

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Religious Truth As Progressive Revelation

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May 8, 2024



David Hanna

A warning not to get stuck in our current understanding - truth has historically come as progressive revelation

A talk given by Dr. David Hanna, head of the North European sub-region of the [Family Federation](#), at an international prayer meeting by Zoom on 8th May 2024.

Good evening, everyone.

Over the last seven weeks we have heard summaries of the lectures disseminated by the [Family Federation](#) International Headquarters.

When I heard that this material was being offered, my first thought was, "Is this going to be useful or helpful in getting our message out to the wider world, especially the Christian world?" - that was my real hope, and it still is.

In my opinion, The [Divine Principle](#) rescues Christianity from being increasingly regarded as irrelevant; it rescues religion generally from being sidelined and ignored; and, of course, fundamentally it brings the greatest news - the gospel of gospels - that total salvation is available through the already realised Second Coming. To prepare for this was Christianity's primary purpose of existence and is the fulfilment of the hopes and expectations of other world faiths as well.

In my opinion, The [Divine Principle](#) rescues



First published in 1966 in Korean: the official version of the [Unification Principles](#), Wolli Kangron. First English version, [Divine Principle](#), appeared in 1973, revised version, [Exposition of the Divine Principle](#), in 1996

[Mother Moon](#) is emphasising that the time is not too late, even it is "ripe" to see a worldwide spiritual awakening and have the immense and rich foundation of worldwide Christianity, especially European Christianity, come metaphorically to the feet of the [True Parents](#).

We are, however, from one perspective, bringing a whole bunch of "heretical" ideas to the Christian world, parts of which have a historical reputation for being "heresy hunters", avidly clinging to what in their minds is a settled orthodox view.

How then to bring the message of [Divine Principle](#) to a wider Christian audience, quickly and successfully - that is the challenge.

I am quite often called to share the [Divine Principle](#) content with ministers. I am keen to learn how to do that better and more effectively. Currently, I always begin by saying: "We totally respect your ministry, and [God's](#) calling you to that ministry" - we do not seek to interfere with that in any way. [...]

I also state emphatically - at some later point, when already some key ideas have been shared - that in no way am I saying that those precious and particular ideas we have believed in until now are wrong, indeed they have served us remarkably well and the living proof is that Christianity has grown to be the largest world religion,

work that can only be as a result of [God's](#) guiding hand and with Heavenly Parent's support.

However, the [Divine Principle](#) is a new, clarifying and developmental message that has come through [Father Moon's](#) own [encounters](#) with the risen Jesus - and through combining revelation and reason - for the benefit of all and for the time we are living in now; it is being spread widely and is bringing extraordinary spiritual revival the world over as part of [God's](#) preparations for us to meet the Lord at the Second Coming beyond denominational, religious and cultural barriers.

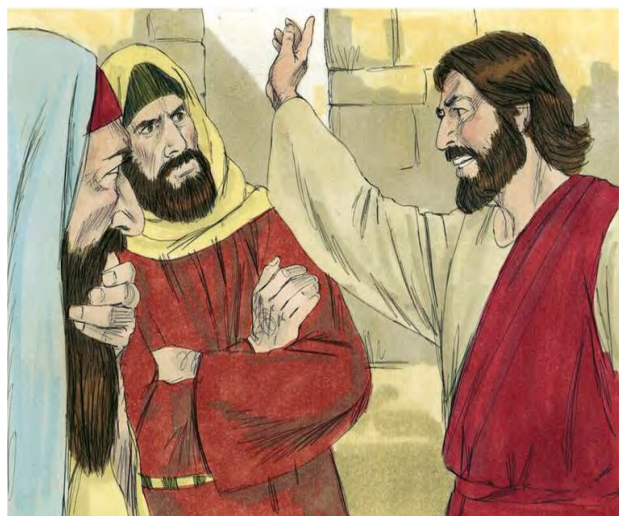
I may then say that central to this understanding is that the Messiah is most helpfully to be considered as a

New Adam, bringing forward these ideas that, under the Christology chapter were topics left to a seven-day workshop in the past. And just as there was Adam and Eve, the messianic, saving work is ultimately to be completed by a couple - a New Adam and New Eve. So the Holy Spirit was given as a counterpart to Jesus, making them the Spiritual [True Parents](#) giving rebirth to all humankind.



[Sun Myung Moon](#) in prayer on Wednesday 17th April 1935, when [Jesus first appeared to him](#). Painting by Shigeyoshi Watanabe from 1982

Well, you can fill in all the blanks. The point is: I never tell a believer (by words or by implication) that what they believe is wrong. Mainly because I do not consider it to be wrong - it is just their belief, and it has served them and countless others well in the past as an anchor for our faith, with [God](#)'s approval and blessing. But now we are in a new era, and [God](#) is sending us some important words of clarification - we need to become new wineskins.



Jesus preaching. Illustration: Biblical illustration of Gospel of Mark Chapter 3

Jesus, of course, faced as a major obstacle to the success of his mission, the stubborn adherence of Jewish religious leaders to the letter of the law.

There are six famous sayings of Jesus that all share the same pattern: They take the form - "You have heard it said [...] but I tell you".

This formula is an ingenious one. It avoids having Jesus look as though he is ignoring the Torah, the traditional Jewish teaching, and just bringing in his own teaching - rather it shows him as one who is respecting the Torah and bringing a new seriousness to the core beliefs of the people.

These so called "Antitheses" demonstrate how Jesus approaches the task of interpreting and applying the Torah.

Using this formula, Jesus refers to a commandment, provides a common understanding of that commandment, and then provides an interpretation which strengthens the force of the commandment. These sayings are really 'intensifiers', and I don't think "Antitheses" is a good name at all, they are not opposites. They build on the traditional understanding rather than oppose it. Thus, it is not enough "not to kill", or "not to commit adultery". It is not enough just to love your neighbour, while still having hatred for your enemy.

Jesus is saying that true righteousness, a person in [God](#)'s image, does not even consider doing any of these things, but forgives wrong and loves enemies freely.

It is [God](#) who must guide not only the deeds of believers, but also their motivation and emotions, their genuine, unseen self. Such striving for perfection signals the breaking dawn of the [Kingdom of God](#), the first light of the new age of righteousness and justice breaking in upon the earth.



A pre-publication version of "True Parents' Status and Value from the Viewpoint of Heaven's Providence"

Why I mention this is because I believe the reception of the new material - concerning the "Status and Value of [True Parents](#)" - could have been greatly assisted by this approach. As it is, there is really no reference to what has been our understanding in the past, or what has been taught, even by [Father Moon](#) himself, and I can see that it leaves thinking, faithful members wondering what has changed and why - worrying less about the status of [True Parents](#), ironically, and more about the status of the accepted truth.

Without the connection to the "You have heard it said," it seems to imply that what we thought before was wrong, but I don't think it is intending to say that at all - rather it is making us aware of just how serious is the

understanding upon which we base our faith, and how much the world needs this intensification of understanding and should grasp the full implications of the truth already revealed, but perhaps imperfectly, or not fully shared up until now.

We must not be stuck with one way of understanding, or eventually we will become unstuck - like the Jews in Jesus' day, or a faithful Christian whose rigid beliefs might become an obstacle to understanding how [God](#) is working today. And as Unificationists, we are not immune from the same tendency. You will remember how the introduction to the [Divine Principle](#) speaks of history as a history of progressive revelation.

However, we do have to be very careful as to how we address the beliefs and understandings that underpin a person's life of faith.

My purpose here is not to criticise the material we have been given but to stimulate YOU into putting the important knowledge that we hold in our hands into a form that can have real, positive, and rapid results - this is our job; it is your job and it's my job.

Let us therefore think carefully about how best to deliver the truth that [God](#) has given us for our use today, and in such a way that there are NO CASUALTIES.

Let us work to make our wonderful bundle of "heresies" the new orthodoxy.

Thank you and God bless you.

"Religious Truth as Progressive Revelation" - text: Dr. David Hanna

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God As Our Heavenly Parent (Father And Mother)

March 29, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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New insight into the concept of God – our Heavenly Parent

Heavenly Parent

Part 1 of a lecture given by Dr. David Hanna, head of the North European sub-region of the **Family Federation**, at an international prayer meeting by Zoom on 27th March 2024.

See [part 2](#), [part 3](#)

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seven lectures, and the title is "Heavenly Parent". It has Jin-su Hwang, professor of theology at [Sun Moon University](#), as the original author and presenter.



Jin-su Hwang, professor of theology at [Sun Moon University, Asan, South Korea](#). Photo (2023): Screenshot from video by [신통일한국 평화포럼](#)

This lecture deals largely with the shift from referring to [God](#) or addressing [God](#) as "Heavenly Father" to "Heavenly Parent", what this means, and why we should do it. It doesn't set out to present a comprehensive view of [God](#) as in *Unification Theology*.

I have to say, as a rule, I don't give other people's lectures, but I can try here to give a summary of what I consider to be the most important parts of this presentation and then add, if I may, some of my own thoughts or comments at the end. So my apologies in advance to Professor Hwang for what I've done to his presentation.

Actually, there's really nothing in this lecture that you will find difficult to accept, I believe, and at points the arguments are rather, shall we say, academic.

But I'm very happy that these lectures in general introduce us to some of the professors of the higher-level institutions that the [True Parents](#) have founded. They have all made great efforts to fulfil their brief.

Professor Hwang starts by expressing his interest in how we teach our children about Heavenly Parent, and how we educate them about the historical development in religious understanding that takes us from Jehovah to Heavenly Father and then to Heavenly Parent.

There are five main points addressed in this lecture. The first is taking us back to [Mother Moon's](#) words, the second, reminding us of [God's](#) dual characteristics of masculinity and femininity, as explained in the [Exposition of the Divine Principle](#). The third point is making clear that our view is not a form of dualism, the fourth is looking at the reasons why [God](#) has been addressed historically as Heavenly Father. And lastly, the final point provides some reasoning as to why the "Era of the Heavenly Kingdom" ("Cheonilguk era" in Korean) is the era of the Heavenly Parent.

Here is [Mother Moon](#) speaking just prior to what we call *Foundation Day* in 2013,

"We must now change how we address [God](#). When we pray, we will change [the Korean word] 'Hananim' to [the Korean expression] 'Haneul Bumonim'. This is [2020](#). Photo: [HFWPU](#)' 'Heavenly Parent'. It is smooth in English and is also meaningful in Korean. Therefore, when you pray, the very first words you utter should be 'Heavenly Parent' [...]. (Speech by [Mother Moon](#) 7th January 2013 in Gapyeong, South Korea)

Dr. Hwang refers to a further passage from [Mother Moon](#), from 15th July 2019,

"[God](#) created a man and a woman. What you need to know is that [God](#), our Creator, exists as [God](#) the Father and [God](#) the Mother, and that is the starting point of the creation of the heavens and the earth. [God](#) created our first ancestors as a man and a woman, in the divine image. This was the principle of creation by which our Creator made heaven and earth."



The [Exposition of the Divine Principle](#) shows its roots in oriental

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Exposition of the Divine Principle, published 1996.

philosophy with reference to the yang and yin of **God** that is manifested in all created beings, culminating in human beings as male and female.

The explanation of the pair system is basic

Divine Principle that I believe we're all very familiar with. The yang and yin principle gives rise to gender distinctions in the natural world.

Personally, I don't find the **Unification Thought** examples of this that are given, to be so helpful. So allow me to inject an explanation.

Masculinity is associated with yang qualities such as strength, assertiveness, and activity, while femininity is connected to yin qualities like receptivity, nurturing, and intuition.

It's important to note that these definitions, they're not fixed and can vary depending on cultural interpretations and individual perspectives within Oriental philosophy.

Now, Professor Hwang provides a quotation from **Father Moon** that describes this process in the following way,



Father Moon. Photo: FFWPU

"Why do we marry? It is to resemble the image of **God**. **God** is a being with dual characteristics, possessing both an invisible male nature and an invisible female nature. In one body with dual characteristics, these characteristics are in complete harmony and unity. **God** is a being that is whole and united. However, these complementary individual natures within **God** are different from each other. If the male and female characteristics of **God** were the same, then one would be an exact copy of the other. But they're different. Being male and female, they must become one, become like seeds, and return to the position of **God's** original nature." (A speech **Father Moon** gave 18th February 1998)

And Dr. Hwang has two more quotations from **Father Moon**,

"We say that **God** is the masculine subject, don't we? **God** appears as a masculine subject, but also has a feminine aspect. **God** is masculine in the front, but just behind there is the feminine character. **God** created what can be divided into inside and outside, or into left and right, or as upper and lower. As this unfolds, what emerges is man and woman. Do you understand?" (A speech **Father Moon** gave 31st July 2000)

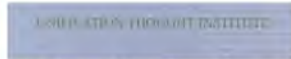
"If we go to the root of the universe, we come to **God**, and we need to be aware that **God** has two natures, a masculine and a feminine nature." (A speech **Father Moon** gave 15th September 1995)

So the fact that **God** is a being who has a masculine aspect and a feminine aspect, is already well understood. [...]

Professor Hwang gives a complete definition [of **God's** masculinity and femininity], which does sound very much like **Unification Thought** to me. He says that **God** exists with a masculine aspect, having internal nature and external form of masculine yang- yin, and with a feminine aspect having internal nature and external form of



nature and external form of feminine yang-yin. Therefore, **God** exists not only with a masculine aspect but also with a feminine aspect.



The latest version of Unification Thought, published in 2006.

Hwang adds that this can be clarified inductively through all things of creation, which is, of course the argument that **Divine Principle** puts forward in line with that of St. Paul in Romans 1;20.

“Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature, namely his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made, so they’re without excuse.”

This exercise charts a course to the same conclusion as the **Divine Principle**. It reveals **God** as a being of personality, which Yang-Yin philosophy alone falls short of doing, and **God** has both masculine and feminine personality.

Father Moon in his *Wolli Wonbon*, the original text that he completed in 1952, but which is yet to be published in English, apparently talks of man as the substantial entity of Heavenly Father and woman as the substantial entity of Heavenly Mother. It’s interesting, isn’t it, that these terms are used by **Father Moon** so early on.

Continued in [part 2](#), [part 3](#).

Featured image above: *Dr. David Hanna lecturing in Oslo, Norway on 13th November 2022. Photo: Knut Holdhus*

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