

A Workable Plan to Fulfill the Three Blessings and Create an Ideal World

Graham Lester
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This brief essay will demonstrate a workable approach based on a few simple principles through which the three blessings can be fulfilled and an ideal world can actually be built. This is the only approach that will work, so pay attention!

I take as my starting point the Divine Principle's opening assertions that everyone is struggling to achieve happiness and that the way to achieve that happiness is by overcoming our present unhappiness. This statement appears obvious but it is easy to overlook the key takeaway point: there is something that is blocking our happiness and that needs to be removed. Once we have removed this "present unhappiness" we are free to fulfill the three blessings and experience joy.

What I am going to tell you is not at all original, or even clever, but it is important and it will work.

The First Blessing

The building block of the three blessings is obviously the first blessing: mind and body unity. We need to have a clear and attainable view of the first blessing in order to practice it and then move on to the others.

We have misunderstood the first blessing until now and that's why nobody has attained it. How can you attain it if you don't know what it is?

The way to unite our mind with our body is by becoming fully present in our senses. Our minds tend to be constantly flitting for one thought to another, always moving; thinking of the past, the future; reliving old emotions; dwelling in memory or fantasy. In the words of many an old MFT commander, we are spaced out. The first blessing means to stop being spaced out, to bring the mind back inside the body. It is what the Eastern religions call mindfulness*. We have not succeeded up until now because we have been approaching it backwards: the real problem is the mind, not the body.

There are three simple and easy-to-remember aspects to the practice of mindfulness or "mind-within-body" unity. Each is crucial, but the second and third are actually implied in the first. Here they are:

- 1) Presence.** The essence of presence is a change in our default mode of interacting with the world. Ordinarily we spend a great deal of time actively thinking and very little time observing. How much of your time do you spend simply observing, being in the senses, in the body, without active thought? Presence means spending more and more time present in the world: looking, listening, being absolutely attentive to the senses with a pure mind. Give each moment your undivided attention: stop thinking and start observing. People in Eastern religions spend many hours meditating on their breath, on objects, on mantras, and so forth, but they often don't know the purpose for which they are doing it: it is to develop the capacity to give nonjudgmental, undivided attention to the present moment.
- 2) Absence.** We need to be present, but we need to have something absent while we are present. What needs to be absent is the selfish ego. The ego is our tendency to identify with our thoughts and feelings. We think that our thought is who we are. Some psychologists call this problem of self-identification with thought "fusion". Through this fusion, this identification with our thoughts and feelings, the individual develops an illusory self-image. The ego is a sort of narrative, a collection of emotionally charged stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves. What is the alternative to this identification with thought? It is identification with the consciousness that underlies thought, the ground of being within us all that makes thought possible; that is the original mind, the part of us that is still there when ephemeral thoughts and feelings have dispersed. The ego, then, is a false sense of self that stands between us and our original minds. When you allow your mind to become perfectly quiet and then give absolute attention to an artwork, or a piece of music, or a beautiful landscape, where is your ego? In a state of absolute attention, intense observation, there is no place for the ego. We need to dissolve the ego and recover the original mind. In terms of reversal of dominion we might say that the human problem is that the subject-object relationship between consciousness (internal) and thought (external) has been reversed. We should think of the first blessing in terms of the recovery of the original mind and its full engagement with the bodily senses.
- 3) Acceptance.** Can you be happy and complain at the same time? Certainly not for long. A life of joy has to be a life without complaint and complaint doesn't merely consist of the outward complaints that we make about the noise and the weather and so forth. We need to stop all of our inner complaining about life, circumstances, and events. We have to root out all of our inner dissatisfaction in order to make space

for the joy of life to enter our minds. Acceptance of whatever life presents to us makes sense because everything that we experience has already happened: by the time you feel the rain, it has already fallen. All inner complaint is in reality nothing but crying over spilt milk. Embrace and accept what life presents to you; if what it presents is objectionable then still accept it, but as a challenge. Whatever you don't accept inwardly will simply come back to haunt you as an unresolved issue. Again, can you really be happy and complain at the same time? Choose happiness.

Ask yourself during the day: Am I present to my senses, or am I spaced out? Am I lost in selfish thought and emotion, or am I maintaining a pure mind? Am I embracing life, or am I complaining inwardly? Try this for a week or two and see if you don't start to experience an inner joy, the joy of life without which all religious doctrines are pointless.

We can consider a person to be within the realm of the first blessing when he or she is practicing mindfulness during the day by remaining fully present and attentive, uninfluenced by ego, and accepting of whatever life presents.

In Unificationist terms we can think of the original mind being present, the fallen mind being absent, and the parental heart being engaged. Or, we can think of an individual unified in mind and body, without individual "sin" (egoless), and with a joyful heart. This doesn't necessarily have to be a permanent state that one is somehow locked into, just a way of being that one manifests more and more every day.

The Second Blessing

Mindfulness alone can solve a great many of our problems, but it is not enough to save the world. The second blessing is the perfection of our families and our communities. In order to make that work we have to introduce a second principle: in addition to mindfulness we need to practice the golden rule by treating others as we ourselves would wish to be treated. The best place to begin practicing the golden rule is with your spouse.

The golden rule implies that we should honor our commitments, including commitments within our family unit. In order to make this clearer I strongly suggest that the Unification movement stop using the bizarre phrase "absolute sex" and replace it with the straightforward term "absolute fidelity". Practice absolute fidelity within your marriages, and in all of your other relationships too.

Here comes the interesting part, the solution to all of your relationship problems boils down to three simple words. These three words answer three great questions: 1) What do women want? 2) What do men want? 3) What do children need?

The answer in each case is: nonjudgmental undivided attention.

When was the last time that you really gave your spouse undivided attention, without simultaneously thinking about something else, or feeling negative in some way, or wanting them to change in some way (judging and not accepting them)? What would happen if you set aside time each day to give your husband or wife nonjudgmental undivided attention, absolutely without any agenda on your part, without your ego being engaged? You can test this out by asking your spouse whether it would improve things if you gave him or her nonjudgmental undivided attention from now on. Or you can just do it and wait and see. Accept your spouse for who he or she actually is, not who you wish they were. Forget your fantasies. Have you really accepted your spouse yet?

Prioritize your spouse. If he or she interrupts you in the middle of a brilliant thought, don't be annoyed, just train yourself to immediately give your spouse nonjudgmental undivided attention. Prioritize other humans, especially family members. Snap out of your thoughts and be attentive to them. Love is giving your undivided attention to others.

When young people fall in love they give each other nonjudgmental undivided attention, don't they? That kind of attention is like crack for the soul, metaphorically speaking of course; it is no wonder that the withdrawal systems can be so lethal. We can also learn to give that same quality of attention to each other as mature adults, deliberately: we can really listen to one another, really appreciate one another. That is how we become one. The ideal relationship between man and woman is like the relationship between the two hemispheres of the brain, which work together harmoniously as a single unit with each side making a unique contribution.

So, in the first blessing we give nonjudgmental undivided attention to life itself, and in the second blessing we give it to our spouses, our children, our communities. That same quality of undivided attention that the monks and the hippies are giving to their breathing and their mantras needs to be given to other people, in joy and without ego.

Is it not true that your children would be doing much better today if you had given them more nonjudgmental undivided attention when they were younger? But do not be regretful because the past is past and you understood no better.

We must start a new providence in which giving undivided attention to one's spouse and one's children takes absolute precedence over everything else. That is the only way to build a healthy community, not just for Unificationists but for the whole world. Nonjudgmental undivided attention opens up the space for love to flow into: watch, listen, accept, embrace, engage, support, give people space.

The Third Blessing

The third blessing is our harmonious dominion over all things. What is it that gives us dominion over all things? It is technology. What gives us technology? Science. What is the essence of the scientific method? The quest for objectivity. It is obvious that our ability to think objectively is enhanced when we work with a pure mind free from the interference of the ego, so the first blessing comes into play even here. Without the willingness of individuals to strive to think objectively our modern technology would not exist. We would have no hope of dominion.

The scientific method requires that ideas are rigorously examined, that experiments are made, and that the mathematical laws of probability are applied to the results so that we can discern what is true and what isn't, what works and what doesn't. The scientific method keeps us on the right track, free from the delusions of imagination and even the falsehoods that common sense is prone to. It also acts as a necessary corrective on the dogmatic claims of scripture. We can unite spirituality and science by identifying the third blessing with a commitment to the scientific method. Accept science; don't struggle against it.

Consider all the controversial social questions like pornography, drugs, the right to bear arms, homosexuality, abortion, the death penalty, euthanasia, poverty, our relationships with animals and the environment, and so forth. How do we resolve such issues when there is so much disagreement and so much gray area involved? We need to apply our two tools, the golden rule and the scientific method. What is the loving solution? What is the workable solution? What we think and feel ought to work and what actually does work might be completely different. We need to investigate objectively, with love and without ego. There will not always be simple solutions and sometimes we will make honest mistakes, but at least these two principles provide us with the mindset we need in order to make success possible.

To recapitulate, these three simple ideas comprise a non-dogmatic reformulation of the three blessings that can unite all of humanity and create an ideal world:

1. Mindfulness
2. The Golden Rule
3. The scientific method

These principles can set the individual, the church and the world the right path. They are in harmony with the ideals set forth in the Principle and yet they are not Unificationist dogma. They are also in essential harmony with Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, science, atheism, democracy, even communism. They depend on adherence to no specific religion or philosophy, revelation or ideology. They are commonsensical and each principle is already well established within its own sphere.

Somebody else would surely have done a better job of explaining them but these essential principles are the only ones that can provide a practical framework for substantially realizing world peace and unity. By dedicating itself to these ideals the Unification community could prosper while simultaneously making a useful contribution to human well being.

*Footnote: for a more complete explanation of mindfulness, I refer readers to the works of Eckhart Tolle, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Pema Chodron or Jack Kornfield. Tolle's *The Power of Now* is perhaps the best place to start.