



# **Peninsula City Church**

**Behold Your God!**

**God's True Image**

Michael Podhaczký

**2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017 the PM Service**

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# God's True Image

## An Introduction

**Q.** What theological implications are there on God's image by Him creating male and female in His image?

Are there any theological implications, or is it much clearer that it first appears. For example, it has been said by a UK bishop that,

"God should not necessarily be seen as a masculine figure, according to the UK's first female bishop to sit in the House of Lords on Monday. 'God is not to be seen as male. God is God,' said Rachel Treweek, bishop of Gloucester, who is to be inaugurated in parliament."<sup>1</sup>

However, if God created male and female what does the Bible have to say if anything on the matter of an effect on His image and nature? That is, "Is God male or female or both?" Especially in light of verses like the following,

<sup>26</sup> "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them... <sup>5:2</sup> Male and female He created them, and He blessed them and named them Man when they were created" (Gen 1:26-27; 5:2 ESV).

"He (Jesus) answered, 'Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female'" (Matt 19:4 ESV)

"But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female'" (Mk 10:6 ESV)

The first thing that needs to be remembered is that in the end, God is unfathomable, i.e. He cannot be understood or confined to our rational restrictions. Paul said this when writing to the church in Rome,

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!" (Rom 11:33 ESV)

God, the unfathomable One has reached out to reveal something about who He is and what He is like in His image and nature. Although we cannot know Him completely, yet we can know Him by His self-revelation of His image. Then there are other revelations of His image and nature seen in creation, the Bible, through His relationship with Jesus Christ, what Jesus had to say about Him and various biblical images.

So, with the light that I have received to this point in my life as a Christ-follower, I would like to review the true image of God. This is in no way an exhaustive or absolute study of our God who is unfathomable but is a short sermon on the issue. I am not asking you to agree with me on everything that I say; I want us to see that for all of our knowledge we are still struggling to understand Him. Finally, a major aim here is for us to stand in awe of an amazingly breathtaking God, who has invited us into a relationship with Him. The problem is that we have a tendency in attempting to understand Him we bring Him down to our level and sometimes attempt to raise ourselves up to His level. We are not God He is, we are His created ones who have the privilege and opportunity to know Him. Therefore, I would ask you to hear what I have to say from this perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> "'God is not a he or a she', says first female bishop to sit in House of Lords."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/24/bishop-rachel-treweek-gods-not-a-he-or-a-she> (Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

## 1. God's image

In beginning this short message, the first thing that needs to be pointed out is that, is God is Spirit. The Westminster Shorter Catechism attempted to give an answer to this question who God is, in Question 4, when asking who or what God is. For example:

“Question: What is God?

The Answer: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”<sup>2</sup>

Jesus pointed out that God is a spiritual Being,

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (Jn 4:24 ESV)

That is, He is not conformed to any idea or image that we could conjure up in our minds. He is not human as He is “a nonmaterial personal being who is self-consciousness and self-determining.”<sup>3</sup> So, even if God used language to reveal Himself in ways that we can understand, hence the language of male and female it does not take away from His image. As human beings, we can understand it when it says that, God created humanity as male and female. But we struggle with the understanding of what His image is like.

That is why, for somebody to know something about God there needed to be a self-revelation of who He is, but this can only be received and understood spiritually. This spiritual knowledge is beyond mere intellectual reason of who is God who has revealed something about Himself. This is where the Holy Spirit needs to illuminate the truth to our spirit. But due to the effects of sin on humanity, we struggle to know Him, and so we need His Spirit to open our spiritual eyes so to speak. Even when we have been renewed spiritually and have had our eyes opened (although this knowledge of God is opaque this side of heaven), we can still know something of His image. In light of this let us see what we can find out regarding God's true image.

But God still used the statement “in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” So, does this mean that although God is Spirit, He still has an image that is male or female, or even male and female? To illustrate some of the struggles that we have in understanding this it has been said that,

“The Christian Church has always had a bit of a problem with God's gender. He doesn't have one, but - as that statement demonstrates – it's hard to talk about God without giving God a gender. To talk about God we have to call God something, and avoiding pronouns altogether is cumbersome, as I've just demonstrated again. 'It' seems a bit rude, talking as if God was an impersonal force like gravity or inflation. So God has to be 'He' or 'She', and in a patriarchal society, there's no contest. As The Catechism of the Catholic Church says: 'God is neither man nor woman: He is God'.”<sup>4</sup>

Yet, both the male and female aspects are a part of God's creative arrangement, as He created humankind, male and female. But, it is only male and female that has been created in His image. However, maybe too much has been made of this distinction, as it has been said that,

“To ask the question, “Is God male or female?” is somewhat like asking if God is right or left handed. Or is his first language English or Spanish? Truth is he is not confined by our human or material world. He created us in his image, but he is unlike us in many, many ways.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> “Westminster Shorter Catechism Project: Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 4.”

Internet: [http://www.shortercatechism.com/resources/wsc/wsc\\_004.html](http://www.shortercatechism.com/resources/wsc/wsc_004.html) (Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Douglas, J.D. & Tenney, Merrill C. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 535.

<sup>4</sup> “Why is God not female?” <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-32960507> (28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

<sup>5</sup> “Is God Male or Female?” <http://seanmcdowell.org/blog/is-god-male-or-female> (29<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

So, God who is Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, was under no obligation or need to create anything, not even humanity. Rather, He chose to do so as a sovereign choice. It is within the context of creation we read,

<sup>26</sup> “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them... <sup>5:2</sup> Male and female He created them, and He blessed them and named them Man when they were created” (Gen 1:26-27; 5:2 ESV).

“He (Jesus) answered, ‘Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female’” (Matt 19:4 ESV)

“But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female’” (Mk 10:6 ESV)

So, God is Spirit, but is He also male or female or both? This is not a new question that has been wrestled with, as it had been raised early in Christian history. For example, Arnobius of Sicca an early Christian apologist (defender of the faith) writing against some wrong teaching on this matter said that,

“And yet, that no thoughtless person may raise a false accusation against us, as though we believed God whom we worship to be male—for this reason, that is, that when we speak of Him we use a masculine word—let him understand that it is not sex which is expressed, but His name, and its meaning according to custom, and the way in which we are in the habit of using words. For the Deity is not male, but His name is of the masculine gender: but in your ceremonies you cannot say the same; for in your prayers you have been wont to say whether you are god or goddess, and this uncertain description shows, even by their opposition, that you attribute sex to the gods. We cannot, then, be prevailed on to believe that the divine is embodied; for bodies must needs be distinguished by difference of sex, if they are male and female. For who, however mean his capacity, does not know that the sexes of different gender have been ordained and formed by the Creator of the creatures of earth, only that, by intercourse and union of bodies, that which is fleeting and transient may endure being ever renewed and maintained?”<sup>6</sup>

So, flowing on from this, the next thing that needs to be pointed out is the use of the masculine pronouns. That is, the Bible continually refers to God using masculine pronouns such as He, His and Him, or the proper noun Father. So, where does the female feature of creation come into His image? Interestingly it has been said that,

“However, throughout Scripture God has chosen to primarily characterise Himself in masculine terms even though He is neither wholly male nor wholly female. And whether we are born male or female, He refers to those he redeems as his children (Romans 8:14), His bride (Ephesians 5:25-27), His holy temple (Ephesians 2:21-22), joint heirs (Romans 8:17), and a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and His very own possession (1 Peter 2:9)... So while God is neither male nor female, He can relate to us as men and women equally, for He loves us equally and has made provision for all of us to be in relationship with Him.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Arnobius of Sicca. Against the Heathen. Book III.8. In *The Ante-Nicene Father: Translations of The Writings Of The Fathers Down to A.D. 325*. Edited by Alexander Roberts, & James Donaldson. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957), Vol VI. 466.

<sup>7</sup> “Is God Male or Female?” <http://seanmcdowell.org/blog/is-god-male-or-female> (28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Having said this, however, it has been said that,

“Feminine images are used throughout Scripture to describe God’s compassionate and loving nature. Examples include the frequent images of God protecting and comforting His children (Isa. 66:12–13; Hos. 11:1–4). But it’s important to note that God is never addressed as Mother. This phenomenon is unique compared with the cultures surrounding the original biblical writers. Most ancient Near Eastern societies had a goddess as the main cult figure or at least to complement a male god—Asherah in Canaan, Isis in Egypt, Tiamat in Babylon. If patriarchy is responsible for cultures portraying God as male, then we would expect goddess worship to reflect a matriarchal society—one in which women are given superior status or at least are equal to men. But this is not the case... To claim, as many feminist theologians do, that the very presence of masculine metaphors for God excludes women simply does not square with the way Scripture uses them. Masculine images of God do not always convey exclusively ‘masculine’ qualities.”<sup>8</sup>

But at times the Bible does use female imagery to describe God. For example, the writer listed below brings out aspects that God has been compared to a mother or woman.

David put his hope in God’s keeping power. He sees God like a mother nursing a weaned child.

“Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother’s milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me” (Ps 131:2 NLT)

Isaiah wrote about God’s chosen servant, which leads to praising God for His faithfulness.

“He will say, ‘I have long been silent; yes, I have restrained myself. But now, like a woman in labour, I will cry and groan and pant’” (Is 42:14 NLT).

Again Isaiah used this type of imagery,

<sup>3</sup> “Listen to Me (God), descendants of Jacob, all you who remain in Israel. I have cared for you since you were born. Yes, I carried you before you were born.<sup>4</sup> I will be your God throughout your lifetime—until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you” (Is 46:3 NLT).

Isaiah in drawing to a close in his letter recorded what God had said using feminine imagery again,

<sup>12</sup> “This is what the Lord says: ‘I will give Jerusalem a river of peace and prosperity. The wealth of the nations will flow to her. Her children will be nursed at her breasts, carried in her arms, and held on her lap.<sup>13</sup> I will comfort you there in Jerusalem as a mother comforts her child” (Is 66:12-13 NLT).

Hosea record God’s love for Israel as she was cared for by God as a mother would care for her child,

<sup>1</sup> “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called My son out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> But the more I called to him, the farther he moved from Me, offering sacrifices to the images of Baal and burning incense to idols. <sup>3</sup> I myself taught Israel how to walk, leading him along by the hand. But he doesn’t know or even care that it was I who took care of him. <sup>4</sup> I led Israel along with my ropes of kindness and love. I lifted the yoke from his neck, and I myself stooped to feed him” (Hos 11:1-4 NLT).

<sup>8</sup> “Why We Call God ‘Father’” <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/july-august/why-we-call-god-father.html> (Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

However, the female imagery is sparse and even when it is used God is not called she, her, woman or even mother. So, although this imagery is used, it is not a strong argument for the femaleness of God. So, although God is Spirit, when He is spoken about in the Bible the predominant language is masculine. As it has been said,

“God can be seen as having feminine characteristics at times, but overwhelmingly the masculine presentation is given us. As I said, God as such is genderless, but when He wants to convey real information about who He is, the masculine is the predominant theme... While God is never described with sexual characteristics in the Bible, He is consistently described in the masculine gender, both by Himself and by others. We must defer to God's chosen self-revelation, and resist the temptation to follow instead modern secular trends and agendas.”<sup>9</sup>

Having said this, I think that Steve Singleton in his article titled, “Is God Female?” has mentioned three important, helpful issues that bring a balance here. He concludes that,

“We must recognise that these things are established:

1. God is referred to hundreds of times with masculine names and with masculine pronouns such as “he,” “him,” and “his.”
2. God is never given a feminine name, or referred to with feminine pronouns such as “she,” “her,” and “hers.”
3. This does not mean that God is male. The masculine pronouns have always had the second, generic sense, referring to both male and female, just as ‘Man’ has been used for centuries to refer to both men and women.”<sup>10</sup>

I think that C.S. Lewis has captured the essence of this whole discussion up to this point well. The context of his article was the ordination of women priests in the Church of England in his day, which is an old issue now. But he used this matter of the gender of God to discuss the matter and has some good points. Lewis said,

“Suppose the reformer stops saying that a good woman may be like God and begin saying that God is like a good woman. Suppose he says that we might just as well pray to ‘Our Mother which art in heaven’ as to ‘Our Father’. Suppose he suggests that the Incarnation might just as well taken a female as a male form, and the Second Person of the Trinity be called the Daughter as the Son. Suppose finally, that the mystical marriage were reversed, that the Church were the Bridegroom and Christ the Bride... Now it is surely the case that if all these supposals were ever carried into effect we should be embarked on a different religion. Goddesses have of course, been worshipped: many religions have priestesses. But they are religions quite different in character from Christianity. Common sense, disregarding the discomfort, or even the horror, which the idea of turning all our theological language into the feminine gender arouses in most Christians, will ask “Why not? Since God is in fact not a biological being and has no sex, what can it matter whether we say He or She, Father or Mother, Son or Daughter?”<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Portrayed in illustrations of relationship

In briefly presenting this issue of the image of God, the Bible has used some important illustrations of relationship. Man and woman were created in the image of God, and this can be displayed ongoing relationships as male and female. Some of these illustrations of relationship that will

<sup>9</sup> “God and Gender.” <https://billmuehlenberg.com/2015/10/29/god-and-gender/> (Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Singleton, Steve. “Is God Female? Is the God of the Bible a Sexist Fiction?” <http://deeperstudy.com/the-depths/heart/is-god-female-by-steve-c-singleton/> (Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

<sup>11</sup> “Priestesses in the Church?” In *God in the Dock*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1970), 237.

briefly be used are God and Israel, Jesus and the Father and Jesus, the Father and the Son, and Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and Christ and the Church.

### Firstly, Israel and God

The nation of Israel is portrayed as God's wife in the Old Testament. If God were feminine in nature, then this illustration of relationship would not work. God is the faithful husband and Israel the unfaithful wife. Therefore, He is represented as the husband,

<sup>5</sup> “For your Creator will be your husband; the Lord of Heaven's Armies is His name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord has called you back from your grief—as though you were a young wife abandoned by her husband,” says your God” (Is 54:5-6 NLT).

“Return home, you wayward children,’ says the LORD, ‘for I am your master (for I am married to you). I will bring you back to the land of Israel-- one from this town and two from that family-- from wherever you are scattered” (Jer 3:14 NLT)

<sup>31</sup> “The day is coming,’ says the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. <sup>32</sup> This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,’ says the Lord” (Jer 31:31-32 NLT).

“When that day comes,’ says the Lord, ‘you will call Me my Husband’ instead of ‘my master’... <sup>19</sup> I will make you My wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice, unfailing love and compassion. <sup>20</sup> I will be faithful to you and make you Mine, and you will finally know Me as the Lord (Hos 2:16,19-20 NLT).

Then also in Ezekiel 16:1-63 Israel is portrayed as the unfaithful wife of God.

### Secondly, Jesus and the Father

Jesus always used the masculine term father when teaching His followers to talk to Him or talking to His Father. He also used this title when addressing Him,

“Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may Your name be kept holy” (Matt 6:9 NLT)

“But Jesus replied, ‘My Father is always working, and so am I” (Jn 5:17 NLT).

“After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to You” (Jn 17:1 NLT).

“Abba, Father,’ He cried out, ‘everything is possible for You. Please take this cup of suffering away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine” (Mk 14:36 NLT).

### Thirdly, the Father and the Son

The Father did not call Jesus My daughter, but My Son. God the Father chose to send Christ into the world as His Son. This is important as we read of the Father calling Jesus My Son,

<sup>16</sup> “After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on Him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My dearly loved Son, who brings Me great joy” (Matt 3:16-17 NLT).

<sup>5</sup> “But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is My dearly loved Son, who brings Me great joy. Listen to Him.” <sup>6</sup> The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground” (Matt 17:5-6 NLT).

On this matter, Eric Weiss has said,

"I think a reason Christ came as a male was so God's salvation would be seen as involving and including both males and females. Had Christ, born of Mary, been a female, then salvation could be seen as being from and for and involving only females and the female nature. But the male Christ was born of a woman. And as the first Eve was brought forth from the first Adam, so the second or last Adam was brought forth from the second Eve (as the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches regard Mary) (cf. 1 Cor. 11:12)."<sup>12</sup>

Fourthly, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

Although the language used for the Holy Spirit is gender-neutral, Scripture always uses the masculine pronoun. The Holy Spirit is never referred to as she or her. He is never referred to the Spirit as it representing an impersonal force, but always He, Him, His, as He is a person.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (Jn 14:26 NLT).

"But I will send you the Advocate-- the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about Me" (Jn 15:26 NLT).

"When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future" (Jn 16:13 NLT).

Finally, Christ and the Church

This is an important aspect of the ongoing relationship between God and us. We will never be abandoned, but be in a relationship with Him forever. The thing that has changed when we were born of the Spirit is that, there is now no male or female only the bride of Christ. As it has been said,

"The age-long preparation of the bride of Christ (the church!) is finally complete, and He takes her arm, as it were, and leads her to the table. The marriage supper of the Lamb has come."<sup>13</sup>

Paul used the relationship between Christ and the church as an example of the marriage between a husband and wife. This is the love of Christ, the Bridegroom for the Church, the bride.

<sup>25</sup> "For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church (a feminine noun). He gave up His life for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. <sup>27</sup> He did this to present her to Himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. <sup>28</sup> In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. <sup>29</sup> No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church(a feminine noun). <sup>30</sup> And we are members of His body. <sup>31</sup> As the Scriptures say, 'A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' <sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church (a feminine noun) are one. <sup>33</sup> So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband" (Eph 5:25-33 NLT).

Jesus also spoke regarding the marriage with Him as the groom,

"Jesus replied, 'Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast" (Matt 9:15 NLT).

<sup>12</sup> "Is God Male or Masculine?" <http://newlife.id.au/is-god-male-or-masculine/> (29<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

<sup>13</sup> "Male and Female He Created Them in the Image of God." <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/male-and-female-he-created-them-in-the-image-of-god> (Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Jesus was obviously referring to the King as His Father and Himself as the sent Son

“The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son” (Matt 22:2 NLT).

Then there is the parable of the ten bridesmaids in Matt 25:1-13 e.g. with Jesus as the coming bridegroom,

<sup>6</sup> “At midnight they were roused by the shout, ‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!’... <sup>13</sup> So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of My return” (Matt 25:6,13 NLT).

Then there is church as Christ’s bride (female) to be married to the groom Christ

“For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you (the church) as a pure bride to one husband—Christ” (2 Cor 11:2 NLT).

John in the Revelation of Jesus Christ referred to the wedding feast of the Lamb, which Himself,

<sup>7</sup> “Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honour to Him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and His bride has prepared herself. <sup>8</sup> She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear. For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people. <sup>9</sup> And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.’ And he added, ‘These are true words that come from God’” (Rev 19:7-9 NLT).

New Jerusalem also as the bride

<sup>2</sup> “And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>9</sup> Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come with me! I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. <sup>10</sup> So he took me in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (Rev 21:2,9-10 NLT).

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ Let anyone who hears this say, ‘Come.’ Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life” (Rev 22:17 NLT).

This is a powerful truth that illustrates the love of Christ for His Church. It has been said that,

“One famous Christian scholar, C.S. Lewis, has suggested that gender is far deeper than our human distinctions reveal. He suggests that if God is so masculine then we all are feminine in relation to Him. If this is true, it might explain why the church is referred to as the bride of Christ, though it is composed of both men and women.”<sup>14</sup>

## Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

**Q.** What theological implications are there on God’s image by Him creating male and female in His image?

Remember that, we need to lift our eyes long enough to see God the way He is, which is so different to our narrow-minded ways. We are all created in the image of God, both male and female. So what are the theological implications?

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<sup>14</sup> “Why does the Bible refer to God in masculine terms?” <https://billygraham.org/answer/why-does-the-bible-refer-to-god-in-masculine-terms/> (28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

**Firstly**, as we have seen God is Spirit, He is not limited to either male or female. We need to remember that God is unfathomable, and cannot be understood or confined to our rational restrictions. However, He has given some self-revelation as to His image. Even though He has used masculine pronouns to describe Himself so that we can try to understand something about His Image we still struggle to know Him as we should. Also, the Bible has used some important illustrations of relationship to illustrate His image, i.e. man and woman were created in the image of God, and this can be displayed ongoing relationships as male and female

**Secondly**, an understanding of God's image should have implications for our relationships with each other. One major way is the way males see and treat females. If the truth is that, God said, let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness and He created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female, then we need to start seeing things from God's perspective. Who are we as males to say that women are lesser than us? Who are we reinterpret the image of God from our perspective or culture?

It all began as God creating humanity in His own image; male and female as equal and one. Paul in his letter to the Galatian church picked up on this very thing as the way that it was from the beginning and saw it from a Kingdom perspective. He said,

<sup>26</sup> "For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes (put on Christ). <sup>28</sup> There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are His heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you" (Gal 3:26-28 NLT).

So, physically we are still male and female, but from a Kingdom perspective, there is no longer male and female for you are all one in Christ Jesus. We can tend to major on the minors and miss the important things. It is time to see women and men as being created in the image of God, even if the Bible used the masculine pronouns for Him.

Let us now conclude this with a quote from Steve Singleton, who said,

"So we can answer the question, "Is God Female?" with a definite "No!" But neither is He male. Just as there will be no marrying and giving in marriage in heaven, there is no gender with God. Both maleness and femaleness are a part of His nature, since God created humankind, male and female, in his image (Genesis 1:27). Both genders reflect His glory and eternal attributes. Both mirror in their lives the divine actions and attitudes.

God is not male or female. God is God. Do you hear the question which God gave to Moses on the mountain, when Moses asked, "Who are you?" God said, "I and that I am!"

We should not try to make God in our image, whether male or female. We should not give Him a gender any more than we should try to give His skin a particular colour, or select His clothes from those worn by a particular class. We should let God be God. Only then will we allow Him to do what He can and must do for us – save us from Satan, sin, and ourselves."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Singleton, Steve. "Is God Female? Is the God of the Bible a Sexist Fiction?" <http://deeperstudy.com/the-depths/heart/is-god-female-by-steve-c-singleton/> (Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017).