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Were True Parents Born with Original Sin? How to Deal with Their Words on This Matter

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Since 2014 the idea of True Mother as the only begotten Daughter has surfaced and stirred a controversy within the Unification movement, even though True Father himself during his lifetime actually used the term, “only begotten Daughter.” This idea has been a target of criticism especially from the FPA (Family Peace Association, started by UCI) and the Sanctuary Church. Even within the Family Federation some people may have questions about the idea. Therefore I would like to address this issue and other related ones.

First, I will show a good number of passages of True Father’s and True Mother’s words on the relationship between True Parents’ births and original sin. Next, in sharing my own thoughts, I will first acknowledge the contradictory nature of Father’s words. His words, in fact, contain two apparently mutually contradictory sets of expressions: on the one hand, they have expressions giving the impression that True Parents were each born *without* original sin, while, on the other hand, they have expressions to give the impression that True Parents were each born *with* original sin.

My interpretation of the contradictory nature of True Father’s words is as follows: While the truth of God is absolute, unique, unchanging, eternal, and infinite, all human words that are used to express it in the spatiotemporal world are necessarily relative, diverse, changing, temporal, and finite. Therefore, depending on the changes of situations in the spatiotemporal world, finite words to express the truth of God also change, and even contradictory expressions are possible. So we, who have not perfected the ideal of the unity of love between God and us yet, should not intellectually think as if finite words were everything. The infinite truth of God that lies behind these finite words will be revealed, only if we live a life of first acknowledging our ignorance and lowering ourselves to serve, love, and forgive others patiently, like God does.

Then, based on my acknowledgement and interpretation of the dual nature of True Father’s words, I will comment on the position of Dr. Jin Choon Kim’s paper of March 2017^[1] and on what the FPA and the Sanctuary Church stand for. I will also defend True Mother’s words, by saying that they do not contradict True Father’s words, and that she has an extraordinarily strong sense of mission. The section on my thoughts will conclude with True Father’s well-known idea that we have to go beyond the level of *word* to eventually reach the higher levels of *personality* and *heart*.

Even at this time, however, some useful, if still tentative, interpretations of the dual nature of True Father’s words can be found here and there. So the final section will briefly introduce them. Perhaps we will be able to build on them as our prayerful inquiry deepens in the future.

True Father’s Words

1. His words giving the impression that he himself was born without original sin:

Before I became 16 years of age, I had the standard of original human nature prior to the fall. Given that lineage, I was chosen by God at 16. My lineage was different. The lineage of Jesus and mine had to be different. Where is what Jesus left behind? Is it the lineage remaining in Israel? I know my lineage, not by studying it nor by being born with it but by Heaven.^[2]

Father has nothing to do with the fallen lineage from childhood. You have to understand it. Those who thought Father was born with the fallen lineage... are crazy people. They do not know the Divine Principle.^[3]

When the world talks about Rev. Moon, they think that since everybody else is fallen, Rev. Moon also belongs to the fallen lineage. This is a mistake.[4]

You must not say that President Moon, too, has received the fallen lineage. Even if Adam and Eve fell, the uncontaminated lineage of God should be pulled out to be able to prevent me from the fall. I knew all this from my childhood.[5]

Father has no relation with the lineage of Satan from the time of his birth.[6]

2. His words giving the impression that he himself was born *with* original sin:

Mother, too, received the lineage of the fallen archangel. Even I, too, received it. Even I. Therefore, absolute faith, absolute love, and absolute obedience are needed for recreation.[7]

Even the Lord of the Second Advent as the lord of humanity came from the lineage of Satan.[8]

Father did not emerge from the blood and flesh of unfallen parents from God, either. The same was the case with Father. If the first human ancestors emerged with the fallen lineage of love and life, how can True Parents emerge out of that?[9]

I cannot believe myself. Because I received the blood of fallen descendants, a thought of rebellion against Heaven often arose within me. Because I knew it, I have continuously been doing things. If I had not known it, what the Unification Church is would not have arisen. I have come to this point, by overcoming the difficulty.[10]

My ancestors and me, too, emerged through the fallen lineage. Therefore I engraft you to the hegemony of all victory I accomplished after the age of 16.[11]

3. His words giving the impression that True Mother was born *without* original sin:

The Lord of the Second Advent comes to find the Mother of humankind, that is, the New Bride. The New Bride whom he, the New Bridegroom, finds is not found in the realm of the fall. She was born in the pure lineage without the fall.[12]

The third Adam must come like Adam before the fall and find Eve before the fall. By finding the unfallen Eve, he must hold the Marriage of the Lamb. They marry and become the Parents of humanity.[13]

You call Sun Myung Moon of the Unification Church “True Father,” don’t you? How about Hak Ja Han who is here? You call her “True Mother,” don’t you? No matter how you may see her, she has two eyes and a nose like any other persons. But what makes her different? Her root. It is her root. You were all born from the fallen root which came from your fallen parents in the world of Satan. But the Unification Church’s Moon so-and-so and Hak Ja Han, Ms. Hak Ja, who is here... were born from the different root. She is the central person who emerged from the root of God, with the Unification logic, which is the logic of true love, for the first time in history.[14]

All the conditions had to be met before choosing Mother. She had to fit in each direction, front and back, left and right, above and below. The first condition concerned the lineage of which she was born. It was important to discern whether she was born linked to a lineage vulnerable to accusation from Satan’s world, or born of a lineage with hidden links by which she could overcome such accusations.[15]

The one who was to become the True Mother had to be from a family with three generations of only daughters. From the youth, Mother grew up as an only daughter, alone and without getting any help from others. The reason God made her an only daughter was to prevent Satan’s lineage from remaining.[16]

4. His words giving the impression that True Mother was born *with* original sin:

The original man had True Mother taken away by Satan. So, he must take her back from the world of Satan even at the cost of his life. In the last days when the Lord comes to receive the New Bride, she will be liberated.[17]

Then what period was the first seven years? It was the period when I raised Mother. I was supposed to educate Mother about heavenly family tradition and law. I did not do this in a careless way, but prayed about it so much every night before sleeping. Mother did not know it. In this way, I restored three things substantially: the daughter who was lost as a result of the fall, her reciprocal standards, and the

standard of True Parents in front of God. This is the path that everyone should go as a fallen person.[18]

Adam fell because he could not fulfill his responsibility. In order to complete that responsibility, therefore, someone on his behalf must restore Eve from the realm of the fall, recreate her, and make her a daughter of goodness. Otherwise, the realm of the Adamic perfection cannot be restored.[19]

Even if you enter the womb of True Mother, what is the root of you as a child and Mother? It has only been cut off from the root of the astringent persimmon to be restored. Do you understand? In order for it to join the heavenly family, it needs a procedure. It is the procedure of love. So, even if you enter the womb of True Mother, it is not connected to the true love and true lineage of True Father yet. True Mother has no true love and true lineage. She belongs to the other side. That means that the New Bride is to welcome the New Bridegroom to unite with him.[20]

Mother, too, received the lineage of the fallen archangel. Even I, too, received it. Even I. Therefore, absolute faith, absolute love, and absolute obedience are needed for recreation.[21]

True Mother's Words

1. On True Father's birth:

Father's history was such that at that moment at which he inherited the mission of Jesus, he was qualified to become the only begotten Son. Do you understand? You have to understand it.[22]

The position of the only begotten Son was established 2,000 years ago. Jesus appeared to Father and asked him to inherit Jesus' mission which had been left unaccomplished. That way a switch took place [from Jesus to him]. Do you understand? For Heaven, the beginning and the end are the same. There are not two only begotten Sons, are there? The only begotten Son must be only one.[23]

2. On her own birth:

My change of lineage was from the womb of my mother. You must believe this.[24]

I grew up within the realm of Heavenly Parent's protection. I was separated from those who were born as fallen humans from their mothers' wombs... Therefore, even if no one taught me a word of the Principle, I would go this path by myself if it is the path I must go.[25]

Daemonim was historically the only person to give birth to the only begotten Daughter. My grandmother educated me, by saying that my original, true parent is God. My father is God. I heard only that word. Until I came to this position, I was in the realm of heavenly protection. No one educated me. The only begotten Son and the only begotten Daughter are equal. We cannot say that the only begotten Son educated the only begotten Daughter. Do you understand what I am saying? Therefore, I decided and I made up my mind.[26]

The only begotten Daughter was in that position in which the only begotten Son was born 2,000 years ago. So, she was born in the position which had nothing to do with Satan.[27]

When I was born, Satan appeared and tried to kill me. He said: 'Because you were born, I am supposed to die and perish. So, I cannot let you live. I must kill you, because you are the only begotten Daughter God must be able to finally find in this fallen world.' Those words of Satan meant that I was born in the same way as Jesus was born after the 4,000-year providence of indemnity of the Israelites, having nothing to do with the fall, that is, that I was born without original sin. You have to know it.[28]

I was born from a lineage which had nothing to do with Satan after the interval of 6,000 years. God is my father. God referred to Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son, when he was born 2,000 years ago. I was the first to be born as the only begotten Daughter 2,000 years after that, that is, after the interval of 6,000 years. It was a miracle.[29]

Jesus Christ was born without original sin 2,000 years ago. The only begotten Daughter, too, was born without original sin. This is true.[30]

My Thoughts

Now that we have seen the words of both True Father and Mother, I would like to share my own thoughts here.

First, True Father's words, as seen above, have two kinds of expressions, as if with two mutually contradictory meanings. That is to say, while they have expressions giving the impression that he was born *without* original sin, they also have expressions which give the impression that he was born *with* it. Furthermore, regarding True Mother as well, while they have expressions giving the impression that she was born without original sin, they also have expressions to give the impression that she was born with it. This must be because he spoke in different situations and contexts. We have to know how different the expressions of his words were, depending on different situations and contexts. We have to definitely accept the two different aspects of Father's words as an important point, but many seem to overlook it due to their ideas which they have already made up about True Parents.

Second, Dr. Jin Choon Kim rightly observes that while True Father's words, as for himself, have expressions which give the impression that he was born without original sin, they also have expressions which give the opposite impression that he was born with it. Regarding True Mother, however, Kim seems to assert that True Father's words do not contain any expressions which give the impression that she was born with original sin. According to Kim, even if True Father's words may have any expressions which give the impression that she was born with original sin, they only appear in an extremely low ratio of 1 to 100, compared with the opposite expressions, so that they can be neglected merely as words of "Level 2."^[31] But I humbly want to state, it is quite clear from True Father's words listed above that they do not appear in such a low rate; in fact, they appear so often that they cannot be ignored.

Third, the FPA and the Sanctuary Church strongly cling to their own fixed idea that Father was born without original sin and Mother with it. In actuality, therefore, they are totally incapable of flexibly responding to the fact that True Father's words have two contradictory kinds of expressions on each True Parent. Contrary to their fixed idea, True Father's words clearly have expressions giving the impression that he himself was born with original sin, and also clearly have expressions giving the impression that True Mother was born without it. But FPA and the Sanctuary Church ignore or belittle these words. And they unthoughtfully criticize Jin Choon Kim's position and, of course, True Mother's words as well.

Fourth, how, then, can we interpret the two contradictory expressions of True Father's words? It might be good if we consider the following point. The truth of God is, of course, absolute, unique, unchangeable, eternal, and infinite. But, if it is expressed in human words in the changing situations of the spatiotemporal world, its expressions will be relative, diverse, changeable, temporal, and finite.

For example, *Wolli Wonbon* ("Original Book of the Principle") only spoke of God's dual characteristics of positivity and negativity and not God's dual characteristics of internal nature and external form, which was used only later. In the past, True Father was called "Great Teacher" or "Master," but later on he came to be called "True Father" or "True Parent." Terms such as "Four Great Realms of Heart" and "Three Great Kingships" did not exist in the past; they started to be used in the 1990s. "Absolute sex" started in 1996, and the terms of "God of Nighttime" and "God of Daytime" began around 2010. The expression of the Family Pledge was revised by True Father a few times. This way, depending on the situations in which he spoke, his expressions differed. Therefore, if the situations in which he spoke were very different, contradictory expressions of his words were possible. Nevertheless, the eternal truth is unchanging.

Fifth, when True Mother seems to say that she was born without original sin, that she is the only person to be born the only begotten Daughter after the interval of 6,000 years, that she was not educated by anyone, and that Father was possibly born with original sin, it may be that while her words themselves never contradict True Father's, they possibly do not yet exhaust the entirety of his words. Nevertheless, the reason she talks so often about the idea that she is the only begotten Daughter is most likely because she feels an extraordinarily strong sense of mission as True Mother, who is united with True Father in requiring herself to fulfill the Will of God. We have to understand it.

Sixth, regarding True Mother's specific statement that she was not educated by anyone, I want to show my own interpretation. If you have a strong sense of mission, you would pray, think, and inquire, only facing God. It would mean that you cannot even consult with anyone nor can you be educated by anyone. Even if you may hear from other people their opinions and advices which may be useful, your own decision would ultimately be the most important thing. That must have been the case with True Mother as well. We can feel her *strong individual character* in the good sense of the term. I hope it is not an arrogant view on my part, and it is, in fact, my own view of faith. I would not listen to anyone in a sense. If you only genuinely pray to God, however, you will definitely receive God's direction that you ought to love, forgive, and serve other people. Therefore it will never result in individualism.

Seventh, we would have to believe that beyond finite words there must exist the absolute, unique, unchangeable, eternal, and infinite truth of God which we do not know yet but which God wants us to know eventually. By believing so, we would have to seek and know it. Only in this way would the absolute, unique, unchangeable, eternal, and infinite truth be definitely revealed by

God. Until that time comes, we in the process of a quest, during which we must humbly confess of our ignorance and treat our fellow humans with faith, love, hope, patience, tolerance, and forgiveness. Otherwise, we would end up making shallow and external judgments hastily at the level of words alone, with the result that we would judge others by deciding that they are wrong, or become dogmatic about our own understandings by asserting that we are absolutely right. Hence quarrels occur. That seems to be the case with the current situation of the Unification movement.

Eighth, we are grateful that True Father's words have two contradictory kinds of expressions. For unless we spiritually grow enough to be connected with God, whatever coherent theory we ourselves may make will be challenged by his words, and we will thus be led to realize that we are not close to the truth yet. According to Karl Barth, a world-famous twentieth-century Swiss Reformed theologian, God's revelation will not emerge where there is a humanly coherent theory but rather where there is a contradiction. Therefore, although the existence of two contradictory kinds of expressions in True Father's words may be a challenge for us, it ultimately shows hope. If only we are humble to God's teachings, the truth will be revealed there.

Regarding this point, True Father suggestively said:

You guys are discussing about whether Father received the lineage of the fall or the lineage of purity. But are you confident of doing it? I received the responsibility of the historical representative of Eve and Adam before their fall at age 16, going through the formation, growth, and perfection stages to go beyond all the eight stages. Unless I thus purify the lineage of 6,000 years, how can I as the representative connect God's lineage? How can you, who cannot even interpret the Divine Principle, discuss whether or not Father was of the pure lineage, what lineage he is of, or what his lineage is like? ... What I did at age 16, my determination at that time, was expressed in the poem, "Crown of Glory." Is it for education? It is a declaration of my fight, of whether I can overcome.[32]

Seriously, these words of Father are food for thought.

Finally, we must not forget that, as Father says, there are "three stages of judgment": judgment of words, judgment of personality, and judgment of heart.[33] We will have to go beyond the level of words to form our personality by substantiating words, and eventually to go into the realm of God's heart. We should not stay at the level at which we only hold up True Parents' words to judge one another and hurt one another. The Bible says: "The written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

Some Tentative Understandings

But some tentative understandings of the dual nature of True Father's words have been suggested here and there. Even though they may still be tentative ones, I would like to briefly show them as useful references. Perhaps we will be able to build on them as our inquiry continues through prayer.

First, *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, in explaining of the biblical passage of John 8:58 to the effect that Jesus is before Abraham was, says it means that with respect to the providence of restoration Jesus is the ancestor of Abraham as the first human ancestor without original sin to regenerate all humankind, although from the viewpoint of lineage he was a descendent of Abraham in the fallen lineage.[34] There are thus two different views of the birth of Jesus, which may look contradictory to each other but which can coexist. If we apply this to the births of True Parents, the same thing can be said of them. That is to say, from the viewpoint of the providence of restoration True Parents as the first ancestors of humanity were born without original sin, although from the viewpoint of lineage they are completely the descendants of fallen Adam.

Second, Jin Choon Kim uses the Divine Principle theory of predestination to explain why True Father's words about himself have two seemingly contradictory sets of expressions as to whether he was born with original sin.[35] As God predestined him to be the Messiah without original sin in the future, he was chosen as a person whose ancestors among the Koreans, the chosen people, had many good accomplishments, who congenitally had a disposition needed to realize God's Will, who developed certain qualities during his early life, and who also lived in a time and place most fitting to God. But the rest was done by True Father himself, when he, even if born in the fallen realm, fulfilled his human portion of responsibility through his extraordinary sincerity and effort to remove his fallen lineage and become the Messiah without original sin, as predestined. This seems to be quite an understandable explanation about True Father.[36]

Third, in his paper, "A Principle Viewpoint on the Only Begotten Daughter,"[37] Dr. Andrew Wilson holds that both True Father and Mother were born without original sin only "conditionally" and not "actually," as it was to be "actually" uprooted only through the Holy Wedding, in which they participated as the only begotten Son and only begotten Daughter, that how True Parents each successfully walked the path from their births to the Holy Wedding can be explained by the Divine Principle's

theory of predestination which involves both God's predestined choice of individuals and the dependency of its fulfillment upon their own responsibilities, and that from the standpoint of the era of the victorious realm of the fourth Adam in which there is no restoration through indemnity, it can retroactively be said that True Father and True Mother were born as the only begotten Son and only begotten Daughter without original sin actually. Wilson's explanation seems to be of interest and use.

Fourth, Noboru Okada argues, based on the distinction between the Age before the Coming of Heaven and the Age after the Coming of Heaven, that while Mother's birth without original sin may have been unthinkable in the Age before the Coming of Heaven, it is thinkable now in the Age after the Coming of Heaven.[38]

Finally, twentieth-century theologians such as Karl Barth and Emil Brunner make a distinction between the "formal" and the "material" senses of the image of God, holding that after the human fall we did not lose the image of God formally, although we lost it materially. If we apply it to our discussion, we may be able to say that True Parents were each born without original sin formally, although they were born with it materially. For the formal and the material senses of the image of God as understood by Barth and Brunner, see Millard Erickson's explanation.[39]

Notes

[1] Jin Choon Kim, "True Parents as the Only Begotten Son and Only Begotten Daughter," *Journal of Unification Studies* 18 (this issue): 55-107. It is a revised version of a booklet that was published in March 2017.

[2] *Sermons* 541-199. *Sermons (Malsoom Seonjib)* is a collection of True Father's words published in Korean; 541-199 means volume 541, p. 199.

[3] 2009.05.17: *Sermons* 611-307, 308. 2009.05.17 means May 17, 2009, the East Asian way to show the date.

[4] 2009.07.07: *Owner of Peace, Owner of Lineage* (New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 2011), p. 12.

[5] 2009.07.09: *Sermons* 613-309, 310.

[6] 2009.08.24: *Sermons* 615.

[7] 2003.10.01: *Sermons* 419-102.

[8] 2004.04.04: *Sermons* 444-197.

[9] 2005.01.01: *Sermons* 481-48.

[10] 2006.11.08: *Sermons* 544-99.

[11] 2006.12.09.

[12] 1970.10.19: *Sermons* 35-217.

[13] 1970.12.06: *Sermons* 36-263.

[14] 1986.10.04: *Sermons* 149-9.

[15] 1987.11.01: *Sermons* 170-31.

[16] 1989.11.07: *Sermons* 195-147.

[17] 1968.07.14: *Sermons* 20-334.

[18] 1969.02.04: *God's Will and the World* (New York: HSA-UWC, 1985), p. 23.

[19] 1972.04.30: *The Absolute Value of True Parents and the Path of Tribal Messiah* (Tokyo: Kogensha, 2014), p. 38, published in Japanese.

[20] 1993.12.20: *Collection of Father's Words in Workshops in Korea for Japanese Female Leaders* (Tokyo: Kogensha, 1994), pp. 185-86, published in Japanese.

[21] 2003.10.01: *Sermons* 419-102.

[22] 2014.07.01, Cheon Jeong Gung.

[23] 2014.09.12, Cheon Jeong Gung.

[24] 2014.07.01, Cheon Jeong Gung.

[25] 2014.09.12, Cheon Jeong Gung.

[26] 2014.10.27: World Leaders' Conference.

[27] 2015.03.11.

[28] 2016.02.24: Elders' Workshop.

[29] 2016.10.05.

[30] 57th Anniversary of the Holy Wedding, 2017.04.12.

[31] Kim, "True Parents," note 11, p. 107.

[32] *Sermons* 608-303.

[33] <https://www.tparents.org/Moon-Books/sm12talk/12TALK04.htm>.

[34] *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (New York: HSA-UWC, 1996), p. 168.

[35] Kim, "True Parents," pp. 28-31.

[36] If so, however, why can't Dr. Kim offer exactly the same explanation about True Mother? For True Father's words about her, too, have two seemingly contradictory sets of expressions as to whether or not she was born with original sin.

[37] Andrew Wilson, "A Principle Viewpoint on the Only Begotten Daughter," February 9, 2017, unpublished.

[38] <http://ameblo.jp/unificationism/entry-12140010219.html> (in Japanese).

[39] Millard, J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), pp. 502-8.

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