

True Mother has not lowered herself - A Response to Andrew Wilson's article

Claude A. Perrottet
May 11, 2020

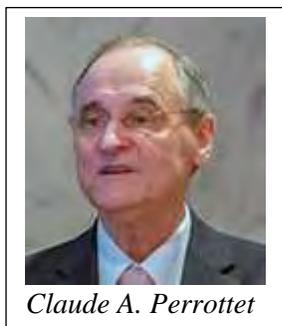


This recent article, "[Why Does True Mother Call Herself the Only Begotten Daughter?](#)" by Andrew Wilson suggests that True Mother has chosen to lower herself by taking on the title of Only Begotten Daughter in reaction to failure and opposition.

While acknowledging the many insights of this factual article, I submit that True Mother (Mrs. Hak Ja Han) has not lowered herself at all, but promotes this view much in line with her role as the first woman in history to fulfill the purpose of creation. Being humble, at least here, does not mean lowering oneself.

It is undoubtedly true that True Mother had no choice but to engage in a sustained effort to create a foundation for herself, just as Jesus and later True Father had been forced to do. And it is obviously true that True Mother had to start her lonely course under circumstances that were not the ones she or anyone would have hoped for (an understatement).

True Father was entirely victorious, but he was largely deprived of the fruits of his victory, and so were God and humankind. In True Family and our movement at large, fractures had begun to appear even before True Father passed on to spirit world.



Claude A. Perrottet

I never had any doubts about the status of True Mother before, during, or after True Father's ascension, and believe I am part of an overwhelming majority on this point. However, when we first heard the expression "Only Begotten Daughter," several thoughts came to mind.

There was the issue of the meaning of "begotten" which Dr. Wilson addresses at the beginning of his article. Rev. Franco Famularo discusses it in detail in his contribution on "[Words Matter: Linguistic, Historical and Theological Issues with the Term 'Begotten'](#)"; also see Dr. Tyler Hendricks' "[Predestination of the Only-Begotten Daughter](#)." No doubt, the Unificationist understanding is

categorically different from the traditional "begotten, not made" understanding.

Is it really either/or?

True Mother's decision to refer to herself publicly as the Only Begotten Daughter was a momentous event. The implications went far beyond those one could have expected from a change in terminology. But this decision may have a more fundamental meaning than that of True Mother lowering herself in response to lack of faith.

In her public speeches and autobiography, True Mother routinely refers to herself as both the Only Begotten Daughter and the True Mother of humankind, quite naturally, in the same sentence (e.g., [The Mother of Peace](#), pp. 19 and 34 in the Korean edition). It is not either/or, and neither does Dr. Wilson's article suggest it is. But the question remains whether True Mother's recent insistence on her status as the Only Begotten Daughter was merely an effort to compensate for lack of faith within our movement, by lowering herself to the status of daughter, rather than standing as the Mother she actually is.

In fact, True Mother has never ceased to confidently present herself as the True Mother. We have all been aware of her status on this point ever since we realized we had True Parents. Whenever Mother speaks of True Parents, the direct implication is she is True Mother. Following True Father's passing, True Mother began to be routinely introduced as "True Parents." For instance, whenever she was about to appear onstage, the emcee would announce that "True Parents are entering the stage," meaning True Father was accompanying her spiritually, but also that her presence alone meant that True Parents, being one, were present.

Quoting from Dr. Wilson's article: "Therefore, Mother exited from the position of True Mother [emphasis added] and took up the position of God's daughter." This, actually, does sound like either/or, but I don't see that as being the case.

Accepting True Mother as such has never been the problem. For decades, she has been our Mother and the mother of 14 True Children, True Father's spouse who allowed him to move from single Messiah to being True Parent. That has never really been questioned. The Mother was lovingly accepted, cherished, admired and valued like True Father was, even by those who would later challenge her status as Only Begotten Daughter and its implications.

Vagueness in our understanding

We Unificationists were never quite clear about the status of True Mother, though we were largely unaware of it. True Mother was True Mother, but what she was beyond that was vague in our minds (or at least mine).

Why have we not been clear on this point? Why have some been a little puzzled or even taken aback when True Mother started introducing herself as the Only Begotten Daughter?

For one, we have simply remained spiritually dull, at least when compared to what our original condition would be. That causes us to always be at risk to miss the next step.

In the early days of our movement, True Mother was the uniquely prepared young woman chosen to be the eternal partner of the Lord of the Second Advent. Gradually, she began to appear side by side with True Father, in pictures and in real life -- we have all witnessed that evolution. What True Mother was before meeting True Father also became known (the story of Daemionim's life course). But it was seen as the story of True Mother's preparation to become the spouse of True Father, hence True Mother, without the understanding that she had herself come as the Only Begotten Daughter, just like Jesus and Father were born as the Only Begotten Son, based on a providential course of preparation. That question, so to speak, bypassed our minds, as the focus was entirely on what Mother herself calls her "[life in attendance to](#)" True Father. Perhaps one could say that True Mother was seen as "Mrs. Only Begotten Son" rather than Only Begotten Daughter -- a significant difference.

In the last years of his life, True Father had been gradually passing on the mantle to True Mother, while keeping ultimate authority. In many ways, Father encouraged Mother to be centerstage and he clarified that she was the one, as the Mother of humankind, who had to do it -- not just because she was younger than Father. True Father even went to the point where he was, literally, attending True Mother, watching her delivering speeches around the world, regardless of time of day, putting himself in the supporting role. This is not a matter of interpretation -- Father clearly explained this was the position he was putting himself in. In various instances, True Father made it clear True Mother had now become in every way his equal. Some of these quotes appear in Dr. Wilson's article.

One thing remained unclear, and mostly we did not even want to think about it: what would True Mother's role be after True Father's passing, beyond maintaining his legacy and further spreading the message?

The messianic nature of the Only Begotten Daughter

By leading us to understand she was "Only Begotten" like Jesus and later True Father, True Mother made us aware of her own messianic preparation and the fact that she had a companion role to that of the Messiah -- not just the role of wife and mother, even True Mother. That is, judging from my own experience, where the lack of clarity was and where some were unable to follow. True Mother's greatness in the past few years is she was able to make an overwhelmingly credible case for that view by her words and, even more so, by her results.

Only Begotten Daughter is the natural counterpart to the well-known Only Begotten Son. It has biblical origins. Using that term in public speeches, notably in front of Christian ministers, is also a way of leading their minds to acknowledge the obvious parallel. It opens the way for them to accept True Mother for who she is. The expression is both shockingly new and very familiar (son-daughter). It presents itself as a natural, though unexpected, extension of something Christians have always known and cherished. It transforms the listener's understanding of the messianic mission in a way that is more direct and explicit than even the term True Mother.

Since True Mother came in that position 2,000 years after Jesus was unable to find the Only Begotten Daughter, it suggests True Mother came to complete what Jesus had come to do. But, given her appearance in a totally different age, it also suggests that the Only Begotten Son she came to complete the messianic mission with is ultimately True Father, rather than Jesus. People can come to that conclusion quietly, in their own minds and at their own pace.

In Christian and Jewish tradition, the Messiah has always been a masculine figure. To a large extent, and perhaps surprisingly, this has also been the case for Unificationists. I do not see this primarily as a consequence of a collapse of faith that immediately preceded True Father's ascension. To a significant extent, I see that particular issue as a consequence of unclarity on the true status of True Mother. More precisely, unclarity on the role a woman -- original Eve -- is meant to play in God's human family. Paradoxically, this point was clear to True Mother since her early childhood, when her mother and grandmother were eagerly anticipating "the coming of the Only Begotten Son and the Only Begotten Daughter who would save the world" (True Mother's autobiography, p. 75 of the Korean edition).

This leads me to another point made in Dr. Wilson's article: "To restore the foundation of faith, True Mother undertook three years of mourning at True Father's wonjeon. This was a duty which traditionally would be carried out by the eldest son." I certainly do not wish to second-guess True Parents' intent in taking unexpected steps. But it seems there is at least another way of looking at this.

It has often been repeated that we no longer live in the Choson era when the queen mother, while highly respected, was sidelined once her husband, the king, had died. As Dr. Wilson often emphasizes, True Mother appeared as the revelation of the original role and position of a woman. Through her three years of intense attendance to True Father after his passing, she sealed her unity with him. As she writes in her [letter](#) to Father, "through those conversations [during her daily visits to his grave], your thoughts became my thoughts and my thoughts became yours." I see this course as essential, not accidental.

True Mother herself explains in her autobiography (p. 28, Korean edition) that she offered these three years of devotion to True Father "as his wife" and "on behalf of all humankind." Likewise, while touring the world in recent years, proclaiming her role and giving the Blessing, she remarked on occasion she was doing this because we did not have the confidence or will to do it ourselves. She did it as a parent taking responsibility for her children's shortcomings.



Mrs. Hak Ja Han awards the [4th Sunhak Peace Prize](#) to former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Feb. 5, 2020

Meaning of the child's position

When saying True Mother "lowered herself to the child's position," it is important to note that this is a position that had never existed before and was understood only vaguely, if at all. It is not a position like that of John the Baptist for which there was a precedent in Jesus and True Father, who had to go this course when the central figure entrusted with it failed.

Throughout biblical times, women of God were in the mother's position, opening the way for men to be victorious in the son's position through mother-son cooperation -- leading eventually to the only Begotten Son Jesus. Women in the daughter's position were not part of the picture. The struggles for restoration were over the Cain-Abel positions, involving sons exclusively. Only in recent years have True Parents begun to speak of father-daughter cooperation and countries in the daughter position -- a sign that the times have been

changing when True Mother began to appear on the world stage.

In short, though women were often key figures, they were so in a largely hidden way, behind the scenes, in a sacrificial position to open the way for sons to make a providential breakthrough. With this backdrop, it was hard to even imagine such a thing as the Only Begotten Daughter coming to earth as a central figure.

Upon consideration, I am not sure that the comparison between True Mother declaring herself to be the Only Begotten Daughter and Jesus "lower[ing] himself to the child's position to take up the mission of John the Baptist" (Wilson article) really applies. On pp. 224-225 of Exposition of the Divine Principle, it clearly states that, after restoring the Foundation of Faith, Jesus "rose to the position of Messiah and True Parent." "Messiah" here is the equivalent of Only Begotten Son -- not the position of John the Baptist he was eventually forced to take on, which was that of Abel (son) in relation to Cain (the Israelites).

In other words, Jesus should have secured the position which he had come to fulfill as both the Only Begotten Son and, after creating his family, the True Father. Both. When the Foundation of Substance crumbled, he "lowered himself" to the position of child = John the Baptist = Abel, not to the position of

child = Only Begotten Son = Messiah. The "Son" of Only Begotten Son means Son of God, not the Abel son of a fallen family in the course of restoration.

Similarly, when True Mother began presenting herself as the Only Begotten Daughter, she did not mean to lower herself to the hypothetical position of an Abel-type daughter in the process of restoration.

She mainly clarified the fact that her generally accepted position as True Mother also meant that she was the Only Begotten Daughter, just like the Messiah (Jesus and True Father) came as the Only Begotten Son of God. She thus removed the vagueness attached to her providential role and value and confidently proclaimed that the providential meaning of True Mother was in every way the full equivalent of that of True Father. She was not simply the Messiah's wife who became the True Mother by marrying him and following her course of attendance, no matter how special her preparation had been.

I see the proud proclamation of her full identity as a message of hope, opening new horizons and washing away the sense of loss and despair (not the inevitable sadness) that overcame all of us after True Father's ascension. More than being damage control, it was a revelation.

Progressive revelation

True Father had been speaking (on occasion) about Tribal Messiahship since the early days (e.g., [CSG, 155-265, 1965.10.31](#)). Then, he began to speak about it in a focused way once the providential time for its completion had come in the early 1990s.

Similarly, he testified to True Mother on various occasions, but only in his last years on earth did he come to fully reveal the scope of her mission. Had Father, as many expected, lived to become 100 or more, the final transition would have proceeded more smoothly, no doubt.

If we understand that, just like Father, she was God's only daughter who came with a mission just as crucial to the restoration of things gone wrong through the Fall, we must also realize that acknowledging who she really is came with the same kind of challenge that people first meeting Jesus or True Father faced. We could be prepared and taught about it (mostly by Father himself), but there was to be a residual element we could not be "fed" by Heaven: each of us had to make, if not a leap, at least a small step of faith and confirm to ourselves what we could sense if we were spiritually attuned (see Samuel Radebe's [remarks](#) on spiritual vs. religious, General Assembly of the World Clergy Leadership Conference, Seoul, South Korea, Feb. 5, 2020, beginning at 1:31 of the video). True Mother, after True Father's passing, was necessarily going to do things in a way we could not fully anticipate. Questions would come up.

In spite of all the miserable events surrounding True Father's passing, it seems most of us did make that step.

When True Father suddenly passed, I felt an immense sense of regret. The over 7 billion people who had lived on earth at the time of the Lord of the Second Advent would never have a chance to know him. That could not be undone. True Mother was still with us, but based on the understanding of her "merely" being True Mother, the sense that history's most essential providential time had passed without humankind being able to take full advantage of it had a devastating feel to it.

That is when things began to be clarified under True Mother's direction. As she later commented, it took us some years to fully comprehend the meaning of this new stage of the Providence centered on True Mother -- the only Begotten Daughter of God.

Dr. Claude Perrottet is Secretary-General of the Research Institute for the Integration of World Thought. He translated An Introduction to the Thought of Sun Myung Moon from Korean to English, and has developed and taught numerous online courses including "Unification Thought in Context" currently offered by UTS. He received his Master of Divinity from UTS (class of 1999) and a Ph.D. in Theology from Laval University in Quebec City, Canada. Dr. Perrottet has served as the FFWPU president of Switzerland and Albania. His publications include a book on Kant's influence on Paul Tillich's philosophy of religion.