



# Beyond theology: clarifications, concerns and a call to reflection

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This is a message to all of you who are concerned or interested in some recent developments, and who are open to our contribution on the matter.

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## 1. Intro: we are not activists

It is certainly not our focus as ESGD to be in the role of “community activists”. Our primary calling is in offering education, care and guidance to Blessed Children. However, in these circumstances, our collective conscience is calling us to raise our concerns and to voice what we believe is needed for a healthier community landscape.

It is both curious and challenging to find ourselves, as ESGD, in the position we are in. Our **ESGD statement on ‘new theology’ from Oct 4th** was a sincere expression of concern that we stand by, yet it is the root cause of recent attention and persecution. Despite our consistent attempts to contribute, the mischaracterisation and misrepresentation

of who we are, what motivates us, and what we stand for has intensified. Shin Chul's public messages were informed by views which are often 2nd or 3rd hand, and due to his three public speeches, and his position, they are views that have been spread further and wider than would otherwise have been the case.

As the misrepresentation has been spread, we want to clarify a few key points on our intentions and convictions. We also want to use this chance to respond and reply; to try and shed more light on current challenges within the community, and contribute towards raising the standard of discourse.

## **2. Clarifying our intentions and convictions**

To accompany our thoughts, we have included a number of excerpts from some recent messages sent to EUME leaders that we have received too. We deeply appreciate the significant amount of support we have experienced in the European community and beyond, and we sincerely thank those who appreciate, acknowledge or simply allow our contribution. However, there are some perpetuating untruths that continue to paint us with intentions and actions that we do not identify with, and for this reason we want to begin by earnestly trying to clarify and reiterate some of our perspectives and motivations on this matter:

**1. WE ARE TRYING OUR BEST TO HONOUR AND LOVE TRUE PARENTS; BOTH TRUE FATHER AND TRUE MOTHER.** We understand that without both of their victories and sacrifices, we would not be here. We also acknowledge that we all have different ways of loving True Parents. First generation, who sacrificed their lives for True Parents, and Blessed Children who are committed to honour those sacrifices, should not have to prove that love on demand; it is something that is a part of our stories and woven into our lives. True Parents are not idols to worship; we need the freedom to relate to True Parents uniquely and even to see that relationship as 'a work in progress', rather than a simplistic matter of loyalty.

**2. WE ABSOLUTELY DO NOT WANT DIVISION.** We do not want to, nor have we, left the movement. Therefore, Shin Chul's call

to welcome us back, if we accept the Chambumoron, was inaccurate and misinformed. Despite the present challenges, we are continuing to make efforts to serve the community of blessed families. Even though we are limited in resources, and facing a difficult landscape, we want to continue offering what we can, however small it may be.

**3. OUR RESPONSE TO SHIN CHUL'S PUBLIC MESSAGES WAS NOT PERSONAL AND WE DO NOT HAVE A PERSONAL ISSUE WITH HIM;** our concern is to address the culture behind the message. For what he apologised, we accept, and we understand the significant differences in our perspectives and cultural backgrounds. We sympathise with him, and hope that he will do well and learn from the experience. We also want to learn from the experience.

**4. OUR FOCUS IS NOT ON HAVING A THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE CHAMBUMORON,** although we certainly have concerns regarding its development and its content. Our concerns are primarily pastoral and cultural: this matter has far reaching implications on our Unificationist identity in the present and future.

**5. OUR INTENTION IS TO RAISE AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT,** not to manage the platforms for these discussions to take place. We are not enthusiastic about making statements, but we believe they can be useful as a catalyst for developing the conversations we need to have. It should be normal to discuss matters of public importance publicly.

**6. WE WANT TO APOLOGISE** if we have not always managed to communicate in the best way. We are trying to find a way forward, and we know that also involves reflecting inwardly. We are a dedicated team, and we are all navigating this process as individuals and families too. We apologise if we have not been sensitive enough to how our messages come across; we are trying our best to address issues rather than blame anyone. We have often needed to accept decisions which have been made and carry on without a satisfactory resolution. Yet, throughout, we have been striving to choose the path of no resentment. Though we have sincerely tried, we apologise that we have not managed the challenges and persecution better.

## 7. OUR CORE IDENTITY IS NOT

**ESGD.** We also want to be clear that ‘ESGD’ is beyond the current leadership team. It extends towards many brothers and sisters who are a part of our shared experiences, who have attended our programmes, and who have contributed to our work and development over many years. We do not want them to be misrepresented either, or put in a box, through their association. For many who are connected to our work, ‘ESGD’ is simply a valued aspect of their faith, a meaningful part of their identity, and something which supports those involved to move in a good direction. We want to affirm that our primary identity is as Blessed Family members and Unificationists.

*“ESGD’s work is all about inheriting from True Parents, following the path of the Blessing and living a principled life. They encourage a culture of being consciously engaged with church matters, to better equip BCs to withstand the spiritual turbulence and trends or currents that occur within our movement and beyond. This is so valuable if we want our community to withstand the test of time and should be encouraged rather than shut down.”*

## 3. Communicating our Concerns

The European community has become aware of the recent issues with Shin Chul’s talks about ESGD. We informed our network by sharing his FIRST and SECOND talk, and here you can find the third talk on the following weekend:



We acknowledge that Shin Chul has had talks with other European leaders, and though we were dismayed that he kept his focus on ESGD, we do accept his apology. But are we meant to ignore the other content in his

messages? Sadly, his claims are an immediate threat to our work, and have already caused damage. Should we expect to be exiled if we don't bow to such threats?

These questions are unsettling and very real concerns for us as a team. But more than that, the issue at hand is far beyond protecting ESGD and preserving our freedom to carry on contributing to the community: it is about the culture that all of us are part of creating – and the aspects of the current culture we need to improve. This is part of the reason we want to share more of our thoughts with you directly.

## —Addressing Shin Chul's comments

We want to specifically address 2 topics from Shin Chul's content that demand our response [paraphrasing]:

### “WE CANNOT CO-EXIST”.

We wholeheartedly disagree on this. We need to co-exist. We can. And we must.

For decades, our movement has been trying to reach out to the world, presenting ourselves as those who want to unify world religions, as well as the worlds of science, politics, economy, art, sport and culture. Peace ambassadors and representatives of many different fields of life have been encouraged to support and join the projects and initiatives of the movement – they have been praised and appreciated regardless of their background, lifestyle and beliefs. In January 2025, we heard a very different message – one that is perhaps a truer expression of where we are currently.

Our aim as a community should not be one where everyone thinks and believes the same. Unity is not uniformity. We must allow for differences in spirituality and religious observance, where we are striving to honour True Parents and the Divine Principle – and worship God – in our unique ways.

*“If we place dogma above the freedom to think, question, and discuss, we will quickly alienate and lose every member of our community – plain and simple. Freedom is a prerequisite for truth. Where there is freedom – of thought discussion and differing*

*...holding ourselves with differing  
opinions – there can be truth,  
goodness, and a healthy faith.”*

No one can deny the value of gaining a deeper understanding of True Parents' life course. We can fully understand the heart to support and attend True Mother whilst she is on this earth, she has our full sympathy and compassion. We can all acknowledge and honour her specific course. However, we do not need to equate 'loving the Chambumoron' with 'loving True Mother'.

The 'Chambumoron', as it has been presented thus far, has brought a silent upheaval and unacknowledged turbulence in how we relate with True Parents as a community. (When we refer to 'Chambumoron' we are talking about the substantial body of educational content focused on 'new teachings on True Parents' / 'True Parents' Theology' / 'Discourse on True Parents'). Some are fully on board and inspired. Some want to give it the benefit of the doubt and find something valuable despite having reservations. But we also observe that there is a cost to such radical reordering. Some are unsettled by the degree of historical revisionism. Some are perplexed and frustrated. For some, it is a crisis of faith and belonging. For some the movement is less credible, and less comfortable to call home. We do not want more brothers and sisters to leave the movement because they feel alienated. We want to contribute towards creating at least some space to represent those voices that cannot be drowned.

### **“THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE IS DIVISION”**

To refer to Sanctuary is inaccurate and misleading; it is an effort to demonise dissenting voices and to stoke fear. We have always sought to work within the community. We do not proclaim authority over True Parents and we do not have any official position in the movement. We should all want a path of reconciliation and harmony, this also includes 'Sanctuary'. And we need to consider the cost of further fragmentation and demoralisation of our community.

Some voices continue to demand that ESGD should be removed (though this has already happened), or that we should be officially condemned (this seems to have happened). What would that achieve exactly, and what would such an action show about our

community as a whole? In a healthy community, would any willingness to voice genuine concerns be seen as divisive? Have we forgotten that facing problems and overcoming them together, is a normal part of development for any group and community? It is certainly not an easy task, but we do believe it is possible. Perhaps, our future as a community depends on it.

*“If there are steps towards further division – if ESGD is cut from the communication network, or banned from Camberg just as they were banned from Slovakia’s center – I believe the whole European movement will be damaged, not just or mainly esgd, not just BCs and blessed families connected to them, but because **it will be an expression and a testimony of our incapacity as an organization to solve internal struggles and find the unity, when we are supposed to witness this to the world.**”*

## **—There is no cohesive narrative of our current reality**

When we witness contradictions in plain sight, it is difficult to have a starting point of discussion, and it undermines us developing a cohesive narrative of what is really going on. Are we in a crisis? Or have things never been better? Is the Chambumoron a discourse that can be freely studied, discussed, and rejected, or is it a new truth that must be accepted?

We still observe an information gap which makes having a constructive conversation difficult. Our original statement received a huge amount of support from those who resonated with the message. Those who tended to downplay the concerns that were raised were often less informed: “I don’t know what Chambumoron is”. Understandably, without information, it is more difficult to digest our reality. Since then, the discourse has opened up, but it is still challenging to be informed enough to have a clear perspective.

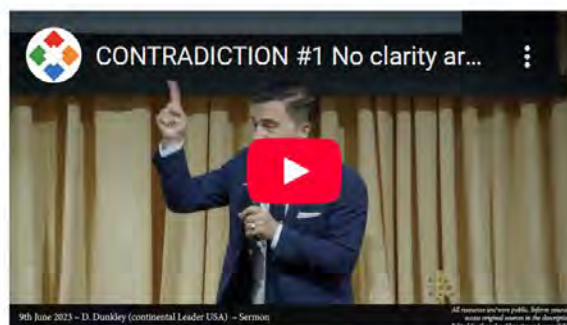
Information might not unsettle people as much as a lack of information does. Noticing that things have changed, and not having a narrative to understand it, is what can bring confusion. That is why, after much reflection, we have concluded that it would be helpful to collect some videos that demonstrate these contradictions, divergence in teachings, and lack of transparency. These are from widely circulated public talks and memos, which we have all been encouraged to listen to and read.

To be clear, we are not here to expose anyone, nor to focus on the details of the Chambumoron. Our concern is about acknowledging that there is no cohesive narrative of what is currently going on in our movement, and we must do better if we want to move forward together. We do not want to spoon-feed anyone, but we also do not want to be vague at a time when people want information:

## — CONTRADICTION #1 Unclarity about the Chambumoron:

These are a few of the topics that need clarification:

1. 'The new theology is a discourse and a conversation' vs. 'we all need to accept it'
2. 'The new theology is not that different' vs. 'we are a new religion'
3. 'Theology is not that important' vs. 'we cannot co-exist with people who do not believe the new theology'
4. 'We must study it' vs 'nothing is final/it's not finished yet'



## — CONTRADICTION #2 Does it or does it not say that Father should not have married his 1st wife?







## — CONTRADICTION #3 Do some integral points about the Chambumoron come from lecturers or from True Mother?



At the pilgrimage in Korea last summer, part of the education was focused on the Chambumoron. These are some follow up messages from leaders after the pilgrimage:

Message from M. BALCOMB  
6th October 2024

"[...] Some of the young people who went on the recent pilgrimage to Korea, we had almost 200, didn't have such a positive experience. They felt, oh, wait a minute, we're, we're confused. We don't like this, and we are not being properly counseled, or we don't have any opportunity to discuss this. And **I have to say, I'm very sorry.** [...] That's on me that we didn't take more care about what happened.

Message from I.P. MOON, B. PAMMER,  
G. CAPONE - 23rd November 2024

"[...] We wish to address some concerns regarding the pilgrimage. [...] Although the lecturers worked diligently to bring clarity and depth to their presentations on Chambumoron and the Spirit & Value of True Parents, we recognize that some explanations regarding True Parents' life course were insufficient or shaped by personal experience, which does not always reflect what True Mother wants to convey. We also acknowledge the limited opportunities for participants to ask questions and interact with senior figures in open, supportive settings. We regret that this may have left some participants feeling confused or unfulfilled. **For this, we sincerely apologise.**"

What do these apologies refer to? How can we cross reference that what the apology is for, is not what continues to be taught? When is it the lecturer's opinion vs. teaching content which they have been asked and authorised to pass on? Since the inception of the 'new teachings', it appears to be that controversial content has been consistently denied, obscured, reformulated, or redacted. This in itself is alarming.

## — Wider CULTURAL concerns

We want to share some further perspectives on the cultural concerns we observe. There is a growing inability to reflect and stick with difficult conversations, perhaps because of the fear of facing an often uncomfortable reality. We are encouraged to 'Forgive, Love, Unite', but this can sometimes be interpreted as 'Forget, don't reflect, move on'. When we do that, it makes it difficult to fix things, or to learn the necessary lessons.

For this topic we are sharing a number of excerpts from letters which have been sent to EUME leadership and us. It is helpful to hear more voices, and we are grateful for their engagement and consideration.

### **Culture of Control**

*“We are sliding toward a culture of control and submission and away from the freedom of God’s blessing of individual responsibility and growth.”*

*“The core message in Shinchul’s speeches, and his “apology” ... was that the Chambumo-Ron cannot be debated. Prohibiting discourse and freedom of speech is not “unity” – it is control. ESGD’s courage in voicing their concerns about the new theology is not divisive. On the contrary, it serves as a bridge, allowing those with similar concerns to feel welcomed and valued in the community, despite differing views.”*

*“How are we supposed to accept something that isn’t finished or where the content of it is changing whilst it’s being taught? Is there no further discussion to be had about the chambumoron when so many feel difficulty with its new teachings? Surely because of this, feedback should have been expected and that concerns expressed should be taken into consideration and explored, not disparaged.”*

*“I am deeply troubled ... that such public and unfair criticism of long serving members of the community is allowed to go unchecked, and that more and more the culture of the movement is just believe or leave,*

*discouraging any autonomy of thought or expression of belief.”*

It seems there is simply ‘too much fear’ in how we communicate in the movement; whilst we need to maintain respect and accept differences, we desperately need to work on being freer to communicate. But threats of ‘excommunication’ are demonstrating how you may be treated as a result of speaking up. Within these threats, there is also a pressure to conform and simply accept what is going on, and we grow evermore disempowered. As a result, there is a concrete narrowing of the space of what it can mean to be a Unificationist. This is a serious pastoral concern. When there is too much control, we lose our sense of freedom and responsibility. We need to protect space for people to take ownership of the community we are a part of.

### **Culture of Slander**

*“We have spoken with our second-gen peers, first-gen parents, and leaders, and many have expressed critical thoughts and questions regarding the discourse surrounding the new theology. These concerns reflect a broader issue within the entire community rather than being limited to ESGD. Why, then, is ESGD being held responsible for tensions and challenges that are being felt across the whole community?”*

*“The accusations Shinchul made against ESGD during his address last weekend were unfounded and aimed solely at damaging their reputation within the community. He presented no evidence to support his claims, and he himself admitted to not knowing the specifics of the alleged transgressions he referenced. When an accusation is made without evidence, it is your responsibility as leaders either to provide the evidence or to publicly condemn the accusation as false. How are members of this*

*community supposed to feel protected from slander if your default response is silence? Your role is to protect all members, ESGD included.”*

*“I think what we cannot afford is to feed and allow a culture in our community where people are “left out” of the main network of FFWPU based on rumours and one-sided information. I think we cannot afford to accept a culture of gossip and ostracization to take root the way it has happened among members and leadership ... Acceptance of this approach – listening to one side without facing the accused side – undermines trust and feeds hatred and misunderstanding.”*

Without fair evaluation and due process, lazy and simplistic conclusions are unchallenged, and lies about members in our community are tolerated and become entrenched. Sadly, there is little accountability for the damage caused, or enough care to rectify the situation.

### **Culture of Silence**

*“A community where people are forced to follow without question, obey without understanding, or blindly accept is not the kind of community God calls us to build. Unfortunately, this is the direction we seem to be heading if you continue to remain silent on these critical issues.”*

*“The issues within our community arise not from a small group but from the leadership’s lack of openness to an honest discourse surrounding the new theology. Labeling critical voices as heretical or silencing dissent does not align with the ideals of love, mutual respect, and freedom of*

*thought that our movement strives for. Such actions foster fear and alienation, rather than unity and understanding.”*

*“Is there nothing to be said here from other leadership to remedy the situation, more than just apologies for profanity? I do not wish anyone ill and I do not envy those in leadership positions. But this is a critical time for leadership to respond to what is happening.”*

This ‘silence’ is in the growing culture of ignoring the issue and not saying anything at all. It is also in denying there is an issue, or dismissing concerns when something is expressed. We should all feel some sense of responsibility for the movement, whether we have a formal position or not. We should respond to issues that need to be addressed.

## **4. Call to reflection**



Shouldn’t we be concerned about the implications of such wholesale changes to our faith? Is it really ‘just theology’? We can only take responsibility over something that we have first figured out ourselves. Yet, the common response to genuine questions often seems to be to ‘pray about it’ and ‘keep a good attitude’. However, in the face of all the contradictions, we need facts, and we want truth. That is why we are trying to engage with care and curiosity, and we want to keep making efforts to make sense of what is happening at present. We want to encourage study, research and reflection, and to encourage people to share honestly about their personal understanding of the Divine Principle, True Parents, and the state of our communities and movement.

We are troubled by a culture that is ignoring legitimate concerns, that is less attentive to seeking the truth, and less and less grounded in reality. If we choose to, this can be a time of contemplation and introspection, rather than of knee-jerk condemnation and scapegoating. We need conscious cultural change if we are to do things differently in the future. If we are to

move forward from where we are, raising the standard of discourse *can* make a difference; as we can better process our failings and work from a deeper understanding. We want to encourage a greater sense of urgency, to preserve a sense of agency over where we are going as a movement, as blessed families, and as individuals. We want to encourage a sense of collective ownership, rather than creating a simplistic distinction between ‘leader’ and ‘members’.

Our movement is built on a rich spiritual tradition of deep faith in God. We stand on our Judeo-Christian foundation, we stand on 70 years of Divine Principle teachings, we stand on the real sacrifices of the 1st Generation. We have had the privilege of receiving the Blessing from True Parents, and we have much work to do towards our goal of establishing ideal families. We want to support a less dogmatic culture of ‘grounded Unificationism’, which preserves space to co-exist with different beliefs, but with a respect for the core identity we share, and those things which do unite us. We want to offer a considered message of encouragement and hope, and trust that God can work with our collective efforts as a community.

The ESGD team  
12th February 2025

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