

The Only-Begotten Daughter

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Sometimes we need theology. In Christian church history, the time theology becomes important is when there are differences of opinion between various leaders or groups of the church, or sects — what in church history came to be known as “heresy.” But “heresy” simply means opinion. To identify truth and distinguish truth from heresy shouldn’t mean to condemn the heretic to the stake — although that often happened in church history. Rather, to distinguish truth from heresy is to properly understand what God is doing and correct misunderstandings. It is the job of the theologian to clarify truth, but not to condemn; it is to clarify what is the core of our salvation.



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These days some question, “How can True Mother call herself God’s only begotten Daughter? Was she born sinless? How could she be, when only the Messiah is born sinless?” Nevertheless, True Mother confidently stated at the second anniversary of True Father’s Holy Ascension (*Seong Hwa*), “I am God’s only-begotten Daughter.”

In fact, this idea can be found in Father’s words. It is in the *Cheon Seong Gyeong* (both old and revised versions) from a June 1972 speech in which he said, “Where there is an only-begotten Son, there is also an only-begotten Daughter.”

It’s important to understand the meaning of this term to properly honor True Mother as the True Parent, now that True Father has ascended to the heavenly realms.

We are well aware of the common view that True Father, coming on the foundation of Jesus Christ, is sinless. He then takes a woman from the fallen world and raises her up to be the Bride, at which point they become True Parents. From that point of view, Mother up to that time was just an innocent girl living a protected life. All her merit, and everything she had, came from Father.

God’s Equal Love to Man and Woman in the Original Creation

But think about Adam and Eve when God created them. They were brother and sister, each created out of a portion of God’s divine essence. As God is the Heavenly Parent having dual characteristics, God must have poured all of His masculinity into Adam and all of Her femininity into Eve. God then would have raised them individually as His son and Her daughter.

True Parents come as the complete fulfillment and re-creation of the original Adam and Eve. Just as True Father coming as Adam should have the experience growing up from childhood feeling God’s special

love and care, and knowing God's special relationship with him as God's only-begotten Son, so too True Mother should know God's special love in a similar way.

Again, how can True Father and True Mother marry and have a life of true love if their fundamental essences are so different from one another? In that case, no matter how good or fine Mother might be as Father's wife, her foundation would be shaky due to a lack of divine love in her childhood. In any marriage, the way the partners were raised as children and the attributes which come from their early life cannot but have an impact on their marriage.

God's Special Relationship to True Mother as a Child



True Mother in middle school uniform with her grandmother, Won Mo Jo

While editing the English translation of *Cheon Bumo Gyeong*, I have been studying about Mother's early life and the foundation that her mother, Hong Soon-ae (*Dae Mo Nim*), and her grandmother, Jo Won-mo, gave her. They were regularly attending certain Christian spiritual churches in the 1920s and '30s when Korea was under Japanese occupation. These churches, beginning with the New Jesus Church, then the Holy Lord Church led by Kim Seong-do, and finally the Inside Womb Church led by Heo Ho-bin, received revelations that the Lord of the Second Advent was coming to Korea. They also were given some key points of the Principle, including that the Fall was illicit sex and that Jesus did not come to die. Those churches were persecuted by the Japanese and then by the North Korean communists. Mother grew up amid that life of faith. At four years old, she was doing bowing conditions at Dae Mo Nim's side to prepare to welcome the coming Lord.

Mother testifies in the *Cheon Bumo Gyeong* that throughout her early life, she was living a life of faith,

in which she felt God's special love. Although she was in school along with friends and classmates, she was reserved and often kept to herself, because she had the sense that God had a special destiny for her. When she was six, Heo Ho-bin's mother took her aside and gave her a special blessing, saying, "You are Heaven's bride." Also, when True Mother was born, her mother, Dae Mo Nim, had a dream in which Kim Seong-do came to her and told her to raise her with special care because she was not her own but God's daughter. Already from a very early age, Mother knew she had been born with a special destiny and identity. She knew that God loved her with a special love that stood out from the way other people knew God's love.

One has to sympathize with Mother, going through the process of grieving for Father after his passing, that she might very well find strength in going back to her childhood and recalling her early life, the special destiny she was given, and all the trials her family went through to protect her for that future destiny. Those experiences made Mother who she was, long before she met Father. Hence, when Father first met Mother, he could say, "Heavenly Parent, I'm so grateful that You could present to me such a precious daughter." He could see in that young girl of 13 she was destined to be his bride. He could recognize that she already had a special relationship with God.

Mother went through such a course of preparation, not unlike other believers who were keeping pure and waiting for the Messiah to save them. Not only that; the Inside Womb Church was teaching about the providence of restoration and what the Lord was going to do upon his return, in many of the same terms as Divine Principle. Upon hearing this, Mother determined before she even met Father that she wanted to be the one who would complete the providence of restoration. She had already made that determination in her heart when she was a young girl. This means that from a young age Mother's heart was entirely in alignment with God's heart. Hence it was quite natural that Mother, reflecting upon her early years, would adopt the term "only-begotten Daughter" as a fitting description of whom she felt she was, to express her identity.

How Can True Mother Be Born Sinless?

One can quibble whether Mother was born sinless, or even whether Father was born sinless — and what word "sinless" even means. Theologians parse these kinds of concepts and come up with rationales to thread any particular needle. In the old days of the church, it had to do with such issues as how Christ was fully God and fully man. Those intellectual gymnastics revolved around such terms as *homoousios* — Jesus is of the same substance as God — and *homoiousios*, of like substance as God.

Here, then, are some theological points to consider: First, the expressions “only begotten Son” and “only begotten Daughter” have a different meaning in Unification theology than in traditional Christianity because Unification teaching on Original Sin centers on the concept of lineage. Fundamentally, the term “True Parents” means the original ancestors of God’s lineage, to which fallen human beings are engrafted through the rebirth process of change of blood lineage and the Blessing. From the perspective of lineage, Father and Mother are at the head. They do not have human parents; God is their Parent. Therefore, they can rightfully be called God’s only-begotten Son and only-begotten Daughter.



*True Mother's mother, Soon Ae Hong
(the real Dae Mo Nim)*

Still, people raise the question: were they were sinless at birth? In the Divine Principle, sin is a condition for a give and take relationship with Satan, and the Original Sin refers to our connection to Satan through lineage. Jesus was free of original sin, not because of a supernatural impregnation of the Virgin Mary, but because of certain conditions carried out by Mary and other women which purified Jesus’ lineage. They restored the Fall by reversing the three positions of Adam, Eve and archangel: a woman in the position of Eve had to leave her husband in the position of archangel and go to Adam. The example of Tamar is often given. In Mary’s case, she was betrothed to Joseph in the position of archangel but goes to Zechariah in the Adam position. These women went difficult and painful courses, impossible to explain to others because they were totally contrary to the norms of family and society, risking at the very least shame and in the worst case, death. It is those conditions in Jesus’ lineage that enabled Jesus to be born free of sin. That is, they enabled God to rightly assert there was no condition for Satan to claim Jesus with respect to lineage.

Yet by all accounts, Father’s lineage did not have women who went through such a course, and neither did Mother’s lineage. Father was born in a family with a distinguished lineage, but in this respect it was an ordinary family. How, then, could he be born sinless? The reason usually given is Father inherited from Jesus the condition that Jesus’ family fulfilled. When Father accepted the mission to complete what Jesus had begun, Jesus’ sinless foundation was imputed to Father. Then, whatever conditional position of grace Father had at his birth could be sealed; there was enough condition in his lineage for God to hold Satan’s accusation in abeyance until Father sealed the deal when he met Jesus and accepted his calling. At that sealing, God declared to Father, “You are My only-begotten Son.” Moreover, that status extended backward to the past and justified God’s relationship with Father from his birth or before his birth.

If that was how Father could be born free of Original Sin, shouldn’t it apply to Mother as well? There is abundant evidence of God’s grace to her from the time of her birth, as mentioned above. Dae Mo Nim and her grandmother had protected her well. When she accepted her position as the Bride of the Messiah, then the condition of sinlessness that Jesus carried could be imputed to Mother, just as it was imputed to Father. When Mother received Father’s recognition that she had passed all the tests and could stand as perfected True Mother, her position as the sinless only-begotten Daughter was sealed as well.

A Higher Bar for Mother — Because She Is a Woman?

Theologically, we can explain that True Mother is free of original sin. The question is, do we believe her when she says she is the only-begotten Daughter? Nobody in the Unification Church has any trouble believing that True Father is the only-begotten Son. They readily accept Father is sinless because they believe he is the Second Coming of Christ. Christ is sinless; ergo Father is sinless. Yet could the reason some doubt whether Mother has the same status as only-begotten Daughter be because she is a woman? Does Father get a pass because Jesus was a man?

Mother has no victorious representative of womankind as her feminine forbearer. In fact, she alone carries the burden of all the pain of womankind through history, going back to Eve. Mother has to deal with the fact that after the Fall there was no respect for Eve whatsoever. People have a better feeling about Adam; he was somehow redeemed by Jesus as the victorious Second Adam. But not so Eve. She was always associated with fallenness, sluttiness, etc.

To investigate why it is that way, look back in Genesis. In Gen. 2:19-20, Adam gave names to all the animals, and in Gen. 2:23, we read that of the female who was created from his rib, Adam named her “woman.” All the naming was done by Adam. Is that true to life? In any family, does only the man give all the names and not the woman? Not at all! A lot of men don’t know what women put into soup. Most likely all of the herbs that go into soup were first named by women. Men may have named the deer and

elk that they hunted, but meanwhile women were gathering vegetables and herbs. Women were just as involved in giving names to the creation as men were.



The cover photo from the new book, True Mother: From the Heart of American Members.

We have to admit the Bible has a certain bias, because it was written mainly by men, in a patriarchal culture where the men were important and gave all the significant names to things. Hence, in the consciousness of religious people throughout history, starting with Judaism and continuing with Christianity — and still today in some quarters of the Unification Church — it is men who define reality. It is Father who defines reality, not Mother.

It was Adam who defined reality for Eve at the time of the Fall. Was it not Adam who blamed Eve for the Fall? “The woman whom you gave me, she made me eat the fruit” (Gen. 3:12). The suffering that came about as a result of that first sexual transgression was magnified by Adam’s attitude towards Eve afterwards.

It didn’t have to go that way. Adam could have said to Eve, “My sister, I realize you are hurting because you were mistreated — even raped — by the angel. I know

it’s not your fault; he overpowered you. I want to help you.” Perhaps he even had such a brotherly attitude towards Eve, but the way it is written in the Bible, he just accuses her. Throughout history women have been downgraded, mistreated and accused of everything under the sun based upon certain attitudes that come from Scripture, and especially these stories in Genesis. They have made things worse than they needed to be. Certainly, in this era after Foundation Day, we don’t have to put up with this sort of demeaning attitude towards women.

True Mother’s Foundation Is Her Own

Divine Principle says that after Eve fell, had Adam remained whole and intact, her restoration would have been through him. That is certainly true. But does it mean that her relationship to God would have been entirely through Adam? After all, Adam could have encouraged her to heal her *own* relationship to God as her *own* Heavenly Mother, so that she could have once again felt a level of self-confidence and value as God’s daughter.

I don’t think Adam and Eve’s marriage would have been a happy one if Eve had felt so wounded and hurt that she would have to depend on her husband for everything. For Adam and Eve’s true love relationship to be ideal, it would have to be one in which Adam rejoiced as Eve recovered and grew in her own relationship with God. Adam would have refrained from having conjugal relations with her until she had recovered her value as God’s daughter.

Eve’s recovery would have been her own accomplishment. Yet when we read in Divine Principle that Eve could have been restored through perfected Adam, without much thought many jump to the conclusion that Adam would take Eve under his wing in some kind of dependent and unequal relationship.

Christianity named Eve a sinner, and said that the only way womankind can find value is to unite with the male Messiah, who came to save us and shed his blood on the cross for our sins. Therefore, the fundamental relationship for a woman and Christ is as a bride of Christ. This overlooks the fact that she cannot fully be a bride of Christ, because she is a sinner and Christ is perfect. Despite the language of “bride,” her position is lower than a bride.

Again the problem is that Genesis portrays Adam as exclusively naming things, including naming woman. Ever since, women’s identity has been predicated on what men call them. It is a fallen tradition. To end it in Cheon Il Guk, we children need to respect the way Mother defines herself. As original Eve, it

is her right to do so.

We need to recognize where certain unstated assumptions, deeply rooted in Christian history, have been thrown into the Principle. The ideal of the Principle, as the Cheon Seong Gyeong says, is the ideal of love between man and woman. Father says, “The Messiah comes to enable us to fulfill our hope for ideal love.” Ideal love comes when you have a man totally at home in his skin as a son of God and a woman totally at home in her skin as a daughter of God. When those two people, a fully realized son and daughter of God, come together as husband and wife, their love can be ideal love. We wouldn’t want it any other way, and God wouldn’t want it any other way.

The Purpose of True Parents and Its Fulfillment in Cheon Il Guk

What is at stake in the controversy over True Mother claiming to be God’s only begotten Daughter is ultimately the whole purpose of True Parents’ ministry. What is so upsetting about those who question it, is that it is tantamount to denying the fundamental mission of True Parents. That mission is not just to be another male Messiah and do what Jesus did — except seven times better because True Father went through seven deaths and resurrections. That’s not the point.



True Father came on this earth as the Lord of the Second Advent with the mission to establish the True Parents. He started his mission in 1945 as the Lord of the Second Advent, but he fulfilled his mission by establishing True Parents — Father and Mother together — who as God’s true Son and true Daughter undertook the task to establish the True Family, and thereby bring the ideal of God’s love to this world.

Now our task is to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. It means we should make our families ideal families. We can do that now because True Parents planted that flag in the creation, because the unity of masculinity and femininity in God is fully mirrored and fully resonates with the masculinity and femininity of True Parents.

No one can jeopardize that unity, no matter what they think about Mother’s position, that “she’s equal but doesn’t have equal authority” or whatever they are saying about her. They cannot change the fact of True Parents’ accomplishment. But what is the value of misunderstanding it and going back to an outmoded Christian notion of salvation by following a male Messiah? What is the benefit of that when True Parents labored and strove to move to the next level? They established that next level successfully on Foundation Day, and I don’t wish to go back to a life of faith that doesn’t acknowledge that accomplishment.

That’s why what is going on now in the wider Unification movement is worthy of theological critique and warrants a Unificationist theologian like myself standing up for what I believe is the real Principle.

It is wonderful that True Mother is declaring herself God’s only begotten Daughter. It means she is emerging from Father’s shadow, where admittedly she seemed to be living during most of her life. It is a victory for all womankind. It is a step on the road to establishing Cheon Il Guk, where man and woman can unite into one, reflecting fully the glory of God’s masculinity and God’s femininity in their own persons. That is what Cheon Il Guk is supposed to be all about.

edited World Scripture: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts. This article is adapted from a sermon he gave at the Mid-Hudson Valley Family Church on March 29, 2015.

Photo at top: True Mother speaks at the second anniversary of the Cheon Il Guk Foundation Day, March 3, 2015.