

## Some Thoughts on True Mother's Proclamations

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*The following sermon by Dr. Andrew Wilson, professor of Scriptural Studies at the Unification Theological Seminary, was given at the Mid-Hudson Family Church in Red Hook, New York on February 3, 2013.*

A few days ago, True Mother made a very important proclamation, in which she said that we should not pray anymore to “Heavenly Father,” but to “Heavenly Parent.” There is a profound significance in this for the upcoming Foundation Day, which I want to explain.

Foundation Day is supposed to be the beginning of Cheon Il Guk, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. How does the Kingdom come into substantial reality? The Kingdom of Heaven is the family of God, and its citizens are people who are confident in God’s love for them and who love each other with God’s love. We all long for this to become a reality, yet all around us we see brokenness, imperfection and dysfunction. It is hard to find any true examples of the ideal.

At least with Foundation Day, we should be at the starting-point of that ideal, so that we can grow into it. What is the ideal? According to the Principle of Creation, it starts from our relationship with God. The ideal is where human beings and God fully engage in giving and receiving as object partners, characterized by perfect resemblance, complete participation in the Will, and unity of love and heart. Our hearts and minds should fully manifest God’s heart and mind. As such people multiply throughout the world; we have the kingdom of Heaven.

Why haven’t we been able to reach that level so far? When we examine our situation, we recognize that we are not in perfect resemblance to God, nor do we engage in perfect relationships of subject and object with Him; how then can we expect to be in perfect unity with each other?

### **We Resemble Our Heavenly Parent**

Maybe the reason is that we do not know God as our Heavenly Parent. I have been studying *Wolli Wonbon*, the original Divine Principle that Father wrote in 1951. It makes a striking and amazing assertion: “People who know God only as Heavenly Father are imperfect.” What is this? As Unificationists we are always praying, “Father, Father.” Most of us only relate to God in prayer as Heavenly Father, and many of us only think of the Messiah as True Father. Is there something incomplete in our standpoint?

If we are fully to resemble God, and if God is fully to resemble us, God has to be Father and Mother, because we are both men and women. We are parents as fathers and parents as mothers. In this regard, Mother’s proclamation that God is Heavenly Parent is of profound importance.

Any parent knows, and any child knows, that a father has a different heart than a mother does. We assert that every child has the right to a two-parent family, because a child needs both: a parent with a heart of a father and a parent with the heart of a mother. A father’s attitude and love, and a mother’s attitude and love, are different. They are both God’s love, but they are different.

Today we sang the Holy Song “Heart of the Father.” It describes the Father’s heart as seeking to bring out the goodness and joy of each person. Indeed, this is what fathers do. They want to give their children every advantage, so that they can succeed in life. They praise success, to encourage their children to become the best they can be — the most loving, the most successful, the richest — whatever values the father has, he encourages his children to succeed in those ways. If the child slacks off, the father gets upset. That is good, because it spurs the child on to greater efforts. His children compete to succeed, and

he rewards the winners.

A mother's love is different. Her love is for all her children, in their failures as well as their successes. A mother cannot forget her child who is handicapped, her child who cannot make it in school, or her child who goes off the wagon and becomes an addict. She suffers with the child who is the victim of circumstance, the victim of bad luck or the child's own bad choices. The mother's heart has the quality of compassion. She looks after the lost sheep that Jesus talks about — even the black sheep of the family.

In a family, we experience balance between a father's love which is always seeking to cultivate goodness and lifts up the child for his or her success, and a mother's love which is compassionate and nurturing even to the failures. That balance between the two genders provides the best of both types of love.

In a movement that is run by True Father who represents Heavenly Father, we have been pushing forward to try to achieve the goals of God's providence. Meanwhile there has been much collateral damage, as friends have fallen by the wayside, and brothers and sister's hearts have been hurt. Some have felt the sting of rejection and then come to resent the church, even resent True Parents. We all too often fall into judging ourselves and others for not measuring up to the "standard." All in all, Heavenly Mother's heart has not been expressed adequately.

If Heavenly Mother's heart were alive in our movement, we would become a movement that would truly nurture everyone and embrace everyone. It would have the patience to care for members who have fallen by the wayside and not judge them or create in them the self-judgment that they are unworthy. It would bear with those whose faith is weak, and if people make bad choices, to work for their recovery.

It was necessary and appropriate to emphasize God's nature as Father when we were so much focused on goals and results. True Father had to fight for goals all his life. He has pushed us to fulfill the goals of the providence, and we all accepted that as necessary. We gritted our teeth, swallowed hard, and sacrificed—but at what cost? The movement has been hollowed out and we are left with a few survivors who straggle toward the finish line.

This is something to contemplate as we approach Foundation Day. The reason we have failed to establish the Kingdom of God in miniature in our church is because we have allowed the masculine side of God and the masculine side of True Parents to dominate our lives and our thinking in a way that has not provided enough room for compassion, for nurturing, for forgiveness, and for inclusion of those brothers and sisters and children who couldn't make the grade.

### **Praying to Heavenly Parent Is Key**

Thus, True Mother's proclamation that we should pray not anymore to Heavenly Father, but to Heavenly Parent is to my mind one of the final keys to prepare for Foundation Day. Foundation Day marks the beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven, where the earth resembles heaven and heaven resembles earth. We resemble God, God resembles us, and we become one. One in heart, one in body, and one in mind. We have heard the definition of Cheon Il Guk: the nation, where two become one. Who are the two? Male and female. That is the Principle.

The fundamental core of the Principle is that God has the dual characteristics of male and female. We were created with two genders for natural resemblance with the God of two genders. Yet, as long as God is only Father we cannot resemble God fully, because there is a difference between a father of one gender and us of two genders. Likewise, as long as our relationship to God is mediated through a male Messiah, a true relationship with God founded on complete resemblance is impossible.

True Parents are of two genders; therefore they are the central people for establishing genuine resemblance. We have our Heavenly Parent and our True Parents. It doesn't work if it's True Parents and Heavenly Father. That doesn't make resemblance. It has to be Heavenly Parent and True Parents. Then on that basis, we also, as parents in our own families, participate in that same unity with God.

But until now, the female gender was disadvantaged. Think about all the ways that the female gender has been disadvantaged in the Unification Movement over the years. Go even further back and think about all the ways that the female gender has been disadvantaged throughout the history of God's Providence.

Today we sang a song about Moses, "There is a man coming to Egypt." It praises Moses, but where was his wife? Why don't we sing, "There was a couple coming out of Egypt, and Moses and Zipporah were their names"? What happened to Zipporah? Why didn't she help write the Ten Commandments? The Divine Principle says that the Ten Commandments represented Adam and Eve, right? So she should have been up on the mountain with Moses writing the Eve side of the Ten Commandments while Moses wrote the Adam side of the Ten Commandments. But she wasn't there. As a result, we have a Judaism which favored men and which saw men as people could receive God's revelation, but not women. There were a few women prophets, such as Huldah who appears in *Second Kings*, and Deborah. But they are few and

far between.

Judaism built a messianic expectation centered on a man—to be precise, King David. Where was David's wife? That is a problem, because David had dozens of wives, so there was no gender balance there. Also, his favorite wife was Bathsheba. Hence when the Jewish people were looking for the Messiah, they were not looking for a couple, they were only looking for a man, someone in the image of King David.

### **True Salvation Involves Both Genders**

Thus, Christianity was left with a messianic expectation that one man alone, the male Messiah, will come and bring salvation, when according to the Principle, true salvation has to involve both genders.

Christianity has the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is up in the heavens and not on earth. So, people's relationship to the Holy Spirit is not quite the same as their relationship to their mothers. With True Mother, the Holy Spirit is not in heaven anymore; She is on earth. And by extension, She is in our mothers, our sisters and our daughters, and in men, too by virtue of their relationship with their mothers while growing up. It is for the last reason that even though I am a man and cannot speak as a woman, I have some basis to speak for mothers and to speak for Heavenly Mother. Indeed, God has led me in that direction over the last few years.

When we think about Christianity and Christians' relationship to God, it is not balanced. Do you see women priests in the Catholic Church? No, women are not allowed to be priests. Why not? Because somehow they cannot represent God the way men can. How about in the Unification Church? How many women leaders do you see? At staff meetings with True Father, when he was alive, there were but a handful of women regularly present.

How many presidents of the Unification Church in the United States have been women? How many of the district- council representatives appointed to the National Council were women? None [in the first round of nominations]. So Hyung Jin Nim, to his credit, asked for each district to put forward the name of a woman so that at six could be chosen as at-large representatives to the National Council. Yet, the fact that all the district councils had appointed only men for the National Council is telling.

I could go on and on about this. Some theologians in Korea say that Foundation Day is about when God marries a wife. Have you heard of the concept that God is to marry a wife? But they do not consider that God is also marrying a husband. Their view is not balanced, because if God is dual characteristics, then just as Heavenly Father rejoices to marry Eve, Heavenly Mother would rejoice to marry Adam. Why is the theology not described that way? It is because our thinking and our spirit is fundamentally male-centered.

Dr. Hendricks spoke last week about a minister who had a beautiful, compassionate heart, until he started reading scripture, at which time he became rigid and judgmental. Why is that? It is because the Bible is very masculine. It was almost entirely written by men and about men, except perhaps for the Book of Ruth.

The way God is portrayed in the Bible is almost entirely masculine. Consider Genesis 3:16, where God spoke to Eve immediately after the Fall: "Because you have done this, you will be cursed with pain in childbearing and cursed in that your desire will be for your husband and he shall rule over you." Do you think Heavenly Mother would have actually spoken to Her daughter like this? Think about it, those of you who are mothers, or you fathers if you can put yourselves in your wife's shoes: suppose your teenage daughter had premarital sex with some high-school guy. Sadly, this is not an infrequent occurrence among second-generation Unificationists. Would you speak to your daughter like that, saying, "You are cursed. Get out of the house! Because you are cursed, you are never going to have a good life"? Since that is not the way most mothers would behave, do you think that is the way Heavenly Mother would have spoken to Her daughter Eve? She would have no doubt comforted Eve in her tears and tried to help Eve recover herself.

Just because something is not written in the Bible does not mean that God didn't do it. Yet, the Bible was written by men who didn't consider a female point of view when they were writing about the Fall. They saw everything in terms of judgment.

Because the Bible does not disclose the heart of Heavenly Mother, we are disadvantaged as a Judeo-Christian world. We must look long and hard to find verses where God speaks in Her feminine voice like this, "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you. You shall be comforted in Jerusalem." (Isaiah 66:13)

Thus, Mother's proclamation is really important for redressing an imperfection in our movement and in the Judeo-Christian world. We have not been able truly to be a balanced church, because our image of God has been only masculine.

According to my understanding of the Divine Principle, we need True Parents. It is not enough that Jesus saves us, or even that Father saves us. We also need Mother. This is Mother's time to take the stage as Heavenly Mother's representative on earth. During Father's lifetime, even when Mother went on speaking tours she read Father's words rather than give her own speeches. But now, Mother is speaking out. Hallelujah! I think it is great. She is saying, "God is Parents." That means she is going to represent Mother God and act like a mother.

### **Both Father and Mother Are the Embodiment of God**

We understood during True Father's lifetime that Father was the complete embodiment of Heavenly Father, but when Father was alive, how many of us truly believed that True

Mother was the embodiment of Heavenly Mother? Did we truly in our hearts believe, or even now do we truly believe, that Mother is God? I am speaking to those of you who hold to a high Christology. You believe that Father is God, and that he was walking the earth as God incarnate. How many of you also believe that Mother is walking the earth as God incarnate? If you do not, it is a problem, because if we truly believe the Principle, there must be dual characteristics to God.

People can point to Mother's flaws. But does being God incarnate mean that one must be perfect and have no flaws? Is that what perfection means? What about Father: did he have any flaws? Was he perfect in every way? He gets angry, he curses people out, and he may even have regrets over some of his choices in life. We teach that Jesus made mistakes in his life, so why shouldn't Father have made some? But does that matter ultimately? No, because perfection is not about being perfect in the sense of not making mistakes; it is about oneness with God. Father has that relationship, and Mother is in the position to have that relationship too. The proclamation that God is Heavenly Parent makes Mother's oneness with God possible.

I think it is important to praise Mother as the embodiment of God. It may feel uncomfortable to some of you. You may have not had the many experiences with Mother that you had with Father. But as Father himself said in this week's reading, God can come to you in visions and dreams as Mother. Have any of you had God come to you in a vision or a dream as Mother? (*About 20 percent of the congregation raises their hands.*) There are quite a few of you. Good! Heavenly Mother can wear Mother's clothes just as Heavenly Father can wear Father's clothes.

It is so important that we change our way of praying and pray to Heavenly Parent. Yet many of us find that when we pray, we lapse into the habitual, "Father! Father!" But just try praying to Heavenly Mother and see what happens. There is a new world of relationship with God that can open up for you if you do. This is because Mother's heart is different from Father's heart.

### **Meaning of "Heavenly Parent"**

*Hanul bumoo*, Heavenly Parent: what does it mean? The Korean word *bumoo* contains *bu*, "father," and *mo*, "mother," so *bumoo* means "father and mother." In English when we translate it "parents," it does not convey the proper flavor of the Korean. After all, there are many single-parent families in the United States, so people think that a mother can be a child's parent by herself or a father can be a child's parent by himself. But the heavenly concept of parent is two, father and mother. *Bumoo* is literally "father-mother." So we can also translate *Hanul Bumoo* as "Father-Mother God." Then the meaning of "Heavenly Parent" becomes crystal clear.

Without changing our way of relating to God, we cannot really welcome Foundation Day, because we cannot enter a mindset and spirituality where we truly can live in resemblance to God in the fullest extent.

What I have learned through my study of *Wolli Wonbon* is that Father already understood this from the very beginning. Mother did nothing heretical when she proclaimed God as Heavenly Parent. Father already wrote about it in 1951. Why, then, did we not practice this standard from the beginning?

The reason is the wilderness course, which Father embarked upon in 1954. After mainstream Christianity rejected Father, he created the Unification Church [Holy Spirit for the Unification of World Christianity] to represent or be a stand-in for Christianity. For 40 years, the Unification Church existed as the surrogate for Christianity, so that when God looked on the world, He could see that Father, the Messiah, had at least some Christians who supported him — namely us. Although it was providentially important at that time, it meant that the members' spiritual level was basically Christian. That is why our spirituality, as reflected in hymns like "The Heart of the Father," was basically about Heavenly Father. To know God as Father is the Christian level, and in representing them we were at that level too.

### **We Represent God as a Family**

This brings us to the second of True Mother's proclamations, that the name of our movement should be the Family Federation for Peace and Unification. In 1994, Father said that we should take down the sign of the Unification Church and start to call ourselves by that name. It was a providential announcement, because it meant that the Unification Church had fulfilled its mission as the standard-bearer for Christianity and now we could be truly at the level of Blessed Couples who could represent God as His/Her family. That means God is Parents.

But we were not sincere in recognizing the import of the Family Federation. One of the ways that members were misusing it was, as Hyung Jin Nim pointed out, to use the Family Federation name to hide their identity as Unificationists. Therefore, he requested that we go back to the Unification Church again so that we could have rightful pride in our identity as Unificationists.

Now, True Mother is reaffirming the name Family Federation to remind us that fundamentally and providentially, the era of being a Christian church is over. We are something greater than a Christian church because we are representing God as family, and therefore we rightly pray to God as Heavenly Parent.

It is all a package: Family Federation and God as Heavenly Parent. Mother is mending some of the flaws in the foundation for Foundation Day. Do you think that Father from the spirit world is supporting this? Yes, absolutely. Mother wouldn't be making these proclamations herself if she did not have Father's approval and guidance.

In a recent program of the Women's Federation for World Peace, we find Mother's words, "History is calling for reconciliation, compassion, love, service, and sacrifice. Today's problems cannot be solved by the logic of power... Our present problems can only be solved by the logic of love." It is a beautiful statement of Heavenly Mother's heart. The logic of love is to bear with your beloved's weaknesses. You don't go around starting lawsuits and judging and saying they are heretics. We have become a movement that is divided because that strong masculine character of Kook Jin Nim and Hyun Jin Nim, those two brothers, are like stags fighting, butting heads and crashing into each other's antlers. That is the way males typically behave. But a mother's love is all about compassion and reconciliation. She bears with her children's weaknesses, saying, "You are all part of my family, and I want you back home." Mother is saying regarding the lawsuits, "I don't care if I lose a million dollars, a billion dollars, a trillion dollars; I want you back! I want my children to be with me, including Hyun Jin Nim. Why worry about the problems about who is first and who is second? It doesn't matter; you are my children."

The order between Cain and Abel is important, surely. But Cain and Abel is a masculine problem, the problem of stags butting heads. Women know that there are other ways of solving unity issues besides confrontations between Cain and Abel. That is what True Mother is doing. Father has said that mothers are in the position to reconcile their Cain and Abel children because a mother's heart is equipped to bring reconciliation through the forgiveness of a mother's love. A mother's love is not a love that favors the first-born over the second born; it embraces every child, and even more those children who are disadvantaged. In families that have a child with a disability, it is natural for the mother to love that child more than her more capable children.

Let us try to prepare ourselves to live after Foundation Day with our Heavenly Parent, God our Father and Mother.

### **Living with Heavenly Parent**

What does it mean to live with our Heavenly Parent? During the Christian era that is ending, we have been living *for* God. So we made offerings, we made sacrifices, and we have been obedient. That is living *for* God. Now we can live with God. Living with God is not about offerings to God, but it is about participating in God's life, sharing God's heart, and manifesting God's love. We do our best to fulfill God's wishes and goals because we care about them every bit as much as God does — about the future of our children, the future of our families and the future of the world. So, we can be there with God, and God can be with us, and we can understand God's situation as our own situation.

Living with Heavenly Parent also means that we are grounded in ourselves. It means manifesting God from within. The feminine aspect of the First Blessing of individual perfection is about the God who *is*; it is the complement of the masculine aspect, the God who *does*. Being confident of God's love and presence, we can love ourselves, and when we love ourselves we can love others.

Another aspect of Heavenly Mother's love is patience. Mothers are patient, because they understand that their children need to grow. Being patient with others means we take the long view and recognize that there will be growth, and there will be perfection in the future. Patience includes being patient with ourselves. We understand that we are wounded, we ourselves, our spouses, our children, our parents, everyone. All of us are wounded and incomplete in our growth, and we bear with our incompleteness, even as we have faith and confidence that we are growing and improving. Heavenly Mother teaches us to

put up with the crying and the grief that it takes for Her children to grow up. Since everyone is growing, we do not have to simply judge people based on where they are right now, because we are mindful of their future potential.

We are called to be parents to everyone. This is being with God, the Heavenly Parent to all humankind. Being with God in this way, we need to open up our hearts to enable God's love to flow in us. When we do this, we can change, and our movement can change, and we will be able to welcome Foundation Day.