Absolute Values in Unification Thinking

Dr. Thomas Selover
CheongShim Graduate School of Theology

Introduction

Perhaps the most well-known and ambitious academic project initiated by Rev. Sun Myung Moon has been the International Conferences on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS).¹ In describing “the background and starting point for the formation, organization and expansion” of the ICUS conferences, Rev. Moon explained that he founded them “in order to seek absolute values together with world experts.”² This signature academic and intellectual initiative founded and led by Rev. Moon provides evidence that absolute values (절대가치 絕對價值) is a significant theme in Unification thinking, whether the topic is theological, philosophical, historical, or scientific. This paper will suggest that prioritizing absolute values is characteristic of Unification thinking.

As will be explored in this paper, Unification thinking on absolute values can be described in two aspects, creative (creation-based) and restorative (restoration-based), reflecting the two-fold nature of God’s relationship with human beings as taught in Divine Principle.³ The search for and focus on absolute values appears differently in these two modes, corresponding to thinking in natural science and social science. As will be seen, Rev. Moon’s appeal to the scientists at the ICUS conferences was to recognize the real possibility of the existence of absolute values, discoverable through scientific and philosophical investigation.

This approach I am calling “creative” or “creation-based” because it focuses on the original ontology of values in creation. The restorative approach to absolute values, on the other hand, tries to remedy the vagaries of valuing in the world of our existential experience, including the problem of mis-valuing (theologically, the problem of idolatry). Taken together, the creative and restorative approaches to absolute values culminate in recognition of the absolute value of being human. First, however, it is essential to Unification thinking to recognize the ground of absolute values in God.

1. The Possibility and Ground of Absolute Values

In order to understand the significance of absolute values in Unification thinking, their connection with the divine source of all existence must first be made explicit. This point is forcefully expressed in Unification Thought:

¹ The International Conferences on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS) took place nearly every year from 1972 until 1992, when they were folded into the World Culture and Sports Festival. The ICUS conferences brought together eminent scientists and other scholars, including numerous Nobel Prize winners, to discuss and explore the basis for the unity of science.
Absolute values are the values of truth, goodness, and beauty based on God’s absolute love, that is, absolute truth, absolute goodness, and absolute beauty. Thus, this new view of value is established on the basis of absolute love.⁴

This passage makes it clear that absolute values come from absolute love, namely the absolute love of God. This is certainly a proper definition for Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s teaching about absolute values; indeed, the sense of grounding in God as the source of value as well as the source of being is basic to his thought. Following the track of seeking absolute values will lead to God, the living God. It will also lead to fellowship with the participants in the traditions which have championed absolute values—the Socratic, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.⁵

However, once this grounding in God is recognized—absolutely (meaning uncompromisingly)—then the ground does not always have to be referenced. Mentioning God at every turn does not necessarily guarantee that the thinking will be God-centered. With confidence that there is a unified ontological and axiological ground underlying our thinking about values, it may not be necessary to continually reference that theological underpinning. Then even in a non-theistic context, it may still be possible to affirm absolute values, as based on the cosmic order of nature itself. This is the arena in which Rev. Moon is inviting all scientists and conscientious thinkers to affirm the search for absolute values.

Thankfully, recognition of absolute values does not require uniformity. Unification thinking on absolute values provides for individual differences and individual initiative in valuing, as explained in New Essentials of Unification Thought.

Thus, even if absolute values are determined by an absolute standard, naturally there will still exist individual differences due to subjective action. In other words, absolute value is a universal value which includes individual differences, in the same way as when one finds that in an individual truth being the universal image includes the individual image. Human beings, through their individual image, pursue the purpose for the whole; they thus express their individual image while maintaining the universal image.⁶

The latitude for individual differences is essential for any workable concept of absolute values. It is important to emphasize that the search for absolute values does not require or imply “absolutism,” a dogmatic insistence on one’s own formulas. Rev. Moon made this point quite clearly to the scientists at ICUS:

I know that “absolute values” is not a popular theme among scholars today. But I hope, first of all, that scholars do not make the mistake of confusing absolute values and absolutism. I have emphasized several times at ICUS that absolute values are based on God’s love. God’s love is not sectarian.⁷

A fundamentalist insistence on certain formulas or phrases is not what is meant by the “absoluteness” of absolute values. Rather, “absolute” means something like “incomparable,”

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⁴ Unification Thought Institute, New Essentials of Unification Thought: Head-Wing Thought, p. 225.
⁵ See the article by Charles Malik, “The Search for Absolute Values” in Diversity, Absolute Value, Commonality and Dialogue, pp. 118-143.
⁶ New Essentials, p. 216.
⁷ Reverend Sun Myung Moon, “Founder’s Address” at the 16th ICUS, “Absolute Values and a Reassessment of Contemporary Society.” See Pyeong Hwa Gyeong, p. 778.
or valuable beyond measure. Through bearing this meaning in mind, we can avoid the suspicion of absolutism when talking about absolute values, and of dogmatism when thinking in terms of absolute values.

2. Absolute Values in Creation: The Sciences

In the context of his series of addresses to the ICUS conferences, Rev. Moon developed the concept of absolute values, in order to lead the thinking of the scientists toward reflection on the divine. These conferences represented a tremendous investment on the part of Rev. Moon’s movement, yet Rev. Moon promised the attending scientists that they would have complete academic freedom to pursue the topics of their interest:

Respected delegates, I sincerely hope that this conference will serve as a forum for conducting serious discussions directed toward solving the essential problems faced by today's society, and that it will contribute greatly to the building of the ideal world which people everywhere are seeking. I hope all of you will feel free here to express your beliefs, and I believe that such an atmosphere will yield a fruitful meeting.  

The participants responded warmly to this invitation. As Princeton philosopher Walter Kaufmann put it at the 8th ICUS in Los Angeles, 1979: “I am here...because there are so many excellent participants, because the level of discussion is exceptionally high, and because these conferences are superbly international and interdisciplinary.” The international and interdisciplinary nature of the conferences was deliberate, in order to transcend the boundaries of nationality or scientific discipline in a way that would facilitate the common search for absolute values.

The ICUS conferences included presentations on topics spread over the full range of contemporary scientific research, yet at the core of each conference was Rev. Moon’s keynote address, always on the concept of absolute values. As Rev. Moon told the scientists,

I recognize that each academic discipline has its own specific characteristics, and I understand the need for specialization in research. However, research conducted in the various individual fields ultimately needs to be brought together through mutually cooperative and complementary relationships in order to serve more fully the common good. This is also the reason I have continued to place the term "absolute values" in the theme of each ICUS conference....

The legacy of ICUS is found not only in the formal speeches that Rev. Moon gave but also in the form of ICUS itself, international, interdisciplinary gatherings, seeking to engage scientists in discussions that transcend the specific fields into which contemporary science has come to be divided, to gather them into a “unified” inquiry.

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10 “Absolute Values and a Reassessment of the Contemporary World,” Pyeong Hwa Gyeong, p. 784.
Dr. Alvin Weinberg, distinguished fellow at the Institute for Energy Analysis in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the ICUS conference chairman for 1988, reported his observations at the close of the conference, declaring:

I confess to being daunted when I first saw the more than 90 papers, which initially seemed to have few common themes, especially our continuing two themes of unity and value and our title theme of the reassessment of the contemporary world. But as I studied this rich intellectual feast, I was delighted to discern common threads that were entirely relevant to our themes. And there were threads that paper writers themselves could not discern, since these threads often emerged only from comparison of papers from different, non-interacting committees. I must therefore congratulate our participants for having responded, bravely and eloquently, to Rev. Moon’s charge.11

Weinberg is here reporting that the ICUS scientists and scholars actually did attempt to address the specific themes and challenges that Rev. Moon provided. As Benjamin Zeller notes in his account of the ICUS conferences, “The attending scientists did respond to [Rev.] Moon and the Unificationist movement’s cue, discussing the nature of science, its place in the modern world, its relation to religion, how science might be unified, and how it should relate to values.”12 A selection of ICUS papers on absolute values by various authors has been published in Diversity, Absolute Value, Commonality and Dialogue.13

Moreover, many scholars have republished their ICUS papers in volumes of their own articles, with appropriate permissions and credits; in this way also, the reputation of the ICUS endeavor has been extended. A number of Rev. Moon’s ICUS speeches have been included in the recently published collection known as Pyeong Hwa Gyeong (Peace Scripture), so they are publically and widely available to draw the attention of Unificationist and other readers.14

Rev. Moon expected that the scientists who participated in the ICUS conferences would become a representative vanguard to spread the message of absolute values:

Those who first become aware of these points must pay serious attention and provide consistent and responsible guidance in their various fields of study. I feel that scholars should not be indifferent, but respond keenly to today's situation of confused values and misleading views of the nature, original dignity and ends of man. This is not limited to any particular field of study, but applies equally to all fields, and can best be achieved through collective coordinated efforts motivated by a sense of mission.15

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13 Published by Sun Moon University Publishing Center in 2005.
15 “Founder’s Address” at the 7th ICUS.
In this way, he admonished the scientists to take up the cause. In Zeller’s words, “For Unificationists, guiding science and shepherding it toward its eventual millennial union with religion represented a core part of the movement’s self-understanding.”16

The separation and conflict between religion and science has been a fixture of the modern worldview. Although the introductory section of the Divine Principle sets out a different vision for the relationship and the coming together of religion and science, how can such a rapprochement be accomplished practically? The answer is not simply to claim that the teachings of the Divine Principle themselves solve the problem between religion and science. This claim alone is too narrow as a bridge to bring science and religion together. If misunderstood, it would become simply an ideological claim, with little else to recommend it. Indeed, it would be all too easy and too likely for Rev. Moon’s teaching about the unity of science and religion to be reduced simply to a claim that the existing Unification sources solve the problem. That would be a serious under-valuation of Rev. Moon’s thinking and legacy.

The phenomenon of the ICUS conferences represents Rev. Moon’s prodigious attempt to inject an acknowledgment of God as “the number one scientist” into the main bloodstream of Western scientific thought. Rev. Moon not only expressed firm and strong belief in the importance of absolute values, but he also apparently believed that the most eminent scientists in the world would understand and appreciate the significance of what he was saying, namely that God is the source of absolute values.

What Rev. Moon was trying to promote through the ICUS conferences was another way of getting to God, through scientific investigation of creation. In other words, when Rev. Moon would talk about God, he was not just talking about religion. He was trying in various ways to get intellectual leaders both in the sciences and also among the religions to talk about God together, by thinking and talking about absolute values. Rev. Moon was hoping that getting scientists to talk about absolute values would lead them to think about the Source of creation.

3. Absolute Values in Restoration: Society and Philosophy

Just as absolute values underlie scientific exploration, both in terms of the intellectual values of clarity, truth and honesty and in terms of the practical values of utility and benefit, so absolute values are also essential in shaping social and economic activities. These values can be classified or approached as restorative, because our understanding of them is informed by the necessities and processes of the history of restoration.17

In the sphere of society, human rights are an example of such absolute values. Under the circumstances of political tyrannies of the fallen world, advocacy of basic human rights represents a judgment upon the evils of oppressive sovereignties. If human rights are conceived as instrumental toward some other goal, such as being beneficial to productivity, that would undermine the concept of human rights. Human rights must be non-negotiable values; in that sense, they are absolute values and must have a transcendental source. The US Declaration of Independence, for example, states that human rights are “endowed by [the] Creator.”

16 Zeller, p. 163.
17 See Exposition of Divine Principle, Part II.
Such values as justice, fairness, inclusivity, equality, freedom—all of these are undergirded by the historical process of restoring original human value. In his 10th ICUS speech, Rev. Moon focuses on the significance of absolute values for overcoming divisions in social and economic life:

To bring unity between the people of the upper and lower classes, we must encourage those of the upper class to unite with those of the lower class and elevate the latter to the level of the former. In order to accomplish that, a central point of absolute value is needed.\(^{18}\)

He goes on to explain that the central point of absolute value is God’s love. God’s love is not bound by class or other divisions, and thus is the key to overcoming those divisions:

God’s love can dwell with both those of the upper class and the lower class. God’s love is never one-directional. It is a force which moves in a spherical manner, capable of revolving freely from the highest point to the lowest. …God’s love always possesses absolute value whenever and wherever it may be.\(^{19}\)

Because God’s love is the absolute value, it relativizes the proximate goods that separate the classes and is accessible from any position. At the same time, allegiance to God’s love as absolute value can provide the missing ingredient to empower the quest for economic justice, the re-humanization of the economic world.

Rev. Moon points out the key role of religions in the process of restoration, in terms of their advocacy of absolute values. The recognition of absolute values through religion and its influence on social development has been famously described by the sociologist Max Weber in his monumental series of studies on the “economic ethics” of world religions.\(^{20}\) Weber developed the concept of value-rationality or “axiological rationality” (\emph{Wertrationalität}), the process of reasoning in terms of absolute values or ends.\(^{21}\) Weber saw the call to value-rationality as the motivating core of prophetic religious movements all over the world, and pointed out that this call has real world consequences in terms of social development. Indeed, the rationality that flows from absolute values can be seen as key to many aspects of Rev. Moon’s endeavors.\(^{22}\) Yet Rev. Moon goes beyond Weber’s descriptive survey to advocate and proclaim the convergence of all the absolutely-held values among the religions.

One of the challenges to absolute-value-oriented thinking in today’s society is the increasing influence of the philosophical trend known as postmodernism, which denies the existence of absolute values and interrogates those who advocate them. In \emph{Beyond the Postmodern Mind}, Huston Smith, a widely-known and respected scholar of world religions who participated prominently in many conferences sponsored by the Unification movement,

\(^{18}\) Reverend Sun Myung Moon, “Founder’s Address” for the 10th ICUS, “The Search for Absolute Values and the Creation of the New World,” Seoul, Korea, November 9-13, 1981.
\(^{19}\) “Founder’s Address” for the 10th ICUS.
\(^{20}\) Comprising his books, \emph{The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism}, \emph{The Religion of India}, \emph{The Religion of China}, and \emph{Ancient Judaism}.
\(^{21}\) See the explanation of Weber’s concept of “axiological rationality” in Raymond Boudon’s \emph{The Origin of Values: Sociology and Philosophy of Beliefs}, p. 86f.
presents a cogent critique of the self-imposed limitations of the postmodern mindset, which he defines as “…one which, having lost the conviction that reality is personal, has come to question whether it is ordered in a way that man's reason can lay bare.”

While Rev. Moon would agree with some of the postmodernists that Western civilization is seriously ill, he does not go on to indulge in the “post-mortemism” that often characterizes the mood of postmodernism. Instead, he has worked prophetically to build a new consensus on absolute values, particularly among scientists. He believed that scientists could be persuaded to consider and pursue their scientific research in the light of absolute values. Postmodernists may freely opt out of the conversation concerning absolute values, since freedom itself is one of those values, but they have no intellectual or political right to foreclose that conversation.

It is not that Rev. Moon, or Huston Smith, wants to ignore or stifle intellectual debate by championing absolute values. Rev. Moon emphasizes, “Absolute values do not contradict rational thinking. Rather, they enable the discovery of its ultimate purpose.” As he teaches, human reason has a purpose, and only in the light of absolute values can this purpose be discovered, and fulfilled. Even if reason is granted a certain kind of autonomy and sovereignty, it still has a purpose which orders and lures it. There’s a reason why human reason has developed; it is for the sake of understanding the reality of God’s true love. Only in that way can thinking actually lead in the direction that we truly desire.

As Rev. Moon summarizes, “Rational exploration will contribute to the true happiness of humanity only when guided by absolute values based on true love.” Although it might seem that Rev. Moon’s teaching emphasis on absolute values is a call to return to an old-fashioned, pre-modern and perhaps inaccessible certainty, it actually points in a different, future-oriented direction. In this way, through Unification thinking, the rational faculty can be re-connected with love as its comprehensive goal, source and purpose.

But there are barriers that inhibit our search for and connection with absolute values. The restorative aspect of absolute values requires further analysis. As Rev. Moon explained to the ICUS participants, including social scientists and social philosophers as well as natural scientists, there are specific reasons why our lived experience is one of value confusion:

Fundamentally, the confusion in the value systems of today’s societies derives from a break in the original vertical order between God and humanity. The various institutions and values we have today lack clear direction and are inherently unstable and mutually contradictory. This is because they are devised by humans and established only horizontally, that is, without a vertical axis connecting them to God.

In more direct words, Rev. Moon attributes the reason for the loss of absolute values to the fallen state of humanity: “Due to the Fall, we lost God; we lost absolute truth and

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24 “Founder’s Address” at the 16th ICUS, “Absolute Values and the Reassessment of Contemporary Society,” Atlanta, Georgia, November 27, 1987; *Pyeong Hwa Gyeong*, p. 778.
25 “Founder’s Address” at the 16th ICUS; *Pyeong Hwa Gyeong*, p. 778.
26 Rev. Sun Myung Moon, “Absolute Values and a Reassessment of the Contemporary World,” given as the “Founder’s Address” at the 18th ICUS, in Seoul, Korea, August 24, 1991. See *Pyeong Hwa Gyeong*, p. 782.
absolute values. We lost both the internally coherent truth and the internally coherent values.”

A consequence of this fallen state is that human valuing is disordered; it is a contested field, fragmented by its refraction through the lens of self-centered consciousness. Rev. Moon explains:

What, then, is the basis for differences in value perspectives? It stems, first of all, from egoism. Almost without exception, each individual is a prisoner of egoism, and each nation and each race is selfishly pursuing its own interests.

As a result, there are not only differences in value perspectives, but often open conflict caused by egoism. The root reason is not the content of the values themselves, but the fact that they lack connection with the absolute Source. Relativistic values are skewed by self-centered self-consciousness, which is always partial and partisan. Sometimes this egoism leads to mis-valuing, excessive valuing of things or other people in a self-centered way. This is the problem that theology calls “idolatry,” in which people undermine their own value by improperly and selfishly valuing others and things.

If so, then to what extent are human beings as we know them (including ourselves) able to appropriately value absolute values? If we do not value them absolutely, we are not valuing appropriately, so what would it mean to value absolute values, absolutely? At least, it must mean recognizing a higher value than our self, such that we would be willing to sacrifice our self for the sake of that higher value. According to Rev. Moon, “Until you realize there is absolute value to becoming one with God, there is no way to resolve the problem of self-centeredness.” The key to overcoming egoism is recognizing God and absolute values. But is it possible for our existential selves, conditioned as we are by the fallen nature and fallen environment, to recognize and uphold absolute values? By and of ourselves, the answer might well be “no.” However, Rev. Moon’s teaching reveals that God has been working actively to restore human beings. In the words of New Essentials of Unification Thought:

God commenced the providence of restoration immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve. Ever since that time, God has been advancing His providence in hope of seeing the world of joy realized in the future when His will is finally accomplished.

As explained in Divine Principle, the key to the providence of restoration is sacrificial love. Absolute values are real, but it is only through sacrificial love that we are able to recognize and experience them. Ironically, but truly, it is only when a person willingly sacrifices him or herself for the sake of absolute values that he or she can feel and experience the real value of being human.

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30 New Essentials, p. 251.
4. The Absolute Value of Being Human

The creative and restorative aspects come together in the quest to realize absolute values. The dialectic of desire and values is elaborated by Dr. Sang Hun Lee and his collaborators in the Axiology chapters of the Unification Thought books. The desire to seek value, which can readily be recognized as a core topic of axiology, is paired with the desire to realize value, which orients the person toward the other to whom he or she is valuable, and ultimately toward that One who is our Source, Creator and Heavenly Parent. Thus, the search for absolute values has a reciprocal effect of strengthening the desire to realize values.

The point of discussion about absolute values is to reorient our thinking and action toward those absolute values. Once we recognize absolute value, there is tremendous affirmation between ourselves and the world. We realize that the world around us is valuable, a world of beauty, truth and goodness. So we are stimulated emotionally, intellectually and actively by those values at the point at which we recognize them.

Stimulation to value—to love—in turn enables human beings to come to realize their own value. This reciprocal synergy of valuing and being en-valued is described by Rev. Moon in these words:

First, nature is the synthesis of all things, all individual embodiments of truth, which are to exist in harmony and unity. The absolute role of nature is to enable people to realize their absolute value as subject partners, exercising a dominion of love over all creation in the position of absolute object partner.

Because all things in nature have an objective position to human beings, it is natural to realize of the value of the position of the subject. Those who become scientists invest their research study in one particular aspect of the creation, fascinated by that area. Through intellectually loving that area of creation by searching for truth, they are actually searching for absolute values, and gaining the absolute value of being the subject. In that sense, the scientists who gathered at ICUS were a very valuable group of people.

So, when scientists explore the multiplicity of beings and their precise scientific and mathematical relationships, they are in a process of realizing the absolute value of the Absolutely Valuable, namely the source of all values, God. At the same time, scientists are also expanding our understanding of the value of human beings, who can comprehend the multiplicity of beings, both in mind and in heart. With this kind of orientation, scientific investigation will explore and enhance both the wonder of God and of human beings. Not only professional scientists, but all of us, are invited and welcomed to pursue this path of understanding and realizing the absolute value of being human.

The realm of human interaction also presents itself as a field for the realization of absolute values. Close relationships with fellow human beings, particularly in a family context, provide the occasion for dynamic synergy in the realization of absolute values. Since the other person is not only an object, but also a subject, we experience inter-

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32 Thus, the value intrinsic to “all things” is realized. Further discussion would develop along the lines of “potential value” and “actual value” (or “realized value”); see New Essentials, p. 208.
subjectively and inter-objectively. We come to understand ourselves not only as subject but also as object, not only as one who loves, but as one who is loved. In Rev. Moon’s words,

In this we discover the standard of absolute value that makes a human being human. As with the interdependent and harmonious relationship between flowers and butterflies, people are created to live for one another and share true love. This means that we establish our standard of absolute value only within a life of true love, through which the relationship between subject and object partners blossoms in harmony.\(^{34}\)

The potential of realizing absolute values through relationship expands through the wider levels of family, society, nation and world, leading to the creation of peace: True peace can be established only on the basis of true love, and true love relationships can be experienced only when people understand the God-centered absolute values that bind human beings together.\(^{35}\)

Provided that the vertical axis is well-established, absolute values can expand horizontally to the widest levels of humanity.

Through participation in these relational realms of absolute value, an individual person can come to realize his or her personal absolute value:

Each person, as an individual embodiment of truth, is to substantiate his or her absolute value and pursue a life of harmony and love through the interaction between subject partner and object partner.\(^{36}\)

As noted above, it is quite difficult, especially under the conditions of fallen nature and fallen environment, to understand our own value well. Though we seem to think we have great value to ourselves, considering how much time and energy we devote to thinking about ourselves, in reality the imaginary self-worth based on egoism pales to insignificance in the face of the absolute value given and invested in us by God. We most fully experience our absolute value through object-consciousness in front of God.\(^{37}\)

The God-inspired desire is to realize values, to become a being-in-relation who manifests absolute values, and who is thereby able to be valued as truthful, beautiful, and good. The realization of absolute value for human beings is to become the object partner of the absolute being, God. As Rev. Moon explains,

The forms of existence thus created with relational value \([상대적 가치], 相對的 價值\) which cannot be exchanged even for God Himself are human beings. It becomes very clear that the form of existence with absolute value is none other than humankind. God created us as valuable beings with such an idea in mind.\(^{38}\)

\(^{34}\) Cheon Seong Gyeong (2013), p. 1395.
\(^{37}\) See New Essentials, p. 173.
When he says that “the form of existence with absolute value is none other than humankind,” this applies not only to humankind in general, but to each person, as a representative of humankind.

Rev. Moon himself would seem to be the most exemplary figure of this teaching. As an individual person, he took it as his responsibility to enter into every area of life and connect it with absolute values—namely with the trajectory for the fulfillment of God’s ideal of creation, through complete restoration. For him, absolute values are not abstract concepts; rather, they are calls to personal engagement for the sake of realizing heavenly purposes in contemporary history. At every turn, his overwhelming motivation has been to realize value, to be the one who could return to our Heavenly Parent all the value that God had been seeking for in human history. In the process, Rev. Moon established the full embodiment of creative and restorative absolute values through partnership with his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, together as True Parents for heaven, earth, and humankind.

Through his teaching and example, Rev. Moon has opened a path of seeking and realizing absolute values. The search for absolute values need look no further; everyone is invited to realize the absolute value of being human.

Conclusion—Future Prospects

As shown in all the records of his teaching, Rev. Moon spoke out of a vivid and powerful sense of the reality of God and God’s love. To him, this reality was and is fully present, manifest in every situation and moment of perception. Yet, he was often speaking to skeptical people who had been educated away from a sense for God. So he promoted the concept of absolute values to entice them to think their way back toward God.

What could work for the scientists may also work for others. Even those who are very familiar with Rev. Moon’s sermons about God directly may find it refreshing to think about God in terms of absolute values, along the pathway laid out in Rev. Moon’s speeches to the ICUS participants. Doing so can enable a renewal of vividness in thinking about God.

As we have seen, Rev. Moon teaches that absolute values are rooted in the love of God. Thus, the search for absolute values turns out to be a search for God’s love. Rev. Moon describes the transcendent and embracing character of God’s love:

God’s love reaches deep into human hearts and becomes the source of true love gushing out into the everyday lives of human beings. Therefore, God’s love is the fundamental element for forming one harmonious heartistic realm embracing all people and comprehending all relative values. Thus, absolute values based on God’s love are deeper, broader, and more permanent than values based on rational presuppositions or on relative ideologies or beliefs.39

In this message, Rev. Moon is reminding all of us of the necessity for on-going recognition that our thinking about absolute values is always inadequate to the values themselves. Just as theologians must always say, along with the Muslims, “Allahu Akbar,” “God is Greater,” including that God is greater than any conception of God, so absolute values always transcend our ability to describe them.

39 “Founder’s Address” at the 16th ICUS, “Absolute Values and a Reassessment of Contemporary Society.” See Pyeong Hwa Gyeong, p. 778.
The call to realize values (to be valuable) is also absolute and infinite, ever calling a person, family, society and world beyond the present realization of values. That infinite call would be felt as an infinite burden, were it not based fundamentally on grace and love. The more highly and deeply the person (family, society, and world) realizes values, the more fully felt is the experience of infinite divine love. The act of valuing itself is reflexive. The more human beings value and seek value, the more we become valuable and manifest our true value.

Corresponding to the absolute value of God’s love is the absolute value of human recipients of God’s love. As Rev. Moon teaches, “Human beings thus are absolutely necessary for the perfection of God’s ideal of love. From this, we can understand that an absolute partner creates absolute value.”\textsuperscript{40} The human process of valuing engages intellect, emotion and will, the components of heart. When this heart-engagement in our own human valuing reflects God’s heart-motivation at the root of creation, absolute values are realized.

Absolute values are realized in two aspects. The creative aspect of absolute value is recognized through investigations of the natural world. The restorative aspect becomes the focus when viewing human beings’ existential situation in light of the undying devotion of God to human well-being. As revealed in Rev. Moon’s teaching, God has presided over a long and painstaking process to restore human beings to the point of being able to fully, whole-heartedly seek and realize absolute values. Sacrificial love is the essential attribute of God’s love as the power of restoration. Therefore, sacrificial love is also the touchstone in our absolute valuing, placing them above the value of one’s own life. Thinking in this way thus leads to a deeper realization of the absolute value of being human.

Under the theme of absolute values, Reverend Sun Myung Moon has made an impassioned and consistent case for theistic science, for a science which recognizes the divine source, the One who is the infinitely valuable and the source of all authentic valuing. By focusing on absolute values, and their divine Source, scientists can help overcome some of the negative effects of past technology more effectively:

Where can we find absolute values? They can be found only in God's love. Beauty, truth and goodness based on God's love are absolute values in themselves. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that we can liberate humanity from the harm caused by the misuse of scientific technology only when science itself recognizes God and applies technology in the same direction as God's love.\textsuperscript{41}

In this way, science will make an even greater contribution to the coming “culture of heart,” the realization of absolute values.

Not only is God’s love the source of absolute values; God is the ultimate and absolute valuer. Rather than an analogy of being, thinking about God’s love as the absolute value and ultimate source of valuing leads to God through a “great chain of value and valuing.” Though at times Unification thinking may proceed to talk about absolute values without referencing God explicitly, this is unspoken, implicit theology. The reality of God’s presence permeates the absolute values that Unification thinking upholds.

\textsuperscript{40} Cheon Seong Gyeong (2013), 1380.
\textsuperscript{41} Cheon Seong Gyeong (2013), p. 626.
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________. “Founder’s Address” at the 10th ICUS, “The Search for Absolute Values and the Creation of the New World,” Seoul, Korea, November 9-13, 1981.


