

Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Fifth International Conference on the Unity of Sciences

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Reverend and Mrs. Moon welcome the conference participants in a reception on the eve of the conference opening

The Fifth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS), held in Washington, D.C. on November 26-28, was, by any standard of judgment, an outstanding success. In his December 1, 1976 speech, Rev. Moon ranked it as the third great success of 1976, with the Yankee Stadium and Washington Monument rallies. At the December state leaders' conference, Rev. Moon further expressed his feelings on the conference. "Yankee Stadium, Washington Monument, and the Yoido Rally were all very dramatic victories," he said. "They will become a part of history. But the science conference, a movement to bring scientists into a direction of harmony, will continue to live. The same spirit which made the rallies also made the conference. It will continue and become the focal point of the free world. It has already opened an important door to peace and tranquility. It could even be the single most important contribution to humanity in the future."



Mr. Michael Warder, Secretary-General of the Fifth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, welcomes the participants to the conference

The Fifth Conference was unique in the four-year history of science conferences in that it included a larger number of participants and countries than previous years, it allowed for greater interdisciplinary interplay among the participants, it was characterized by very warm interaction, and in general, received the greatest support from the participants at the conclusion.

On Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 26, Rev. Moon and Mrs. Moon greeted all participants who had then arrived at a reception at the conference site, the Washington Hilton Hotel. By the next morning, 350 participants and over 200 additional observers had arrived from 53 nations.

The official opening of the Conference was held in the International Ballroom of the Washington Hilton on Friday, November 27. Mr. Michael Warder, Secretary General of the International Conferences on the Unity of the Sciences, welcomed the guests on behalf of the International Cultural Foundation, sponsor of the conference. Dr. R.V. Jones, Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen and former advisor to Sir Winston Churchill, was moderator of the morning proceedings.

Rev. Moon's opening address was, of all his speeches at former conferences, the most closely related to the Divine Principle.

Sir John Eccles, Chairman of the fifth ICUS, was the second speaker of the morning. A Nobel Laureate noted for his research in nerve impulse transmission, Dr. Eccles addressed the conference's theme, "The Search for Absolute Values: Harmony Among the Sciences:" "This conference gives opportunity for fruitful meeting across all the artificial frontiers in the attempt to recognize the unity and harmony amongst the sciences in their search for absolute values.



Sir John Eccles, Chairman of the Fifth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, sets the tone for the Conference in his opening remarks

"The cultural achievements of mankind bear witness to the search for absolute values that has motivated and inspired the great creative geniuses. It can be said that, symbolically, absolute values have provided a guiding beacon light. This can be appreciated when we consider the scientific efforts of Kepler, Newton, and Einstein to understand the natural world. A similar guidance of geniuses can be discerned in other fields of cultural achievement: philosophy, religion, literature, history, and the arts. The thoughts and aspiration of mankind in respect of truth, goodness, and beauty have led to the search for justice and for codes of ethics in social organization..."

"It is important to recognize that science is not restricted to phenomena that can be measured. On the contrary the identifying characteristic of science is its reliance on creative imagination and rational criticism. The harmony among the sciences derives from their common metaphysical principles: namely that creative imagination is exercised in attempting to develop hypotheses that are in conformity with existing knowledge and that await challenge by new evidence discovered by research. Always the aim is to approach closer and closer to absolute truth."

He continued to express his hope for the conference:

"The conference will address itself to the many fundamental and practical problems that are within the purview of this broad and deep interpretation of science. The present predicament of mankind arises because the great progress of science has resulted in the destruction of so much of the philosophy and religion by which man has lived. Regretfully, there has been no development either of a philosophy or of a religion that is fully consonant with science in all of its implications for man as a self-reflecting being. This conference will in part be directed to the attempt to re-examine some of the basic philosophical principles that have been developed by man in his efforts to give a coherent and rational account of his origin and density, of his nature any of the meaning and purpose of life."

Opening remarks of the committee chairman reflected that they had given careful consideration to the themes of unity of the disciplines and the meaning of value. Dr. Frederick Sontag, chairman of Committee I, called for greater integration, of religion, philosophy, and science. He told the participants: "Do we want our societies to be merely political entities or do we want to use their resources to promote human aims? If we decide that directional goals must be provided for our society from outside, then philosophy as well as religion become candidates to provide this direction and all theories and religions are open to apply for this leadership role if our aim is to provide health to society through establishing clear goals. Thus, we must use philosophies, practice religions, develop sciences according to how they seem to promote human life and the health of societies. We no longer need to argue the superiority of one theory over another theory or pit religion against religion. We gain unity and promote harmony by treating theory as a convenient instrument, never as something simply good in itself. In the words of one

of my favorite ancient sages: 'Vain are the words of the philosopher which heal no suffering of man.'

Dr. Morton Kaplan, chairman of Committee II, the Social Sciences, called for greater unity in the social and political sciences as a preliminary in helping to achieve a better world:

"If history, art, and science require an infusion of values for grandeur or sublimity, the social and political sciences must play a leading role in showing us how to relate the activities of man to human aspirations and character. However, this very purpose requires a grave re-examination of the character and methods of the social sciences. Can we afford a continued fragmentation of the social sciences in which an infinite number of niches are pursued by an infinity of social scientists whose endeavors are unrelated to each other or to any conception of the nature of society and its relationship to the nature of man?"



Dr. Eugene Wigner, Committee chairman, gives his introductory remarks at the conference's opening session

Dr. Eugene Wigner, chairman of Committee IV on the physical Sciences and one of the fathers of modern nuclear physics, expressed his desire for the exploration of a new theory to embrace both the physical and life sciences:

"What I believe is that there is a continuous transition from the limiting case in which the effects of life and consciousness are negligible in the situation which the quantum mechanical equations describe very well to the situation in which life and consciousness are relevant. This transition is similar to the transition from Newtonian mechanics to situations, as prevail for instance in the inside of stars, in which light pressure plays a decisive role. What I hope then is that sometime a more basic theory will be developed of which present quantum mechanics will be a limiting case, the more basic theory applying not only to inanimate objects but having validity also when life plays a role. I do hope that the possibility of such a theory will be explored sometime in the future even though at present we do not know how to attack it."

During a mid-afternoon break, Sir John Eccles and the four committee chairmen held a press conference in which they upheld the integrity of the conference. In explaining why they had associated themselves with an activity founded by so controversial a figure as Reverend Moon, both Dr. Eccles and Dr. Wigner pointed out the double standard of the press by themselves asking why the motives of the Catholic Church

in its charities or the Soviet Union in its conference sponsorship were not also so closely scrutinized.

Committee meetings -- a Sampling

The committee meetings, beginning on Friday afternoon, and lasting through Saturday evening, were, for many participants, the heart of the conference. Each of the four committees held three sessions, with three papers presented in each session. Each evening was devoted to general discussion of all papers presented that day. In each session a presentation of each paper was made by the author and commented upon by several scholars.



Dr. Herbert Richardson presents his paper in the "Religion and Society" group

Committee I, "Religion and Philosophy," was readily acknowledged as being one of the most lively. A paper delivered by Dr. Richard Rubenstein stimulated much discussion. Rubenstein asserted that the "Protestant Ethic," based upon Calvinism, has paradoxically become fertile ground for the areligious Darwinist "survival of the fittest" doctrine. He said in his paper: "...Social Darwinism can be seen as a secularized form of Calvinism in which the 'survival of the fittest' is the Darwinian equivalent of the Calvinist 'salvation of the elect...' Of greatest importance is the fact that both Calvinism and Darwinism provide a cosmic justification for the felicity of the few and the misery of the many." He concluded: "Before we could bring about fundamental economic and/or political changes, we would have to alter profoundly the hierarchy of values that informs our decision-making and our conceptions of human worth."

Committee II, "The Social Sciences and the Humanities," was most directly concerned with the application of values to society. Dr. Dan Segre, chairman of the committee's first session, set the tone for an open-minded discussion in his paper, "Ways, Means, and the Absolute." Dr. Segre said in his paper: "...Whereas Christian culture has tended to search for absolute aims, Judaism has maintained the view that the absolute should be sought after in means rather than in aims, in action rather than in purpose... It should be to the people of our generation that the growth of tyranny has been paralleled by a growing reliance on absolute aims and a growing forgetfulness of absolute means... Freedom and creativity flourish where religion means the search for the organic connection between means and ends, where the ultimate responsibility for the aims rests with the Absolute, while the ultimate responsibility for the means rests on man."

Committee III, "The Life Sciences," hosted one of the most popular sessions when it considered the topic "Neuroscience and Absolute Values." While the details of the discussion were quite technical, its general direction indicated that purely physiological viewpoints that the mind is limited to the brain are losing popularity. One scientist, for example, described her research indicating the complementary relationship between the brain and the mind. Just as the physiology of the brain can influence thought, she said, thought can influence the physiology of the brain. In fact, most participants were more eager to discuss the philosophical implications of recent research on the brain than the research itself.

The relationship of science to values was considered in one session by Committee IV. "The Life Sciences." Dr. Henry Margenau contended that science and ethics are similar in their process. The formulation of scientific axioms, through man's evaluation of his experiences is, he said, analogous to the codification of moral standards through man's evaluation of his behavior.

On the final day of the conference, Sunday, November 28, guests listened to the four committee chairmen: Dr. Frederick Sontag, Dr. Morton Kaplan, Dr. Miguel Covian and Dr. Eugene Wigner gave summaries of their sessions, with the twelve group chairmen called upon for comment. In the afternoon, Dr. Antonino Zichichi from CERN, a nuclear research group in Geneva; Dr. W.H. Thorpe, zoology professor at Cambridge University; and Dr. Nicholas Rescher, philosophy professor at the University of

Pittsburgh, gave plenary speeches related to the theme of science and absolute values. At the end of the session, the New York City Symphony orchestra performed the "Egmont Overture" by Beethoven, "Finlandia" by Sibelius and the third movement of Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony. Each of the compositions was very intense, building the performance to a crescendo. The audience loved it and gave the orchestra a standing ovation.



As in the previous conference, time was set aside for group discussion

Conclusion

Rev. and Mrs. Moon hosted the Farewell Banquet of the conference. After performances by Sunburst, the Voices of Freedom, and the New Hope Singers in their international costumes, Rev. Moon gave a brief closing speech in English. After thanking the chairmen and participants he told them:

"The success of the conferences is a reflection of the effort that has been put into them by yourselves. Of course, we cannot expect to solve all of the world's problems in three short days... Yet we all resolved to talk of the problems of values and other matters in an open and free atmosphere. Surely this is a very significant accomplishment. On this basis, we can have reason to believe the solution to mankind's problems can come."

"It is unfortunate that today many people have lost faith in the nobility of man and his culture. They have not been able to see a purpose in life and have no principles or values to guide them in a productive manner. They are trapped by their own despair and have no constructive ideas to offer to help others. Hedonism, family breakdown, mental illness evidence a society and culture that is lost in defeat. Many seek totalitarianism in such chaos. It is especially distressing to see this circumstance in our youth, who will soon take responsibility for the problems history will bequeath to them."

"Some people have blamed science itself for the problems of man and a number of youth look to primitive, pre-scientific cultures as models of society. Hence we see an anti-science movement.... Hopefully, this meeting can contribute to the establishment of a standard of value that can solve these problems."

"Along with this annual conference, the International Cultural Foundation would like to initiate some additional activities of a scholarly nature in coming years. We will do this because intellectuals such as yourselves who have been entrusted with talents are vital to society and should be supported. We would like to do something especially for those of you who are willing to work for the elevation of the human culture in general."

Rev. Moon concluded the conference by inviting the guests to the next conference, to be held on Thanksgiving weekend, 1977, in San Francisco.

Response

It was everywhere apparent that the participants were enjoying the conference. At lunch tables, during coffee breaks and in the hallways, participants continued their discussions and formed friendships transcending national and disciplinary divisions. The following response from a professor to an ICUS staff member was not unusual:

"Thank you for including me among those invited to the 5th ICUS. My wife and I found pleasure and profit in the experience. And I wish to pass along a comment frequently heard at the Hilton: 'This is the best run conference I ever have attended.' Since this was voiced by people who have attended a lot of scientific meetings, you should feel honest satisfaction in the results of your labors."

The first factor in the success of the conference was the environment which was created for the participants. Interested participants from the last year's conference, including Sir John Eccles, contributed their ideas for the improvement of this conference. And the conference structure was simplified and streamlined. Papers were sent to participants ahead of time for their consideration and were reproduced by the thousands during the conference to keep up with the demand. When the participants arrived, they were met at the airport and driven to the Hilton, usually by a Seminary student. Church members volunteering as hospitality staff were easily available to serve their personal needs.



Participants and their families enjoy the farewell Banquet on November 28

All details, from room temperature to coffee break schedules, were carefully attended to. Even extra entertainment was provided by a square dance convention taking place in the hotel at the same time!

The international character of the conference and the breadth of viewpoints represented were also of considerable importance. The list of participants included officials from the UN's World Health Organization, World Council of Churches, University presidents, department chairmen, government officials from third-world countries, academicians from Eastern Europe, and even one Soviet. When questioned, most participants said that this was the only conference of such breadth in existence. One commented that scientists are rarely in a situation allowing them to discuss the philosophical implications of their work.

"The ICUS has come of age," remarked one professor who has participated since the beginning in 1972. "We are over the hill," said Dr. Frederick Sontag. "It is a base you can build on to create something even more significant."