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Angelic Order and Human Growth

PANDASITES 2

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Why does Divine Principle place little emphasis on the topic of angels, yet the course of restoration history was based on the failure of a human-angelic relationship? The Principle of Creation gives no guidelines for ideal interactions between the two worlds. True Mother (Mrs. Hak Ja Han) expects Heavenly Parent's Holy Community[1] to be the harbinger of world peace and God's ideal, yet the contingency of that reality must manifest not only in our human world but in the angelic one; for that is God's Original Design.

We are not meant to have all the answers, yet Heavenly Parent does not usually use divine revelation in these matters. True Father had to work hard to understand the Fall. The same is expected of us. In this post-Foundation Day[2] reality when Unificationists believe that the ideal world beyond the Fall should be unfolding, we must work hard to ask the questions that lead to the "what should have been" in the first human-angelic relationship.

Yet the Unification Church lacks expertise on angels. Those members that do are largely in the West. Nora Spurgin's *Circles of Angels*[3] may be the best work on angels that the church has produced, yet it remains untranslated and hence unavailable to our Asian membership. The West has the great advantage of the Judeo-Christian foundation; there are over 300 references to angels in the Bible. Classical Christian scholarship on angels is the foundation upon which the research in this paper begins.

After describing "the Celestial Hierarchy" of the angelic world developed in the Christian tradition, we will make a comparison with the course of human growth in Divine Principle. It discloses what appears to be a relationship between this nine-level hierarchy of angels and the nine levels of human growth described in the Principle of Creation. We will look at this similitude between the two worlds and then consider its significance for what God had envisioned for the relationship between the angelic world and the human world.

The Celestial Hierarchy

In the medieval period, around the 5th century, Pseudo-Dionysius, a Christian theologian, made an extensive study of biblical references to angels and described what came to be known as "The Celestial Hierarchy." It inspired generations of Christian theologians, not the least of whom was Thomas Aquinas who wrote extensively of this hierarchy in his magnum opus, *Summa Theologica*. The hierarchy itself is not considered church doctrine, but it has been honored in Christian tradition throughout the centuries.

Dionysius in his book, *On the Heavenly Hierarchy*[4], presents a schematic that organizes the nine orders, or "choirs," of angels into three spheres with three levels each.

The Celestial Hierarchy	
1. The Seraphim 2. The Cherubim 3. The Thrones	The First Sphere: Support of the Godhead and the Universe
4. The Dominions 5. The Virtues 6. The Powers	The Second Sphere: Support of the Cosmos
7. The Principalities 8. The Archangels 9. The Angels	The Third Sphere: Support of Our World

The nine orders of angels on the left are from the Celestial Hierarchy, as is the appellation "spheres" on the right. The functions of the spheres are classifications suggested by Peter Kreeft, a professor at Boston College,[5] which I have adjusted to comport more closely to the Divine Principle.

Dionysius' hierarchical design of nine orders of angels organized into three spheres is the same in organization as the schema of human growth of three stages with three levels in each described in the Principle of Creation. On this basis, we can study the angelic world order as it relates to our human world. The angelic world was created to love, serve, support and care for God and God's creation, which includes the universe, the cosmos and humanity.[6] It is evident here that our Creator uses similar organizational structures in our two worlds to achieve this goal.

Dionysius' hierarchy from the 5th century, presented in the commentaries of Aquinas in the 13th century, intrigued Christian theologians as to how the angelic world functioned. Their inquiries will act as the base for our present-day exploration of the common journey of angels and humans towards God's Ideal.

In Kreeft's presentation of the hierarchy, he introduces each of the three levels.

"The first three levels see and adore God directly... the next three choirs fulfill God's providential plans for the universe, like middle management personnel... The last three choirs directly order human affairs.[7]

I have varied these appellations to be more in line with Divine Principle by stating the first three levels, Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, serve as the support of the Godhead and the entire universe. The Godhead is a realm of three levels, as is the universe. The angels in the sphere are God's own angels. They serve God directly and have done so since their creation, which was well before our own. Their exclusive purpose to surround the Godhead and to serve God's plans for the enormity of the universe is what sets the trinity of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones apart.

First, the Seraphim ("Seraph" in the singular) are the highest of the angelic beings. The word means "burning" as in the intensity of this level of divine love.[8] Seraphic love has been used to describe St. Catherine of Siena and St. Frances of Assisi, whose lives were completely ruled by divine love. Biblical references, in Isaiah 6:2-7 for example, describe the cleansing properties of the Seraphim's mastery of the figurative fire in their love for God. In Deuteronomy 33:2, ten thousand of these angels came down to Mt. Sinai to confirm the holy presence of God as he gave the law to Moses.

References to Cherubim, the angels of the second level, are numerous in the Bible. They are heaven's custodians and protectors. In the Fall narrative they blocked the Tree of Life when God's commandment was not upheld and blocked the entry to The Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). Both of these acts of protection were in relation to direct revelation from God. The Cherubim were the images placed upon the Arc of the Covenant, as it contained the 10 Commandments, the direct revelation from God to Moses (Ex. 25:18). They are also referred to in the vivid imagery of Ezekiel's vision in chapter 10. The Cherubim are divinely charged to protect direct heavenly intervention in all of God's creation.

The third level of God's exclusive angelic orders in the first sphere are the Thrones. St. Paul makes reference to them in Colossians 1:16: "... in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him." Dionysius describes the role of this order:

Their unswerving separation from all remoteness; and their invariable and firmly-fixed settlement around the veritable Highest, with the whole force of their powers; and their receptivity of the supremely Divine approach, in the absence of all passion and earthly tendency, and their bearing God; and the ardent expansion of themselves for the Divine receptions.[9]

Our interest here is twofold. First, the words secure a better understanding of the mission of this order. Second, the practical position of The Thrones as the level closest to the second sphere reflects their mission. Dionysius denies any "remoteness" of the Thrones and emphasizes their "settlement" around God, which emphasizes the rapport between this group of the angels and God. This call for intimacy and openness on the part of these angels can support the importance of their position as closest in proximity to the next level. It is their mission to create the link between these levels. They must, therefore ready themselves for "the ardent expansion" to the next level as they "themselves" are charged to facilitate a "Godly reception." Perhaps this is why they are called "Thrones." They do not only serve God directly as the Seraphim do, or guard God directly as the Cherubim do, but as the emissaries beyond the first sphere threshold with intimate understanding of God, they appear as "the Throne of the Godhead."

Angels of this first sphere, in their exclusive service to God, were more than likely the celestial choirs that sang at Christ's birth, "and suddenly there was, with the angel, a multitude of heavenly host praising God" (Luke 2:13-14) and are well portrayed in Revelation: "and I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne" (Rev. 5:11). Since their missions relate to the creation of the universe, human-angelic interaction with these angels offer possibilities for fruitful knowledge for solving global warming, not to mention taking us beyond our galaxy to God's creation elsewhere.

The second sphere of the order of the angelic world is also composed of three levels: The Dominions, the Virtues, and the Powers. The function of this sphere is described as "the Support of the Cosmos." It has also been called "The Heavenly Governors of the Creation."

The Dominions are the first level of the second sphere and are included in St. Paul's letter to the Colossians as quoted above. They regulate the duties of lower angels.^[10] Since their position occupies the position closest to the first sphere, they are well positioned to receive from above. Thus, according to Dionysius, the Dominions, "issuing forth to those next in degree... the beautiful and unconfused good order..."^[11] They are the emissaries that communicate with the upper realms to assure the proper functioning of the cosmic responsibilities that are commissioned to this second sphere.

The second level of this second sphere are the Virtues, who are mentioned in First Peter 3:22.^[12] They communicate to earth the miracles and signs of the high realms. Examples of their role would be the miracle of the fall of the walls of Jericho (Josh 5:13-15) or the survival of the three boys from a fiery death in the third chapter of the book of Daniel.

Angels of the third level of the second sphere are called the Powers, or Authorities. They are mentioned in St. Paul's list in Colossians 1:16. The Powers are thought to supervise the movement of the heavenly bodies to ensure order in the cosmos. They are traditionally also seen as warrior angels who oppose the evils spirits' efforts in the cosmic arena. An example of the force of this angelic level may be found in the Psalms of David, where he testifies to the chariots of the angels leading away captives on the high mount of Sinai (Ps. 68:17).

Once again it is important to take note that the level of the Powers has the pivotal position of transition to the three levels that follow. Fr. Pascale Parente, long time professor at Catholic University of America, cites St. Paul in Ephesians, where the Powers are to "make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places." (Eph. 3:9-10) They are responsible for the wisdom of God to be known to the Principalities that are the next level.

Both the Virtues and the Powers, more so than the emissary role of the Dominions, relate, albeit remotely, with the human world. Their remote positions and missions within the hierarchy will not protect these angels from the troubles that ensue after the Fall. St. Paul mentions the Powers in this regard in Ephesians 3:10 and 6:12.

A contemporary Catholic theologian, Peter Kreeft, referred to this sphere as "middle management personnel." It is an excellent depiction, as the Dominions regulate to the second sphere and communicates the needs of the upper level. The Virtues then receive these directives and perform God's miracles and phenomena on earth.

The Powers, which also receive their directives from the emissary angels the Dominions, establish remote interaction between the solar system and the earth's functionality. We can expect that as the Powers' inter-angelic warrior duties diminish post-restoration, these angels and humanity could explore earth's solar system and its relationship to human character and our place in our galaxy, giving greater credence to the popular expression, "as above, so below."

The third sphere, consisting of the Principalities, the Archangels, and the Angels, is the one most engaged with human affairs, with the mission to support them. The majority of the 300 references to angels in the Bible concern these three angelic orders.

The Principalities, the last of the levels mentioned in Col. 2:16, are the angels that guide and protect the nations and groups of people.^[13] They carry out orders of the upper sphere angels and educate the guardians of the realm of earth. Their presence can be seen in many references to Israel in the Old Testament, for instance, in Daniel 10:10-14 where Israel and Persia clash, and in the beautiful promise of security for Israel in Psalm 91:11, "For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all ways." However, as Paul points out in Ephesians, all is not well with their mission as will be explained.

The order of angels in the middle position of the third sphere is the Archangels. They are well known in scripture if not agreed on in title. The Catholic Church recognizes three: Michael, Gabriel (in all biblical versions) and Raphael (in the book of Tobit in the Roman Catholic Bible). There are many variations as to who are among the "seven archangels" who stand before the Lord" (spoken of by Raphael in the book of Tobit) depending usually upon which Orthodox Church is citing the verse. In the apocryphal writings, Uriel is mentioned as an archangel as well. And of course, Divine Principle recognizes the original position of Satan as Lucifer, the Archangel that was charged with educating Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Dionysius describes the Archangels as having a dual role as to their responsibilities. Relating to the Principalities, they serve as emissaries from them. They also have responsibilities to be messengers to the angels at the lowest level.

The holy order of Archangels occupies the middle position in the Hierarchy between the extremes, for it belongs alike to the most holy Principalities and to the holy Angels; the Principalities because it... unites the Angels after the fashion of its own well-regulated and marshalled and invisible leadings; and it belongs to the Angels, because it is of the messenger Order, receiving hierarchically the Divine illuminations from the first powers.^[14]

The Archangel Michael is of course well known. He is mentioned three times in Daniel where Michael is designated the protector of Israel (Dan. 13:10-21). He is mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls.^[15] Michael is also considered the defender of the Christian Church.^[16]

The Archangel Gabriel brings the heavenly message to Mary at The Annunciation.^[17] He is also the messenger who teaches the Qur'an to Muhammad in the Islamic faith.

The appellation "angels," meaning simply "messengers" is the final level of The Celestial Hierarchy, and the one most experienced by humankind. Once again, Kreeft explains succinctly that "ordinary *angels* are the 'guardian angels,' one for each individual."^[18] Parente in his commentary is more substantive; he states, "by their nature and duties, the Angels are closer to man than any other celestial spirit... the closest link between the spirit world and rational man."^[19] The New Testament validates the efforts of these personal spirits, for instance in Luke 15:10, "Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" or in Acts 8:26 where Philip is guided by an angel to meet the Ethiopian eunuch. These are the "ministering spirits" of Hebrews 1:14 who are sent forth to serve.

The angels are with each of us always as a personal sign of a loving God. Nora Spurgin's book *Circles of Angels* and others works of that genre seeks to help our relationship with these most personal of angels. In Western culture, books, films, and articles abound relating to this level of human-angelic interaction. An overarching sentiment of gratitude seems to link them all.

The Celestial Hierarchy and the Growing Period in Divine Principle

Now, let us consider the relationship between the nine-level hierarchy of the angelic world and the nine-level period of growth of human beings in Divine Principle. Let's also contemplate the repercussions of the Fall on both of these structural elements of God's original design, which allows us to ponder questions about the important human-angelic relationship.

To introduce this comparative study of the angelic hierarchy and the human growth period, it is important to address the concept that several of the theologians cited in this study call "the concept of a probation period in the angelic realm." Parente emphatically makes the point:

Just like man, the Angels had to undergo a period of probation during which they were free to choose between good and evil. They were not yet confirmed in grace, and they did not enjoy the Beatific Vision during this time... The fathers and the theologians are unanimous in admitting a period of probation for the Angels.^[20]

Here Parente affirms the concept in Divine Principle that all of God's creations must undergo growth, as nothing is created in perfection. This includes the angels.

A further point also needs to be made. Neither Dionysius nor Aquinas put Lucifer in the level of the Archangels. Yet, the two theologians disagree about his original station. The former considered him to be from among the Cherubim^[21] based on Ezekiel 18:2, while the latter placed him among the Seraphim.^[22]

This article defends the Divine Principle view that Lucifer was an Archangel because of the role of the Archangels in the Celestial Hierarchy. He is working in the third sphere devoted to humankind, as is appropriate for the angels of the third sphere. Lucifer, as an archangel, would have no mission in the first sphere of the angels of the Godhead.

One effective way to advance our comprehension of God's original design is to try to imagine what could have been the ideal relationship between the angelic world and the human world. It is formed in understanding the ideal relationship between God and the angels. Love commands both.

Both worlds, human and angelic, have to achieve the perfection level of their creation.

Each sphere of the angelic world has its probationary period in function of the responsibilities of their respective levels. Divine Principle explains that the Archangels level has the responsibility to oversee the education of the human growth process. The human world had to pass through their three levels of growth by fulfilling their responsibility which was in conjunction with the growth of the angelic world that was supposed to be helping them.

Divine Principle explains that Lucifer was already in a state of angelic maturity at the time of the Fall whereas Eve was in the position to receive wisdom from him as she was immature. Nevertheless, Lucifer must have still been in his probationary period -- which would conclude when human beings reached perfection. Likewise, Eve was still in the period of human growth -- at the top of the growth stage. Eve and Adam had successfully worked with the angelic world to progress that far. What would have happened if that progress had continued?

Let's consider the evident parallel between the model of humankind's growth period -- nine levels grouped into three stages -- and the same organizational structure in The Celestial Hierarchy -- nine levels grouped into

three spheres. Adam and Eve had progressed successfully through the first two levels of the growth stage, completing in all five levels of growth. This suggests that the angels involved in human growth to that point were the angels of the bottom five levels. The following chart illustrates this comparison:

The Celestial Hierarchy		The Period of Human Growth		
1. The Seraphim		Completion	C	
2. The Cherubim			G	
3. The Thrones			F	
4. The Dominion		Growth	C	
5. The Virtues	Levels with Fallen		G	Successful
6. The Powers	Angels: 5 Levels		F	Angel/Human
7. The Principalities		Formation	C	Cooperation:
8. The Archangels			G	5 Levels
9. The Angels			F	

The formation stage for the original human ancestors Adam and Eve was a success. The growth stage was completed successfully in both its formation level and its growth level. Unification teaching puts the emphasis on the Fall of Adam and Eve at the top of the growth stage -- the perfection level of that stage. This is true; however, for the present study it is necessary to recognize the equally true fact that there was a precedent of successful interactions between the angelic world and the human world in the three levels of the formation stage and the bottom two levels of the growth stage.

These five levels of angels were caring for the human world. The success that humans had in growing to that point in their course surely involved angelic presence. This was God's original design. However, as a consequence of the Fall, according to the biblical references above, the fallen angels also came from these five levels. Had the progress of Adam and Eve's interaction with the archangelic level been achieved, the probationary period of the angels of these five levels would have been completed.

Divine Principle speaks of the Archangel Lucifer's education of Adam and Eve. Affirming that he deviated implies that he was himself in his probationary period as an archangel. What of the other angelic spheres?

It became evident in my research that within the angelic hierarchy, a correlative effect transpired on five levels of the angelic world. The biblical references to the fallen angels come from I Kings 22:19 and Jude 1:6 in general and specifically from St. Paul in Ephesians 6:12 and I Corinthians 15:24. How many angels fell is uncertain. Christian theologians have reasoned from scripture that it would be one in three.^[23] The question arises, which one third?

Biblical references to fallen angels only speak of the angelic levels of the lowest sphere and two of the three levels of the middle sphere. That is to say the lowest five levels of the Celestial Hierarchy were the ones that suffered infiltration of evil and ended up propagating fallen angels: Angels, Archangels and Principalities in the third sphere and Powers and Virtues in the second sphere.

The diagram indicates a parallel in the two worlds. What does it mean for our understanding of the historical relationship between humans and angels? It would mean that the probationary period was not yet complete for the angels of these five levels, as human responsibility in human growth was a requirement. On the other hand, the upper four levels were not affected. The reason most probably was that they successfully completed their probationary period in relationship to the respective responsibilities of their level in the hierarchy.

If this is indeed true, the necessary element of gender balance in the Principle of Creation may have been achieved at that time in those levels. Had things gone as they should have, there would have been female angels created, and possibly even procreation of the angels, to supply the expanding numbers of guardian angels of level nine. I note a passage from a compilation of True Father's words from 1965 in which he apparently speaks of "restored" angels, thereby allowing that there could be other angels who did not need restoration:

When the restored angels have a perfect relationship of give and take with God and become positive (plus), then the negative (minus) is to come about naturally. Whether this will be from the existing angelic world or from a new creation, we don't know.^[24]

In conclusion, God's Original Ideal mandates angelic-human cooperation. Nevertheless, none of us qualify as experts on angels. Therefore, we conclude with a series of questions. The overarching question is, where do we see relationship between the angelic and human worlds in God's original design?

1. We have seen structural models that God has used in the two worlds.

2. We have established that there is both a period of growth for humans and a period of probation for the angels.
3. What explanation can be offered for the correlation between the Fall of Adam and Eve just beyond the 5th level of growth and the reality of fallen angels amongst five levels of the Celestial Hierarchy?
4. Equally important, how should we understand the successful relationship between angels and humans during Adam and Eve's initial five levels of growth?

Adam and Eve, Jesus and True Parents have their own claims to progress by interacting with the angels. Where is ours? Our mission is not an impossible one. We are not undertaking this exploration *ex nihilo*. The foundation of successful interaction goes back to the very beginning. It contains the requirement that humans and angels understand each other and work together successfully. As we leave behind the rocky road of restoration, this exciting journey lies ahead of us.

Notes

[1] Mrs. Moon announced this new name for the Unification movement in the spring of 2020.

[2] Foundation Day, January 13, 2013 by the lunar calendar, was declared to be the starting date of *Cheon Il Guk*, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

[3] Nora Spurgin, *Circles of Angels: How You Can Call Your Own Circle of Angels to Energize Your Life* (New York: HSA Publications, 2017).

[4] Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Heavenly Hierarchy*, translated by John Parker M.A., 2015.

[5] Peter Kreeft, *Angels (and Demons) What Do We Really Know About Them*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995).

[6] I take the universe to denote the entire creation in all its vastness, while the cosmos denotes the spiritual world and the physical world around the Earth, whose center is human beings. Hence, the cosmos is intermediate between the universe and the human world.

[7] Ibid, 75.

[8] Pascale Parente, *The Angels in Catholic Teaching and Tradition* (North Carolina: Tan Books, 1975), 78-79.

[9] Dionysius, 31.

[10] Kreeft.

[11] Dionysius, 36-37.

[12] In the Douay-Rheims version, a Roman Catholic bible directly translated from the Vulgate. Cited in Parente, 84.

[13] Kreeft, 75.

[14] Dionysius, 40-41.

[15] *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, ed. Wise, Abegg and Cook (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), 426.

[16] Parente, 92.

[17] Lk 1:6-38.

[18] Kreeft, 75.

[19] Parente, 88.

[20] Parente, 8-9.

[21] Dionysius, Coel.Hier. vi, vii. Cited in *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.63, art.7, 161.

[22] Aquinas, q.63, 161.

[23] Parente, 12.

[24] Sun Myung Moon, "On Prayer and the Spirit World," *Today's World*, November 1998