

My response to Dr. Andrew Wilson's article.

My comments are in red, inserted within the text.

Jim Stephens

The Only-Begotten Daughter

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By **Andrew Wilson**

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.

Interesting opening statement. Probably he didn't mean it, but it sounds like... “We theologians will tell you people what the real truth is.”

I prefer to be wary of the intellectuals since truth can be manipulated and has been so often in history, starting with Lucifer. Seek God in prayer. Ask True Father and Jesus for guidance. Repent. Test the spirit. Look at the fruits. Follow your conscience and your heart. These are the ways I have found most successful.

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.”

I don't remember the concept of “only-begotten daughter” from Divine Principle. I question if Father is saying in that speech that Mother was born sinless. I don't recall that ever being an article of faith from Father.

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.

I disagree with that being the common view. I think we all believed she was from a specially prepared lineage not just an innocent girl. "Everything she had" did not come from Father. This is incorrectly portraying what Father taught us. It sets up a belief which will then be argued against. That does not prove anything if it's not the issue being raised. It's called a "straw man argument".

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.

God is one, not two. I prefer that Adam and Eve were made in the "Image of God" and all of us are in the image of God as well, trying to grow to perfection. I don't think "all" of God's masculinity will fit in Adam nor "all" of God's femininity can fit in Eve.

True Parents come as the complete fulfillment and re-creation of the original Adam and Eve.

I disagree. They are not a new reconstituted Adam and Eve. Jesus was raised up from the fallen lineage by conditions so that he was free from Original Sin. I honestly don't know about Father's birth, but Father is the Messiah and Christ. Mother comes from the fallen lineage of Adam and Eve. Mother's mission is to become the restored Eve.

I believe my Original Sin was forgiven through the Holy Wine Ceremony. That doesn't make me perfect, nor does it make me sinless or the only begotten son of God.

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.

Wilson presumes to know what relationship Father should have had with God growing up. This statement also ASSUMES Mother was necessarily born sinless like Eve. The rest of Wilson's arguments are based off of the same assumption. Therefore, it is all circular reasoning. He tries to prove what he has already assumed.

I believe the special mission and preparation that God provided for Mother was to fulfill the role of the Bride of Christ, coming from the fallen world and being restored on behalf of all women by the Messiah. Her mission was not as another Eve born sinless in the same way as the original Eve.

I believe the Principle of Restoration is NOT that God needs to start over with both a new Adam and a new Eve. I believe God takes the responsibility to bring the Messiah, or restored Adam, and then part of the Messiah's mission is to restore Eve.

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?

Again, this is an assumption, not a proof. I believe True Father's mission was to restore a True Mother and that there were a number of women that God prepared, not only Hak Ja Han. This stuff about "fundamental essences" does not come from any Divine Principle I ever heard.

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.

Again Wilson is assuming that Mother necessarily had to be born like Eve. His proof seems to be that she would not have received divine love as a child if she wasn't. She could not be the equal of Father without this raising by God. Since Wilson assumes Mother is the "equal" of Father, then he argues that she must have been born sinless. I do not believe that is the Principle, nor is it the definition of "equality" in a marriage or in love.

I don't accept Wilson's line of reasoning. I believe Mother comes out of the fallen lineage of Adam and Eve because restoration requires it. God had to raise up a Messiah out of the fallen lineage and it took him 4,000 years to get Jesus. God (and True Father) must also raise up the Bride of Christ, a recreated Eve, out of the fallen lineage.

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.

That's true of course, but pretty irrelevant. Is this some proof that Mother had to be born sinless? We cannot assume a person who had a difficult childhood would necessarily be a bad spouse or parent, nor can we assume the opposite. Is this a claim that True Mother's lineage is so special that she is the only one that could be the bride of the messiah? I always thought there were other women that could have been Father's bride. And also Mother, as a human, must have her personal Portion of Responsibility, as does True Father.

God's Special Relationship to True Mother as a Child

While editing the English translation of *Cheon Bum Gyeong*, I have been studying about Mother's early life and the foundation that her mother, Hong Soon-ae (*Daemonim*), 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 Daemonim'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, Daemonim, 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.

This does not prove Mother was born sinless. Lots of women were prophesied over or had dreams they would be the Bride of Father. In the splinter movements from our church, people are getting strong revelations.

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.

Small point here, I don't think Father addressed God as "Heavenly Parent" at that instance.

No one is arguing against these points to my knowledge. The claim is that Mother fulfilled her responsibility as True Mother. She was victorious at that mission. It was after Father passed that she separated from Father's will. Her failure came after many years of successful faith. Take as another example Rev. Kwak.

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.

Where does Wilson get all this from?... "from a young age Mother's heart was entirely in alignment with God's heart."

"...it was quite natural that Mother...would adopt the term 'only-begotten Daughter'"

I think Wilson is doing a lot of editorializing, assuming, or making it up unless Mother actually said something like this. I find it wholly unconvincing.

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.

Very true and Wilson will go on to do so himself. He will quibble that Mother WAS born sinless. This is for me a totally new claim that I never heard when Father was alive.

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.

I guess I know what Wilson means, but “They do not have human parents” sounds funny since we know they had human parents.

Therefore, they can rightfully be called God’s only-begotten Son and only-begotten Daughter.

“Therefore...” now that they did not have human parents, presto they must be only-begotten son and only begotten daughter. That’s just theological gymnastics to me, an engineer by training.

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.

I had not heard this before....Father's family was "ordinary"...Father was from a sinful lineage until he accepted the mission from Jesus and THEN he inherited sinlessness from Jesus.

Mother seems to be claiming she was born sinless from the womb. That gives her one up on Father's sinlessness which he got from Jesus.

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."

I don't remember hearing this.

Moreover, that status extended backward to the past and justified God's relationship with Father from his birth or before his birth.

This is new to me also. How does this work exactly? When my Original Sin was forgiven in the Holy Wine Ceremony could it have been extended backward to my birth?

If that was how Father could be born free of Original Sin, shouldn't it apply to Mother as well?

Is that what HSA teaches about Father being sinless. That's news to me. But should it apply to Mother too, NOT necessarily. The Principle of Restoration for a restored Adam could be different than for a restored Eve.

Why should we assume that Jesus' condition would be applied to Mother or some other woman?

There is abundant evidence of God's grace to her from the time of her birth, as mentioned above. Daemanim 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.

And how do we know that all this is the true process?

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

Possibly. BUT maybe there needs to be restoration of Eve's fall which Mother has to restore on behalf of all women, which cannot be restored by a man.

Theologically, we can explain that True Mother is free of original sin.

I thoroughly questioned already whether Wilson really explained it or not.

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.

I don't remember Father as "only-begotten" ever being an important item in our faith. To my knowledge it was never talked about.

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?

Could this be a guilt trip by a theologian? As I previously stated, I believe Mother's mission in restoration was to come from a fallen lineage and become the restored Eve.

Does Father get a pass because Jesus was a man?

Nope.

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.

Is this still a theological argument? It sounds somewhat like resentment. That's not a good foundation for an intellectual argument.

It also sounds like Lucifer, "You poor Eve, Adam is such a chauvinist. He doesn't care about you. Here let me take care of you."

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.

OK, women got a raw deal in the Bible. I get it. So therefore, I'm probably from a long line of male chauvinists just because I would question whether Mother is born sinless.

We better not question Wilson's logic or we'll be accused of not liking women and wanting to keep them down. This is Political Correctness in the Unification Church.

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.

Christians would say God wrote/inspired the Bible, not "men" wrote it keeping women down.

If I have to vote on which is correct, the reality that Father defines or the reality that Mother defines, ASSUMING that they are different, then I'll vote for Father's understanding of reality.

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.

Is this a new theology about what happened between Lucifer and Eve? I have not heard this before.

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.

Is this an accusation against the Bible and a case for changing it? Or is this casting aspersions against anyone who doubts Mother's authority?

Even the fact that women have been mistreated throughout history does not prove that Mother was born sinful or that people who are questioning it have something against women.

Certainly, in this era after Foundation Day, we don't have to put up with this sort of demeaning attitude towards women.

Not good theology. "All you people who disagree are mean spirited and you should just keep quiet."

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.

Once Eve fell, she needed a Savior. That could have been Adam, but he fell too. Eve cannot restore herself through her relationship with God without the Messiah. That has always been my understanding of the Principle.

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.

What does Wilson mean by "depend on her husband for everything"? Salvation is what fallen Eve needed.

Wilson saying, "I don't think..." sounds like some more speculation on his part, but again what does it have to do with "Only begotten daughter" theology and Mother being born sinless or not?

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.

How does Wilson know this about their conjugal relationship? Was Mother necessarily perfect before Father had conjugal relations with her? I don't think so. I always heard that Mother had at least a 7 year course that she had to go through.

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.

"Eve's recovery would have been her own accomplishment" sounds like she is her own Messiah and does not need a Savior after she fell.

Wilson says that others "without much thought" are wrong. He'll now tell us the true way to think about how Eve was able to save herself. As I recall being taught, if Adam had not fallen and had reached perfection, then he would be the "Messiah" for Eve.

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.

Theological gymnastics. Again he assumes Mother had to be perfect in order to marry Father because they had to be “equal” and Father was perfect. If Mother is from a sinful lineage, then she needs salvation by the Messiah. If you claim Mother was perfect before she married Father, then she did not need salvation.

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. original Eve, it is her right to do so.

I fail to see this logic about men naming things. But in the end, Wilson just asserts that since Mother is perfect, then she can say and claim whatever she wants.

I don’t think she can go against the Principle. I sense Wilson thinks she can change the Principle if she wants because she is perfect.

We need to recognize where certain unstated assumptions, deeply rooted in Christian history, have been thrown into the Principle.

Wilson is implying here of course that there are many FALSE assumptions that have been thrown into the Principle. I’m not so OK with that statement. Let’s be really, really careful about changing the Principle since going way back to Lucifer, he and his agents have always been out to change the Word of God.

Everyone has assumptions they come in with. Does that allow them to change the Principle? Just exactly who can change the Principle? If Mother claims she can change the Principle, where does it end? Every person after Mother might say they are totally one with her/True Parents and therefore they too can change the Principle. It never ends. I know God gives progressive revelation, but God is not relativistic. There are many off-shoot groups of HSA now that change 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.

Where is this line of thought going? Is it going to try to prove Mother is perfect and therefore born sinless?

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.

Nobody that I know of is saying that is the point. Nobody is “denying the fundamental mission of True Parents”. Because Wilson assumes Mother is perfect, he cannot understand the issues being raised about only-begotten daughter. Since he does not understand the real issues being raised, all his arguments are arguing against something not being said by Sanctuary Church, in my opinion.

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.

No argument.

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.

I think the argument from Sanctuary Church is rather that Mother fulfilled only part of her mission. She did fulfill the conditions to be True Mother, but then did not complete her mission which meant remaining faithful to what True Father willed after he ascended up until the end of her life.

But what is the value of misunderstanding it and going back to an outmoded Christian notion of salvation by following a male Messiah?

I doubt the Christians think they have an “outmoded” notion of salvation.

Again I think Wilson is misunderstanding the issues being raised by Sanctuary Church.

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.

I believe differently about what 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.

History will tell better whose victory this was.

Sincerely,

Jim Stephens

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.♦

Dr. Andrew Wilson is Professor of Scriptural Studies at Unification Theological Seminary. He 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.