

Enticed by Eden

Authors Linda Shearing and Valarie Ziegler
on how Adam & Eve are Used (and Misused) in Popular Culture

Eve as Everywoman

Eve has never really stood for just herself. Eve is seen as all women everywhere. As advertising presents images of Eve that tempt and seduce, these messages are telegraphed to viewers as essential traits of all women.

First of the Red-Hot Lovers

If you have never pondered Eve and Adam as red-hot lovers, you may also never have considered the vitality of contemporary Christian lovemaking. Though Genesis 2-3 never mentions romantic love or depicts the original humans as sexual athletes, some Christians look to Eden as the birthplace of romance, and regard sexual desire as positively explosive. They view every Christian marriage as a recreation of the original mating in Eden.

Eden, Disney, and Camelot

In the Christian courtship/purity subculture, the understanding of life in Eden is filtered through extra-biblical images such as fairy tales, Disney, and Camelot. The single most important characteristic of life in this American Eden is woman's wholehearted submission to man. Children are socialized to glorify women as passive Princesses and men as daring Prince Charmings.

Adam, Alpha Male: Christian Domestic Discipline (CDD)

In the world of Christian domestic discipline, husbands rule over their wives by spanking them into submission. Male dominance and female submissiveness are not mere roles in CDD; they are attributes of cosmic reality put in place by God at the creation, and they reveal the essential nature of what it means to be male and female.

Marketing Forbidden Fruit

As the image of the "forbidden fruit" is associated with gambling, alcohol, and tobacco consumption, the Garden imagery becomes a doorway to addiction rather than paradise—with Eve/woman paving the way. These ideas, rather old in themselves, are kept alive in contemporary advertising.

The Sexploitation of Adam and Eve

Little did ancient storytellers imagine that the story they preserved would someday become a platform for porn. Yet "Adam & Eve" became synonymous with the adult entertainment industry when porn magnate Philip Harvey named a chain of stores and internet sites after the first couple.

Adam and Eve Jokes

Contemporary humor attempts to go back to the Garden either to support existing power structures and stereotypes or to challenge them. Such recycling attempts are less interested in the story as "Scripture" and more interested in how it can be used to shape current culture. They remind us that stories of origins are never simply about the past, nor is humor always about entertainment.

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