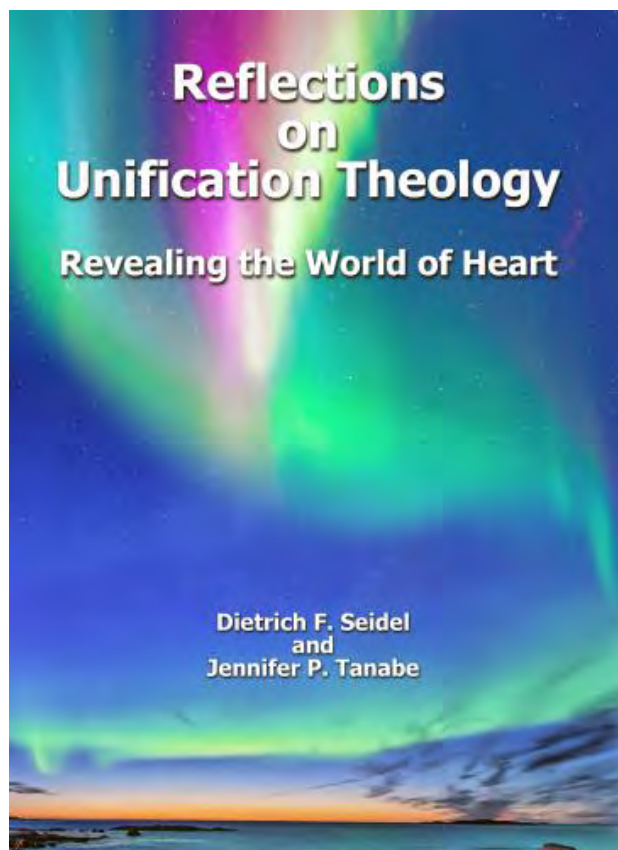


## Revelation and Theology

Jennifer Tanabe  
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The new publication, *Reflections on Unification Theology: Revealing the World of Heart*, which I co-authored with the late Dr. Dietrich Seidel, offers reflections and insights into Unification Theology.

These insights come not just from the hard work of the intellect, but more subtly and quietly through that small voice that speaks to the heart, that reveals the heart of God. Beyond theological expertise, it takes heart to understand God.

As Rev. Sun Myung Moon himself remarked, God is a God of heart:

*The Bible is like a love-letter written by a bridegroom searching for his bride and containing many secret codes. Why does God write in code? It is because God is a God of heart. Not everyone is meant to decipher the Bible ... only those who have prepared themselves to attend the Lord with a heart akin to God's heart can decipher the Bible; to anyone else it is an impenetrable mystery. ... It does not matter how well you know theology. You cannot understand the Bible unless you interpret it by the flow and feeling of heart.*

So, what is the purpose of theology? It is to understand God, God's purpose for creation, and particularly the purpose of the creation of human beings, namely us.



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How do we do this? We need God's help. How do we receive God's help in understanding God? Through revelation, and revelation comes not from our own rational intellectual efforts, but through the heart.

Without revelation, we have only our human reason to try to make sense of our Creator, the being who transcends human history in time and space. An impossible task! In fact, any description and understanding of God that we come up with on our own is doomed to be incomplete, and probably misleading.

Unification Theology depends not only on human reason but also on divine inspiration, or revelation, to bring its new understanding of God. I can attest that the insights contained in this book are not based on intellectual reasoning alone, but include inspirations that came through the heart.

To apply the truths found in Unificationism to successfully change ourselves, and by extension change society so that God's ideal of creation can finally come into existence, the central point cannot be our intellect. God, our Heavenly Parent, created based on heart, that irrepressible emotional impulse to seek joy through love. To fulfill the ideal of creation, we human beings must also base our co-creatorship, of ourselves, of our families, our societies, our world, and our stewardship over all creation, on heart.

It is through the eyes of the heart that we most clearly see our way, our purpose, and what we must do to restore this world to the original ideal of creation. Our quest is to see the world through the eyes of the heart, and in so doing to experience the true love of God.

What follows are two excerpts from our book:

### The Importance of Revelation

«In theology we are seeking answers about God, about creation, and about human beings and our purpose in life. We are looking for something from God, something to follow, how to act. Because we are separated from God, out of our own resources we would never find our original purpose.

We cannot find out how this world can be saved; how all the suffering of humankind can come to an end.

We cannot understand God through our reason and intellect alone; we need God's help.

God is He whom we cannot see with our human eyes or touch. He is not a being who can be seen within the limit of human vision. God is the parent of all humankind, the creator of all things. If such a God can be determined and analyzed within human thinking, then we can conclude that any other great being could be God.

God is only God. ... If anyone could analyze God with their human brain, that person would have to be God.

(Sang Hun Lee, *Messages from the Spirit World*, FFWPU, 2001)

Interestingly, the great theologian, Thomas Aquinas, wrote [in *Summa Theologica*] in favor of divine inspiration in addition to the work of human reason:

Now Scripture, inspired of God, is no part of philosophical science, which has been built up by human reason. Therefore it is useful that besides philosophical science, there should be other knowledge. i.e. inspired of God.

He argued for the need to have knowledge revealed by God in order that we may understand God's purpose for humankind:

Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason: "The eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee" (Is. 66:4). But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation. ... It was therefore necessary that besides philosophical science built up by reason, there should be a sacred science learned through revelation.

Even theologians recognize the need for revelation! For those who seek answers to the questions of ultimate concern for humankind, even if they were trained in theology and philosophy, revelation is fundamental, foundational to the direction of their understanding.»

### **What is Revelation?**

«In Young Oon Kim's book, *Unification Theology*, there is an interesting discussion about revelation. She makes a number of points that are relevant to Unification Theology, noting that there are different types of revelation. For example, there is revelation as a doctrinal statement, as in scripture. We read the Bible and then think, here is what God is telling us.

Because it is a holy text, we acknowledge its authority, and from there we gain insight. In connection with that, we read the text and then inspiration comes. We look beyond the words and we feel God is revealing more of His heart. So, beyond the doctrinal revelation we have inspiration as another way that God conveys His view and His will to humankind.

Then, also, there is revelation in the more immediate sense of certain people having a personal encounter with God, the mystical encounter where revelation is given. For example, Moses meeting God on the mountain; that is very dramatic. Other such revelations may be less dramatic, more personal or private in nature, experienced as a mystical union with God.

Another type of revelation is described by twentieth-century German theology, Wolfhart Pannenberg, who concluded that "it is in history itself that divine revelation takes place." Indeed, we see God revealed through salvific acts. For example, a major salvific act for the Israelites is the Exodus. As Moses leads them out of Egypt, God reveals continuously through His actions that He is their God. This is the foundation for the Israelite people to strengthen their belief, to be inspired, and to persevere in the midst of hardship.

Then there is the possibility of new revelation and how this can be tolerated. Many times, people of faith say that we have it all in here, in our scriptures. Why do we need new revelation? This is important because people may refuse to talk about new revelation because it is part of their doctrine that there is to be no more revelation. The book is closed. But on several occasions in history there was new revelation. Jesus brought new understanding to his disciples that went beyond the Covenant between God and the Israelites, beyond the Ten Commandments received by Moses. Francis of Assisi and others received divine revelation that changed the course of their lives, and many others who followed them. There are many historical situations where there was more revelation, and, based on that, the providence could progress.

Revelation is important because it defines our primary sources: The Bible, Divine Principle, Father

Moon's speeches, Mother Moon's speeches. Revelation defines our primary corpus, our collection of scriptural writings, and it is an ongoing process that gives us more and more access to God's heart, to His will.



*"Thomas Aquinas" by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, 1650.*

The next step is that we take revelation and apply it to our daily lives. We reflect on it, we say, what does this mean in this situation? That way we gain more and more treasures for our life of faith, and we become stronger, better able to accomplish God's will.

Advancing the providence requires more than just spiritual revelation. It means action in the physical world. Knowing more about God is a calling, a mission, and it calls for change in this world. You are changing not just yourself, but your environment and other people, when you carry out your mission. Revelation leads us to action. That was Sun Myung Moon's situation. He had this tremendous experience with God, felt intoxicated with God's love, and multiplied that intoxication, becoming the leaven for humankind to be saved.

How can the primary revelation, God's will as it is manifested to us, affect our lives, change our behavior, change our heart, so that we become reconnected with God? This is why we do theology: We do it to reflect on revelation and become stronger in our faith, and act on it.»

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### **Eschatology: Revelation**

«How can we make sense out of the whole body of revelation in the New Testament and Old Testament? The understanding is that God's self-disclosure will be given at the end of history, at the eschaton. Eschatology, therefore, as a theological discipline provides a methodical explanation of revelation.

There have been a number of revelations concerning the eschaton. We have the final book in the Bible which is actually called Revelation, or the Apocalypse in the Catholic tradition. In the Old Testament, there are apocalyptic books, like the Book of Daniel, that contain descriptions of spiritual phenomena. Certain categories are consistently presented in these revelatory sources. There is a specific revelation regarding the end times. It is not something philosophers or theologians were dreaming up, but God has been revealing that something will happen.

The history of restoration is not a smooth history moving along at a constant pace. Restoration happens in a very dramatic fashion at certain times in history. These times are often times of revelation, when something previously hidden is made known.

Restoration comes through the cooperation between God and humankind. It is our willingness to

cooperate with God which advances the fulfillment of God's will.»◇

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We are living in a time of new revelation. Such divine inspiration allows us to know the nature of God, our Heavenly Parent, beyond anything our intellectual reasoning alone can discover. Unification Theology is based on newly revealed understanding of God's heart, including God's hope for humankind, and the pain that our Heavenly Parent has felt at our failures.

To treat revelation as knowledge is not enough; it is also a call to action. The time we live in is one of those periods in human history when the providence of restoration advances in dramatic fashion. It is an exciting time! However, we must remember that God is not responsible to do all the work. Unification Theology stresses the importance of human responsibility, the cooperative effort between God and humankind.

Fulfillment of human responsibility allows God to give revelation to us, provided our hearts are open. Such divine inspiration advances our understanding, informing our theological discourse, so that theology can fulfill its purpose. That purpose is to know God and to fulfill God's hope for human beings to be co-creators of God's ideal. When we understand that purpose, and act on it, as Dietrich Seidel declares, "We have to proclaim the end of theology!"

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*Dr. Dietrich F. Seidel (1943-2016) received his Ph.D. in theology at the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto. He taught theology and related subjects for 12 years at Unification Theological Seminary. His publications may be found [here](#).*

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*Reflections on Unification Theology: Revealing the World of Heart* may also be ordered as an eBook.