

The Economic System in Cheon Il Guk

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As far as I know, there is no one who can explain the concrete system of Cheon Il Guk. But then is it possible to realize something without any clear vision and goal? Even if we have a clear vision and goal, it may be difficult to realize Cheon Il Guk.



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Obviously, Cheon Il Guk is not the nation that can automatically be built by God's miraculous power. The ideal of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universally shared values should be established through cooperation between God and human beings. It is wrong to think that the concrete plan for the society of Cheon Il Guk would be given by Rev. Moon or God unilaterally.

Regrettably, even inside the Unification Movement, a large number of people are reluctant to establish a concrete system for Cheon Il Guk. Their main insistence is that if the ideal world consists of "original" people (persons without fallen nature) and ideal families, the external structure will not be so important. However, it is a naive way of thinking that "original" people will do well whatever the system.

It is true that if all problems come only from fallen nature, we will be able to gain prosperity within either a market economy or planned economy. This is because problems due to fallen nature will be automatically solved by the management of "original" people without fallen nature.

However, in reality, there are structural problems within both systems that have nothing to do with human fallen nature. Accordingly, the Bible says we must "pour new wine into new wineskins." The original economic system must be built on the basis of a new ideology and practice that can solve the structural problem of existing economic systems.

The human model utilized in modern economics is generally referred to as "Rational Economic Man." The Rational Economic Man is defined as "A person who acts rationally based on knowledge, self-interest and the desire for wealth." Max Weber maintained that the image of the Rational Economic Man became the general human image after the Protestant Reformation.

Weber defined the human image prior to the Rational Economic Man as Traditionalism. Traditional man did "not by nature wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and earn as much as is necessary for that purpose."

In contrast, the model human image for Cheon Il Guk is that of "Original" man and woman. Original human beings possess distinct characteristics. They resemble the Divine Image and pursue a life of truth, goodness, beauty, and love. They create harmonious families. They are individuals of heart, Logos (truth), and creativity. Original human beings find individual fulfillment in living for the sake of others. They practice "true love." According to Rev. Moon, true love "gives, forgets that it has given, and continues to give without ceasing." True Love also gives "without any expectation ... of receiving something in return."

Divine Principle often uses expressions such as “socialistic ideal,” “socialistic economy,” and “socialistic idea.” However, it never identifies the socialistic ideal with that of planned economies which were actually practiced in the Soviet Union and other communist countries.

This is because the term socialistic has a broad meaning; for example, we can regard the European welfare state as a socialistic ideal in a broad sense. What Divine Principle wants to say regarding the “socialistic ideal” is not that the ideal world should be planned and controlled from the government, but that the ideal world should provide equal living conditions to all people, i.e., “Just as parents love all their children equally, God desires to provide pleasant environments and living conditions equally to all His children.” This is utterly different from the state socialism that communism actually established.

The private ownership system is the basis of capitalism’s existence. Without it, we cannot undertake any kind of economic activity and the Rational Economic Man does not feel any incentive for hard work. However, in Unification Thought, economic activities are understood as a part of dominion. The concepts of ownership and dominion are quite different. According to Divine Principle, what God gave us as the “third blessing” is “dominion” over creation, not “ownership” of the creation.

Essentials of Unification Thought states, “Dominion incorporates the meaning of ruling, managing, processing, protecting, and so on.” Dominion means to manage something as the central person on behalf of someone else. God is the real owner of creation, and human beings manage them in place of God.

The characteristics of ownership are irreducibility and abstractness. Irreducibility means the owner can do anything, including negative things, with his possession: exploit it, throw it away, or destroy it. Abstractness means that possession and occupation can be divided. An owner does not need to be in direct contact with or directly use possessions. Cheon Il Guk is not the world based on private ownership such as this, but the world based on dominion.



There will be no monetary system in Cheon Il Guk.

Jesus said, “You cannot serve both God and money” (Luke 16:13). In my view, there will be no monetary system in Cheon Il Guk. In the present economic system, money is the main medium of exchange. It is used as “something in return,” a kind of reward in the transaction. Here is a major contradiction between money and Rev. Moon’s thought of giving and forgetting what one has given. For example, Rev. Moon said, “In the heavenly world of the future, the time for living off a monthly salary will pass away,” and also stated, “There is no concept of equalization in the world of money.... People do not want to share these things, so they will never stand equal and there will be no peace.”

Money inevitably induces human egoism and corruption in people. If money as a source of value disappears in the economic system, the gap between rich and poor will never happen. Currently, we hoard property and have the desire for limitless wealth because of the existence of money as a storehouse of value. In a society without money, this would not be. There is no other way to realize the ideal of equality completely.

It is obvious that the character of True Love to give without any expectation or condition of receiving something in “return” and the character of exchange transactions to absolutely require money as a “reward” are completely incompatible with each other. It also is exclusive and merciless to the disadvantaged who cannot participate in such transactions. The monetary system will utterly perish from the face of the earth to the degree that human beings restore their original nature and cut their connection with fallen nature.

In monetary society, since the maximization of self-interest is paramount, companies do not stop producing at the point of market equilibrium, but try to increase sales as long as the profit rate is higher. However, Divine Principle states that in an “ideal society,” production, distribution and consumption should have an organic relationship. “There should not be destructive competition due to over-production, nor unfair distribution leading to excessive accumulation and consumption, which are contrary to the purpose of the common good.”

A society whose purpose is to obtain monetary profits inevitably causes utilitarianism and individualism in people; as a result, it leads people to the destruction of families in the end. Cheon Il Guk must be an economic society in which labor is freed from money and becomes people’s hobby.

To what extent should government control the economy? It is desirable that production and distribution be undertaken at places nearest to people’s lives. As such, the control of the central government must be minimized. Individuals and companies nearest to consumers are best suited to make production and distribution plans by analyzing consumption trends themselves. Cheon Il Guk affirms “consumer sovereignty.”

Government control should be limited to 1) the administration of natural resources which have a direct influence on the earth’s ecosystem; and, 2) businesses with highly public needs, i.e., city planning, public transportation, education, postal service and medical services. Production of consumer goods as well as service industries required to meet the diverse tastes and preferences of consumers should be left to the private sector.

In Cheon Il Guk, the average hours of labor will decrease considerably. The fact that 1 percent of the world population came to possess 40 percent of the world’s wealth, much of which is meaningless wealth, indicates that we would be able to produce goods needed for daily life in half the amount of time. In addition, with no need for financial institutions such as banks, securities companies, and insurance companies workers from those institutions would flow into labor markets further shortening the necessary labor time in society.

The economic system of Cheon Il Guk will not be established until people embody the characteristics of original men and women. Of course, it is not easy to remove fallen nature which people have inherited for generations and at the same time restore original nature. Therefore, if the number of people who can restore human nature close to the original reaches the minimum number which can maintain a society, I see no alternative but to gather those people to build one model nation.

Once Cheon Il Guk succeeds in establishing a materially wealthy society through its external economic system and at the same time establishes even the first steps of the culture of living for the sake of others, stable growth can be expected. In addition, once Cheon Il Guk succeeds in removing the problems which capitalism never solved, such as unemployment, inflation, depression, destruction of natural resources, excessive competition, and the gap between the rich and poor, the world will have to pay attention to the reason why and how people could do that.

That would be the very time Cheon Il Guk could announce its basic concepts and ideology. Most significantly, when a national sovereign asks questions such as, “We would like to rebuild our nation based on Rev. Moon’s thought. What do we have to do?” or, “What kind of a country is Cheon Il Guk?” we need to have prepared a clear vision so we can give an immediate answer such as, “Cheon Il Guk is the nation whose system is such, and you can realize it if you do this.”

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Of further interest:

“Shopping in Cheon Il Guk: Economics in the Unificationist Ideal World,” by Tyler Hendricks, Journal of Unification Studies, Vol. 7, 2006

“The Just Third Way: How We Can Create Green Growth, Widespread Prosperity and Global Peace,” by Norman G. Kurland, Dawn K. Brohawn, and Michael D. Greaney, Center for Economic and Social Justice, Washington, DC, 2008