

The Unity of Religion and Science in Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Founding Vision for ICUS

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Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the founder of the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS), believed that God created the cosmos based on one unitary Principle that should be equally the basis of religion and the basis of science. Since Rev. Moon's central calling was to reform Christianity and make it a force for peace, he spent most of his life teaching the Principle in religious terms. Yet science was never far from his concern.

At the very beginning of his ministry, in 1951 while sojourning as a refugee in Pusan, he wrote *Original Text of the Divine Principle (Wolli Wonbon)* where he laid out the basics of this Principle. Although it is mainly a religious text, over 100 manuscript pages of *Wolli Wonbon*'s 700 pages are devoted to science. It covers such scientific topics as Newton's theory of universal gravitation, electromagnetism, and Darwin's theory of evolution, seeking to incorporate them into a framework of the one Principle that he saw operating throughout the creation. Here we can find the germ of his vision for ICUS, which he founded some 20 years later.

Yet because Rev. Moon put the major emphasis on his religious mission, few of his scientific ideas in *Wolli Wonbon* were taught in his later sermons or discussed among members of his church. The manuscript was never published, and the ideas about science that he set forth in its pages remain largely unknown to this day.

I have the double privilege of access to the manuscripts of *Wolli Wonbon* and partnership with a capable Korean translator, Hee Hun Standard, who is exceptionally experienced in working with the Rev. Moon's words. For the past decade she has dedicated herself to *Wolli Wonbon* as her life work. As a result of this effort, today it gives me great pleasure to introduce its teachings about science in this essay.

Rev. Moon's Vision for the Unity of Religion and Science

Rev. Moon did not share the view of many Christians that religion and science are fundamentally in conflict with each other. To him, science was not inimical to faith. Nor did he take the position that science and religion addressed two fundamentally separate spheres of reality, i.e. facts vs. values, or the “how” of things vs. the “why” of things. Rather, he viewed science and religion as complementary paths of human striving for knowledge about the same reality, and that they eventually will arrive at the same endpoint.

We can recognize Rev. Moon's regard for science from his biography. In 1935, while he was a student, Rev. Moon received his calling from God. During World War 2, he studied electrical engineering in Japan at a technical school affiliated with Waseda University. Thus, he began his career as a faith leader with a background in science. Those years at Waseda were the period when he developed his theology, the Divine Principle, which he based on deep study of the Bible. Yet given his electrical engineering training, we should not be surprised to find that his original text of the Divine Principle is peppered with concepts and logic drawn from science, such as “plus and minus,” “action,” “interaction” (give-and-receive action), “circular motion,” “orbit,” and “circuit.”

In this regard, we may liken Rev. Moon to a Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), a French Jesuit priest who was trained in Paleontology and took part in the discovery of the Peking Man and numerous scientific expeditions in China. Teilhard boldly incorporated evolution into his theology. He saw the evolution of species in the plant and animal world as part of a larger movement of cosmic evolution that led to human beings, and then through human beings to universal convergence with the Divine, which he called the “omega point.”¹

His views were condemned by the Catholic Church, which is not surprising given the tradition of Christian rejection of science that goes back to back to the Church's condemnation of Galileo and in the twentieth century its rejection of Darwinian evolution. Yet posthumously he has come to be held in high regard, praised as a man of vision by both Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

Rev. Moon taught that God created the cosmos based on one unitary Principle. This Divine Principle, rightly understood, is equally the basis of religion and the basis of science. The weaknesses of current religion, as well as its distrust of science, is largely the result of its ignorance of the Principle. Faith should not be the enemy of science, yet conventional faith relies on beliefs in miracles and supernatural occurrences. For example, the creation of the universe in six literal days or Jesus' Second Coming on the clouds.

Conventional religion sometimes stands against science because it places God and God's work outside of science. Yet in Rev. Moon's view, God always acts according to His own laws. Science has been striving to understand God's laws in their material aspect; it only needs to expand its purview to recognizing their spiritual aspect.

¹ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper, 2008).

Rev. Moon believed that once religion understands the Principle, it will cease to operate out of blind faith. The Bible, which fundamentalists take as a rallying-flag for opposing such scientific facts as the age of the earth and the evolution of species, would be understood as a textbook of truth written for an older, unscientific age.² Enlightened religion will understand that the purpose of faith should be understood in the context of God's creation that operates by scientific laws. Once they grasp the laws of the Principle, religionists will recognize that the Bible's account of the creation, that God created it in six days and formed Adam out of dust, was written in symbols and metaphors. The verses of Genesis are not meant to be taken literally. The truth lies behind its symbols, but people who take them literally will not fully understand that truth.

The same is true for heaven, the goal of faith. Religious believers who aim for life in heaven, believing it to be a supernatural world where they will partake of heavenly delights, may renounce life in the world and even despise their bodies. However, Rev. Moon believed that God created the earth to be the place of His-Her ideal, where people find their true value by practicing true love. Although people have fallen far away from that ideal, it ever remains God's purpose. Religious faith became necessary after the Human Fall, but ultimately it should give way to original life in the world, in harmony with God. Thus:

The world that religion describes appears to be another dimension, a far-away world that has nothing to do with reality. However, this is a serious misunderstanding... In fact, the world that faith is seeking is the original world of reality. It is the World of the Principle that the first human beings should have begun and walked in. However, since they lost that world, it put God in a position where He had to recover it by introducing religious faith. (*Wolli Wonbon*, pp. 483-84)³

Religion has had this important purpose historically. Yet today the supernaturalism of religion is one reason why many modern people have rejected faith. They see more hope in the promise of science, which is providing a better life to people in the real world.

Since God created the world by a scientific Principle, it should be the mission of religion to uncover this Principle and share it with the world. The Principle that religion teaches should be consistent with the laws of science; this will revive religion as relevant to the modern world.

People in the contemporary world regard religion to be unscientific; however, this is a serious misunderstanding. It is because religion's central purpose is to fulfill the Principle. Since God exists, would God not require what is truly scientific to

² *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (New York: FFWPU, 1996), p. 104.

³ Sun Myung Moon, *Wolli Wonbon*, manuscript translated by Hee Hun Standard with Andrew Wilson, unpublished. Page numbers refer to the original manuscript pages. All quotations unless otherwise stated are from this source.

arise from religion? If so, the highest religion should unify the principles of science with His supreme Principle. (p. 445)

Thus, religion and science are two different paths to understanding the same reality, which must in the end be governed by one principle. Religion approaches this matter from above, seeking to know God. What remains is that it should, through such teachings as the Principle, relate its knowledge of God to the physical world. Science approaches this matter from below, seeking to understand the physical world. The cutting edge of science is looking beyond that world to discern its cause.

Consider that nineteenth-century science was solidly materialist. With Einstein's theory of Special Relativity, it began to recognize that the cause of the material world is energy.⁴ Today scientists are looking at information as a cause, which takes science one step further beyond materialism. But where does energy come from? Where did information begin? Is there a deeper Cause, the One Source of even energy and information? Thus, Rev. Moon wrote that science is on a trajectory to find God.

Contemporary science views living things as having originated from matter. Yet why does it view the origin or beginning as matter? To fulfill its mission to elucidate this question, science has been climbing up trying to find the Origin and has arrived at the stage of discovering the Theory of Relativity. (p. 463)

Meanwhile, religion needs to understand God and the principle of God's creation in a more realistic way. When it does, it can begin to descend to address material reality and even guide science. Thus, the two fields of endeavor are destined to meet in the end:

The course of science has always been to climb up in search of fundamental Principle. Religion, which has this fundamental truth, must descend to science. It is the hope of humankind that they will unite with each other, because when the two unite in the Principle, the world will be restored to the One. (p. 464)

Rev. Moon envisioned that the world would one day become an "advanced scientific civilization, in unity with God... where no one has any shred of doubt about Him." (p. 479) Knowing that the task of building such a world would require the joint efforts of scientists themselves, he envisioned a time when leading scientists would join with theologians in the endeavor to unite science with God's purpose to build the Kingdom of heaven in this earthly world. Is this not the very work of ICUS?

The world of modern science should help people to testify to God and unite with Him. This responsibility lies not only with the religious world but also with today's scientific world. Should not science make the entire world become the Kingdom of Heaven in its material aspect?

⁴Specifically, the formula $E = mc^2$.

This is God's purpose for the world of science and the way for it to bring joy to God. Hence through this writing, I am appealing not only to the leading religious people but also to the leading scientists to save the entire world together. It is because an ideal world is the hope of all people throughout the world. (p. 480)

A second source of Rev. Moon's involvement with science was his encounter with Dialectical Materialism. He saw first-hand the misery it brought to humanity. Moon encountered it amid circumstances of unbearable suffering in a labor/extermination camp at Hungnam, North Korea, where he was required along with all the prisoners to attend weekly lessons in Dialectical Materialism and criticize the "errors" of his beliefs. Armed with the Principle that he had found, Rev. Moon could see through the errors of communist theory, which captivated the minds of people and turned them into murderers. It gave him the inner strength to resist communist indoctrination while he was a prisoner in Hungnam Labor Camp.

One of Dialectical Materialism's chief claims is that it is scientific, and thus most suitable to this scientific age. Hence, conventional religious faith is not adequate to refute it. If the theory of Dialectical Materialism were to be refuted, it would need to be critiqued based on a deeper understanding of reality that embraced material truths within the larger framework of God and God's purposes. Rev. Moon believed that his theory, the Principle, was adequate to the task.

Advocates of Dialectical Materialism present their view that the origin of the universe is matter in motion. However, before they make such an assertion, should they not consider why motion, the action of forces, began? However, because they do not know the Principle, the law of heaven, they deny the One, the Original Being who is the source. (p. 464)

Rev. Moon commissioned a disciple, Dr. Sung Han Lee, to develop a theoretical critique and counterproposal to communism based on the Principle that he had elucidated in *Wolli Wonbon*. In the 1970s and 80s this teaching was disseminated through the CAUSA movement to millions of students, government officials and military officers to block the spread of communism by winning the ideological struggle for hearts and minds. This effort was largely successful. It was a milestone of Rev. Moon's ministry that is addressed in a concurrent session of this conference.

The Basic Standpoint of Rev. Moon's Teachings in Relation to Science

a. The Principle of Object Partners and the Forces of the Natural World

Here I want to briefly summarize a few of Rev. Moon's teachings in *Wolli Wonbon* that are relevant to his viewpoint on science. The first is that every entity exists in relationship with another entity and on a path to become that entity's object partner. An object partner relationship arises when separate entities (call them counterparts) relate by giving and receiving, and through that process they unite as object partners.⁵ Out of such object partner relationships arise all forces for existence, multiplication and action. As such, the Principle proposes a relational ontology, rejecting the Aristotelian concept of "substance" in favor of a dynamic view of reality as composed of countless interactions among entities at every level.

The paradigm of object partners applies to religion, in that the individual's relationship with God, which should not be limited only to receiving grace but also to giving back—to serving God by loving other people and all creatures. It applies to the family, in the giving and receiving between husband and wife, which on the physical level can produce a child and on the emotional level creates oneness. It applies in business, where successful businesses not only seek to profit from customers but also to give benefits that foster customer appreciation and loyalty.

Even God exists for eternity based on the Principle of giving and receiving between the poles of yang and yin as object partners within Godself. Thus, *Wolli Wonbon* describes the process of creation as akin to electrical induction, whereby an alternating current in a radio antenna creates a corresponding action in surrounding space. In like manner, the giving and receiving between the poles of God's duality in the realm of Spirit induces the same action in the physical world, leading to the formation of positively and negatively charged particles, of living things in pairs, and of human beings, man and woman. The giving and receiving between the poles within Godself induces love between man and woman, who unite in love to participate with God in the act of creation—the conception and birth of a child. Creation thus conceived is a process of unfolding dualities at ever higher and more complex levels, following a consistent formula from one stage to the next.

Applied to science, the Principle requires that existence and force arise by the giving and receiving of elements. In chemistry, bonds between atoms are formed by giving and receiving of electrons. Living things exist by myriad actions of giving and receiving in breathing, the circulation of blood, digestion, etc. All this is self-evident and well supported in science.

⁵ This concept of object partner is different than that in *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, in which object partner describes a position correlative to subject partner. *Wolli Wonbon* lacks the term "subject partner." It defines an object partner as a being in a relationship of unity, in contrast to a "counterpart" which is a more distant relationship.

Applied to physics, *Wolli Wonbon* criticizes Newton's theory of gravitation as lacking the concept of giving and receiving. Gravity is purely a force of receiving (attraction); something needs to counterbalance gravity with a force of giving (repulsion). He would rather look at the Solar System holistically, as a balanced system where the gravitational force of attraction is precisely balanced by the centrifugal force of the planets' revolution in their orbits.

The fundamental forces that shape the physical world, which Rev. Moon called *universal prime forces*, or just *prime forces*, are gravity (coupled with its centrifugal counterpart) and electromagnetism.⁶ The action of these forces arises by forming a circuit of giving and receiving, as described above. Modern physics recognizes that electromagnetism is mediated by the giving and receiving of virtual photons; this is in accord with the Principle that Rev. Moon describes. Some theories of gravitation posit the giving and receiving of gravitons. Physics adds two more fundamental forces: the weak force and the strong force operating within the atomic nucleus, which likewise operate by the interaction of particles (W and Z bosons for the weak force, gluons for the strong force).

However, *Wolli Wonbon* has a more expansive concept of prime forces than only those studied by physicists. For example, it identifies an animal's life-force, by which it lives and reproduces, as a prime force.⁷ It also calls the force of the conscience that connects human beings with God a prime force.⁸ Each of these prime forces operates by the same principle as the prime forces of the physical world—by the action of giving and receiving between object partners.

Thus, wherever Rev. Moon saw the workings of the Principle in nature, he saw it as affirming the basic data of science, even while sometimes calling out science for having only a partial understanding of the fundamentals of its action. He also recognized the Principle to be operating at more levels than just those that science describes. Here we can understand the reason Rev. Moon proposed that ICUS take a thoroughly interdisciplinary approach to knowledge.

b. The Growing Period of Creation on the Path to Truth, and the Theory of Evolution

A second concept of the Principle that is relevant to this discussion is the concept of the growing period. A plant begins as a seed, grows, and becomes a mature plant capable of propagating itself. Human beings begin as babies and grow through a course of twenty-one years to maturity. A growing period has a beginning and an end that speaks to purpose; hence it can be called a "path to truth." All beings go through a growing period, through stages from

⁶ This is not the same concept as that in *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, which describes universal prime force as a single vertical causal force from God.

⁷ *Wolli Wonbon*, p. 532.

⁸ *Wolli Wonbon*, p. 538.

formation to growth to reach perfection where they completely embody their truth. It is different from evolution, which is open-ended.

The history of the Earth can likewise be seen as traversing a growing period towards the realization of its highest potential, as the planet becomes a home for life, sentient beings and ultimately human beings—the beings who can relate directly to the Creator.

The path of truth is a process, from the formation stage to the growth stage and from the growth stage to the completion stage, and then to become a perfect object partner. Accordingly, lower beings have as their purpose of existence to become constituent elements of higher beings, so that higher beings may realize the purpose to become perfect object partners. By thus uniting as an aggregate, they proceed on the path to become object partners of perfect original human beings.

All beings in the cosmos are in positions that link with one another, advancing in stages from formation to growth to completion. In this way they take positions as if elements that cooperate for the perfection of the original human beings,⁹ in order to join in body with the Supreme One. (p. 587)

In all of creation, the principle of growth applies. The Principle differs from Darwinian evolution in positing a purpose to all life. Life is teleological, endowed with purpose that reaches its fulfillment in human beings who can embody God in all His-Her fullness. When human beings appear who realize God's love, they in turn endow God's love to the animals and plants around them. Thus, life is an unfolding process for the purpose of God realizing Him-Herself in the physical world. The phenomenon of life is itself actually the growth-stage unfolding of an even greater process that began with the Big Bang and the origin of the stars and planets, including planets like Earth that can support life. Its endpoint arrives with the perfection of human beings. Human beings are the climax of the entire process, who unite the entire physical universe in oneness with God.

In other words, God created the universe with the purpose to manifest the fullness of love with beings who could become His object partners. For this, such beings need to be sensible to the emotions of God's Heart, have the intellectual capacity to understand God's thought, and be able to act according to God's Will. It goes without saying that these beings of God's purpose are human beings.

What, then, is the purpose of the original human beings? It is to enable the cosmos to secure the position of counterpart in front of the Creator, the Center, and then to perfect its position as His object partner so that it can fulfill the purpose of giving and receiving with Him. (p. 590)

⁹ The term "original human beings" in *Wolli Wonbon* refers to the first human beings Adam and Eve had they not fallen. Fallen human beings, who lack an adequate connection to God, cannot fulfill this purpose. Nevertheless, the purpose of God's providence is to restore human beings back to that original state.

Seen in this light, the process of evolution has an endpoint: first, human beings who can relate directly with the Creator, and second, the animals and plants that human beings can interact with—by consuming them as food, appreciating their beauty, and utilizing them to create a comfortable living environment, whereby they too can make circuits of giving and receiving with the Creator.

Not only that, this oneness should extend to human societies and even the entire world, so that the entire world can move as one. This view of creation has much in common with Teilhard de Chardin's concept of the Omega Point.

Therefore, we should quickly establish a world with a structural form which represents that of the Original Human Beings.¹⁰ By so doing, once the world takes the form to relating to the Original Human Beings, the world will fulfill the purpose of the object partner.... Then, heaven and earth will unite and fulfill the purpose of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Then God, human beings, and the world of all things will realize the ideal of one body. (p. 602)

Darwin began with a definition of species based on Linnaeus' taxonomy and saw the problem of evolution in terms of the development of new species from precursors. Rev. Moon, on the other hand saw evolution within the overarching process of creation, which is set to purpose. Therefore, instead of viewing evolution from the perspective of individual species, Rev. Moon viewed extinct creatures as earlier stages of growth on a path that leads to contemporary animals and plants that have the opportunity to relate to human beings as object partners, and thus fulfill their purpose within God's greater purpose for the cosmos. Thus, extinct mammals like *Eohippus* and *Merychippus* are the formation and growth stages of modern horses. Dinosaurs are the growth stage of modern birds.

Created beings, passing through countless cycles, advanced through their formation period, their growth period and their completion period, with the purpose to reach perfection by becoming one body with the first human beings.

However, Darwin in his theory of evolution, looking at all things from the perspective of their classification by species, presents the logic that all species began and evolved from a single precursor entity. Being ignorant of the fact that all beings have taken a course of progressing through stages towards the purpose of fulfilling the original point,¹¹ he erected his Theory of Evolution. (pp. 597-98)

In viewing evolution from the standpoint of the Principle, Rev. Moon affirmed the fossil record and the descent of species. However, he viewed the mechanisms of evolution as described by Darwin, such as survival of the fittest and natural selection, as secondary phenomena that accompany and support the process towards realizing the overarching teleological purpose.

¹⁰ Here the Original Human beings refer to the perfected Adam and Eve of this age, the True Parents.

¹¹ "The original point" denotes prelapsarian Adam and Eve as the beginning of God's ideal.

All living things did not evolve as Darwin asserted, but progressed by stages for the realization of God's purpose of creation. They demonstrate an orderly path, and hence are in accord with the logic of evolution in some respects. (*p.* 598)

The theory of biological evolution has been so caught up in process that it is not given sufficient thought to the idea that creation has a purpose. This contrasts with the situation in astrophysics, where concepts like the Anthropic Principle are leading some thinkers to consider the role of purpose in creation.

Rev. Moon understood this purpose to pre-exist the creation itself. With reference to John chapter 1, that in the beginning was the Word, he saw the process of evolution as the unfolding of the Logos, pre-existing in the mind of God. The idea of a pre-existent Logos is not foreign to scientific thought, notably in speculations about mathematics as the scaffolding upon which the universe was built. The Principle goes much further, given that human beings are the summit of beings in the universe, endowed with self-consciousness and the ability to discern God's existence. Hence, the Logos within God's mind must have contained the plan for the human beings who would one day exist as substantial entities to fulfill God's purpose of creation. Having envisioned the endpoint, God then abstracted partial elements of the Logos to design lower beings. This is the reason animals and plants have structures that resemble the human body and mind, and why human beings can relate to all the creatures that they encounter.

With the human being as the model, God unfolded partial elements into the forms of all existing beings. ... Accordingly, human beings are structured with forms that resemble the elements of existing beings. Hence, the target beings of God the Origin were human beings, and other beings were elements on the way to completing the form of human beings. In this way, God unfolded the various forms of beings centering on human beings, with human beings as their standard. Thus, He formed the material world for human beings' happiness and comfort. This is the plant kingdom and animal kingdom. (*pp.* 598-99)

This is the opposite perspective from materialist evolutionism, with its causality from below, which holds that the resemblance of human beings to animals and plants is the result of human beings receiving the evolutionary contributions of precursor beings. Materialist evolutionism explains the higher functions and capacities of humans as the result of emergent properties of matter, but exactly how emergent properties appear remains a mystery. In my opinion, it is more parsimonious to hold the Principle's idealistic view of creation, which sees causality as beginning with God's Mind.

In this discussion, I hope you can see that Rev. Moon did not set up a sharp dichotomy between creation and evolution. He did not deny that evolution has taken place. Rather like Teilhard de Chardin, he saw the process of evolution within the larger framework of God's creation.

Whether discussing gravity or evolution, Rev. Moon avoided the conventional Christian stance that sees religion and science in irreconcilable conflict. Rather, he held that God is the greatest Scientist, and hence the theories of science should illuminate the work of God. If science can recognize the work of God behind the laws and phenomena of nature, and if religion can rise above its partial dogmas to see the universal truth that underlies all reality, then he believed that science and religion could arrive at agreement on most major issues.

The Principle states that a new existence does not simply emerge from God's Word, as some scriptures maintain. There must be giving and receiving between entities that draw them together as object partners, as well as a long process of growth from formation to completion. Accordingly, Rev. Moon understood that no matter how much truth his word contains, it could remain but a dormant seed unless talented scientists and religious thinkers add elements from their own fields of expertise to nurture its growth. Addressing the participants of the 16th ICUS in 1987, he said,

The complicated problems of the world cannot be fully understood simply within the narrow perspectives of individual fields of knowledge. Their solution is beyond the capability of any single specialized society of scholars. This is because the problems of the world are essentially the problems of the human being. A human being has both a physical body with material desires and material senses and a spiritual self with spiritual desires and spiritual senses. The world is nothing but an extension of the human being with these two-fold aspects; in other words, the interrelationship of human beings with their two-fold aspects determines the order within societies and among nations. This is the reason why multi-disciplinary research for solving the world's problems has to significantly consider such factors as religion, culture, art, and so on.¹²

Thus, we can recognize that Rev. Moon's abiding purpose for ICUS, which remains its purpose today, is to be a special venue for discussions among scientists and theologians to develop bridges between the sciences and the fields of religion and human values. As participants freely share their diverse viewpoints and expertise in dialogue at the highest level, they are contributing toward achieving a world where material truth and spiritual truth are one, and where the achievements of science, united with the truths of religion, are the foundations of a peaceful and flourishing world.

¹² Sun Myung Moon, "Founder's Address," ICUS XVI, Atlanta, GA, Nov. 27, 1987. tparents.org/Moon-Talks/SunMyungMoon87/SunMyungMoon-871127.htm. Accessed January 14, 2020.