

## Responding to McFague – point and counterpoint

<p>This argument assumes that language about God is a human invention. It isn't – it comes from divine inspiration, and is not our right to change. Jesus was counter-cultural about a lot of things (having women as disciples) – was he so spiritually blind/ unwilling/ anti-women as to talk of God as Father, if he didn't believe it?</p>	<p>Scripture is a "record of experiences" of God, interpreted by those people, writing in their own time and place. We have as much right to interpret our experience of God differently. Our concept of how God relates to the world, needs to make sense in today's world, which is not the patriarchal world of the Ancient Near East.</p>
<p>Scripture only uses Father as an analogy of God. Any feminine adjectives used apply to God as male – never any hint that they apply to God as female. This is true for all of Israel's oral and written history.</p>	<p>If we are made in God's image, then God must be thought of as including both male and female. Both metaphors should be used.</p>
<p>Not cultural – surrounding NE religions had fertility gods and goddesses Israel several times tempted but forbidden by prophets to take on this way of seeing God. Going against the trend: counter-cultural to insist on Fatherhood of God, and in a non-sexual way. (paganism)</p>	<p>The metaphor is "God imagined as a Father is in the Ancient Near East". This is culture dependent. It subjugates women as 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens. God as an Ancient tribal king is not relevant today, where people do not have experience of kingship.</p>
<p>Father-metaphor better at explaining creation as something distinct from God yet expressive of him. God isn't his creation. This puts us in our place, in dependence on God.</p>	<p>God as Mother really shows creation as related to God. Hurting creation in a sense hurts God. Makes us more responsible to think of God and creation in this way.</p>
<p>Father-metaphor better at showing God as simultaneously all-powerful and caring, and as beyond creation. Mother-god suggests immanence, continuity with creation, loses sense of power/ transcendence.</p>	<p>Mother metaphor better at showing how God relates to us in a non-hierarchical, dominating way. Includes idea of all creation being cared for, not just humans. Emphasises fulfillment and flourishing of all, not obedience.</p>
<p>Father metaphor better at showing God as origin and source of everything (Fathers initiate procreation, which is then separate from them) A mother receives life and nurtures it, but doesn't begin it.</p>	<p>Mother metaphor better at showing how creation is "brought to birth", in relation to God, rather than as distinct from him. Creation is almost organically related to God. Not sterile/ abstract.</p>
<p>Father metaphor better at showing how creation depends on God. Mother metaphor suggests God is in creation, and creation shares in this divinity of itself. Nature religion.</p>	<p>Mother metaphor better at showing God as involved, nurturing, suffering-with creation. Better at showing how creation depends on God even for physical needs.</p>
<p>Father as analogy for God – shows that God has full patriarchal authority, of which earthly fatherhood only a pale reflection. Lack of care/ justice/ presence in earthly fathers does not mean the analogy is wrong. As Father, God cares for us individually, with a personal love.</p>	<p>God as Father makes God too personal, individualistic, human-centred, intervening. God as Mother sees all creation as valuable, in an unbiased way. Puts us in our place. No one today can believe in a personal God who magically interferes in the way the world works.</p>
<p>Being Father is a matter of who God is – God's identity – the Trinity defines God as Father, related to 2<sup>nd</sup> Person we call Son, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Holy Spirit. Changing this, changes what God is like in Himself as Trinity. There is no "God" apart from God as Father, that we can re-imagine differently. Would change worship – what people believe in.</p>	<p>All language about God is metaphorical as God is so different from us, nothing can be said with certainty. Using metaphors, different metaphors, reminds us that we can't "pigeon hole" God or say we know who He is.</p>