norms of ethical conduct within a family, he will be able to maintain the same standard of conduct in carrying out whatever responsibility he may be given in society."¹⁷ Is the transition from one setting to another really so easy? Does the idea of "fully to embody" make this claim infeasible and therefore empty?

Those who have received a complete education of norm and fully embody the ethical norms learned at home and in school could never become unjust or corrupt. Moreover, when they are ready to settle down as a husband or wife, they will make a wonderful family.¹⁸

Two things are frustrating about this passage. It tells us virtually nothing about how education of norm is to be accomplished. And it seems to jump suddenly from a history of suffering and effort to a time of perfection. Does this do justice to what is involved in the growth of complex (body-mind-spirit) created beings, beings that, moreover, are fallen?

The third section, on education of dominion, while brief, contains several points worthy of attention. The first is that dominion is a multivalent term. It comprehends both creativity (the ability to make new things and develop new ideas) and dominion (the ability to dominate another being--thing or human).¹⁹ An important footnote specifies

further that "to dominate" means "to rule," "to control," "to deal with," and "to love." Dominion is asked to do a lot of work in this system of thought and education. Is it a coherent concept?

Just as recent environmental thinkers have construed the biblical injunction to "have dominion" in the direction of "stewardship," so Unification thought has surrounded "dominion" with meanings that do not suggest control, e.g., "to deal with," and "to love." Although this seems odd at first, a plausible reason can be found in the Unification scheme of thought. It appears that the theory of human nature is being worked out in terms of the three blessings. If being fruitful has to do with perfecting the personality and multiplying has to do with the family and morality, a lot is left to be fitted under the rubric of dominion. In fact, dominion could be understood as comprehending the whole range of human action. In that case, room will have to be made for receptivity and mutuality as well as control and rule.

Let us grant that the question of the coherence of the concept of dominion has been settled provisionally. Still, it must be asked whether justice is done to creativity. The paragraph devoted to it puts the accent on the teaching of skills and on practice.²⁰ These are important, of course, but do they account for the emergence of genuine novelty? Do we not need to give attention to imagination and to the aspect of gift? I am left with the suspicion that the model in mind when this passage was written was technological innovation, rather than artistic creativity, or even the everyday creativity of perceptual delight and conversational play.

This suspicion is confirmed when the general areas of education of dominion are listed as intellectual education, technical education, and physical education. Physical education (after all, the body is not just left to grow automatically) assures that the mind will not be held back by weakness or infirmity. Intellectual and technical education both appear to be oriented to the sciences (natural and social) which work on the world. I miss references to education in the humanities (languages, history, art, etc.). The question returns, Can the concept of dominion provide all that is needed to yield an adequate and comprehensive theory of education?

Finally, the author calls for the three realms of education to be coordinated in such a way that education of dominion is carried out on the foundation provided by education of heart and norm.²¹ Again, we have an appeal for a worthy goal, but no specific indication of how it is to be achieved.

The author moves toward conclusion by sketching the ideal human image. We learn that education of heart takes first place. Given a choice, it would be better to have a crippled, slow person with heart than a beautiful, bright person without heart. The one who is united with the Heart of God is a "man of personality."²² Here, it would be helpful to know the Korean word translated as "personality." I suspect that it does not mean how we affect others or charm or anything of the sort. I suppose that it means personhood, or just person. One who resembles God in this respect is, one might say, a mensch. Without regard for talent, accomplishment, learning, and appearance, one knows that one is in the presence of someone who can be trusted and loved and who can trust and love.

The ideal person is also a good citizen.²³ Citizenship goes from family to society to country to, with the Heavenly reference, the whole of humanity. Here, more clearly than any place so far, we have a point that could be developed in the direction of the global transformation of consciousness. Ideally, we are active participants in a wide range of associations, and there is no limit to the scope of our "we." In fact, a simple test of good citizenship might be to ask, Who is included in your "we"?

What sort of participation is envisaged for a good citizen? The text suggests that good citizens love the group and will "faithfully fulfill any responsibility assigned to them."²⁴ Does love for one's group necessarily mean that one will be obedient? It seems to me that a good citizen who loves one's country, for example, might well show that love by raising questions about established norms and assignments. Here, as earlier in the discussion of norms, the author presupposes established norms for males, females, children, etc. Perhaps a new global consciousness, centered on the Heart of God, will include some surprising innovations in responsibilities.

Genius, the final mark of ideal humanity, brings up again the theme of creativity. The idea seems to be that the Creator is so generous that each person whose talents are developed to the full can become a genius; "originally, everyone is given boundless energy."²⁵ It is unclear just what the term "genius" means here. The expression "true genius," contrasted with "average ability," suggests that a strong sense of the term is intended.²⁶ Surely, it is correct to say that fallenness hinders the development of our capacities. But isn't it grandiose to say that originally we all are potential geniuses and that whoever receives genuine education will become a genius?

The final brief sections of the chapter deal with the goal of Unification Education and the relation between unity and individuality. The goal is to move from self-centeredness where one seeks to gain at the expense of others to God-centeredness where "mankind will become one family--brothers and sisters serving the same God, and realizing an eternal worldwide peace."²⁷

What is the nature of the hoped for unity and how much room does it leave for individuality? Even though it has just been affirmed that everyone can be a genius (implying a high degree of individual creativity), several statements here suggest that unity has the last word. We are told that "the unity of our hearts, thoughts, and actions will . . . be realized" and that "the world will progress in one direction."²⁸ In the trinity of kinds of education, the fundamental ones of heart and norm are called education of unity and that of dominion, based on them, is called education of individuality. Accordingly, the author looks forward to a unity of heart, thought, and action.²⁹ It might be that one expresses individuality only by finding the appropriate area of study.

But is that the only possibility? I am struck throughout this book by how much it is articulated in opposition to other ways of thought, particularly communism. The disarray and degeneration of our time is contrasted with the order, excellence, and unity of the new vision. Certain key concepts of the new vision are not elaborated fully and critically. Thus, order is achieved by instituting certain traditional hierarchies. But does order need to be hierarchical? And unity is affirmed so massively that one is left wondering what room is left for individuality. I can imagine a kind of unity (unselfish

and noncompetitive) that would be compatible with an abundance of individuality. Let me put the issue in the form of a question which has to do with education and also with the whole movement, namely, What is the meaning of Unification?

I cannot conclude without quoting two excellent passages from EUT which have a bearing on education. First, a statement about the teacher: "Heaven does not want to see you, or any teacher, selling knowledge as an 'education merchant.' Teachers must teach their students with their whole heart and soul."³⁰ And then another that I like very much from the axiology chapter: "God's most essential attribute is Heart--that is, the emotional impulse to seek joy through love. . . . We can understand the existence of such an impulse through our daily experiences . . . every person lives and works for joy. . . . has an unrestrainable impulse to seek joy."³¹ My question, which contains my hope as well, is this: Can Unification Thought develop a theory of education consonant with these beautiful statements?

NOTES

1. n.a., Explaining Unification Thought, New York: Unification Thought Institute, 1981. Preface by Sang Hun Lee.
2. Ibid, page 215.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, page 216.
5. Ibid., page 113. Bold face mine.
6. Ibid, page 217.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid, page 218.
10. Ibid, page 219.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid, pages 220-1.
13. Ibid, page 220.
14. Ibid, page 222.
15. In addition to several issues of Blessed Family and Blessing Quarterly, I was able to read unpublished manuscripts by Laura Gilfillan, Sharon Goodman, and Kathy Winings, as well as the chapter on education in Unification Culture and The Twenty-First Century by Mose Durst, New York: HSA-UWC, 1991.
16. Explaining Unification Thought, page 225.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid, page 226.
20. Ibid.

21. Ibid, page 227.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid, page 228.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid, page 229.
28. Ibid, page 229.
29. Ibid, page 230.
30. Ibid, page 114.
31. Ibid, page 213.