

**It could easily have been Adam and Steve – but Adam was straight so God chose Eve.**

The extraordinary allegorical wisdom found in Genesis – relating to the archetypes of Adam (this merely means ‘man’ in Hebrew) and Eve (‘mother of all the living’ in Hebrew) are what can be called ‘true myth’. As a source of the sort of truths we have become accustomed to receive – textbooks, histories and lists of facts, Genesis does not function. It does however teach us profound truths about the human condition, but speaks in the language of theology, not history.

In Genesis there are two different accounts of creation, and the first account, the grand narrative of God moving over the waters of chaos and man and woman being created together is rather different from the second account, which has the hallmarks of oral tradition, and has woman being made from the rib of man.

There is widespread academic consensus that Genesis 1 – 2:3 was a sophisticated theological rewrite, whereas the Genesis 2 creation story records an earlier oral tradition.

What is important for us is the idea that the Adam and Eve story somehow shows an exclusivist model of human relations, and not merely an example of normative (most common) human relationships. Because the ancient writers of Genesis wrote about two archetypal people called Adam and Eve did this mean that **only** men and women can form meaningful relationships that are compatible with God’s purpose? Furthermore, even if they did intend this to be the only relationship are we to be bound by their beliefs any more than numerous other forms of family and relationship in The Old Testament that are now rightly considered beyond the pale?

Actually I do not think that a complex and sophisticated allegory like Genesis can be used as a ‘checklist’ of individual human circumstances. What we learn from Genesis is that God is the all powerful, uncreated Creator of all we see and experience, as well as the wider universe beyond our knowledge. We see that human beings fit best into a loving, self giving relationship of mutuality and commitment, and that God pours grace through such relationships so that they become a powerful means for us to develop and enrich ourselves – spiritually, emotionally and physically. It is no more essential that the players are male and female (except where procreation is touched upon in the story) than it is essential for us to suffer horribly in getting our food, or that women should suffer during childbirth. Nor is it essential to be agriculturalist or to live in the ancient near east – what matters are those aspects of Genesis that are universally applicable.

Indeed – when we read the story with open eyes we see that God actually offers Adam a choice as to who his mate should be in the second creation story. Adam turns down all God’s possibilities until God, knowing Adam’s inmost thoughts and nature, creates Eve for him. Presumably if Adam had chosen differently or if the first Adam had not been heterosexual it could just as easily have been Adam and Steve rather than Adam and Eve. Of course this would not have worked for a

creation allegory, as the story speaks of the origin of The Human Condition; therefore it makes more sense for the tale to include procreation.

To take any verse in isolation in The Bible is to do violence to the integrity of The Bible's wisdom and content. The Bible is a sacred text, but its origin is not necessarily sacred. Human beings wrote The Bible – but because of the nature of their intent and the continuing revelation we seek from God the Bible is more than the sum of its authors. It is the ongoing conversation we as Christians have around and including the Bible that enables it to speak prophetically to us – it can never be fixed in any point of time lest it become a dry, dead thing – gagged by humanity's fear of change and challenge.

For the Bible to be truly God's mouthpiece it has to be relevant to us as a faith community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – facing the conditions and challenges *WE* face, otherwise it dwindles into a source of merely historical significance.

Unless we are able to reinterpret those difficult passages around slavery, polygamy, genocide etc in the light of Christ and our life and experience as Christians – today - then the Bible becomes prey to the follies of whatever era its author's lived in. If we are unable to move beyond the literal, and dare I say somewhat infantile conclusion that because somebody thousands of years ago wrote about a man and a woman to attempt to explain our earthly existence then all other forms of human interaction and devotion are beyond redemption.

It is not Adam and Eve that is significant – it is that God loved Adam *and* Eve – and that God's motivation was 'it is not good that he should be alone'. If Adam had lived today, and had grown up with a exclusive homosexual orientation then God's desire for his fulfillment and happiness – God's cry that 'it is not good that he should be alone' surely would have led to the production of **Steve** to comfort him, love him, cherish him and protect him till the end of their days. God loves us too much to leave us alone and unloved, and loves women too much to have them used merely to ease our comfort at the presence amongst us of homosexuals – women are not there to help the Adams of this world appear straight.

