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Words Matter: Linguistic, Historical and Theological Issues with the Term "Begotten"

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The word "begotten" is problematic for Unification teaching both within the Unification family and in efforts of Unificationists to reach out beyond Unification circles—especially to adherents of the Religions of the Book, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Use of the word begotten is as challenging for Unificationists as it was for Christians in the 1950s, when translators of more recent English versions of the Bible removed the word begotten from some key verses.

The Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek, and the founders of Unificationism speak Korean. Understanding Biblical language and how certain concepts are expressed in English and Korean is important in the ongoing quest for truth. This article seeks to clarify the linguistic challenges and theological misunderstandings. Its thesis is that what the founders of Unificationism seek to convey in their formal speeches and informal talks and posts by use of the English word "begotten" is mistaken, and will hinder efforts to effectively communicate the teachings of Unificationism. Although there are controversies in some circles about what has been referred to as "only begotten theology," this paper does not respond to specific theological issues but seeks to clarify why the word "begotten" is not helpful for any constructive discussion about Unification teachings.

Historical Overview

There are too many lessons from history that demonstrate how one letter, one word or one phrase has led to divisions among the faithful—in some cases even to extended conflict and violence. For brevity, consider that the Christian church in the third and fourth century eventually split over the use of one letter. Was Jesus *homoousios* (ομοούσιος) or *homoiousios* (ὁμοιούσιος)?[1]

Without knowing Greek, it is easy to miss the nuances. However one of the main issues at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. was whether Jesus was of the same essence as God, *homoousios*, or of a similar essence and created by God out of nothing, *heteroousios* (ἑτεροουσιος). After intense discussion, a middle party, led by Eusebius of Caesarea, suggested a compromise position by introducing the term *homoiousios*, which suggested that Jesus was of a similar essence.[2] The Greek letter iota or "i" made all the difference.

This led to a split between Eusebius of Nicodemia, who presented the views largely developed by the Presbyter Arius who believed Jesus was subordinate and of a similar essence to God, and Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, who presented the view principally developed by Deacon Athanasius who also served as Alexander's personal secretary. At Nicaea, the Emperor Constantine, who had convened the council at the Empire's expense, and most attendees aligned themselves with the view of Athanasius and concluded that Jesus was co-equal and of the same essence as God.[3] In the view of Nicene Christianity, Jesus is God.

Later the question was whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father only or from the Father and the Son. The *Filioque* crisis, along with other issues, eventually led to the split between what we now know as Roman Catholicism based in Rome and the Eastern or Byzantine Orthodox Church based in Constantinople. The words "and the son" made all the difference.[4]

Unificationists view resolving differences as one of the founder's major objectives—indeed, Reverend Sun Myung Moon is widely known for his efforts to bring harmony and cooperation among representatives of different religions, races and cultures—and also among Unificationists of different persuasions![5]

The word "begotten" is used in some English translations of the Bible, the most well-known being the King James Version

(KJV) of 1611. The verse most often quoted is John 3:16. One also finds the word "begotten" in John 3:18, John 1:14, John 1:18, 1 John 4:9 and Hebrews 11:17, as well as some other verses. Begotten generally suggests the idea of originating or produced by someone else and, more importantly, a being begets someone or something like itself.

C.S. Lewis wrote in the 1940s about "begotten" in *Mere Christianity* as follows:

> We don't use the words begetting or begotten much in modern English, but everyone still knows what they mean. To beget is to become the father of: to create is to make. And the difference is this. When you beget, you beget something of the same kind as yourself. A man begets human babies, a beaver begets little beavers and a bird begets eggs which turn into little birds. But when you make, you make something of a different kind from yourself. A bird makes a nest, a beaver builds a dam, a man makes a wireless set—or he may make something more like himself than a wireless set: say, a statue.[6]

However, the word used in the Greek version of the New Testament is *monogenes* (μονογενής). (The g in *monogenes* is pronounced as in the English "go" or "get"). *Monogenes* has two primary definitions: being the "only one of its kind" within a specific relationship or being "unique in kind."[7] Literally, *monogenes* means "only" or "of the same kind." The Greek word can be used as an adjective meaning "unique and special,"[8] or on its own as a noun as in "the only one" or the "only legitimate child."[9] Also, it can be understood as an adjective compounded of *mono* (μονο), only, and *genes* (γενής), kind; thus it is translated into English as "only," "one of a kind," or "unique."[10] The *genes* in *monogenes* is not the root word for genesis, generation, gestation or generate in English, as will be explored later.

Latin, the other major language used in the early Christian period, originally used the word *unicus* in early translations of the Bible and is identical in meaning to the Greek *monogenes*.[11]

The word in question, *monogenes*, was drawn from the biblical verses mentioned above (John 3:16, 1:14, 1:18 and 1 John 4:9) for the formulation of the Nicene Creed. Interestingly, the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the version of the Bible most often used in the *Divine Principle* text,[12] does not use the phrase "only begotten Son" in the key verses mentioned above but uses the phrase "only Son." For example, in one of his most important speeches at Yankee Stadium on June 1, 1976, Rev. Moon quoted from John 3:16 and his interpreter used the RSV translation for the published version of his speech:

> For God so loved the world that he gave his **only** son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16, RSV)[13]

Because Unificationists in the English-speaking world have referenced the RSV in most of their literature since the first English rendition of Divine Principle in 1956,[14] the English word "begotten" was hardly ever used in Unification literature before the mid-1990s. However, while the earlier versions of Divine Principle did not use the word "begotten," calling Jesus the "only Son" rather than the "only begotten Son," for some reason the editors of the 1996 edition of *Exposition of Divine Principle* chose to use the word "begotten" on five occasions, based on its usage in the King James Version.[15] One also finds use of the word "begotten" in English translations of Rev. and Mrs. Moon's speeches.[16]

Rev. and Mrs. Moon have been addressing the issue of Jesus' uniqueness for decades, and more recently Mrs. Moon's use of the phrase "only begotten Daughter" has led to much controversy.[17] Although use or misuse of a word is clearly not at the root of current schisms, a better understanding of Father and Mother Moon's words as expressed in Korean may be helpful and will be explored later in this article.

Theologically Motivated Translation

To better understand the issues with the term "begotten", it is important to explore how and why the word "begotten" entered the King James Version of the Bible. The first English translation of the Bible directly from Hebrew and Greek is the version of William Tyndale (1494-1536). It is estimated that when the 54 scholars who produced the King James Version of the New Testament gathered, they utilized so much of Tyndale's version that 83% of the King James Version is identical to Tyndale's version.[18] Among the verses that are not identical are those using the word "begotten."[19]

In addition, one must also explore the translation produced by Jerome (c. 347-420) in the fourth century.[20] Jerome is best known for his Latin translation of the Bible. His text relied on the Greek, Latin and Hebrew versions and has generally been seen as the most reliable translation. Jerome's Bible, the Vulgate, provided the source material for virtually all translations for over

one thousand years including the translation by Erasmus (1466-1536) which greatly influenced the King James Version.[21]

Translations don't occur in a vacuum, and as is too often the case, political, theological and other influences were at play. In the Cathedral of Vercelli in northern Italy is the best known Old Latin Codex, Vercellensis, apparently written in 365 A.D. by Eusebius, Bishop of Vercelli. The document contains the Gospels, and there the word *monogenes* is translated into Latin as *unicus*, "only," not *unigenitus*, which can mean "only begotten."

It is very important to note that Jerome went to Rome in 382 A.D. and undertook a revision of the old Latin version of the Bible. Jerome made changes specifically to verses in John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16 and 3:18. He changed the Latin word *unicus* to *unigenitum*. Jerome apparently made the change due to an interest in ecclesiastical dogma, due to the theological battle with Arianism.[22] Since Arianism held that Jesus was created by God and viewed that Jesus was not co-substantial with the Creator, there existed intense disputes. Indeed arguments over *homousios* in the squares and churches of Alexandria were commonplace.

The issue was officially settled at the Council of Nicaea in 325, but the intense controversy continued unabated. Indeed Arianism continued until the seventh century in much of the Christian world. Thus, in the 56 years from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Constantinople in 381, Roman emperors frequently deposed and exiled bishops and presbyters deemed schismatic and heretical.[23] This created a culture of intrigue, division and hatred among the Christian brethren, and one's safety and survival often depended on which view the Roman Emperor supported.[24] It was within such an atmosphere that Jerome worked on his translation of the Bible. His translation was greatly influenced by the times he lived in and the convictions he held. His choice of *unigenitum* over the word *unicum* used in earlier Latin versions was clearly motivated by theology and not linguistic accuracy.

When the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was published in the late 1940s and early 1950s, there was great controversy among scholars over the removal of the word "begotten," particularly in the verses from the Gospel of John, namely, John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16 and 3:18. Removal of "begotten" was seen as an attack on the traditional Christian view held since the Council of Nicaea—an attack on belief in the divinity and virgin birth of Jesus. Nevertheless, the translators saw themselves as simply correcting an error in the English translation of the word *monogenes*, an error that had become established for over 300 years in the King James Version. It was no easy task.

According to the translators, the Greek word *monogenes* simply does not mean "begotten"; it means "only" or "one of a kind."[25] Interestingly, aside from the principal verses that refer to Jesus divinity—John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16 and I John 4:9, the KJV itself translates *monogenes* as "only." The same Greek word *monogenes* is translated in two ways in the same version of the Bible. Clearly, the translators of the King James Version inserted their theological perspective in their rendition of 1611.

There are numerous instances in the Bible of the use of the word *monogenes* in the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible. For example, Judges 11:34 and Jeremiah 6:26 translate the word *monogenes* as "only"; the Hebrew word used is *yachid*. *Yachid* is the common Hebrew word for "only":

- Judges 11:34 – "she was his only child"
- Jeremiah 6:26 - "as for an only son"

Moreover, Luke 7:12, 8:42 and 9:38 also use the word *monogenes*, but for some reason the translators of the King James Version did not use the word "begotten" but simply used the word "only":

- Luke 7:12 – "the only son of his mother"
- Luke 8:42 – "he had one only daughter"
- Luke 9:38 – "for he is mine only child"

The simple reason for using a different translation of *monogenes* in John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16 and I John 4:9 is because these verses make reference to the divinity of Jesus.

In comparing translations of John 3:16 in Bibles of other Western languages (Spanish, French, German and Italian), one finds the same issue. Some translate *monongenes* as "only" or "unique," others give the theological translation "only begotten":

Spanish:

- Porque de tal manera amó Dios al mundo, que dio a su **Hijo unigénito (only begotten Son)**, para que todo aquel que cree en Él, no se pierda, mas tenga vida eterna. *(La Biblia de las Américas)*
- Porque tanto amó Dios al mundo que dio a su **Hijo único (only son)**, para que todo el que crea en él no perezca, sino que tenga vida eterna. *(Biblia de Jerusalén)*

French:

- Car Dieu a tant aimé le monde qu'il a donné son **Fils unique (only Son)**, afin que quiconque croit en lui ne périsse point, mais qu'il ait la vie éternelle. *(Nouvelle Edition de Genève)*
- Car Dieu a tant aimé le monde qu'il a donné son **Fils unique (only Son)**, afin que quiconque croit en lui ne se perde pas, mais ait la vie éternelle. *(Bible Jérusalem)*
- Car Dieu a tant aimé le monde, qu'il a donné son **seul Fils engendré (only begotten Son)**, afin que quiconque croit en lui ne périsse pas, mais qu'il ait la vie éternelle. *(French Translation of the King James Version)*[26]

German:

- Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt, daß er seinen **eingeborenen Sohn (only begotten Son)** gab, auf daß alle, die an ihn glauben, nicht verloren werden, sondern das ewige Leben haben *(Lutherbibel)*
- Denn Gott hat die Welt so sehr geliebt, das ser seinen **einzigen Sohn (only Son)** hingab, damit jeder, der an ihn glaubt, nicht zugrunde geht, sondern das ewige Leben hat. *(Einheitsübersetzung Bibel)*

Italian:

- Dio infatti ha tanto amato il mondo da dare il **Figlio unigenito (only begotten Son)**, perché chiunque crede in lui non vada perduto, ma abbia la vita eterna. *(La Sacra Bibbia)*
- Perché Dio ha amato il mondo da dare il suo **unico Figlio (only Son)**, perché chiuque crede in lui no perisca, ma abbia vita eterna. *(Bibbia della Gioia)*

Traditional Christians adhere to the Nicene Creed, with its emphasis on Jesus' divinity and his role in the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A legitimate question is, why did Christian translators of more recent versions of the Bible in English change wording that seems to be supportive of those theological views? Indeed, some Christians still claim the King James Version is the only authorized version of the Bible and regard other translations as questionable.

The road to the use of "begotten"

Dale Moody in his article, "God's Only Son," states that the contemporary removal of the term "only begotten" was prompted not by theological interests but by the plain demands of linguistic study.[27] The word used in the RSV "only" is a literal translation of *monogenes*. It combines *monos* (single) and *genos* (kind). *Monogenes* is simply a fuller form of "only" and means "one of a kind," "only" or "unique." It does not mean "begotten"

How then did "only begotten" get into the English Bible and stay there so long? Jerome's role has been mentioned above. His translation, the Vulgate, with its changes to the older Latin version, was motivated by ecclesiastical dogma. Jerome left *unicus* (only) as the translation of *monogenes* in other verses, as has been noted. Where no theological question was involved, he kept an accurate rendition and used "only" as a translation of *monogenes*.

It is also interesting that although Augustine eventually used the Latin *unigenitum* as a translation of *monogenes*, he initially used the word *unicum*, meaning "only." The ultimate text of the Western Creed in 750 A.D. also uses *unicum* and not *unigenitus*.[28] Yet, it was the debate leading to Nicaea in the fourth century, with its controversy around the words *gennethenta ou poiethenta*, "begotten not made," that most likely led to Jerome's decision about translating the word *monogenes*.[29]

Jerome's translation of the Vulgate carried over to the King James Version (1611) and English Revised Version (1881). The error was first removed in the Twentieth Century New Testament, published in 1898, as modern Bible translators have been more concerned with linguistic accuracy than theological correctness.

Thus, contemporary translations tend to render *monogenes* as "only" throughout, and most have dropped the word "begotten" in John 3:16. Most have correctly identified the original language and its intent, and thus use something similar to "one and only Son." They include the Jerusalem Bible (1958), New English Bible (1961), New American Bible (1970), Good News Translation (1976), New Jerusalem Bible (1985), New Revised Standard Version (1989), Contemporary English Version (1995), New Living Translation (1996), English Standard Version (2001), Homan Christian Bible (2004), Common English Bible (2011), English Standard Version (2016), International Standard Version (2014), New American Bible (Revised Edition 2010), New International Version (2011), and the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (1993). Only a few recent Bibles, notably the New King James Version (1994) and the New American Standard Bible,[30] retain "begotten." Piotr Blumcynski, who has studied this issue,[31] concludes that modern translations are right to work from the original Greek and Hebrew rather than from the Latin Vulgate, thus avoiding this mistranslation of the fourth century that was based on theological concerns.

Some ancient translators erroneously thought that the root of the second part of *monogenes* was *gennao* rather than *genos*. *Genos*

means "of the same kind," but *gennao* means "to beget," from which comes begotten. English words such as genesis, generate, and genealogy derive from *gennao*. However, if *gennao* was the root word, an additional "n" would need to be added to read *monogenNes*. Some scholars have concluded that they would have to add to the Greek text if they want to translate *monogenes* to begotten!

Again, it is clear the term "begotten" came about due to doctrinal reasons. Somewhere in the third century, Origen promoted the doctrine of eternal generation—that Christ eternally came from the Father.[32] As mentioned, this idea was furthered in the fourth century by Jerome and others to battle against the Arian heresy.

Next was the formulation of the creeds and the formulation of language in creeds such as the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. The trans-lations were influenced by the Creeds, and the translators of the King James Version of 1611 were Anglican churchmen and theologians who adhered to the 39 Articles of the Church of England (1563), which state explicitly that the Son was "begotten from everlasting of the Father" similar to Origen's eternal generation doctrine. In fact, English clergymen were required to pledge submission to the 39 Articles of Religion.[33]

The translators were directed by King James to make as few changes as possible. However, as mentioned above, the translators were not consistent when it came to translating the word *monogenes* with regards to Luke 7:12, 8:42 and 9:38. In these verses they accurately translated *monogenes* by the English word "only." It is more than obvious that the translators inserted their theology in the translation of verses referring to Christ.

Christological Views: Unification vs. Christian Christology

Christology is the part of theology that is concerned with the nature and work of Jesus. The traditional Christian view is that Jesus is God, he pre-existed his birth, he is one in substance with God, and his birth occurred miraculously through a virgin. The basic sources for arriving at such conclusions are the New Testament, the creeds of Christianity and the reflections of theologians throughout the past 2,000 years.

Most Christological reflection took place in the eastern Mediterranean and the language of discourse was Greek amid concepts of classical antiquity. Two notions were central to Christological discourse: Logos and pre-existence.[34] Without an understanding of classical Greek and Roman culture, it is difficult to grasp how early Christians arrived at a Christological view that places Jesus as not only the son of God, but God himself. One could explore the so-called Monarchian and Monophysite heresies and also consider that during the time of Jesus the Roman Emperor was viewed as a god.[35] It is within those contexts that traditional Christianity reflected upon the nature of Jesus. A pertinent question at the time was how Jesus could possibly be a lesser being that the Roman Emperor, since the Emperor was viewed as divine.

The Christological view of Unificationism

The view of Unificationism agrees with modern theological trends in that Jesus was both human and divine. However, in the view of Unificationism, Jesus is the man who attained the purpose of creation.[36] *Exposition of Divine Principle* (1996) states the Unification view of Jesus' identity in the Chapter on Christology in a section entitled "Is Jesus God Himself?"

> Jesus may well be called God because, as a man who has realized the purpose of creation and who lives in oneness with God, he has a divine nature. Nevertheless, he is not God Himself. The relationship between God and Jesus may be thought of as analogous to the relationship between the mind and body. Because the body is the substantial object partner to the mind, resembles the mind and acts in oneness with the mind, it may be understood to be the mind's second self; but it is not the mind itself. By analogy, since Jesus is one with God and the incarnation of God, he may be understood to be God's second self; but he is not God. It is true that he who has seen Jesus may be said to have seen God (John 14:19-10) but Jesus did not mean by saying this that he was God Himself.[37]

Unification teaching affirms that although Jesus is divine or godly, he was not God the Creator. One could imply that Jesus was divinely born, but ultimately he was born through the relationship of a man and woman and was naturally conceived.

First-born Son and Daughter of God – victorious Messiah vs. failed Messiah!

In an effort to clarify the view of Unificationism's founders, Rev. and Mrs. Moon, (referred to as "True Parents" in Unification parlance), it is imperative to consult the original language and meaning expressed in their public and private talks. Recently, debate about the nature of True Parents' person and identity has sparked intense interest within Unificationist circles. Both Rev. and Mrs. Moon have spoken about their identity and currently Mrs. Moon often elaborates on her identity as God's daughter.

Since Korean is their language, both use the following biblical terminology: (Korean script and Chinese characters are provided

for clarity).

- *Dok saeng ja,* 독생자 (獨生子) means only born son:

  독 (獨) = only, 생 (生) = born, 자 (子) = son

- *Dok saeng nyeo,* 독생녀 (獨生女) means only born daughter:

  독 (獨) = only, 생 (生) = born, 녀 (女) = daughter

It is significant that the words used in Korean are closer to the original Greek (*monogenes*) and Latin (*unicus*). What do they mean to communi-cate? What does the word "only" mean in this context?

To some readers it appears Rev. and Mrs. Moon are emphasizing that that they are the first to have fulfilled their responsibility and are the first to fulfill the purpose of creation. They are in this sense the first-born son and daughter of God. Rev. and Mrs. Moon are not teaching that they are the "only" couple who will ever realize the purpose of creation, but that they are "unique" in being the first man and woman to jointly fulfill the goal and purpose of creation as explained in the section entitled "Purpose of Creation" in the Divine Principle.[38] Throughout their lives, they have continuously encouraged everyone to become a "true" son or daughter of God.

Accordingly, Rev. Moon said the following:

Dok saeng ja means the first son who can receive the first love and the dok saeng nyeo means the first daughter who can receive the first love. (*Sermons*, vol. 203, June 27, 1990)

Dok saeng ja is the one who is connected to the fullness of God's first love for an individual. (Jan. 24, 1986)

It is the goal of all of us to become a *dok saeng ja* and a *dok saeng nyeo*. (*Sermons*, vol. 41, Feb. 15, 1971)

The most important thing is how to reach the position of the *dok saeng ja* and *dok saeng nyeo*. (*Sermons*, vol. 52, Dec. 30, 1971)

It is our task to become the *dok saeng ja* and the *dok saeng nyeo* in order to liberate God. (*Sermons*, vol. 94, June 26, 1977)

Blessed families need to become a *dok saeng ja* and a *dok saeng nyeo* so that God says, "You two are the ones I love most." (Sept. 29, 2002)[39]

In the above quotes, the Korean words are used for emphasis. When Rev. and Mrs. Moon use the words *dok saeng ja* or *dok saeng nyeo* to denote themselves, they both are saying that they are the first to have fulfilled their responsibility and are thus the first to be born as God's son and daughter.[40] It is also important to note that theirs is not an exclusive state. They continuously encourage each and every child of God to become a "true" son or daughter of God as well.

Differences between Christian and Unification views

The complexities that emerge with the use of the word "begotten" are not restricted to linguistics. There are also thorny theological issues that arise. Since the Council of Nicaea, Christians generally accept that Jesus was not only born through divine intervention but also stress that Jesus was not born through physical conception as is stated in the Nicene Creed, "Begotten, not made." This view is held by all major Christian denominations: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Churches of the East, and Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, and most mainline Protestant Churches. Christian doctrine concludes that Jesus was not conceived by natural conception between a man and woman. It is because Jesus in the traditional Christian view is God himself.

Thus, when Christians use the word "begotten" in reference to Jesus it has a very specific meaning. Jesus was not conceived in a natural way and did not have a physical father. He was conceived miraculously, and his mother Mary is referred to as the Virgin Mother or the Virgin Mary.[41] This greatly complicates use of the word "begotten" in a Unification context.

A close reading of the *Divine Principle* chapter on Christology leads to the Unification understanding that Jesus was conceived of a man and woman. Rev. Moon explained in numerous speeches that Jesus had a literal father and mother. Jesus was conceived through a relationship between a physical man and woman. Furthermore, the Unification view is that Jesus was not God himself, but rather the son of God. Yet Jesus was divine and the mediator between God and human beings.[42]

The nature of the Messiah – True Parents

True Parents were born of a man and woman. They had natural births. Indeed photographs of their parents exist! When Father and Mother Moon refer to themselves as the "unique" son or daughter of God, they are actually saying that they are the first to have accomplished their responsibility—the first to fulfill the purpose of creation. They are the first to cross the finish line. It is

God's hope and the hope of True Parents that all of humanity not only pursues that goal but also accomplishes it. Similarly, Jesus encouraged his disciples in Matthew 5:48 to "be perfect as Heavenly Father is perfect."

When Father and Mother Moon state that they are the first to fulfill the purpose of creation, they are indeed stating the same thing Jesus said when in John 8:58 he is quoted as saying "Before Abraham was I am." Did Jesus pre-exist his birth? He did not. However, he was in a sense the spiritual ancestor of all of humanity, including Abraham.

Conclusion

Use of the word "begotten" in the English language is not helpful in conveying Unificationist teaching for multiple reasons. If the translators of more recent versions of the Bible in English could make corrections more than 300 years since the publication and wide-spread use of the King James Version, then it should be similarly possible for Unificationist translators in our time.

"Begotten" is an inaccurate translation of the biblical text, as has been amply demonstrated above. The Greek word *monogenes* simply means "only," "unique," or "one of a kind." More importantly, the term "begotten" does not accurately convey what the founders of Unificationism have been teaching. Although it may be debatable whether the founders teach that they were born differently from all historical human beings, they have never taught that they were born without physical parents. In addition, from what one can glean from translations of the Korean, the word "begotten" is also an inaccurate translation of the Korean terms used by Rev. and Mrs. Moon both conceptually and linguistically.

Since the term "begotten" is loaded with historical theological baggage, use of the term makes it increasingly difficult if not impossible to effectively communicate the Unification message, especially to adherents of Judaism, Christianity and Islam who represent almost half of world's population. The point here is not to forge Unification views to accommodate the beliefs of others, but to communicate what is true effectively and accurately.

For traditional Christians, the term "begotten" is always associated with the view and belief that Jesus was not conceived as are all other humans. Jesus was conceived supernaturally and born of a Virgin. "Begotten" has a very specific meaning for Christians, i.e. that God begat a God, namely Jesus. Unification teaching, however, is quite clear that the founders of Unificationism and Jesus were born of a man and woman. When Rev. or Mrs. Moon speak of having a special birth, they are not saying that they were conceived supernaturally. It is best understood to mean that they are divinely managed or divinely guided by God. In this sense they are unique providentially, and in this sense are different from the rest of humanity. Nevertheless, they are not "begotten."

Adherents of Judaism do not accept the view that Jesus was miraculously born of a Virgin. Hence, to use the word "begotten" to explain that the founders of Unificationism were born by Divine intervention conveys the view to Jews that the Unification founders consider themselves God the Creator.

For followers of Islamic teaching, there is only one God. Although Islam generally accepts the idea of the Virgin Birth, some followers of Islam consider "begetting" to be an animal act belonging to the animal function of sex. Begotten indeed means "sired." It is considered blasphemous to consider that Jesus (considered a prophet of God in Islam) to have been sired by God.[43] Christian missionaries to the Muslim world in past centuries encountered many challenges even to start to explain what "begotten not made" meant.[44] Islam, according to one Christian scholar, considers itself the purest form of monotheism.[45] Consider that a sura considered to be worth one-third of the entire Qur'an reads:

> In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Say: He is God, the One and Only: God the Eternal, Absolute, He begetteth not, Nor is He begotten: and there is not Like unto Him"[46]

Thus when explaining the Unification message to Jews, Christians and Muslims, the word "begotten" is more of a hindrance than a help. This article does not provide a study of the reactions of representatives of the world's religions, but surely a study of Hinduism, Sikhism and religions that honor a Deity will demonstrate that effective communication with any of the adherents is made more complicated by use of the word "begotten."

As has been noted, "begotten" does not effectively translate the Korean text. Since it was not long ago that the term "begotten" entered the English speaking Unification world, it is not too late to make corrections. The experience of Christians who translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek texts, and not from Latin, should be a lesson for all Unificationist translators today, to look to the Korean and explore the intent of the founders when rendering their words into other languages. They should be careful not to make the same errors as those that derived from Jerome's translation of the Bible.

Notes

[1] See New World Encyclopedia article on Council of Nicaea – Arian Controversy http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/First_Council_of_Nicaea. (accessed June 2017)

[2] Matt Perry, "Athanasius and his influence at the Council of Nicea," *Quodlibet Journal* 5/2-3 (July 2003).

[3] Ibid. Neither Arius nor Athanasius were present at the Council of Nicaea because both were not bishops. Arius was a presbyter and Athanasius was a deacon and personal secretary to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria. When Eusebius of Nicodemia presented the view of Arius he was shouted down and his speech snatched from his hand, torn to shreds and trampled underfoot.

[4] "Filioque clause," Theopedia: https://www.theopedia.com/filioque-clause. (accessed May 2017)

[5] The co-founders of Unificationism, Sun Myung Moon and Hak Ja Han Moon, founded numerous federations and associations to promote inter-religious dialogue and world peace. They include the Universal Peace Federation, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace, Inter-religious Federation for Peace, Professors World Peace Academy, Middle East Peace Initiative to name a few.

[6] C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Samizdat, 2014), p. 86.

[7] *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (University of Chicago Press, 3rd Edition) (BDAG)

[8] James White, *The Forgotten Trinity*, (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1998).

[9] Richard Murphy, *Background to the Bible*, (Servant Publications, University of Michigan, 1978).

[10] Michael Marlow, "The Only Begotten Son," 2006, p. 1. http://www.bible-researcher.com/only-begotten.html

[11] Dale Moody, "God's Only Son, the Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 72, No. 4 (Dec. 1953): 213-19.

[12] *Divine Principle*, (Washington D.C.: HSA-UWC, 1973) and *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, (New York: HSA-UWC, 1996).

[13] Sun Myung Moon, "God's Hope for America" (or America is God's Hope), speech at Yankee Stadium, June 1, 1976.

[14] The Revised Standard Version has been the version most quoted in the English editions of the Divine Principle since the partial English translation of *Explanation of Divine Principle (Wolli Haeseol)* by Young Oon Kim as *The Divine Principle* in 1956.

[15] One finds the phrase "only begotten" in the Introduction on page 11, the Section on Give and Take on page 23, , the section on Second World Wide Course on page 271, the section on the Spiritual Foundation of Faith on page 278 and the section on the object partner of God's heart on page 402.

[16] Jin Choon Kim, "True Parents as the Only Begotten Son and Only Begotten Daughter," February 2017, claims that Rev. Moon used the term Only Begotten Son 1500 times and Only Begotten Daughter 180 times in his sermons. Rev. and Mrs. Moon do not use the English term "begotten" in their speeches, since they speak in Korean.

[17] Sanctuary Church led by Hyung Jin (Sean) Moon and its representatives have spoken extensively about the "only begotten" issue in sermons and presentations. Also, the Family Peace Association led by Hyun Jin (Preston) Moon has also taken issue with the "only begotten" matter. For Sanctuary Church views, see presentations by Richard Panzer: http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/Panzer/Panzer-170508.pdf and Kerry Williams: http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/HyungJinMoon-13/ HyungJinMoon-151119.pdf#search="kerry williams". For a sample of the view of Family Peace Association see Mark Bramwell: http://www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/HyunJinMoon-14/HyunJinMoon-160908.pdf.

[18] Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University, 2010), p. 16, citing John Nielson and Royal Skousen, "How Much of the King James Bible is William Tyndale's? An Estimation Based on Sampling," *Reformation* 3 (1998): 49–74. Some suggest the translators of the KJV did not fully acknowledge how much they relied on the Tyndale version.

[19] For example John 3:16 in the Tyndale version reads: "For God so loveth the worlde yt he hath geven his only sonne than none that believe in him shud perisshe: but shuld have everlasting lyfe" Compare to the King James version of 1611 which reads "For God so loued the world, that he gaue his only begotten Sonne, that whoseuer beleeueth in him, should not perish, but haue euerlasting life.

[20] Stefan Rebenich, *Jerome*, The Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 2002).

[21] "Saint Jerome," *New World Encyclopedia*. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/ entry/Saint_Jerome. Accessed June 2017. The New Testament of the King James Version was translated from Textus Receptus and the Old Testament from the Masoretic Hebrew Text. Textus Receptus is the Latin name given to a succession of printed Greek texts of the New Testament. Although Erasmus worked for years on collating the Greek texts and an updated Latin text, it is interesting that in the earlier phases of his translation efforts he rarely mentioned the Greek. He is quoted as saying: "It is only fair that Paul should address the Romans in somewhat better Latin" (see "History of Textus Receptus" in Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textus_Receptus)

[22] Moody, "God's Only Son," pp. 213-19.

[23] Tarmo Toom, *Classical Trinitarian Terms* (New York: T&T Clark), p. 43: Emperor Constantine opted for *homoousios* (same) at the Council of Nicea in 325 but Emperor Constantius II in the 340s aligned with *homoiousios* (similar), and then another version *homoios* (resembled or like) was favored by the same Constantius II in 359 and adopted by Emperors Valens, Valentinian II and his mother Empress Justina in the late 380s. Then it went back to *homoousios* in 381 with Emperor Theodosius.

[24] Christopher Hall, "How Arianism Almost Won," *Christianity Today*, 2005.

[25] Moody, "God's Only Son."

[26] Interestingly, from research of over twenty versions in French, only the French version of a translation of the King James Version and the New World (Nouveau Monde) version of the Jehovah's Witnesses uses the term *fils unique engender*.

[27] Moody, "God's Only Son."

[28] John Baron, *The Greek Origin of the Apostles Creed* (Parker and Co, 1885), pp. 11-25.

[29] Moody, "God's Only Son."

[30] Some NASB publishers include a footnote stating that the literal translation is "unique, only or one of His kind" yet "only begotten" is used out of respect for tradition.

[31] Piotr Blumczynski, *New Voices in Translation Studies* 2 (Belfast: Queen's University, 2006), pp. 1-8.

[32] *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Alan Richardson & John Bowden, 1983, p. 225.

[33] Bob Williams, Bible Lessons World Wide Ministry. http://www.biblelessons.com/ begotten.html (accessed June 13, 2017)

[34] *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, pp. 100-108.

[35] See "Monarchianism," *New World Encyclopedia*. Monarchianism is considered a heresy that emphasized the indivisibility of God (the Father) at the expense of other persons of the Trinity. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Monarchianism; also "Monophysitism," *New World Encyclopedia*. Monophysitism was considered a heresy that took the position that Christ has only one nature in which his divinity and humanity are united. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Monophysitism. Views such as these were among many theological explanations proposed during the first two centuries of Christianity but later rejected when the doctrine of the Trinity was canonized at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 C.E.

[36] Young Oon Kim, *Unification Theology* (New York: HSA-UWC, 1987), pp 162-65.

[37] *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, pp. 167-68.

[38] Ibid, pp. 32-36.

[39] Thanks to Katsumi Kambashi who provided translation from the original Korean text.

[40] When one checks popular Korean English dictionaries or Naver, a popular online crowd sourced dictionary, the English word begotten translates into Korean as *dok saeng ja* (독생자) and vice versa. The most likely reason is because the early versions of the Bible in Korean were translated from the English King James Version and not from the original Greek. There are currently versions of the Korean Bible that translate John 3:16 using the Korean word for "only." Here is John 3:16 from the *Korean Living Bible*, 하나님이 세상을 무척 사랑하셔서 하나밖에 없는 외아들마저 보내 주셨으니 누구든지 그를 믿기만 하면 멸망하지 않고 영원한 생명을 얻는다, which translates into English as: "God loves the world so much that he has sent even one and only son who is alone. If anyone believes in him, he will not perish but have eternal life."

[41] T.M. Doman, "Virgin Birth," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Bromley, (Geoffrey W. Eerdmans) p. 990.

[42] *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, pp. 163-168. Although Rev. Moon is not the first to allude to the idea that Jesus had a

physical father, it well known among Unificationists that he has referred to the High Priest Zachariah (also spelled Zechariah or Zacharias who is husband of Elisabeth and father of John the Baptist) as being the father of Jesus. There have been numerous suggestions in history that point to the same. See Robert Price, "Was Jesus the Son of the Priest Zacharias?" 2006, http://www.robertmprice. mindvendor.com/art_zachar.htm or Mark Gibbs, *The Virgin and the Priest*, 2008. http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Books/MakeMessiah-Gibbs/MakeMessiah- Gibbs-03.pdf

[43] Some Islamic scholars point to the fact that the Revised Standard Version removed the word begotten: http://peacebk.blogspot.ca/2011/08/is-jesus-christ-begotten-son-of-god.html

[44] Duncan B. Macdonald, "Begotten Not Made," *The Muslim World*, January 1916, p. 18.

[45] Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* (Baker Books, 1993 and 2002), pp. 15-16.

[46] Ibid. p. 19.