

## True Myths!

The seven day creation of the world about ten-thousand years ago is a story that most of know to be "story" and not scientific fact as we know science today. Yet once again it seems to be the focus for another "myth-busting" book. Richard Dawkins tackles this myth, as he celebrates evolution and the work of scientist Charles Darwin. It seems to me the trouble we get ourselves into as people who practice Christianity, is when we mix up myth and story with scientific data. Sometimes it seems that unless we can "prove" or uphold the stories that shape us as being historical or scientifically verifiable, we lose confidence in them.

But we do not need to be "myth busters" to be contemporary Christians and spiritually healthy people. It is possible to hold two different categories of information simultaneously and know them both to be "true" The one engages the scientific data of the material world, the other the emotional and experiential stuff of human living and relationships. We know a scientific or historical text book to be "true" and contain verifiable data, and at the same time we know novels to contain truth that is verifiable by the resonance with our own experience. Myths function like this too: they resonate with our experience and point us toward bigger "truths" than our personal lives can contain. They link us with others who are engaging with the same myths and together we "make sense" of our otherwise random human life. We develop stories about our life on earth around our relationships with others in community. But these myths and stories are not based on scientific evidence and we know that. Both the science and the myths are valuable; we can see truth, in different ways, in each.

Our Christian stories (or myths, if you like), that speak of the beginnings of life and death and new life out of death, arose in a context of struggle for life and understanding. In our contemporary context they speak to the same human experiences. I think we will be the poorer if we simply discredit myths. Myths shape us and empower us, they link us together and provide ways of looking at our human experience that helps us make sense and be gentler people. **Susan**