

Paper prepared for Gathering of UTS Alumni and Friends

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The Relevance of Divine Principle Today

‘The Relevance of the Divine Principle Today’ is too vague a question to address without reframing it. We quickly find ourselves asking: Relevant to whom? Relevant in what way? However, before reframing the question, it will be useful to explore the notion of truth and how it is realized.

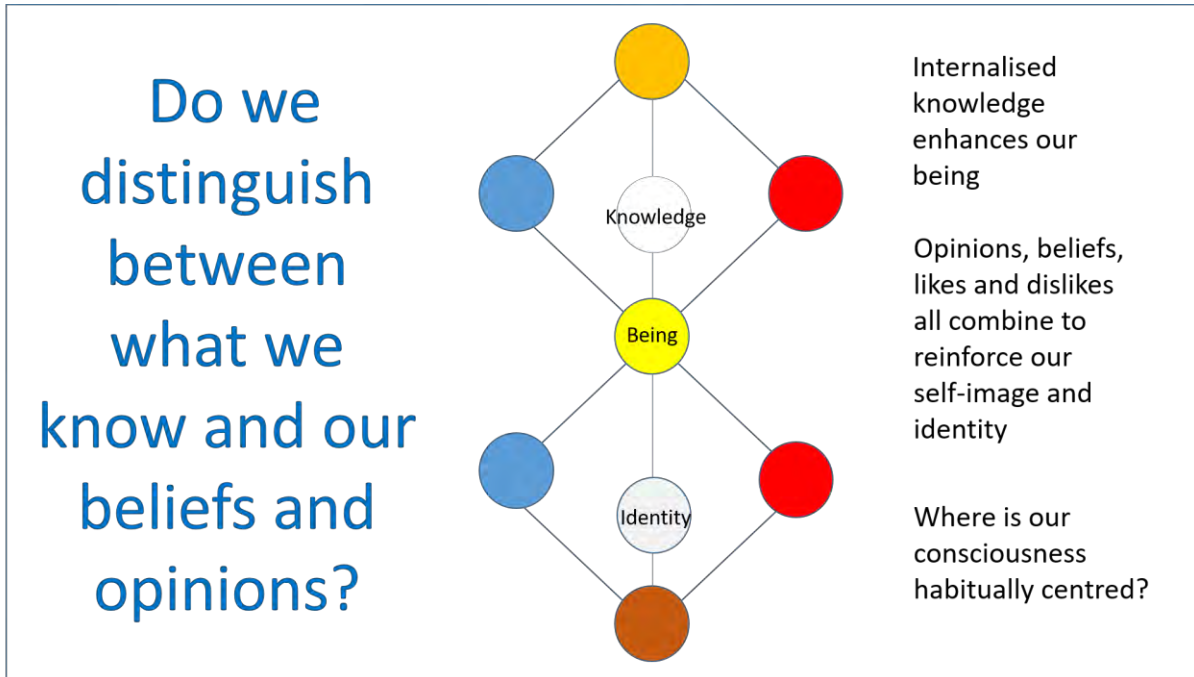
The scientific methodology for uncovering knowledge relating to the world around us – let us call it “outer truth” – is a familiar one. A thesis is posited. Experiments are conducted exhaustively until the thesis is either proven or disproved.

The discovery of “inner truth” follows a parallel course. We imbibe some statement or teaching. Internally our mind validates the statement against accumulated experiences. When the statement accords with our experiences, the lights go on, so to speak, and the new-found truth then becomes part of our personal knowledge-base and operating reality. The statement can encompass something as simple as a mother’s instruction to a child such as: “Don’t touch, it’s hot”, to a philosophical maxim like, “What you give out, comes back”.

As sentient beings, we all have experiences. Through study, exposure to the thoughts of others or an inspiration from a higher source, we are able to order our experiences in a meaningful way. Sometimes we ingest knowledge prior to having had the experience. When the experience later takes place, we may encounter an “Ah, now I understand what the speaker meant” moment. At other times, we may have experiences that lie dormant until revealed. Those moments are more of the “Ah, yes, somehow I’ve always felt that was the case” variety. Either way, it’s not just a matter of knowing; we also need to “know that we know” for that knowledge to be incorporated into our being.

While scientific knowledge, or outer truth, is largely validated and monitored by the scientific community, inner truths can only be validated by each of us as individuals. Nonetheless, there is no shortage of religions, philosophies and political movements, each peddling their own views of the world and each eager to help people make sense of their life experiences. The problem people encounter is that all these teachings, especially those which form the basis of the world’s religions, mix inner truths with half-truths and even with teachings that are completely unverifiable or plainly false. It’s an observable fact that if an institution or accredited teacher reveals valuable knowledge to a person that stimulates the inner self, the recipient is much more likely to indiscriminately accept other teachings from the same source. When we imbibe a set of teachings in its entirety, some parts will genuinely enhance our being, while other parts just get incorporated as beliefs or opinions. The more we reiterate our beliefs and opinions, the more these becomes part of our identity. We rarely draw a conscious distinction between our being or true self (the crystallization of knowledge) and our persona or identity (the accumulation of opinions, beliefs, preferences and habitual modes

of thought) in our day to day actions and interactions with others. All manifestations are presented as 'I'.



Based on this understanding of the human condition, we are now in a position to reframe the question regarding the “Relevance of the Divine Principle Today”. Given that inner and outer truths are both timeless and relevant, the question we need to ask is how much of the Divine Principle is actually true – that is, how much of it actually strikes an inner chord that resonates with our life experiences – and how much has been added by the authors, either explicitly or implicitly, to inculcate a certain view of the world and a belief system which cannot be internally verified.

Here of course, we have two ends of an argument. Some will argue that the whole of the Divine Principle is God’s revealed word and therefore it must all be true – in much the same way that fundamentalist Christians will justify propagating their own interpretation of the Bible. Others, myself included, are more circumspect.

Two themes occurring over the past fifteen years have made the Divine Principle in its current form far less relevant.

It was no secret that, from the outset, a significant part of the Divine Principle had been formulated in order to convince a Christian readership that the Messiah they had long awaited was now on earth and that he had arrived in Korea. In that sense the Divine Principle combined a fundamental explanation of the inner life of man with a broader world view and strategic objective.

Further, over ten years ago, the attempted rewrite and extension of the Divine Principle, under the branding “ODP” (“Original Divine Principle”), effectively rendered an elegant and relatively coherent treatise almost unintelligible. New material was introduced. The

“Original” moniker was used to imply that this material had been there from the beginning but the audience had only now become ready to receive it. At this point, the content of the Divine Principle was clearly a moveable feast that could be re-engineered to suit the goals of the Korean leadership.

The subsequent decision by the Korean authorities, following the passing of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, to no longer include the Divine Principle in the list of core teaching materials, further indicated that parts of it were an obstacle to the new direction that the Unification Movement was to take. In particular, the Divine Principle’s unambiguous emphasis on Jesus being a fully perfected man and not God – an understanding that struck a chord in the hearts of so many early members and inspired them to believe that they too could evolve spiritually – had now become a major impediment to elevating Reverend and Mrs Moon to the position the eternal True Parents of Heaven, Earth and All Mankind and the visible form of God from here to kingdom come.

The second development that has undermined the credibility of the Divine Principle has been the collapse of the so-called True Family and the ensuing bitter, internecine feuds that have consumed tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars in lawsuits. If the Divine Principle mapped out the theory of how to build the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, the True Family should have been the first substantial example of the four-position foundation. Its current demise must lead rational onlookers to one of two conclusions: either the theory is unworkable in practice or Reverend Moon failed in his messianic mission, or both.

If the Divine Principle is perceived as no longer relevant because of the polemics that surround it, then that will be very sad. There is so much in the Divine Principle that advances the boundaries of spiritual knowledge in the world and can be of genuine benefit to those seeking answers to the big questions in life.

One cause for optimism though is that once truth has started to spread, it’s hard to put it back in the box again. What will no doubt come to pass in the near future, either through the Unification Movement or otherwise, is a rewrite of the Divine Principle that encompasses its core truths – the nature of God, the three blessings, the four position foundation, the spiritual and physical worlds, the divided nature of man, and the principles of restoration – but decouples them from the notion of original sin and the need for a substantial messianic couple into whose lineage all mankind must be grafted.

In this manner, the truths embedded in the Divine Principle can be made relevant to the lives of people. God’s Providence on earth can be advanced and the extraordinary contribution made by Reverend Sun Myung Moon to mankind can, in time, become widely appreciated.

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