

Here is a question I received recently.

### **QUESTION:**

One of my favourite pieces on the blog is your post from 13 July 2015 titled 'Earliest Christian Diversity' on the work of Destro and Pesce. I find it fascinating and thought-provoking whenever I re-read it. It's like new information hidden in plain sight.. Did you ever do any follow-up research or expansion on this topic? (Sorry if you did and I missed it.)

### **RESPONSE:**

I have to admit, I had forgotten all about this post, and had to look it up. I agree! It's unusually interesting. Not because of anything I say, but because of an intriguing theory proposed by others. Really fascinating. And no, I haven't followed it up (having even forgotten about it.) But it's definitely worth posting again. Here it is!

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In keeping with the current topic of the diversity of early Christianity, I thought I could say something about a book that I just read that I found to be unusually interesting and enlightening. It is by two Italian scholars, married to each other, who teach at the Università di Bologna, Adriana Destro, an anthropologist, and Mauro Pesce, a New Testament specialist whose teaching position is in the History of Christianity.

Their book is called Il racconto e la scrittura: Introduzione alla lettura dei vangeli. It is about all the things I am currently interested in: the life of Jesus as recounted by his earliest followers, the oral traditions of Jesus, and the Gospels as founded on these oral traditions. In it they develop a theory that I had never thought of before. I'm not sure all the evidence is completely compelling, but the overall view is very interesting and very much worth thinking about. As an anthropologist Prof Destro looks at things in ways differently from most of us who are text-people; and she and Prof. Pesce together apply these thoughts to our early Christian writings.

The aspect of their book of particular relevance to this thread on the diversity of early Christianity has to do with the evidence found in our Gospels themselves that different followers of Jesus from the very beginning - the VERY beginning - may have had different perspectives on who he was, what he taught, what he meant, and why he was important.

What the two of them do is focus on...

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