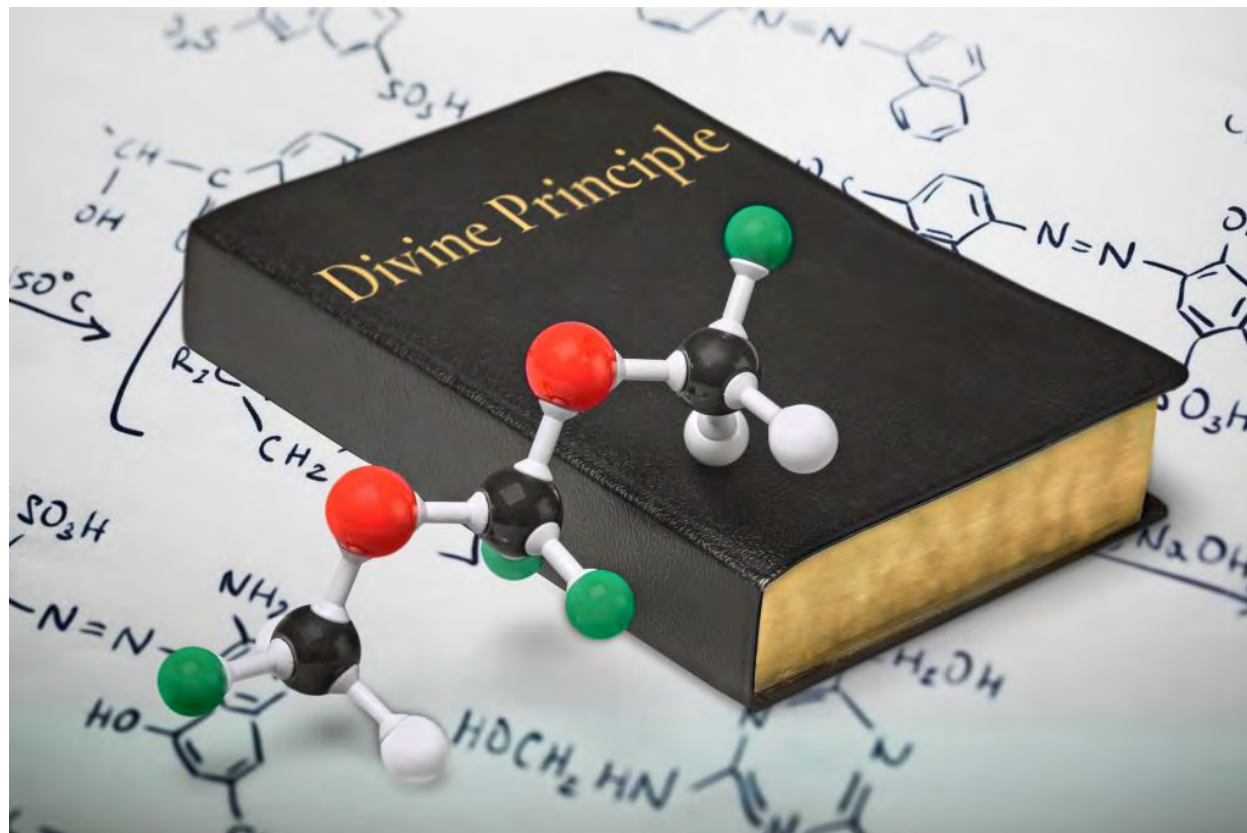


## Harnessing the Potential of Divine Principle

David Burton  
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An important thread to my spiritual life and time in the Unification Church has been the idea that science and spirituality should come together and work in concert -- that there should be one unified worldview, not a worldview splintered and fractured into different parts.

On and off for the last twenty plus years, I've been exploring how we can develop a theoretical basis for achieving this unity derived from the ontology of Divine Principle and Unification Thought. In the course of that work, I've come to believe that in the 1980s there was a real opportunity for such unity to develop, but something was missing from the mix.



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Today, I feel we are again at a point where that unity can be achieved. Alison Wakelin's recent blog article on this site, "[Science, Unification Thought and a Post-Materialist Era](#)," reports that among scholars in the field there is a growing sense of approaching a paradigm shift.

Here, I briefly address what happened within Unificationism and what I see as the potential of Divine Principle for today.

When I first heard Divine Principle in 1979, I was a graduate student in chemistry and just starting out on my spiritual journey. I was impressed by the respect shown to science and excited by Rev. Sun Myung Moon's work to bring science and spirituality together.

Perhaps the very first gift from my spiritual mother was a bound copy of the proceedings of the [Fourth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences](#) (ICUS). This respect for science was one of the important reasons for my joining the church. When the Level 4 Divine Principle text came out, it was a major step forward, but it wasn't until six years later that I got my own copy of the Brown Book.

In the Brown Book, the [general introduction](#) is a work of art and should not be overlooked. It sets the stage for the purpose of Divine Principle itself, and the parts related to science deeply resonated with me. From the most recent translation:

Eventually, the way of religion and the way of science should be integrated and their problems resolved in one united undertaking; the two aspects of truth, internal and external, should develop in full consonance. Only then, completely liberated from ignorance and living solely in goodness in accord with the desires of the original mind, will we enjoy eternal happiness. (*Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 3)

In other words, the new culture we are striving for emerges from a true unification of science and spirituality brought together in one undertaking. Divine Principle is positioning itself as the new truth that can be the basis for bringing this unity.

What missions must the new truth fulfill? The new truth should be able to unify knowledge by reconciling the internal truth pursued by religion and the external truth pursued by science. (*EDP*, p. 7)

I felt like the sailor in the text:

When the sailor who has completed his voyage in search of external truth under the sail of science, adds another sail, the sail of religion, and embarks on a new voyage in search of internal truth, he finally will be headed toward the destination for which his original mind yearns. (*EDP*, p. 4)

Given the significance of science for the emergence of an ideal world, it should be unsurprising that the first major conference series Rev. Moon established was ICUS. The purpose of these conferences was to create the philosophical basis for a new culture and participate in building the external ideal, that is, to realize the goals for science and spirituality described in the introduction to Divine Principle. What happened?

More than 40 years from my beginning, where do we stand today? The world has gone through many changes since then. At one level, there have been many victories, beginning from the successful end of the world-wide Cain-Abel struggle when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 at the end of 40 days of Divine Principle workshops in the Baltic states. My wife and I were there for that. Satan was subjugated in 1999. We held the Coronation Ceremony for the Kingship of God in 2001. We were there for that too. Rev. Moon declared restoration had come to an end in 2004. This sequence of accomplishments cumulated in the completion of the messianic mission, which we celebrated on Foundation Day in 2013 after Rev. Moon's passing.

These are incredible spiritual victories. We stand in a completely different position today because of them. However, the world is still facing significant problems on many fronts. From environmental issues and climate change, to a troubling rise of authoritarian regimes, mass migration, poverty, and of course a worldwide pandemic. Despite a profound change in our internal reality, our external reality has still to catch up. If there was any time that needed a new truth to dispel ignorance it is right now. Where do we stand on that?

One of the key hallmarks of the new truth, and the basis for new culture, is it dispels ignorance by uniting science and spirituality. So we can use the state of this unity as an indicator of where we stand. That our external reality still faces huge problems without clear solutions suggests we are still far from realizing a true unification of science and spirituality.

### **ICUS, WRIST, and Unification Thought**

The very first ICUS was held in 1972 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York with only 20 participants. It was centered on the work of [Edward Haskell](#), a synergic scientist and integral thinker. Several members directly worked with Haskell at the time, and according to Glenn Strait, believed they were working on the unified science that Rev. Moon was looking for.

From these humble beginnings the conferences grew in size. At the tenth conference in 1981 the international highway project was announced along with a shift in focus toward more practical solutions to world problems. In 1984 there was an attempt to clarify and renew the internal direction and two themes were articulated: Unity of Knowledge, and Science and Values. Then in 1985 we begin to see the introduction of Unification Thought into the conferences.

This is significant. It is the task of the new truth to bring unity between science and spirituality. If ICUS was to provide the philosophical basis for a new culture, some injection of the new truth was needed in order to bring that unity. Since ICUS was not religious, Unification Thought was more appropriate to include than Divine Principle itself. If the scientists involved had grasped something of this vision to bring science and spirituality together we might be in a different place externally today.

Parallel to this in 1984, at the time of renewing the internal direction of ICUS, Rev. Moon established the World Research Institute for Science and Technology (WRIST). This was also when I finally joined the church after a lot of soul-searching. Three years after this, I was actively recruited by WRIST, but chose instead to go to Unification Theological Seminary.

Then in 1985, Rev. Moon gave WRIST a "homework problem" to develop technology to reliably communicate with the spirit world. If successful this could indeed have changed the world. What better



way to demonstrate a unity of science and spirituality than a reliable machine to interact with spirit world. This would also have revitalized ICUS at a time Unification Thought was starting to be introduced. ICUS could have been a platform from which to transform the world.



*Rev. Sun Myung Moon gives the Founder's Address at the Fourth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences on November 27, 1975 at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York.*

Unfortunately neither ICUS nor WRIST lived up to the hope invested in them. Unification Thought did not take with the ICUS scientists, and WRIST never got past a few exploratory papers on the idea of a spirit world machine. There was no developing unity between science and spirituality.

Further, the respect for science within the church, that had been so instrumental to my joining, began to decline. It was replaced by the more general suspicion, even rejection, of science found in some Christian circles. ICUS continued until 2000 but Rev. Moon went on to other things. There was then a 17 year hiatus until Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon reconvened ICUS in 2017. After years of personal interest, I was finally able to attend an ICUS in person. However the reconvened ICUS was tasked with addressing environmental issues. It had a different focus.

So the task of the new truth remains unfulfilled. In order to move forward, I think it is helpful to look into why neither ICUS nor WRIST succeeded. I believe the two are connected by a common underlying reason.

### **A Simple Question**

Both Unification Thought and WRIST neglected to ask a fundamental question of Divine Principle, one simple to state but not straightforward to answer. The question is: how does Divine Principle reconcile science and spirituality? Another way of approaching this question is to ask: what is it that makes Divine Principle a new truth?

About five years ago, after years of reading Divine Principle, I found the beginnings of an answer hiding in plain sight in the text. I had overlooked its significance for so long because it appears obvious, and hence unimportant. Here is the passage:

For example, subatomic particles, the basic building blocks of all matter, possess either a positive charge, a negative charge or a neutral charge formed by the neutralization of positive and negative constituents. When particles join with each other through the reciprocal relationships of their dual characteristics, they form an atom. Atoms, in turn, display either a positive or a negative valence. When the dual characteristics within one atom enter into reciprocal relationships with those in another atom, they form a molecule. Molecules formed in this manner engage in further reciprocal relationships between their dual characteristics to eventually become nourishment fit for consumption by plants and animals. (*EDP*, p. 16)

This passage is deceptively simple, which is why we miss it. Today we take it for granted that matter is

composed of atoms -- everybody knows that now, but it was not always so. For most of Christian history, all the way up to and including Kant, atoms were not among the things that were thought to exist. Rather what was thought to exist were two fundamental substances, spirit and matter, where spirit is a substance that is pure quality. It has no mass or spatial extension and is entirely separate from the substance matter. In human beings our mind or consciousness is spirit and is separate from our body, which is matter. There can be no spirit body in this paradigm.

The most obvious problem for science is this understanding of spirit. By definition it is inaccessible to scientific investigation. Science can neither prove nor disprove its existence. If this definition were true, the "homework" Rev. Moon gave to WRIST would not be possible. Matter, on the other hand, is something science can deal with. It has mass and measurable properties. However even with matter there is an unappreciated conflict with science. Traditionally, matter is something inert and continuous. It is simple. Life, mind, even shape and structure, need to be added to it (by God). Matter composed of atoms is very different to this. Things composed of atoms are complex and contain many particles. Structure and properties, even perhaps life and mind, then emerge from relationships between particles rather than needing to be added from outside.

Traditional Christian ontology is therefore completely incompatible with a scientific worldview. Divine Principle addresses this by changing the underlying explanation of what exists. As we see in the passage above, what exists for Divine Principle are particles. This is what makes it compatible with science. Particles are absent from, and incompatible with, the traditional substances of spirit and matter.

In Divine Principle, each particle has two sets of dual characteristics, and all that we observe to exist in both the physical and spiritual worlds emerges from their reciprocal relationships. Spirit is *sungsang*, or internal character, but *sungsang* is a characteristic of a particle. It has no independent existence separate from the *hyungsang*, or external form, of the particle.

Consequently particles themselves are half spiritual and half physical, and we derive from the text a completely new relational understanding of spirit. The essence of what makes Divine Principle a new truth with the capacity to unite science and spirituality is then a new ontology. It redefines, for religion not science, the meaning of spirit and matter in a way that is continuous with scientific explanation. It goes further than science can currently explain, but seeks first to change religion, our understanding of spirit, rather than change science directly.

### **Saving Divine Principle**

Neither Unification Thought nor WRIST began to address this aspect of Divine Principle. Instead they assumed without question the traditional paradigm of spirit and matter. For me this is the central reason (though perhaps not the only reason) that neither was completely successful. They did not adopt a crucial part of the new truth. ICUS had no chance. Unification Thought did not embody that part of Divine Principle which could have led to a unity between science and spirituality.

What relevance does this have for today? As this was all in the past, over 30 years ago, how does it affect us in the present? It affects us now because the development of our external reality is severely lagging behind the development of our internal reality after the victories of Rev. and Mrs. Moon. We are no closer today to realizing a true unity between science and spirituality than we were in 1972 when ICUS first started. In fact, in many ways we are further from it because of a distrust of science that has crept into the church.

Also the central problem remains the same. Collectively we do not recognize the ability of Divine Principle to unify science and spirituality. Consequently its power to transform the world lies hidden under the weight of an historical paradigm that is in fundamental conflict with science. Without the input of Divine Principle any contemporary worldview that includes both spirituality and science remains schizophrenic at some level.

The task before us remains the same too. In order to transform the world we need to realize the promise of the new truth in Divine Principle to bring an end to ignorance, and for that, as long as there remains a division between science and spirituality, it has not done so. The time is certainly ripe for unity. There is a growing desire to find it. Alison Wakelin's blog article, cited above, is testimony to that.

The problem, however, is scholars in the field are still laboring under the old paradigm of spirit. Therefore it is highly unlikely they will be able to achieve a paradigm shift that is actually compatible with science. The spark needed to actually initiate fundamental change is derived from chapter one of Divine Principle.

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