

The Scripture according to Ed



In response to Thomas Huckaba's response to Scott Camp's response to Lia Salciccia's column on women and Christianity, I think y'all doth protest too much. Of course, that doesn't mean I'll be quiet.

Now I know other people have written letters on this subject, but I don't know them. Thus, they are irrelevant.

I agree that the story of God creating Eve from one of Adam's ribs suggests that women are inferior. If earlier translations imply that Eve was a "fit companion" for Adam (since I'm not fluent in ancient Greek or Hebrew, I can neither confirm nor deny these allegations), it doesn't necessarily follow that Eve was Adam's equal. A dog is allegedly man's best friend, and with few exceptions, the dog is not its master's equal.

However, it is unfair to single out Christianity as the original gorilla. The story of Adam and Eve is part of Judaism and Islam as well as Christianity. Besides, this story is somewhat moot. Christianity has a lot more to do with the New Testament than it does with the Old.

Huckaba argues that translations of ancient biblical texts into languages that use gender-specific pronouns inaccurately refer to God as He. However, what little I have read of the Bible suggests that the Christian God is male.

Jesus Christ was male, there's no denying that. One can try to deny his divinity, but as a biblical fact, Jesus was a guy. The Old Testament God says — like Popeye — that "I am who I am," but he embodies masculine characteristics far more than feminine characteristics. That doesn't mean, however, that the Christian God is necessarily

prejudiced against women any more than I like dogs (which I don't).

Yes, Christianity has traditionally placed women in an inferior role, but so have the religious and secular elements of virtually every society throughout history. Absent Christianity and patriarchal religions in general, would women have fared better? Without addressing society-wide male-female relationships and the triumph of group over individual identity and choice, I doubt it.

Christianity is clearly not the only patriarchal religion in history, or even today. Most civilizations in history have not embraced a Goddess religion. (Of course, I haven't researched this subject, but why should I buck a trend?) Goddess religions have tended to prosper in societies that are constantly at the mercy of natural forces. Virtually helpless against Nature, they look to the Earth Mother Gaia for protection from storms, drought, etc.

When a society has progressed to the point that the people have achieved some security from the forces of nature, they are less likely to see their deity as Mother and themselves as Her children. Indeed, civilizations not only avoid being dominated by nature most of the time, civilizations can exert control over it. A society that can control nature tends to lose its awe of nature, and so is unlikely to worship it.

A word on saints. Salciccia referred to Joan of Arc's crispy end, implying that Christians don't even treat their women saints kindly. St. Joan was executed by the English for political reasons. Yes, they said she was a witch, but really they were irritated and embarrassed that an adolescent peasant girl could rally the French and whip the Limeys off of the continent. Besides, everyone knows that the best way to be made a saint — whether male or female — is to die a violent death for staying true to the Christian faith. It looks great on the application.

Both Salciccia and Huckaba had unusual statements about the existence of God — unusual because they both believe in a Supreme Deity.

"I will choose (a deity) I can relate to," Salciccia said. Huckaba said in his second letter, "As society is changing so is Christianity." Wait a minute.

To quote AC/DC, "Who made who?" If there is a Supreme Being, he/she/it simply is. God is the creator of man, not the other way around. An all-powerful, all-knowing God will not change its personality or its sexual/gender identity simply to suit individual tastes or changing social mores.

If the Supreme Deity is female, I can believe that the Creator is male, but I can also believe the world is flat — thinking so won't make it so. Hell, I can belong to the Church of Elvis, but that doesn't mean that God will sport a pompadour and wear a sequined cape. We cannot choose our god anymore than we can choose our parents. Unless of course, God doesn't exist (which would go far to explain the 1970s), in which case, God is the creation of man/woman/Oliver Stone.

This column may appear to be rough and disjointed, but that's because you, the reader, have been living in a patriarchal, hierarchical, Eurocentric, Judeo-Christian society. My literary work is free-flowing like the mighty Mississippi. Any attempts to contain and redirect this column in a linear fashion with editing levees would have ended in philosophical disaster.

To Salciccia, Huckaba and Camp: Because I know all three of you, why don't we end this religious war by letters and come over to my apartment for a face-to-face confrontation. We could all have some tea and a little sponge cake. God bless.

Ed Carson is an associate editor of the Emerald during summer term and will be editor and publisher of the Oregon Commentator beginning fall term.

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