

From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church

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Abstract

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1:0 Overview

This is one of three companion documents which make use of new developments in neurophysiological and psychological research to put together a new understanding of gender and sexually variant behaviour in the Christian Church. These documents may be read either as standalone papers or together. The first paper is: Gilchrist, S. (2013), "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian teaching on Homosexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach" The second one of these is this paper Gilchrist, S. (2014). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church". The third paper is: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Reform and the Christian Church".

A summary is also given in Gilchrist, S. (2014): "Christianity and Crisis: An Overview of Gender and Sexual Difference in the Early and Modern Christian Church". An additional paper: Gilchrist, S. (2014): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach" considers the neurophysiological and the psychological processes which are involved in the early development of personality and self-identity. See the footer to obtain access to all of these documents.

2:0 Introduction

Current attempts to explain the origins and causes of gender and sexual variation, including homosexuality bisexuality and transsexuality, rely either on the traditional psychodynamic and social learning theories or on the influence of hormones acting on the foetus in the womb. It is generally accepted that the origin of these conditions is not well understood. Recent neurophysiological research has added much to the understanding of how the brain develops in infancy. The work by Dawkins, Gallese, Girard¹ and others show how much contagion influences the process. Up to the

¹ For more detailed information see Gilchrist, S. (2013d): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". Also: Gilchrist, S. (2013c): "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach": Since this paper was first published further articles have become available. See: Gilchrist, S. (2015c): "Principles of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church". And Gilchrist, S. (2015a) "Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process": Use the web address on the footer to access these papers

present time there has been a failure to effectively link these various branches of knowledge. That failure is addressed in this analysis, which uses gender dysphoria as a case study to examine the nature of the transitions, and how these branches combine. It is shown that the same processes apply to other core (basic) elements of personality and identity. Thus it is possible to trace a continuous pattern of personality and identity development from infancy to adult life. That is where the novelty and the principal advances of this neurophysiological and psychological study are found.

This investigation is in two parts. The neurophysiological and psychological elements of the analysis show that the development of the core elements of personality and self-identity are identity driven processes. Conflicts which arise from these are identity driven conflicts. In such conflicts behaviour is not the focus and as wide a range on moral attitudes, beliefs, inclinations and responsibilities are found in these groups as those which occur in the population at large. It is also demonstrated that a corresponding moral duality is encountered which demands the welcome of cross-gender activities and same-sex relationships given in love and faithfulness while condemning those that are engaged in for abusive and illicit sex. This contradicts the traditional teaching of the Christian Church which condemns all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour as disordered and for the purpose of lustful sex. Church teaching also condemns same-sex intercourse as a particularly heinous act. An extended theological study therefore forms the second part of this analysis. This makes use of the results of the neurophysiological and psychological investigation to examine why this contradiction occurs. This examination concludes by considering the impact of these findings on the behaviour and doctrines of the present day Church.

An extended examination of the teaching of Jesus is conducted. New insights are gained by using the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study to remove the veil of the theological presumptions on gender and sexuality, which have dominated both Church and society for the last two thousand years. It is established that the same criteria in relation to use and abuse must apply equally to heterosexual and same-sex acts. Instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for all sexual abuse it is demonstrated that the correct issue for the Christian Church should be that of combatting all forms of abusive sex.

2:1 Case Studies

Two case studies are used to assess the validity of the neurophysiological and psychological part of this analysis. The first of these examines gender dysphoria. The second investigates the growth and the development of the Christian attitudes to gender equality, gender complementarity and to gender and sexual variance in the early Christian Church. It is established that instead of a single type of driving force which is in pursuit of goal centred desires a duality is encountered^{2 3}. This duality is

² Gilchrist, S. (2013), "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian teaching on Homosexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach". Gilchrist, S. (2014): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access.

³ This investigation is described in: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". Also in Gilchrist, S. (2013). "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on

characterised by separate driving forces and dynamics that are almost opposite to one another. The nature of this duality within gender and sexually variant behaviour is such that the attempts to provide even well intentioned support or to manage both gender and sexual variation by adopting the traditional Church doctrines that these are invariably goal driven conflicts creates very destructive effects. Therefore the conclusions that are reached by the neurophysiological and the psychological assessments obtained from the first study demonstrate that the traditional teachings of the Christian Church upon gender and sexual variance cannot be correct.

2:2 Duality

In this enquiry it is revealed that there are two very sharply contrasting main reasons as to why gender and sexually variant activities can take place. One of these is in the goal directed behaviour which makes use of sexual substitution in the pursuit of lust, domination, heterosexual frustration and the physical gratifications of sex, as well as for the purposes of practicing safe sex. All of these actions can be engaged in by heterosexuals and homosexuals alike. The second of these reasons comes from the identity driven outpouring of love between two people who are sexually attracted to each other, and who also happen to be of the same sex

This dual nature is denied by many Christian Churches, which demand that only the goal driven conflicts could exist⁴. Therefore this analysis is not a neutral analysis. Its purpose is to find out why the fundamental duality which has been demonstrated by the psychological and neurophysiological studies has come to be rejected by the Christian Church. A second objective is to try to understand what was known in first century society about this duality, and how this was acted on in the teaching of Jesus himself.

This is why the second and third of the three perspectives which are employed in this investigation adopt different standpoints to examine the history and the theology of the Christian Church. The second of these works backwards within Church history and traditions in an attempt to determine what the earliest doctrines adopted by the Christian Church had been. The third of the perspectives independently examines the social and the cultural backgrounds of the Greek, Roman and Jewish societies in which Christianity and the early Church had first been formed. By taking this duality

Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach". And in: Gilchrist, Susan. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief". Other more detailed accounts have become available since this paper was first published. See: Gilchrist, S. (2015a): "Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf> Also Gilchrist, S. (2015c) Principles of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/212P-PrinciplesSexGender.pdf> : Use the footer to access these documents.

⁴See for example the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Paragraph 2357. The Second Edition English Translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with corrections promulgated by Pope John Paul II on 8 September 1997: "Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, Tradition has always declared that "Homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They choose the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved."

Gilchrist, S. (2014). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity".

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into account and through approaching the history and the traditions of the Church from these two different perspectives, the starting points and the ending points of its early development can be more readily identified, and the differences can therefore be more accurately mapped. These changes can then be compared with the results of the neurophysiological and psychological studies and from the use of this three sided approach it is considered that a better understanding can be gained⁵.

By removing the veil of the sexual presumptions which for nearly 2000 years have dominated much of Christian theology, psychology and psychiatry, and by examining both the histories and the cultures of the surrounding societies as well as the development of the Christian Church from the point of view of this duality a new perspective is obtained, and these results have major consequences for the interpretation of the doctrines and the teaching of the Christian Church.

2:3 Same-Sex Relationships

The attitudes to same-sex relationships are considered in greater detail in Part 4 of this document, where it considers how this same duality was managed within the spheres of first century and earlier Greek and Roman philosophy⁶. It is symptomatic of Greek society that it was assumed that love as a serious emotion ordinarily meant love between two males. Plato further argued that the highest form of love, and the only type of real love, is the love between two men. There was no boundary placed between strong heterosexual friendships on the one hand and on relationships which resulted from homosexual attraction on the other. Indeed the latter was preferred for the depth and intensity of the commitments it provided. A host of writers demonstrate that this understanding was common not just to Athens but throughout the Greek world. Different words were used to define the different types of love, but these were not employed on a gendered basis. What was then demanded was responsibility of behaviour, and the boundary which divided acceptable from unacceptable behaviour was fixed between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex: and these same principles were applied to relationships with either sex⁷.

The issue of immediate concern is how this was matched within the Jewish tradition. Plato argued for the total sublimation of all sexual acts, but the permitted degrees of expression varied across cultures and even between city states. By considering the impact of the "Pairs" culture in Judaism and the cross-stimulation promoted by the didactic teaching and learning methods adopted by Jewish culture it is shown how these relationships could be expressed within the Rabbinic partnerships and how the same form of relationship was carried forward into the services and commitments of Adelphopoiesis or "Brother Making" which were adopted by the Christian Church. It is noted that while cultural differences prohibited anal penetration, the Bible does not prohibit any other sexual acts.

2:4 Christianity and the Goddess Cults

⁵A complete analysis is given in: Gilchrist, S. (2013), "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian teaching on Homosexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach". See footer for access.

⁶ References to Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex relationships

⁷ For a complete account see: Gilchrist, S. 2011. "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"

An examination of this cultural background to these relationships is given in Parts 4 and 5 of this document. In complete contrast to the vehement condemnations of the Goddess cults by the fourth century Christian Church it is demonstrated that, as well as a way of darkness, there was also the way of light and that present in the core of the theologies of the Goddess cults there was the calling for responsible sex⁸. In all of these studies that same type of duality has been shown to exist whereby those people who attempt to live to the highest moral standards which their society expects can live according to the way of light. People who do the reverse follow the paths of darkness instead. These equivalent dualities are encountered across cultures and continents, where people who seek to transcend the sex/gender boundaries by living in ways which are true to the ideals of both lives may be given a high and frequently a priestly status. However those people who embrace the path of transgression are very ruthlessly condemned for their acts.

Accepting the principles of this duality has major consequences for the interpretation of Christian doctrines, for the Gospels themselves, and for all of the New Testament texts. It is already been shown that the early Christian Church sought to continue the Jewish teaching and doctrine on matters of gender and sex. In the Apostolic Decree of AD 50, Peter stated that "We shouldn't create problems for Gentiles who turn to God. Instead, we should write a letter, telling them to avoid the pollution associated with idols, sexual immorality, eating meat from strangled animals, and consuming blood"⁹. The cultural clashes also played an important role. Within the dominant and subject societies almost the reverse outlooks were adopted. In Greco/Roman society the codes and standards of sexual morality were determined by responsibility and authority. This meant that any Greek or a Roman male citizen could engage with any other woman or a man who was of lesser status without any form of penalty for the purposes of his own sexual gratification, and this included the anal penetrative acts. Same-sex rape was also employed as a weapon to humiliate a beaten enemy. This meant that the only protection which such people had against heterosexual or same-sex rape were the social obligations for responsibility in action, and slaves had no

⁸The close association of the cult of Cybele and Jesus with the outcasts of society led to the condemnations of both groups by people and organizations which had a vested interest in the social structures of society. Like the disciples of Jesus the Gallae also set out on missionary journeys and, like the disciples, they were itinerant priests who relied on the alms that were provided by their followers. Like the Gallae, who were identified with the lowest forms of society, Jesus also associated himself with the outcasts. Both of the groups brought their separate messages of transcendence to the communities which they missioned to. The care for the dispossessed, and the adoption of an all-embracing moral philosophy of a subject culture was common to both groups. Both groups suffered denigration and attack. For those of the castrated Gallae who followed the "Way of Light" it was their transcendence of the gender boundaries of society which offered them their shamanic and priestly role. In stark contrast to the condemnations of immorality and the eventual total repression of the cult by the Roman Catholic Church, Cybele's myths embraced sex and spirituality, they gave an earthier caution against lust and other sins of excess and they showed that sex and gender were less important to the soul than love.

⁹ Acts 15:7-20: After much debate, Peter stood and addressed them, "Fellow believers, you know that, early on, God chose me from among you as the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and come to believe. ⁸ God, who knows people's deepest thoughts and desires, confirmed this by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. ⁹ He made no distinction between us and them, but purified their deepest thoughts and desires through faith. ¹⁰ Why then are you now challenging God by placing a burden on the shoulders of these disciples that neither we nor our ancestors could bear? ¹¹ On the contrary, we believe that we and they are saved in the same way, by the grace of the Lord Jesus."....¹⁹ "Therefore, I conclude that we shouldn't create problems for Gentiles who turn to God. ²⁰ Instead, we should write a letter, telling them to avoid the pollution associated with idols, sexual immorality, eating meat from strangled animals, and consuming blood.

choice¹⁰. Maintaining the social status was given absolute priority, and where there was public expression of any same-sex relationships between two male citizens who were of equal status, it was only the penetrated or the submissive partner who was condemned. Within a victimized and subjugated society the reverse situation is encountered. The horror of same-sex rape being inflicted upon the Israelites is very obvious within the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and this resonates throughout all of the Jewish tradition. Therefore the Greeks and the Romans could be regarded as people who penetrated at will, but the Jews did not.

This paper traces the development of the Church traditions from the theological viewpoint. A companion paper examines the development of these traditions from the neurophysiological and psychological perspective. The full discussion of these aspects is given in, Gilchrist, S. (2013), "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian teaching on Homosexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach". However a brief summary is given in Part 3 of this document.

Part 5 considers the impact of these on the development of the early Church and it discusses the changes that were made because of the search for respectability within the early Church.

Part 6 considers the teaching of Jesus and it discusses the changes that were made because of the search for respectability in Greco/Roman society by the early church. Part 7 examines how the early church adapted its teaching to conform to the requirements of Greco/Roman society and Part 8 considers the development of present day attitudes. It also considers the crises which are faced by Christianity in the present day, and it contains an examination of the Pilling report.

2:3 Social Consequences

2:5 Women

From the beginning, many Jewish women, which included Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, had accompanied Jesus during his ministry, and supported him out of their private means (Luke 8:1-3)¹¹. The gender disrupting behaviour of the Goddess

¹⁰ Roman Citizens were expected to exercise high social responsibility in all of their actions, and misuse or abandonment of responsibility could invoke legal penalties against them. However the primary decisions, even over life and death matters, lay with the head of the household, the "Pater familias" in each case

¹¹ King, Karen L. "Women in Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries."
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.htm>

cults was also a serious threat to this male domination and an examination of the cult of Cybele demonstrates that the political elements that were contained within it must not be ignored¹². In the terms of their own social messages, both Christianity and the Goddess cults shared some key elements in common. This was because they both represented minority groups inside the dominant societies. Like the Goddess cults, it will be established that early Christianity did not simply challenge gender inequality through its actions and the importance and esteem which it gave to women. It also challenged the moral precepts and the perceptions upon which such a patriarchal society was based^{13 14}. Like the Gospel which Jesus brought to the poor, rejected and the dispossessed, the actions of the self castrated transgendered Gallae priests disrupted the social structures of established Greco/Roman society and the contest with Christianity can hardly be missed¹⁵

However there was also a significant problem. Because of the gender stratification which was inevitably imposed by the Gods and Goddesses belonging to polytheistic society who were themselves gender defined, any struggles for the equality of status or for complete gender equality could only be carried so far¹⁶. Even though women had achieved considerable power inside their own domains, the divinely decreed orders of difference meant that these fundamental gender divisions could not be broken and this created a glass ceiling which could never be crossed¹⁷. What was required to make the breakthrough was a religion that worshipped a single gender transcendent God and which additionally possessed a social perspective which was close to the Goddess cults^{18 19 20 21}. Because of its agenda for women, together with the moral values of a subject society, Christianity could bridge that void²².

¹²An extended analysis is given in section 2:3:2 and section 2:2:8 Gilchrist, S. (2013):"An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

¹³It is shown that a major driving force behind the gender disruptive behaviour of the Goddess cults was defined by the pursuit of power for female protection, concerns and rights. The Christian Church instead makes the presumption that this disruptive behaviour was entirely in pursuit of illicit sex.

¹⁴By the first century women had become an increasingly powerful influence on society and at this time the social status of women had developed to a point where the breakthrough was needed, however the existence of gender defined Gods and Goddesses in a polytheistic society created divinely ordained boundaries that could not be crossed. See: Gilchrist, S. (Pub. 2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults" and Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See the footer for access

¹⁵Gallae Priests disruption

¹⁶This analysis shows that within the cult of Cybele there was a way of darkness and a way of light. Cybele's myths embraced sex and spirituality, they gave an earthier caution against lust and other sins of excess and they showed that sex and gender were less important to the soul than love. The need to rise above the divisions of gender could give at least some of the Gallae a priest like transcendent status, and this is in stark contrast to the condemnations of immorality and the eventual total repression of the cult by the Catholic Church,

¹⁷Gilchrist, S. (Pub.2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults". Or Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

¹⁸In 395 BC, just nine years after Athens had suffered catastrophic defeat in war the comic playwright Aristophanes wrote and produced a play called Women in the Assembly (Ecclesiazusae). The plot is simple and striking. The women of Athens are fed up with the mess men have made of the city and its affairs. They infiltrate the political assembly and persuade it to hand over all power to the women. It is a comedy, and the demand for true gender equality is taken to excess so that for example if a man wanted to have sex with a pretty woman he had to have sex with an ugly one first. In ancient society the different roles assigned to men and women were determined by their perceived usefulness to society and not by modern ideas of universal equality. In Greece at this time plays were used to criticise authority and society. This play illustrates the parity of esteem that was given. See Gilchrist, S. (Pub.2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults". Or Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access..

¹⁹Frymer-Kensky, Tivka. (1993) "In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth" Ballantine Books; (First Edition February 10, 1993) ISBN-10: 0449907465 ISBN-13: 978-0449907467.

The same concerns also demand a reconsideration of the teaching of Jesus, as it is presented in the Gospels themselves. Examining the Gospel texts in the knowledge of the existence of this duality opens up new interpretations which have previously been denied by the presumptions which have been made. It is demonstrated that it is demonstrated that all people, lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual who attempt to live their lives within the full love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in the ways which are true to themselves; must be accepted alike, and that this does not demand any automatic or a universal condemnation of those in loving same-sex relationships which involve anal penetrative sex.

However an even greater reversal was required, because in order to obtain respectability in this society, Christianity quickly had to separate itself from the still continuing social and gender disrupting behaviour of the Goddess cults. This meant that instead of just adopting the social structures and gender complementarity which were a cornerstone of the gender unequal Greco/Roman society, Christianity had to be seen to take a proactive role in its enforcement of them, and it is shown that this pursuit of respectability has led to the imposition of a strong heterosexual, gender defined and exclusive orthodoxy in which all types of expression of gender or sexually variant behaviour is automatically considered to be a mortal sin and an immoral act. This has also led to the great severity of the Christian condemnations of all gender and sexually variant behaviour as being second only to bestiality in the heinousness of these acts.

²⁰ That there were public official duties for women in Rome contradicts the commonplace notion that women in ancient Rome took part only in private or domestic religion. The dual male-female priesthoods may reflect the Roman tendency to seek a gender complement within the religious sphere. Most divine powers are represented by both a male and a female deity, as seen in divine pairs such as Liber and Libera. The twelve major gods were presented as six gender-balanced pairs, and Roman religion departed from Indo-European tradition in installing two goddesses in its supreme triad of patron deities, Juno and Minerva along with Jupiter. This triad "formed the core of Roman religion." (See Schultz, Women's Religious Activity in the Roman Republic, pp. 79–81. Lipka, Michael. (2009), "Roman Gods: A Conceptual Approach". Brill, pp. 141–142)

²¹ Barker, Margaret. (2001) "The Temple Roots Of The Liturgy"

This is developed from a paper read in Dublin in November 2000 subsequently published in Sourozh. A Journal of Orthodox Life and Thought. Available online at:

<http://www.margaretbarker.com/Papers/TempleRootsofChristianLiturgy.pdf>

See also Barker, Margaret. (2003). "Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy": T&T Clark; ISBN-10: 0567089428 ISBN-13: 978-0567089427

²² While the cult of Cybele and the practices of the Gallae could only challenge within the sex-gender boundaries of a polytheistic society, it is the transgressive body of the eunuch in the New Testament that symbolizes the Kingdom of God, which breaks through these gender-defined frontiers, and who brings its mission to the world. Thus in Christianity this affirmation of relationships that are given in love or in early asceticism transcends both gender and sex. Christianity sought to transcend gender so that all people are treated as one in the Gospel of Christ - and this theme is present throughout the Gospel message. It is also notable that the more correct translation of the text in Galatians 3:18 reads "...male and female..." rather than the more usual version "...neither male, nor female..." The result of this change is to emphasise the social and political challenges that are brought by this interpretation of transcending gender in the love of Christ. The translation "neither male nor female" is more usually used since this reflects the normal expectation of gender duality of today's society. However, given that this concept of gender duality breaks down in the ancient world and that the Gallae were considered a third sex, a number of other possible interpretations follow. The effect of all of these is again to further confirm that more than just gender equality is sought, and that everybody is as one in Christ. See Gooder Paula, Sr (2008) "Searching for Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the New Testament". Westminster John Knox Press, ISBN 0664231942, 9780664231941.

2:1 Respectability

It is established in this analysis that the changes from the early teaching have been driven by the requirement for the Church to obtain respectability in a strongly gender polarised Greco/Roman society. This pressing need for respectability is evident in all of the Pauline epistles and in the Letters. The development of this accommodation can be observed at various points within the New Testament texts and in the history of the early Church. It is shown that this is because the Church had come to accept the social norms of the surrounding societies and then tried to adapt these to fit with its own theology and beliefs²³. The decision to make these adaptations has set the Church on a trajectory where the original Gospel teaching on gender transcendence and also on the essential duality of the gender and sexually variant conditions was lost, thus all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour was presumed to be for the goal driven pursuits of immorality and lust. By the time of St. Augustine (354-430) and the fourth century Church, an almost complete transformation in outlook had taken place.

These transformations lead to a simple and direct conclusion which states that what today are considered to be the traditional doctrine of the Christian Church on sexual and gender variance are built on a false foundation. They were driven by the need to gain respectability in Greco/Roman society and they do not come from the teaching of Jesus himself. However an even greater reversal was required, because in order to obtain respectability in this society, Christianity quickly had to separate itself from the still continuing social and gender disrupting behaviour of the Goddess cults. This meant that instead of just adopting the social structures and gender complementarity which were a cornerstone of the gender unequal Greco/Roman society, Christianity had to be seen to take a proactive role in its enforcement of them, and it is shown that this pursuit of respectability has led to the imposition of a strong heterosexual, gender defined and exclusive orthodoxy in which all types of expression of gender or sexually variant behaviour is automatically considered to be a mortal sin and an immoral act. This has also led to the great severity of the Christian condemnations of all gender and sexually variant behaviour as being second only to bestiality in the heinousness of these acts.

2:1 Transformation and Change

People engage in same-sex intercourse for many reasons. One of these is because of the outpouring of love inside gay and lesbian relationships. The second reason is as sexual substitution for heterosexual sex. However same-sex intercourse also has had an advantage of avoiding reproductive consequences. Therefore there was much less of a bar to prevent promiscuous behaviour, either within gay and lesbian relationships, or where sexual substitution involves heterosexual people in same-sex acts. The Rabbinic condemnation of same-sex promiscuity and rape is unequivocally expressed within Judaism and the Bible texts, and the Christian Church was equally aware of these concerns. The advent of widespread contraception has now made

²³ Common practice in Christianity. Pilling Report

this become an identical issue for heterosexuals and gay and lesbian people alike and this is where a new understanding is needed within the Christian Church. This investigation does not negate the traditional teaching of the Christian Churches when they are applied to issues of gender and sexual abuse. The neurophysiological and the psychological studies demonstrate that these same condemnations cannot be applied in the same way to loving same-sex relationships and to consensual same-sex acts. It is also shown that these conditions are identity driven and that as wide a range of moral attitudes and behaviour will be found within the gender and sexually variant communities as there are in society at large. Nevertheless this analysis asks as many questions about the behaviour of LGBTI people as it does of the Christian Church. Those people who step outside the conventional boundaries of society have a particular responsibility to ensure that others understand the full decency of their actions. Those who do not make everyone become an easy target for scapegoating by the Church.

2:1 Neurophysiology and Psychology

The examination of the neurophysiological and psychological processes which are involved in self identity and personality development clearly show that two very different driving forces are involved²⁴. It is confirmed that a rapid and step change in infant behaviour occurs at a time from about twenty months to three years of age. Prior to this transition period the development; almost from the moment of birth, is driven through feedforward, contagious and self reinforcing processes of possessive imitation which, together with the nature and timing of physical brain development is programmed to ensure the acquisition of huge amounts of largely uncoordinated data²⁵. During the transition period, at around the age of two years, these separated strands of information begin to coalesce through another contagious process which enables the basic but more global concepts of self identity to be created²⁶. The third period is one in which the conscious separation of the self from the other begins to develop and this is when children start to be able to make sense of what has already taken place²⁷. The feedback and controlling forces of cognition and analysis which are needed during this third period must not only be strong enough to overcome the contagious drives of imitation and acquisition which continue to exist, they must also ensure that an individual personality which stays constant over time is created²⁸.

²⁴ A summary of this research is given in Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Christianity and Crisis: An Overview of Gender and Sexual Differences in the Early and Modern Christian Church". This is further elaborated in three companion papers which make use of recent developments in neurophysiological and psychological research to put together a new understanding of gender and sexually variant behaviour ,in the Christian Church. These documents may be read either as standalone papers or together. The first paper is: Gilchrist, S. (2013), "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian teaching on Homosexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach" The second paper is: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church". The third paper is: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Reform and the Christian Church". See footer for access to these documents.

²⁵ Dawkins Neurophysiology

²⁶ Quorum sensing

²⁷ Theory of mind

²⁸ Bipolarity strength

Advances in personal development take place through the resolution of the conflicts which these forces create. It is shown that a fundamental change in the character of these conflicts occurs during the transition period from around the age of two years. The conflicts which have their origins after the transition period may be characterized as goal driven, and these search for the rewards of the goal which is sought. The identity driven conflicts have roots which have developed before the transition period and they look back at what has already been created. Thus instead of the search for a reward they reject the identity or the attribute which is, from the transition period onwards, being enforced²⁹. It is shown in this study that these conflicts must be seen to arise as the symptom of the failure to create a coherent sense of self identity rather than the cause³⁰. The methods that are essential to manage the different types of conflict are almost opposite to one another, so that attempting to provide even well intentioned support, or to manage both gender and sexual variation by adopting the conviction that they are invariably goal driven conflicts can produce very damaging counterproductive effects.

2:2 Church Doctrines

There is little difficulty in applying the traditional doctrines of the Church to these goal directed conflicts alone. The major problems are encountered when the identity driven conflicts, which including those that involve sexual and gender variation, are considered, and in these cases the conclusions of the neurophysiological and the psychological research studies cannot be ignored. This research has demonstrated that the dominating and the often subconscious compulsions which are powered by the deep seated driving forces within identity driven conflicts come from the need for people to true to themselves. This means that behaviour is not the focus and that as wide a range of moral attitudes, beliefs and motivations will be found to exist in the transgender and homosexual communities as those that are encountered in society at large.

3:0. Cultural Influences and Clashes

3:1 A New Evaluation

One of the most noteworthy inputs which this neurophysiological and psychological analysis brings to an understanding of the development of these Church traditions occurs because it breaks through those sexual barriers which have presumed that Christian condemnations of the social malpractices of surrounding societies were driven only through disgust of the sexual acts. While these sexual practices in many cases could be rightly condemned it is shown later in this analysis that the principal driving forces which directed the development of the early Christian Church were not those of sex, because they were instead the politics of power and control which were determined by the need to establish the respectability of the Church within a gender unequal Greco/Roman society. This is in complete contrast to the Christian stance in

²⁹ Theory of mind and developmental timing

³⁰ Theory description

which the Christian condemnations of sexual practice were an important weapon of attack.

These considerations in turn have demanded the full re-evaluation of the Goddess cults. An extended examination of the cult of Cybele has been undertaken, and in a complete contrast to the vehement condemnations of this Goddess cult by the fourth century Christian Church it has been shown that, as well as a way of darkness, there was also a way of light, and at the core of the cult's theology there was the calling for responsible sex³¹. A duality is has been shown to exist whereby people who attempt to live to the highest moral standards that their society expects can live according to the way of light. People who do the reverse follow the way of darkness instead. The equivalent dualities are encountered across cultures and continents, where people who seek to transcend the sex/gender boundaries by living in ways which are true to the ideals of both lives may be given a high and frequently a priestly status. However those who embrace the path of transgression are very ruthlessly condemned for their acts.

3:2 Duality and Love

In Ancient Rome this duality was experienced in the attitudes of society to the cult of Cybele, which on the one hand gave the cult a very high status, and yet on the other hand, it strongly condemned it^{32 33 34 35}. The same outlook was also true for most, if

³¹Although the theologies and practices of the two groups were entirely different the similarities are extremely important. The close association of the cult of Cybele and Jesus with the outcasts of society led to the condemnations of both groups by people and organizations which had a vested interest in the social structures of society. Like the disciples of Jesus the Gallae also set out on missionary journeys and, like the disciples, they were itinerant priests who relied on the alms that were provided by their followers. Like the Gallae, who were identified with the lowest forms of society, Jesus also associated himself with the outcasts. Both of the groups brought their separate messages of transcendence to the communities which they missioned to. The care for the dispossessed, and the adoption of an all-embracing moral philosophy of a subject culture was common to both groups. Both groups suffered denigration and attack. For those of the castrated Gallae who followed the "Way of Light" it was their transcendence of the gender boundaries of society which offered them their shamanic and priestly role. In stark contrast to the condemnations of immorality and the eventual total repression of the cult by the Roman Catholic Church, Cybele's myths embraced sex and spirituality, they gave an earthier caution against lust and other sins of excess and they showed that sex and gender were less important to the soul than love.

³²The Roman attitudes to the Goddess cult of Cybele and to her self castrated Gallae priests were always ambivalent. There were the strong conflicting condemnations of gross immorality on the one hand and respect for the purity and high status of many of the cult's devotees on the other. Roller attributes this contrast to a dualism in the cult practices whereby the formal public components created and maintained the social boundaries while the ecstatic elements transgressed them. Borgeaud tends to set the boundary more directly by using the traditional teachings of the Church. See: Roller, Lynn E. (1996). In Lane Eugene N (ed.) (1996), *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren. Religions in the Greco-Roman World*, 131. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996. ISBN 90-04-10196-9. and Roller, Lynn E. (1999). *In Search of God the Mother The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press. ISBN 0520919688, 9780520919686.

³³Borgeaud, Philippe. (2004); "Mother of the Gods. From Cybele to the Virgin Mary". Originally published as *La Mère des dieux: De Cybele à la Vierge Marie*. Éditions de Seuil, Collection "La Librairie du XXe siècle", 1996. Translated from the French by Lysa Hochroth. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8018-7985-X.

³⁴Fear, A.T. "Cybele and Christ", In Lane Eugene N (ed.) (1996), *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren. Religions in the Greco-Roman World*, 131. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996. ISBN 90-04-10196-9. Fear contends that the cult of Cybele and Attis was deliberately reshaped to meet the challenge of Christianity, with no influence passing the other direction. Disagreement with this argument is discussed later in this account.

³⁵Gilchrist, S. (Pub.2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults", or Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Sexuality, Gender and the Christian Church". Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

not all of the first Century Middle Eastern societies, where the identical observations of attitudes to same-sex relationships could also be made, and where the distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour were similarly determined on the basis of the motives that were involved, rather than by specifying the physical acts.

It is symptomatic of Ancient Greek society that it was assumed that love as a serious emotion ordinarily meant love between two males. Greek philosophers distinguished between all forms of acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour by using the equivalent duality which was inherent within their discussions³⁶. They expressed it through an analogy which concerned the integrity of the charioteer who was driving the ugly black horse of passion and the noble white horse of love³⁷. Plato further argued that the highest form of love and the only type of real love is found in the love between two men³⁸. Therefore there was no boundary which was placed between strong heterosexual friendships on the one hand and on relationships which resulted from homosexual attraction on the other, and indeed the latter was preferred for the depth and the intensity of the commitments it provided. A host of writers demonstrate that this understanding was common not just to Athens but through the whole of the Greek world. The Greeks and Romans did not possess any words which would enable the present day distinctions between heterosexuality and homosexuality to be made. Different words were used to define the different types of love, but these were not employed on a gendered basis. What was then demanded was responsibility of behaviour, and the boundary which divided acceptable from unacceptable behaviour was set between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex – and the same principles were also applied to relationships with either sex³⁹.

3:3 Cultural Clashes and Same-Sex Rape

Any assessment which is undertaken must take full account, not only of the cultural differences between the societies of the first century and those of today, but also the differences between these first century societies themselves.

There were fundamental cultural clashes between the Jewish and the Greco/Roman cultures. Many of these were associated with the differences between the power of the dominant and the repression of the subject or conquered societies. One such quarrel related to the practice of anal penetration which was employed as a weapon for humiliation and domination as much as it was for the physical gratifications of sex⁴⁰. Inside the dominant societies, such as those of Greece and Rome there were codes and sets of rules which applied between any two citizens, but outside those

³⁶The moral values surrounding the attitudes to gender, sex and sexuality in the first century were very different to those of the present day. Although these condoned activities which were horrific to modern day perceptions, the moral integrity of these activities was intensively discussed. Unlike the present day traditional teaching of the Church which considers all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour to be inherently disordered, and always in pursuit of lust and immoral acts, the first century societies, most notably Greek, but also the Roman and Jewish societies took an attitude to gender and sex which demanded total responsibility in behaviour but which separated the acceptable activities which were for the noble pursuit of love, from the unacceptable activities which were for the carnal abuse of sex.

³⁷Gilchrist, S. 2011. "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

³⁸For an example of Plato's attitude, see: Plato, Ladder of Love. In Symposium (210a-211b)

³⁹For a complete account see: Gilchrist, S. 2011. "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"

⁴⁰This was the original definition of the term Sodomy. The word is not used here since it has come to mean many other things

particular circles there was much more freedom to act. Within the dominant Greco/Roman societies the codes of sexual morality were determined by responsibility and authority. This meant that any Greek or a Roman male citizen could engage with any other woman or a man who was of lesser status without any form of penalty for the purposes of his sexual gratification, and this included the penetrative acts. Same-sex rape was also employed as a weapon to humiliate a beaten enemy. This meant that the only protection which such people had against heterosexual or same-sex rape were the social obligations for responsibility in action, and slaves had no choice⁴¹. Maintaining the social status was given absolute priority, and where there was public expression of any same-sex relationships between two male citizens who were of equal status, it was only the penetrated or the submissive partner who was condemned.

Within a victimized and subjugated society the reverse situation is encountered. The horror of same-sex rape being inflicted upon the Israelites is very obvious in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and this resonates throughout all of the Jewish tradition. Therefore the Greeks and the Romans could be regarded as people who penetrated at will, but the Jews did not.

The Christian and the Jewish condemnations of these culturally determined abuses are completely understandable⁴² and by today's standards most people, including the author, would consider these condemnations to be entirely correct. However activities which were considered to be fully moral in the culture of one society could also be horrific in another, and because of these disparities it was made easy for the Christian Church to disregard these cultural divides and the dualities within the cult behaviour in order to identify and to condemn the Goddess cults, and with them the moral precepts of Greco/Roman society as hotbeds and repositories for promiscuity, prostitution, illicit and inappropriate sex.

3:4 Moral Attitudes, Power and Sex

All of the main Goddess cults engaged in gender disruptive behaviour in ways which attacked the gendered security of a male dominated society. The cult of Cybele was no exception to this, and Christians and the Church adopted an approach of strict heterosexual orthodoxy in order to distance themselves from the cult and to obtain the respectability of the Church within Greco/Roman society. For the same reasons it also identified all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour with immoral sex, and that is the understanding which has been built into the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church⁴³. The standard Christian views exclusively associate the Gallae⁴⁴ and the moral behaviour of the cult with sexual orgies, prostitution and for immoral

⁴¹ Roman Citizens were expected to exercise high social responsibility in all of their actions, and misuse or abandonment of responsibility could invoke legal penalties against them. However the primary decisions, even over life and death matters, lay with the head of the household, the "Pater familias" in each case

⁴² It was same-sex rape and not consensual same-sex relationships which was condemned as Sodomy by the Christian Church. [Attitudes to children](#)

⁴³ Catechism of the Catholic Church: Paragraph 2357. The Second Edition English Translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with corrections promulgated by Pope John Paul II on 8 September 1997.

⁴⁴ Self castrated priests of the Goddess Cybele

sex⁴⁵. Currently accepted research work adopts a similar viewpoint. Roller, Borgeaud and others perceive a single boundary exists between the reputable and disruptive behaviour⁴⁶. This analysis argues that both of these presumptions are incorrect, and that more than one boundary must exist. For an examination of that it is necessary to consider how and why the cult was first introduced into Greece and then into Rome itself⁴⁷. Unlike the reasons and the objectives of the Christian condemnations of the Goddess cults, which exclusively concentrated on lust and improper sex, it is shown that the principal concerns were about the political and the social pressures which both Christianity and the Goddess cults presented to the gendered security of the male dominated Greco/Roman society.

These two boundary lines cannot coincide, for the sexual boundary equally affects all strata of society, while the political boundary is defined by it. Examining these first century societies using methods which take these cultural clashes fully into account gives very different perspectives on the roles which were played by many of the institutions and perhaps most notably in the behaviour of the Goddess cults⁴⁸. In the social and political arenas the Goddess cults received support from all strata of society, from the emperors on the one hand to slaves on the other. Therefore some people had very strong reasons for protecting the existing structures of society, but for others there were strong reasons for confronting them. In a culture where power and control was exerted through military force and overwhelming domination, the political boundaries become very important, and it is in this sphere that the second boundary between acceptable and disrupting behaviour is found.

4:0 Social Transformations in Greco/Roman Society

4:1 Breaking Boundaries

A major challenge (and achievement) that was met by Christianity was its success in transferring the distinctive views of the minority Jewish religion into this dominant culture. That meant confronting the self-centred moralities of the dominant culture

⁴⁵ Cultural clashes are extremely important. The problem with making judgments of all forms of purity is that these must always be made within the social contexts and the cultures of the societies in which they are set. An examination of the cult's theology and its practices demonstrate plenty of evidence of the gender disruptive behaviour, the disorderly processions, the ecstatic activities, the flagellation, the self-castration etc but the emphasis is on the power of the Goddess, rather than on sex. However it must also be recognised that the sexual moralities of dominant societies, such as those of Greece and Rome were based on authority. This meant that any male Roman citizen could sexually penetrate anyone else below the rank of citizen, or his own social rank, without any moral approbation being given. Therefore these societies, in effect, condoned what today would be regarded as heterosexual and homosexual rape. However a very different situation was encountered in those subject societies which were dominated by the major powers. Here the reverse views are encountered. The absolute horror of the threat of same-sex rape being carried out on the Israelites by the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah is very clearly expressed in the Jewish texts

⁴⁶The impact of these separate boundaries on relationships is discussed more fully in Gilchrist, S. (Pub. 2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults" and in Section 3:1:3 of Gilchrist, S. (2013):"An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access

⁴⁷ An extended analysis is given in Gilchrist, S. (Pub. 2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults" and in section 2:3:2 and section 2:2:8 of Gilchrist, S. (2013):"An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

⁴⁸Contrary to the Christian condemnations, Cybele's myths and doctrines embraced both sex and spirituality, they gave earlier cautions against lust and the other sins of excess, and they also demonstrated that sex and gender were less important to the soul than love. Those included nurture, care, protection and responsible sex.

and sexual values that were characteristic of Greco/Roman male dominated society. This additionally meant challenging and usurping the power structures which are formed inside these powerful societies by placing the concern for the victims and the suppressed first on the religious and the social agendas of those cultures, and by embracing an all-encompassing morality which is founded on compassion, nurturing and love. These moral characteristics were more typical of the first century female expectations, and women were also a subject group. By the time of the first century many women had become well educated, had responsibility and they were making significant contributions to society; nevertheless they were still denied any form of power and authority over their own lives. This was also a time of religious upheaval within Greek and Roman society. Many of the traditional religions had lost credibility, the Goddess cults were undergoing a major resurgence, there was a proliferation of new religious beliefs, and the male domination of society was being put to the test⁴⁹. While the sexual boundary cuts across all of the social strata of society, the political boundary divides them and it is shown in this analysis that it is the need to transcend these political boundaries, not the sexual boundaries, which have played the major role in the development and the transformation of the Christian Church.

4:2 Christianity and the Goddess Cults

From the beginning, many Jewish women, which included Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, had accompanied Jesus during his ministry, and supported him out of their private means (Luke 8:1-3)⁵⁰. The gender disrupting behaviour of the Goddess cults was also a serious threat to this male domination and an examination of the cult of Cybele demonstrates that the political elements that were contained within it must not be ignored⁵¹. In the terms of their own social messages, both Christianity and the Goddess cults shared some key elements in common. This was because they both represented minority groups inside the dominant societies. Like the Goddess cults, it will be established that early Christianity did not simply challenge gender inequality through its actions and the importance and esteem which it gave to women. It also challenged the moral precepts and the perceptions upon which such a patriarchal society was based^{52 53}. Like the Gospel which Jesus brought to the poor, rejected

⁴⁹ This analysis gives a very different perspective on the role and function of the Goddess cults from that the traditional Christian viewpoint, which regards them as havens for lust, promiscuity and inappropriate sex. In this analysis it is demonstrated that the rituals and activities of the Goddess cults also embraced the attributes of protecting female interests against the attacks of male aggression and domination. They additionally included support for women's concerns, for birthing and nurture, for fertility and renewal, and in total contrast to the Christian condemnations, they further emphasised the requirement for responsible sex. Therefore, far from any thoughts that their existence was purely to promote the sexual orgies, the cult's activities had an important role. This included fortune telling, the production of charms and healing and welfare activities. They were also associated with the power struggles within these gender unequal societies, and the diversity, disruption and the nature of this behaviour caused both a strong disapproval and a high respect. A full analysis is given in Gilchrist, S. (Pub.2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults" see also Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

⁵⁰ King, Karen L. "Women in Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries."
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.htm>

⁵¹ An extended analysis is given in section 2:3:2 and section 2:2:8 Gilchrist, S. (2013):"An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

⁵² It is shown that a major driving force behind the gender disruptive behaviour of the Goddess cults was defined by the pursuit of power for female protection, concerns and rights. The Christian Church instead makes the presumption that this disruptive behaviour was entirely in pursuit of illicit sex.

⁵³ By the first century women had become an increasingly powerful influence on society and at this time the social status of women had developed to a point where the breakthrough was needed, however the existence of

and the dispossessed, the actions of the self castrated transgendered Gallae priests disrupted the social structures of established Greco/Roman society and the contest with Christianity can hardly be missed⁵⁴

However there was also a significant problem. Because of the gender stratification which was inevitably imposed by the Gods and Goddesses belonging to polytheistic society who were themselves gender defined, any struggles for the equality of status or for complete gender equality could only be carried so far⁵⁵. Even though women had achieved considerable power inside their own domains, the divinely decreed orders of difference meant that these fundamental gender divisions could not be broken and this created a glass ceiling which could never be crossed⁵⁶. What was required to make the breakthrough was a religion that worshipped a single gender transcendent God and which additionally possessed a social perspective which was close to the Goddess cults^{57 58 59 60}. Because of its agenda for women, together with the moral values of a subject society, Christianity could bridge that void⁶¹.

gender defined Gods and Goddesses in a polytheistic society created divinely ordained boundaries that could not be crossed. See: Gilchrist, S. (Pub. 2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults" and Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See the footer for access

⁵⁴ Gallae Priests disruption

⁵⁵ This analysis shows that within the cult of Cybele there was a way of darkness and a way of light. Cybele's myths embraced sex and spirituality, they gave an earthier caution against lust and other sins of excess and they showed that sex and gender were less important to the soul than love. The need to rise above the divisions of gender could give at least some of the Gallae a priest like transcendent status, and this is in stark contrast to the condemnations of immorality and the eventual total repression of the cult by the Catholic Church,

⁵⁶ Gilchrist, S. (Pub.2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults". Or Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

⁵⁷ In 395 BC, just nine years after Athens had suffered catastrophic defeat in war the comic playwright Aristophanes wrote and produced a play called *Women in the Assembly* (*Ecclesiazusae*). The plot is simple and striking. The women of Athens are fed up with the mess men have made of the city and its affairs. They infiltrate the political assembly and persuade it to hand over all power to the women. It is a comedy, and the demand for true gender equality is taken to excess so that for example if a man wanted to have sex with a pretty woman he had to have sex with an ugly one first. In ancient society the different roles assigned to men and women were determined by their perceived usefulness to society and not by modern ideas of universal equality. In Greece at this time plays were used to criticise authority and society. This play illustrates the parity of esteem that was given. See Gilchrist, S. (Pub.2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults". Or Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access..

⁵⁸ Frymer-Kensky, Tivka. (1993) "In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth" Ballantine Books; (First Edition February 10, 1993) ISBN-10: 0449907465 ISBN-13: 978-0449907467.

⁵⁹ That there were public official duties for women in Rome contradicts the commonplace notion that women in ancient Rome took part only in private or domestic religion. The dual male-female priesthoods may reflect the Roman tendency to seek a gender complement within the religious sphere. Most divine powers are represented by both a male and a female deity, as seen in divine pairs such as Liber and Libera. The twelve major gods were presented as six gender-balanced pairs, and Roman religion departed from Indo-European tradition in installing two goddesses in its supreme triad of patron deities, Juno and Minerva along with Jupiter. This triad "formed the core of Roman religion." (See Schultz, *Women's Religious Activity in the Roman Republic*, pp. 79–81. Lipka, Michael.(2009), "Roman Gods: A Conceptual Approach". Brill, pp. 141–142)

⁶⁰ Barker, Margaret. (2001) "The Temple Roots Of The Liturgy"

This is developed from a paper read in Dublin in November 2000 subsequently published in *Sourozh. A Journal of Orthodox Life and Thought*. Available online at:

<http://www.margaretbarker.com/Papers/TempleRootsofChristianLiturgy.pdf>

See also Barker, Margaret. (2003). "Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy": T&T Clark; ISBN-10: 0567089428 ISBN-13: 978-0567089427

⁶¹ While the cult of Cybele and the practices of the Gallae could only challenge within the sex-gender boundaries of a polytheistic society, it is the transgressive body of the eunuch in the New Testament that symbolizes the Kingdom of God, which breaks through these gender-defined frontiers, and who brings its mission to the world. Thus in Christianity this affirmation of relationships that are given in love or in early asceticism transcends both gender and sex. Christianity sought to transcend gender so that all people are treated as one in the Gospel of

This is the transformation which Christianity brought. Yet that achievement carried its own dangers because this meant that in order to gain respectability in Greco/Roman society, Christianity had to quickly separate itself from the still continuing social and gender disrupting behaviour of the Goddess cults. In addition there were many other moral, cultural and theological differences between the two religious groups, and these equally required an absolute and an immediate rejection of any possible links with these Goddess cults⁶².

4:3 Respectability and Disconnection

The need to establish two clear boundaries between Christianity and the Goddess cults has meant that instead of simply endorsing the social divisions and the gender complementarity of a gender unequal society, Christianity had to be seen to take an active role in its enforcement of them, and this pursuit of a social respectability and acceptability has led to the imposition of a strong heterosexual, gender defined and exclusive orthodoxy in Christianity, whereby every form of expression of gender or of sexually variant behaviour is automatically considered to be an immoral act. It has also led to the extreme severity of the Christian condemnations of all types of gender and sexually variant behaviour as being second only to bestiality in the heinousness of these acts.

However short or long this early period of absolute gender transcendence was, it had to be complete, for without this Christianity could never have made the transition into a world religion from a local gender defined sect. Therefore instead of simply seeking gender neutrality the Christian Gospel provided a major role for women⁶³. A doctrine

Christ - and this theme is present throughout the Gospel message. It is also notable that the more correct translation of the text in Galatians 3:18 reads "...male and female..." rather than the more usual version "...neither male, nor female..." The result of this change is to emphasise the social and political challenges that are brought by this interpretation of transcending gender in the love of Christ. The translation "neither male nor female" is more usually used since this reflects the normal expectation of gender duality of today's society. However, given that this concept of gender duality breaks down in the ancient world and that the Gallae were considered a third sex, a number of other possible interpretations follow. The effect of all of these is again to further confirm that more than just gender equality is sought, and that everybody is as one in Christ. See Gooder Paula, Sr (2008) "Searching for Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the New Testament". Westminster John Knox Press, ISBN 0664231942, 9780664231941.

⁶² It should be noted that sexual morality in these dominant societies was determined by authority. Responsibility in all activities was demanded, but provided the recipient was of a lesser status than the perpetrator, these societies endorsed what in the present day would be considered to be same-sex or heterosexual rape. That was horrendous to subject societies, whose members could be the victims of such actions. However this difference arises due to cultural clashes between subject and dominant societies more than the theologies of the cults

⁶³ Paul's letters also offer some important glimpses into the inner workings of ancient Christian churches. These groups did not own church buildings but met in homes, no doubt due in part to the fact that Christianity was not legal in the Roman world of its day and in part because of the enormous expense to such fledgling societies. Such homes were a domain in which women played key roles. It is not surprising then to see women taking leadership roles in house churches. Paul tells of women who were the leaders of such house churches (Aphia in Philemon 2; Prisca in I Corinthians 16:19). This practice is confirmed by other texts that also mention women who headed churches in their homes, such as Lydia of Thyatira (Acts 16:15) and Nympha of Laodicea (Colossians 4:15). Women held offices and played significant roles in group worship. Paul, for example, greets a deacon named Phoebe (Romans 16:1) and assumes that women are praying and prophesying during worship (I Corinthians 11). As prophets, women's roles would have included not only ecstatic public speech, but preaching, teaching, leading prayer, and perhaps even performing the eucharist meal. (A later first century work, called the Didache, assumes that this duty fell regularly to Christian prophets.) See King, Karen. (1998). "Women In Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries" Frontline is produced by the WGBH Educational Foundation. WGBH

of complete gender equality was expressed within early Christianity that would obtain acceptance in present day society. Therefore it is not surprising that women figured prominently in the early church. However even though these important functions at first were given to women, the social constraints that were imposed through gender complementarity meant that the public spokespeople for this new religion could only be men. Through their pursuit of a male agenda and from its pursuit of authority and respectability, the doctrines of the Gospel Church have been disconnected from the traditions and doctrines which came to be embraced by the later Church⁶⁴. Therefore the theological justifications which in the present day are employed to validate the presumptions for a male leadership, together with its male prerogatives, and with its arguments for an exclusively male priesthood are also founded upon these later traditions. They do not come from the teaching of Jesus and the Gospel Church.

5:0 Social Transformations and the Gospel Message

5:1 Revolutionary Christianity

Jesus was a disappointment to many people within first Century Judaism who were looking for a strong military leader who would smash the oppression of Roman Rule. Despite this Jesus was no less of a revolutionary - even though his approach was to work within society to change it, rather than to destroy it. That strategy is apparent in Mark 12:17, where Jesus says "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's". The same strategy is also observed in Romans 13 where Paul declares that Christians are obliged to obey all of the earthly authorities, and, because they were introduced by God, a disobedience of them also equates to disobedience of God. This is further evident when Jesus said to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."(John 18:36).

This meant that Christianity was given two contrasting paths of authority to follow, and one or other of these paths would be expected to predominate in cases where conflict occurs. This is particularly likely in the circumstances where one of the paths bases its demands on the pursuit of respectability and authority in the Greco/Roman society, while the other relates to the radical and socially disrupting message of the Gospel itself. Continuing the path of disruption would leave the Church on the fringes of society, while the path of conformity would enable the Church to take the Christian Gospel to the wider world. The path of conformity was chosen, and it transformed the teaching of the Church.

For as long as the Christian Church was able to maintain that all gender and sexually variant behaviour is always in pursuit of immorality and lust, it has been impossible to correctly interpret those passages which are indeed present in the New Testament and which discuss this type of activity. By using the results of the neurophysiological and psychological analysis the validity of that traditional assumption has now been

is a major producer of programs for PBS, the U.S. public television network.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>

⁶⁴ See Section 3:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation".

destroyed. That result requires a full re-examination of the Gospel message and the consequences of the changes are now discussed.

5:2 Jesus and Women

It has been shown elsewhere that the change from the original gender and personal transcendence of the Gospel message to the form of gender complementarity that was found in first century Greco/Roman society was brought about by the need to provide the church with respectability and acceptance within that society, and that the adoption of a strict heterosexual orthodoxy came from the need to separate the Church from the gender disrupting behaviour of the Goddess cults. What is also well known from the New Testament is the high status which Jesus gave to women in the first century Jewish Society. Jesus does not make any statements about the equality or the status of women but that is implicit in the texts.

The most striking thing about the role of women in the life and teaching of Jesus is that they are always present, and the continual testimony to the presence of women amongst the followers of Jesus and his serious teaching and treatment of them is a break with tradition which has been described as being without any precedent in contemporary Judaism⁶⁵. Of all of the founders of religions and religious sects, Jesus stands alone as the one who did not discriminate against women in any way.

From the beginning of his ministry, Jewish women, which included Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, accompanied Jesus during his ministry and they supported him out of their private means (Luke 8:1-3).⁶⁶ In the parable of the Lost Coin and the parable of the Leavened Bread, Jesus relates his own work as a man to the growth of the Kingdom of God by using the model of a woman and her domestic work.⁶⁷ In the account of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38–42), Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and she listened to his teaching and religious instruction. The challenge which this story made to the social conventions of the time can easily be underestimated by present day society⁶⁸. Not only does this passage show that Mary chose the "good part," but Jesus related to her in a teacher-discipleship relationship, and he commended her for her choice. The account of the woman at the well in Samaria is highly significant for a number of reasons. By talking openly with this woman, Jesus had crossed a number of barriers which normally would have separated a Jewish teacher from such a person. He did three things which were highly unconventional and astonishing for his cultural and religious situation: As a man he discussed theology openly with a woman, as a Jew he asked to drink from the ritually unclean bucket of a Samaritan,

⁶⁵ The Staggs note that the synoptic Gospels of the canonical New Testament contain a relatively high number of references to women (Stagg, Evelyn and Frank. *Woman in the World of Jesus*. Westminster John Knox Pr, 1978. ISBN 978-0-664-24195-7). Bilezikian agrees, noting that this is exceptional by comparison with other literary works of the same epoch (Bilezikian, Gilbert. *Beyond Sex Roles*. Baker, 1989. ISBN 0-8010-0885-9 p.82).

⁶⁶ King, Karen L. "Women in Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries."
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.htm>

⁶⁷ These parables follow the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Parable of the Mustard Seed, and they express the same messages in the same way as these male-identified equivalents. (Witherington, Ben. (1987): "Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A study of Jesus' attitudes to women and their roles as reflected in his earthly life", Cambridge University Press, 1987, ISBN 0-521-34781-5, p. 39–41.)

⁶⁸ Such an action was not permitted for a rabbi, nor was it acceptable for a Jewish woman. Jewish women were not allowed to touch the Scriptures and they were not taught the Torah itself, although they were instructed in accordance with it for the proper regulation of their lives.

then finally he did not attempt to avoid her, even though he knew her marital record of having had five former husbands, and was now living with a man who was not her husband (John 4:1-42). The story of the Syrophenician woman (Matthew 15:21–28 and Mark 7:24–30) shows that Jesus was capable of taking a critical stance towards women. When he did this he is also demonstrated his respect for her self-affirmation when she boldly challenged his remarks. The Gospel of Luke is unique in declaring that there were many women who not only benefited personally from Jesus' ministry, but they also ministered to him and with him, even to the point of accompanying him and the twelve disciples during his evangelistic journeys (Luke 8:1–3). Along with the disciple John, there were only women disciples at the foot of the cross. In all four of the Gospel accounts, women were the first people to be given the sign of Jesus' resurrection and to report it to others. The most prominent woman in the ministry of Jesus is Mary Magdalene⁶⁹. Not only was she the first "witness" of Resurrection, she was also described as a "messenger" of the risen Christ⁷⁰.

Information from early Christian writings is also of interest. The authorship of one of the apocryphal gospels, the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, is attributed to this the most famous of Jesus' female apostles⁷¹. In Chapter 96 of the Pistis Sophia⁷², Jesus is reported to say; "Where I shall be, there will be also my twelve ministers. But Mary Magdalene and John, the virgin, will tower over all my disciples and over all men who shall receive the mysteries in the Ineffable. And they will be on my right and on my left. And I am they, and they are I." Gender differentiation was a foundation stone of the first century Middle Eastern societies. Not least because of these attitudes to women, the Gospel of Jesus had challenged the entire social structure of society. In Matthew 23 he reveals his view of the hypocrisy of the Jewish establishment in no uncertain terms. More importantly Jesus had given the ownership of Christianity to women as well as to men, and through the search for conformity and respectability, the ownership by women was lost.

By the time Paul began his missionary movement, women were important agents in spreading the Gospel message. Paul's informal greetings to his acquaintances give clear indications about the status of Jewish and Gentile women who were prominent in the movement. His letters give vivid clues about the kind of activities which women did⁷³. He greets Prisca, Junia, Julia, and Nereus' sister, who worked and travelled as missionaries in pairs with their husbands or brothers (Romans 16:3, 7 & 15). He also sends elaborate greetings to Tryphena, Tryphosa, who "Labour for the Lord's work", and to the mother of Rufus. (Romans 16:12–15). Priscilla (or Prisca) is expressly mentioned six times in the Bible, as the wife of Aquila, and as a missionary partner with the Apostle Paul. When Paul refers to Priscilla and to Aquila, Priscilla is usually the first to be listed, which has suggested to some scholars that she was the head of

⁶⁹ King, Karen L. (2003): "The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle": Polebridge Press: 01 November 2003. ISBN 13: 9780944344583 ISBN 10: 0944344585

⁷⁰ Ingrid Maisch (1998). Mary Magdalene: the image of a woman through the centuries. Liturgical Press. ISBN 978-0-8146-2471-5

⁷¹ Reference Apostle

⁷² Pistis Sophia. Translated with Commentary by G. R. S. Mead: J. M. Watkins Revised Second Edition, 1921 (The first edition was published in 1896) <http://gnosis.org/library/psoph.htm>

⁷³ FRONTLINE: from jesus to christ - the first christians: paul's mission and letters. PBS. Retrieved on 2011-02-13.

the family unit.⁷⁴ Mary and Persis are commended for their hard work (Romans 16:6 & 12). Chloe, who is a prominent woman from Corinth, appears to be the head of a household of an extended family (1 Corinthians 1:11). Euodia and Syntyche are also called his fellow-workers in the gospel. (Philemon 4:2–3). Karen King concludes that these biblical reports seem to provide credible evidence of women Apostles active in the earliest work of spreading the Christian gospel.⁷⁵ This ministry of women lies in contradiction with the later teachings of the Christian Church, and the nature, timing and the extent of these changes is discussed later in this account.

The contrast in the outlook which is found between the entrance of Christianity with its gender transcendent God, as expressed by Paul' in Galatians 3:28 and the demand for the submission of women in the later teaching demonstrates the full nature of the changes which occurred. Until recently the possibility of examining these changes has been limited because the only texts which have survived showed only the side that had won. The new material which has since become accessible is therefore crucial in building a fuller and a more accurate portrait. The Gospel of Mary, for example, argues that the leadership should be based on spiritual maturity, regardless of whether one is male or female. This Gospel provides an alternative voice to the one that is dominant in the canonized works like I Timothy, which tried to silence women and insist that their salvation lies in bearing children.⁷⁶ Early Christianity did not simply insist on care, compassion, consideration and respect for women, it challenged the male patriarchy by identifying with their demands, instead of simply supporting them. It made itself belong to women by right, and the disappearance of that ownership is one measure of what has been lost in the search for the respectability of the Church.

5:3 Jesus and Society

The teaching of Jesus which is recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels shows that he forbids any type of hierarchy in Christian relationships, and that includes both women and men. Jesus says: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you." (Matthew 20:25–26a)(Mark 10:42)(Luke 22:25).⁷⁷ Far from the support of any type of social privilege, Jesus demonstrates his preference and his free association with the outcasts and the poor. So in Luke (Luke 4:18) Jesus states "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed". In Matthew 26:11 he said: "For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me". And in Mark 10:21 it is stated

⁷⁴ Achtenmeier, P.J. (1996). HarperCollins Bible Dictionary (revised ed.). HarperCollins. p. 882. ISBN 0-06-060037-3.

⁷⁵ King, Karen L. "Women in Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries." PBS Frontline. Frontline is produced by the WGBH Educational Foundation. WGBH is a major producer of programs for PBS, the U.S. public television network <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>

⁷⁶ King, Karen, (1998) "Women In Ancient Christianity": PBS Frontline. Frontline is produced by the WGBH Educational Foundation. WGBH is a major producer of programs for PBS, the U.S. public television network. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>

⁷⁷ Although the words "Lord it over" implies an abusive leadership, his words "Exercise authority" have no such connotation. Marsh, Clive, Steve Moyise. (2006): "Jesus and the Gospels". Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006. ISBN 0-567-04073-9

“And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” In Luke 14:13 Jesus also says: “But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind”.

As with women Jesus identified himself with the poor, the outcast and the deprived. His message was not just a preference for the poor, because, the self-righteous, the self-important and the uncommitted were ejected as well. In Luke 14:15-24 Jesus said: “One of the dinner guests, (on hearing this), said to him, ‘Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, “Come; for everything is ready now.” But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, “I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my apologies.” Another said, “I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my apologies.” Another said, “I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.” So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, “Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.” And the slave said, “Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.” Then the master said to the slave, “Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.””

It was not good enough for Jesus simply to express his care and his concern for the poor the outcast and the dispossessed. As with women, Jesus identified himself with them and he gave them the ownership of his message. Like the Gallae priests this action attacked the need for the preservation of status and structure inside a socially unequal world. Both groups inverted the power structures of society⁷⁸ and it was this fundamental difference between the identification of Jesus with women, the outcasts and the poor, not just his expressions of love, care and concern for them, which was a major handicap in obtaining the respectability of the Church.

5:4 Jesus, Gender and Sexual Variation

By far the major challenges in dealing with the topics of gender and sexual variation are the ones of overcoming many centuries of intense vilification by the Christian Church. Evidence may be sparse or corrupted because when the opponents are in charge, material which might be likely to challenge the opposing views can always be destroyed. Nevertheless there are a number of sources which may still be used. However it has been shown in this analysis that the ability to use these relies on the full awareness of the driving forces and the complete range of motives which lie behind the gender and the sexually variant activities, the conclusions reached by the neurophysiological and psychological analysis, and in particular the conclusion which demonstrates that these conditions are identity driven, and that as wide a range of moral attitudes and behaviour will be found within the gender and sexually variant communities as there are in society at large. These characteristics provide the base

⁷⁸ Girard etc influence

for the fundamental duality which is encountered in first century societies, and in the teaching of Jesus himself.

5:5 Eunuchs and Gallae

It has been demonstrated⁷⁹ that the closeness of the behaviour and the results of the neurophysiological and psychological studies demand a reassessment of the attitude which Jesus took to the Cult of Cybele and to the Gallae priests⁸⁰. The most obvious passage is that in Matthew 19:12 where Jesus declares that: "For there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it".⁸¹

Jesus would have known about the cult of Cybele and her Gallae priests for this was widespread in the Roman Empire⁸² and the social context in which this statement was made implies that Jesus here acknowledged the duality that was encountered in the gender and the sexually variant behaviour of the cult followers. It may further be noted that his perception of this duality is in accord with the neurophysiological and psychological studies. Jesus would also have been familiar with the Old Testament passage in Isaiah 56⁸³ which gave those eunuchs who kept the law a high place in Jewish society. However these Jewish eunuchs were people who had that condition forced upon them because of the acts of a dominant power. Jesus went much further than this, when in Matthew 19:12 he declared that those people who have voluntarily made themselves eunuchs for the "Kingdom of heaven's sake" can also be accepted into the same fold. With the high profile of the cult of Cybele and her Gallae priests it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that those of the Gallae who sought to live true to the ideals of both lives should be included in this welcome as well.

In the companion papers it is further shown that the construction of the statement on eunuchs in Matthew 19:3-12 is also a very direct and active statement which would connect⁸⁴ Christianity with the behaviour of those Gallae priests who transcended the gender divisions of society by embracing a morality which sought to be true to the ideals of both lives. The commanding tone⁸⁵ which Jesus had used in this text caused great difficulties for the early Church. It was not just Origen who took this statement of Jesus literally; there were thousands of others who did so too⁸⁶. Indeed,

⁷⁹ Demonstrated

⁸⁰ Closeness description

⁸¹ A further consideration of this is given in section 3:1:3 Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

⁸² It is understood from Eusebius that there was a shrine to Cybele in Bethlehem during the time of Christ.

⁸³ Isaiah 56:4-5. "For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off". NRSV

⁸⁴ See Gilchrist, S. 2012. "Sexuality, Gender and the Christian Church"

⁸⁵ The third phrase in this statement implies that this is an active act. For the social culture of the time that statement was very direct. Those who opposed ritual castration had an uphill battle against them for there was little doubt about the authenticity of the text.

⁸⁶ These issues caused very real difficulties for the early church. The most relevant passage in the Bible which describes the attitude of Jesus to celibacy and ritual castration is that in Matthew 19:12 which states "For there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it". The third phrase in this statement implies that this is an active act and for the

the criminalization of eunuchs in the church in the first Canon (decree) of the Council of Nicaea is testimony to the degree to which self castration was practiced.

The close conjunction of the statements on marriage and eunuchs in Matthew 19: 3-12 further suggests that these two statements should be considered together. Both of them are included in the same sentence; the directly equivalent form of words is also used, and the Jewish midrashic tradition of interpretation imposes a very careful structuring and it demands a close reading of any biblical text. In regard to marriage, the usual interpretation⁸⁷ which is given to this passage states that Jesus considered that marriage should be treated as a “Second best” option, and therefore the same close textural relationships between these two statements additionally implies that the people “Who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven”, together with the coupling of: “He that is able to receive it let him receive it”, should be treated in the same way. Therefore this extreme action too should likewise be regarded as another “Second best” approach.

However the worship of the Christian gender transcendent God meant that these acts of physical transformation were no longer required, although it should be noted that they were not prohibited by Jesus in this text. The Council of Jerusalem in AD 50 was called to decide whether Gentiles should be required to be circumcised as a mark of their Christian beliefs. In the announcement of the Apostolic Decree, Peter declares: “Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15:19–20). That requirement is therefore rejected. This decree is commonly taken to refer only to the issue of whether the Gentiles have to be circumcised or not. However some people have suggested that the same decree could also have been intended to apply, not just to circumcision alone, particularly in relation to Paul’s comments in Philippians, Chapter 3: 2-12, but to a wider range of physical acts.⁸⁸

social culture of the time that statement was very direct. Those who opposed ritual castration had an uphill battle against them for there was little doubt about the authenticity of the text. Throughout Christian and European history there have been many who took and taught these statements literally. They include Valentinus (whose sect was declared heretical in the mid-second century), Julius Cassianus (declared heretical in the mid-second century), Basilides (also declared heretical in the early-second century), Leontios of Antiochia, (Bishop of Jerusalem, late-fourth century), Melito “the Eunuch” (ca. late-second century), Hilarion (mid-fourth century), Marcarius “the Egyptian (late 4th century) and Origen (also declared heretical in the early-third century). These people are among the most famous of thousands that chose ritual castration. This perception was not confined to the Gnostic or fringe movements, it became a major issue in the early church. The earliest report of the desire for castration among Christians comes from the second century writings of Justin. Self-castration was a widely practiced and it was an ancient expression of religious devotion throughout the Middle East. Several early Christian encratite and ascetic movements (centred mainly in Egypt) are known to have members who were eunuchs. The cloisters of Egypt and Syria were centres of self castration, and Coptic monasteries continued to perform castration well into the Islamic period. Indeed, the criminalization of eunuchs in the church at the Council of Nicaea is testimony to the degree to which self castration was practiced. For the full account see Gilchrist, S .2012. “Sexuality, Gender and the Christian Church”.

⁸⁷ This term is the author’s own but it is implicit in almost all scholarship and in the bible texts. See for example: Deming, Will (2004) “Paul on Marriage & Celibacy” Publisher: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN 13: 9780802839893 ISBN 10: 0802839894

⁸⁸ Judaism demanded circumcision as the badge of membership, and some of the conflicts related to the role which circumcision should play within the Church are addressed by Paul in Philippians Chapter 3: 2-12. Here Paul uses the words “We are the circumcision” to describe the Christian Community but he then goes on to identify this “circumcision” as the members of the Church itself and he rejects the need for individuals to submit to any physical act. This passage is usually taken to refer to circumcision on its own but the text of verse 2 which states: “Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh” suggests that a

Modern interpretations attempt to construe that this reference to eunuchs is limited to an exhortation by Jesus for people not to marry, to abstain from sexual intercourse, or just to embrace a celibate life. However this interpretation ignores the widespread endorsement in the surrounding first century cultures of the act of self castration as an expression of supreme religious devotion, together with the major problems which its continued practice would cause throughout the early church^{89 90}. Those eunuchs who kept the Law were given a high place in Jewish society (see Isaiah 56:4-5) and it was considered that Deuteronomy 22:5 only prohibited acts of cross dressing for unapproved purposes or for deceit⁹¹. Gender transcendent behaviour was matched by the actions of the early Church. Thus, just as it was with the transgressive body of the eunuch in the New Testament which symbolizes the Kingdom of God, and who is charged with bringing its mission to the world, then like the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts (Acts 8:26-40), those transgendered people^{92 93} who use the breadth and range of

much broader scope was envisaged. The reference to the dogs may refer to back to the qedeshim mentioned in the Old Testament who may have had roles that were similar to the Gallae priests and Reumann (Reumann, John. (2008). "Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary", Yale University Press. ISBN 0300157703, 9780300157703) considers that this passage can be taken to refer to a large number of equivalent groups. The usually accepted date for the writing of Philippians was around 62 AD, this was about 12 years after the accepted date of the pronouncement of the Apostolic Decree by the early Christian Church. The decree dealt with the arguments as to whether Gentile converts had to be circumcised. In this Peter states: "Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:19-20). Although the decree deals only with circumcision the same arguments can be applied to all forms of physical transformation, and that would apply to the Gallae Priests

⁸⁹ Hester, J. David, (2005) "Eunuchs and the Postgender Jesus: Matthew 19:12 and Transgressive Sexualities" Journal for the Study of the New Testament September 2005 28: 13-40, Interfakultäres Zentrum für Ethik in den Wissenschaften, Tübingen Centre for Hermeneutics and Rhetorics, California. Accessed at www.spirituality.org.za/files/Eunuch.pdf 23 July 2012

⁹⁰This was the subject of the first Canon in the Canons of the Council of Nicaea: Canon 1: Castration among the clergy: "If anyone due to sickness has undergone a surgical operation, or if he has been castrated by barbarians, he is allowed to remain among the clergy. But if anyone enrolled among the clergy has castrated himself when in perfect health, it is good for him to leave the ministry. From now on, no such person should be promoted to the clergy. But since this applies only to those who wilfully castrate themselves, if anyone has been made a eunuch by barbarians, or by his master, and is otherwise fit for office, church law admits him to the clergy".

⁹¹ The Jewish concerns in Deuteronomy 22:5 are not about creating or reinforcing gender differences but in preventing the gender associations of clothing, or possibly body hair from being used to deceive others for purposes leading to sexual immorality, or to dishonest behaviour. Every interpretation condemns cross dressing for dishonest or destructive action or to condemn the practice in other cults. None of them prohibit it for just purpose. In the ancient world no literal interpretation has ever been applied to this passage and it is rightly put in the section of the Holiness Code in Leviticus which deals with deceit. For a full discussion and an account of the various interpretations see Gilchrist, S .2012. "Sexuality, Gender and the Christian Church".

⁹² In the Apostolic Church gender was contested as a "natural" category because of the transcendent power of God's Spirit at work in the community and the world. Therefore early Christianity challenged gender in every way. Unlike the requirements for physical castration that was demanded by the Goddess religions this action was no longer required, but many Christian men still continued to self castrate as an act of extreme devotion. Origen was the most notable of these, but there were also many others. In early Christianity a woman's identity and spirituality could also be developed separately from her roles as wife and mother (or slave), whether she actually withdrew from those roles or not. This meant that women and men could equally exercise leadership in the Church on the basis of spiritual achievement alone. That was apart from their gender status. However this attitude also contravened what were regarded as the "respectable" division of gender roles in a male dominated patriarchal society. (See for example King, Karen (1998) "Women In Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries". Accessed 27 March 2013 at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>.)

⁹³ Christian examples of male to female transgendered people are hard to come by because gender reassignment in that direction would become so suppressed by the later Church. However there is much more evidence of transgender behaviour in the female to male direction. The early Church sought to transcend all divisions of gender and the nature of this type of transgender influence may be due more to the growth of gender discrimination within the Church because of the ways it sought to gain respectability by conforming to the polarised gender role expectations of a male dominated Greco/Roman society. Thus, for example saying 114 in

27

Gilchrist, S. (2014). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity".

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Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

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their experiences to embrace and enrich the ideals of both lives may participate in that priestly act.

Few eunuchs were ever praised in the Greco/Roman literature. All eunuchs were considered morally dubious, including those who rose to achieve considerable power and authority. These were to be feared but not respected, since they were perceived to be a threat to the masculine domination of society⁹⁴. For other people that social identification led, or it was understood to lead to the engagement in prostitution and inappropriate sex. A great deal of evidence does reveal a highly sexed and morally dubious "Third type of person" who both exploits and embodies the worst fears of masculine vulnerability and sexual transgression. These eunuchs were certainly not celibate; they were not even viewed as chaste and indeed they were characterized by the frequency, ease and adeptness with which they performed sex acts, with both men and women. Because of the ways in which they transgressed the sex-gender boundaries, and through their threat to the social structure of society, all eunuchs were despised and considered morally dubious and profligate. However in reality most eunuchs had little choice about what had happened to them and the range of moral standards and personal ability within the eunuch group would also be as wide as that found in the whole of society⁹⁵. Nevertheless, although the internal needs of such a community were likely to be as widely spread as those of the people around them; there is little incentive for a group of people who are completely rejected by the surrounding society to conform to the standards which that society would expect. Some eunuchs did ascend to positions of high power and authority. Despite this, any

the Gospel of Thomas reads: "Simon Peter said to them, "Make Mary leave us, for females don't deserve life." Jesus said, "Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of Heaven." Most scholars now tend to attribute an early date to the Gospel of Thomas. (See: <http://gnosis.org/naghamm/gosthom.html>). One of the most famous woman leaders was Thecla, a virgin-martyr who was converted by Paul. She cut her hair, donned men's clothing, and took up the duties of a missionary traveller. Threatened with rape, prostitution, and twice put in the ring as a martyr, she persevered in her faith and her chastity. Her lively and somewhat fabulous story is recorded in the second century Acts of Paul and Thecla, The importance of such stories lies in their acceptance and not necessarily their absolute truth. (As at the 25 February 2013 the text of the acts can be accessed at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/thecla.html>). During the second and third centuries gender discrimination continued to increase and it was considered that fourth century female mystics could only achieve salvation and redemption if they rejected every aspect of their femininity. Even then redemption could only be gained in heaven and not on earth. Therefore even if male to female transgender behaviour was considered abhorrent by the second third and fourth centuries it was positively encouraged in the female to male direction. The idea that women had to have an instant sex change when they die in order to enter heaven as men was commonly held in the Church. Had the surgical possibilities present day female to male gender reassignment been available to the second third and fourth Century Church one wonders what might have happened! Thus for women gender reassignment for entry to heaven was an ideal to be achieved but it could only come after death, in order to protect the authority of a male church hierarchy in a male dominated society. That attitude towards reassignment for entry to heaven was not held by all, and others concluded that because lust and sexuality was absent gender differentiation failed to matter at all after death. In the meantime on earth women could only redeem their lives through childbirth, obedience or by renouncing all aspects of their femininity. On earth they could only wait in penance for the sins of Eve until heaven, when the day of gender reassignment, or freedom from gender comes.

⁹⁴ Hester, J. David, (2005) "Eunuchs and the Postgender Jesus: Matthew 19:12 and Transgressive Sexualities" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* September 2005 28: 13-40, Interfakultäres Zentrum für Ethik in den Wissenschaften, Tübingen Centre for Hermeneutics and Rhetorics, California. Accessed at www.spirituality.org.za/files/Eunuch.pdf 23 July 2012

⁹⁵ That high status was recognised within the Jewish tradition for those eunuchs who "Keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant", (Isaiah Chapter 56, Verses 3-4). It was also recognised by Jesus but no such recognition was given in the Greco/Roman tradition where universal condemnation seemed to apply

social recognition was very rarely given, and their universal censure was largely due to prejudice, insecurity, fear and their perceived threat⁹⁶. Eunuchs were therefore to be kept at the bottom of society and anyone who associated with them was to be considered in the same way⁹⁷. Even though the Ethiopian eunuch who in Acts 8:26-40 may be a person who represents the priestly attitudes and the respect given to those eunuchs who sought to live true to the ideals of both lives, for the Christian Church to use some person like this, and to symbolically charge him with bringing its mission to the world, was still a socially challenging and provocative act.

5:5 The Centurion and Cross-Cultural Challenges

The same attitude of Jesus to the cultural divisions between the Greco/Roman and Judean societies is perhaps encapsulated in the story of the Centurion and his slave, which is given in Luke, Chapter 7:1-10 and in Matthew, Chapter 8:5-13. Some argue that this story provides an insight into the approach which Jesus took to homosexual and to same-sex relationships, but this story can also be looked at in a different way.

Centurions were provided with servants or slaves to satisfy their personal needs. To avoid compromising relationships in occupied countries these included the services of sexual satisfaction. That had to be accepted by the slave because he had no other option, but these were not consensual relationships, and they would not (normally) have been expressions of homosexual desire. The description in the Bible makes it clear that the Centurion cherished both his slave and he loved the Jewish nation. Although the bible in translation does not appear to discuss the full nature of the relationship between the Centurion and the slave, the Greek words which are used in the passage do strongly suggest that a physical relationship was expected.

The Christian Gospel makes no especial pleading for gender transcendence or for gender equality, but this is implicit within the Gospel texts. Neither does it explicitly discuss sexual and gender variation but that also is inherent in the texts. The acts of sexual domination that were approved by legal and cultural codes of Greco/Roman society are correctly and strongly condemned in the bible, yet the expectation of the same act of same sex anal penetration being carried out in circumstances when it is given and received in love, as it is described in the story of the Centurion and slave, gives rise to little or no concern.

To understand why, it is necessary to look at the original Greek word for slave used by the writers of both gospels. Both Matthew and Luke use the Greek word *pais* to describe the Centurion's relationship with his orderly or slave. *Pais* and *paidika* were

⁹⁶ The historical breadth and durability of the institution of courtly eunuchs is testimony not only to their usefulness to monarchs throughout the world, but also indicates the importance of their role as intermediaries (between court and public, between imperial household and aristocracy, between public male realm and private female realm, between political institutions and their allied religious institutions) which they were considered to be particularly capable to fulfil. Nevertheless, even though these eunuchs as political figures were powerful, widely feared and respected, it was precisely because of their sex-gender status that they remained despised and viewed as being morally dubious. Their obvious abilities could make them a threat to society and their loyalty was always in doubt.

⁹⁷ Kuefler Mathew (2001) *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago Series on Sexuality, History & Society) University of Chicago Press (11 Jun 2001) ISBN-10: 0226457397 ISBN-13: 978-0226457390

used by non-Christian writers in New Testament times to refer to the younger partner in a same-sex pederastic relationship. A Centurion in the occupied countries was discouraged or was prevented from having sexual relationships with the local population⁹⁸. Providing sexual satisfaction was an accepted duty of his slave, and any first century Jew, Greek or Roman who heard the word pais in this context would know precisely what the gospel writers meant⁹⁹. There were other words that could have been used if that is not what was intended. However in today's biblical Greek lexicons, pais just means "manservant, son, young man or maid". For these reasons the different Greek and Jewish uses of the word "pais" must be more extensively considered. The word is frequently employed elsewhere in the New Testament, but in all of these passages it is used in the Jewish context to describe a boy, youth, girl, maiden, servant, slave, attendant or minister¹⁰⁰. Same-sex intercourse could be regarded as acceptable in a dominant society but this became the horror of same-sex rape in a subject one. Pederasty was commonly practiced in Greco/Roman society but it was absolutely abhorred in Judaism. When this word "pais" is used in the Jewish context, or to describe the actions of any Jew, no allusions to the practice of pederasty could ever be allowed.

That restriction did not apply to Greco/Roman society. Here the practice of pederasty was endorsed and these cultural differences are extremely important in determining the correct interpretation of the word¹⁰¹. In Greco/Roman society the word pais was

⁹⁸ The Roman soldier, like any free and respectable Roman male of status, was expected to show self-discipline in matters of sex. The Emperor Augustus, who reigned from 27 BC-14 AD, prohibited soldiers from marrying, and this prohibition remained in force in the Imperial army for nearly two centuries. A military officer on campaign might be accompanied by a male concubinus. See for example: Caesar, Julius? (100-44 BC): "The Spanish War": Paragraph 33: http://juliускаesar.altervista.org/en/spawar_book.html. Other forms of sexual gratification available to soldiers were prostitutes of any gender including, male slaves and attendants. Unlike Greece where same-sex relationships between soldiers could be strongly encouraged, sex among fellow soldiers violated the Roman decorum against intercourse with other freeborn males. See: Williams, C.A. (1995): "Greek Love at Rome": Classical Quarterly 45 (ii). Pp 517-539:

<http://www.centenary.edu/academics/religion/dotto/rel332/greek%20love%20at%20rome%20article.pdf>

⁹⁹ Victory in war gave the freedom to rape but the need to provide good governance in peacetime demanded the conquered society's respect. The role of the Centurion in peacetime was to provide some of that governance and authority; and this civil role of this centurion is written into the bible story. Soldiers of the rank of Centurion and below were not permitted to marry into local society, nor could they afford to offend it by licentiousness of sex. The role of a male slave as a concubinus for a single man was an established one in Roman society, and this is the same role which the Centurion's slave might expect. For more background information on the expectations of the military see: Phang, Sara Elise (2001): "The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 BC. -235 AD): Law and Family in the Imperial Army" Brill ISBN: 90 0412155 2 also: Phang, Sara Elise: (2008): "Roman Military Service. Ideologies of Discipline in the Late Republic and Early Principate" Cambridge University Press: ISBN 9780521882699. It is perhaps worthy of note the story as it is presented in the bible does not demand that this particular Centurion and his slave engaged in these acts.

¹⁰⁰ Matthew 2:16; Matthew 12:18; Matthew 14:2; Matthew 17:18; Matthew 21:15; Luke 1:54; Luke 1:69; Luke 2:43; Luke 7:7; Luke 8:51; Luke 8:54; Luke 9:42; Luke 12:45; Luke 15:26; John 4:51; Acts 3:13; Acts 3:26; Acts 4:25; Acts 4:27; Acts 4:30; Acts 20:12

¹⁰¹ There were significant differences between Greek and Roman society. In Archaic and classical Greece, pederasty had been a formal social relationship between freeborn males. Rules and regulations set according to the values of that society were introduced to prevent misuse, but the need to maintain the authority of male citizenship meant that the upper age limit for the junior partner was fixed by the age when he first became able to grow a beard. Same-sex relationships in Rome were acceptable only within an inherently unequal relationship. Therefore in Roman society any pederastic relationship with a freeborn male of any age was frowned upon. Male Roman citizens retained their masculinity as long as they took the active, penetrating role, and the appropriate male sexual partner was a prostitute, concubinus, or slave. This use of slaves defined Roman pederasty. Sexual practices were "somehow 'Greek'" when they were directed at "freeborn boys openly courted in accordance with the Hellenic traditions of pederasty". This and similar practices were described as the "Greek Vice". Pederasty came to express roles based on domination and exploitation. It was utterly abhorred in Judaism, it increasingly

applied to the junior partner in a pederastic relationship and Neill notes that, the Greek term "pais" used for the servant almost always had a sexual connotation¹⁰². Dover supports this, and he indicates that the word is often linked to situations where the Greek noun *erastês*, 'lover', for the senior partner is used¹⁰³. Mader gives a thorough discussion on how the terms *pais* and *entimos doulos* are employed¹⁰⁴. Matthew and Luke were also writing in Greek for a mainly Gentile audience and they were already playing with the meanings of the Greek words *entimos*, *doulos* and *pais* to make their points. Luke uses several Greek words to describe the sick person. He says this *pais* was the centurion's *entimos doulos*. The word *doulos* is a generic term for slave, and was never used in ancient Greek to describe a son/boy. Thus, Luke's account rules out any possibility the sick person could be the centurion's son. However, Luke also takes care to indicate this was no ordinary slave. The word *entimos* means "honoured." This was an "honoured slave" (*entimos doulos*) who was also his master's "*pais*". In Matthew's account, when the Centurion is speaking of his other slaves, he uses the word *doulos*. But when he talks about the slave he is asking Jesus to heal, he uses only "*pais*". Again, the clear implication is that the sick man was no ordinary slave, and the question is one of interpretation and status. In these particular passages Jesus is reaching out across these cultural boundaries and as if to emphasise that point in verse 10 of Matthew's account, he says of the Centurion, "I have not found faith this great anywhere in Israel." Matthew and Luke were also writing for a society in which the Greco/Roman understanding would be expected.

How these passages are interpreted goes to the heart of what was permissible in terms of same-sex relationships. If Matthew and Luke had wanted the more restricted Jewish interpretation of the word *pais* to be used they would have had to specify that restriction. They did not do so and their limitations are carefully defined within the story itself. The story can also be read in two ways, either as an account of this particular incident or also in symbolic terms, whereby the Centurion stands as representation of the Greco/Roman cultural values. The challenge which the neurophysiological and psychological analysis presents to the traditional teaching of the Christian Church is one of asking how the duality which it requires can be correctly represented. It is also shown in this analysis that a major driving force which lies behind the development of the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation arises from the abuses of power between subject and dominant societies and relationships. This is instead of a direct abhorrence of same-sex acts. It is the consequences of the abuses of power which are challenged

came to be rejected in Roman society, and these practices should rightly be condemned with the same intensity as paedophilia is today. The use of the word *pais* by both Matthew and Luke in this passage is both challenging and problematic unless the duality predicted by the neurophysiological study is recognised, and the distinction is made between same-sex relationships given in love and commitment and those pursued for abusive sex.

¹⁰² (Neil, James (2008): "The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies": McFarland, ISBN 0786452471, 9780786452477: Pages 216, 197, 180-181. Also: Sergent, Bernard. (1986): "Homosexuality in Greek Myth" Beacon Press, Boston, ISBN 10: 0807057002 / ISBN 13: 9780807057001).

¹⁰³ (Dover, K.J. (1978): "Greek Homosexuality": Harvard University Press, Cambridge, page 16, 85-86, 165. A copy may be downloaded at: https://tajakramberger.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/k-j-dover_greek_homosexuality_updated_and_witbookfi-org.pdf).

¹⁰⁴ (Mader, Donald: (1998): "The *Entimos Pais* of Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10" in: "Homosexuality and Religion and Philosophy", Harland Publishing, Inc., New York, 1998 pp 223-235. A copy may be downloaded at: http://www.williamapercy.com/wiki/images/The_entimos_pais_of_matthew_studies_of_homosexuality_volume_1_2.pdf)

in this story. In it the importance of love and care is emphasized. The dynamics of power are absent and it is significant to note that the Centurion is said to love the Jewish nation; not just the Jews. Matthew and Luke are at pains to point out that this slave is singled out as an honoured slave, who is loved by his master, and it would appear that a loving and committed same-sex relationship existed, within which acts of same-sex intercourse could occur.

A conclusion of the neurophysiological and psychological part of this analysis is that in such loving and faithful relationships and in circumstances where the influences of power are absent, there should be no automatic condemnation of any heterosexual or same-sex act of sex. Jesus does not condemn or criticise their relationship, nor is there any hint of condemnation by both Matthew and Luke. Such a condemnation would be needed if this is not correct. However other biblical scholars dismiss any suggestions of a homosexual theme as deliberately distorted interpretations of the text¹⁰⁵. Marston argues that in line with the weight of other scriptural evidence, Jesus would not have condoned any homosexual relationship¹⁰⁶, while others suggest that even if the relationship had been homosexual, his lack of condemnation does not necessarily equate to his approval of them. A further approach is cited within a blog where it is alleged that a much better way to understand the centurion's servant is that he was perhaps an adopted son¹⁰⁷.

Proving something by silence is always more difficult than when a direct statement is made. On its own, this passage suggests indifference; however other evidence may also be used. The attitude which Jesus took to eunuchs and to the Gallae priests indicates that is not any of these acts, nor is it the gender transformation which is condemned; it is the purposes to which some people might have put their acts. The separate analyses on the prohibitions contained in Leviticus, Paul's condemnations of same-sex activities, the declaration of Jesus on marriage and on eunuchs in Matthew 19:12 and the definition and use of the word *agápē* within the first century Christian context, lead to the same result. By his acceptance of the Centurion, and from his almost certain knowledge of what the usual Greco/Roman practices were, it can be argued that in this passage, Jesus was consenting to the acceptability of all such relationships when they are given and received in love.

5:6 Jesus and John

¹⁰⁵ See for example: Gagnon, Robert A. J. (2005) "Why the Disagreement over the Biblical Witness on Homosexual Practice?" A Response to David G. Myers and Letha Dawson Scanzoni, *What God Has Joined Together?* Reformed Review 59.1 (Autumn 2005): 19-130, 56. Available online at: <http://www.robagnon.net/articles/ReformedReviewArticleWhyTheDisagreement.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Marston, P. (1995) Dear Peter Tatchell *The Independent*, Tuesday 21 March

¹⁰⁷ There is some credence to this argument. Centurions were not permitted to marry. Therefore the Centurion's "pais" could be his son born to him by a female slave, which he could not acknowledge. However the difficulty with this argument is that the passage itself only deals with these Centurion and slave relationships in general terms. It does not claim that the Centurion himself was engaged in any form of same-sex behaviour. Matthew and Luke would have had to impose these restrictions on their accounts if that is what was meant. See: Centurion's Servant::Blog <http://hipandhigh.blogspot.co.uk/2007/02/centurions-servant.html>). It is worth noting that similar explanations are offered to explain away any possibility of condoning same-sex relationships in the Christian ceremonies of Adelphopoiesis, or "Brother Making" which were conducted during the first millennium and after by the Christian Church.

It has already been made clear that if the first century attitudes to homosexuality and to transgender issues are to be correctly understood, it is essential to separate the sexual aspects into the three largely independent components. These elements are anal penetration, relationships which are given in love and activities engaged in for illicit or promiscuous sex. In any relationship between Jesus and John the third of these can be totally dismissed. However this part of the analysis is by far the most challenging to present day perceptions, because in any form of relationship which might have existed between Jesus and John, the acts of anal penetration cannot be completely ruled out, and the reasons for this are examined later in this account¹⁰⁸. That is considered very unlikely but, it did take place it would have to be kept private, given the contemporary Judean attitudes to such acts, and also because of the place of celibacy which is contained in the preaching of Jesus himself. Nevertheless some form of love between Jesus and John did clearly exist, for that is what is described in the Gospel texts.

The key question which has now to be asked is, “Is this love purely an expression of the ascetic love of friendship, or is it anything more?”¹⁰⁹ Any thought or suggestion of it being anything more than just this ascetic friendship is vehemently denied by the present day Christian Church, but a re-examination of one key text concerning this issue, (see John 21:15-17)^{110 111}, when this passage is considered together with the historic changes in the interpretation of the word “Agape” where, unlike present day teaching in the original Hebrew bible and in the Greek Septuagint, the word agape and its equivalent it is used to describe committed and faithful love which can find its fulfilment in sex¹¹². That change in interpretation is highly significant, because the

¹⁰⁸ The reason for this is given in section 3:1:8 Gilchrist, S. (2013): “An Unfinished Reformation”. See footer for access, where cross cultural transformations and attitudes to anal penetration are considered.

¹⁰⁹ It is noted that the relationship between Jesus and John is described by using the word agape in the Gospel of John.

¹¹⁰ In John 21:15-17 Jesus uses the word agape on the first two occasions when he asks Peter if he loves him, to which he receives an affirmative but uncommitted response. Peter uses the word phileo when he replies both times. However on the third occasion Peter’s response becomes enthusiastic when Jesus reframes his question by using the word phileo instead.

¹¹¹ The present day Church interpretation defines the word agape as the spiritual self-sacrificing ascetic and non sexual love through which Jesus calls Peter to love His Church. In this present day interpretation Jesus uses the word agape on the first two occasions when he asks Peter if he loves him, but Peter responds each time with the word phileo, meaning brotherly love or love of family or friendship instead. The current Roman Catholic Teaching as affirmed by Pope Benedict in his encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* (2005) argues that the difference in meaning between these two verbs for “love” signifies that when Jesus uses the word agape he is calling Peter to the higher form of love for the Church. However Peter is not yet ready to commit himself to the kind of self-sacrificing ascetic type of love for the Church that the current definition of agape represents. In English both of phileo and agape are translated in the same way as “love” and the real meaning of this passage is hidden in translation. Some scholars contend that the use of the two words, phileo and agape for “love” means nothing significant. However it is also known that John never uses double words or double-meaning words without some hidden significance, and Jesus indeed plays on the differences in meaning between the two words in this passage. First century readers of the Greek Septuagint would also read these as separate words and thus would understand the word play involved in this passage.

¹¹² Although present day interpretations describe agape as the type of spiritual self-sacrificing ascetic and ascending love for people and for the Church that specifically excludes the expression of any form of sexual passion, that is not the definition which first century readers would have known. The arguments for the modern ascetic interpretation are not borne out in the Old Testament texts. The word agape (which is a direct transliteration of the equivalent Jewish word *ahabà*) is used in passages such as Genesis 34:1-4, Judges 16:4:15, Jeremiah 2:20-25, Jeremiah 2:33, Hosea 4:18 and Hosea 9:1, to describe acts of non-marital sexual love. Passages such as Genesis 24:67, Judges 14:16, 1 Samuel 18:20-21, and 1 Kings 11:1-3 deal with married sexual love. Genesis 29, Deuteronomy 21:15, 1 Samuel 1:4-5, 2 Chronicles 11:21 use the word to describe acts of sexual attraction. The Song of Solomon uses it to describe the outpouring of love in a sexual context. The

application of this first century understanding leads towards a somewhat different conclusion which suggests that something stronger than just a friendship did exist¹¹³. However the morality of any such relationship must be judged in accordance with the first century social expectations, and not those of the present day

5:7 Rabbinic Partnerships

Today the Christian vocations of celibacy are considered to apply only to individuals. However within first century Jewish society, study partnerships between two men in a close relationship with each other could be even more highly valued for the greater degree of intellectual rigour, commitment and the challenges with which each partner could test the other's arguments. As these cultures did not recognise the limitations of the present day labels, no distinctions between the legitimacies of heterosexual and of homosexual feelings were made. These partnerships could further be seen to be the fulfilment of the call of duty which was associated with individual celibacy, since the distractions of marriage and family were likewise avoided¹¹⁴.

Talmudic study in Judaism traditionally used Chavruta¹¹⁵ partnerships, where pairs of students worked together to learn, discuss and to debate a shared text. The rabbis in these academies repeatedly encouraged their students to embrace ever increasing degrees of intimacy. No rules for Chavruta partnerships are encountered which establish any boundaries which approve of strong heterosexual friendships on the one hand, and also disapprove of homosexual relationships on the other. A more extended analysis of this topic is given elsewhere¹¹⁶. In the Avot de-Rabbi Hathan for example it is recommended that a partner should be someone with whom one can "eat and drink, read and study, sleep, and share secrets of the Torah and personal

same word is also used to describe the relationship between David and Jonathan, (see for example I Samuel 18), and between Jesus and the beloved disciple in the Gospel of John. In the original Hebrew bible and in the Greek Septuagint the word agape and its equivalent it is used to describe committed and faithful love which can find its fulfilment in sex. This is in marked contrast the current Christian definition of the word. The full reasons for this change are discussed in Gilchrist, S. (2011) "Issues on the Sanctity of Same Sex Relationships". Agape therefore means more than friendship for it allows the expression of sexual affection as well.

¹¹³ Phileo is the love of friendship family and home, and this understanding has broadly remained the same. However this opening up of the definition of the word agape to include a sexual content immediately gives possible new meanings to the word-play which was used by Jesus, in John 21:15-17. This affirms that Jesus and John both loved Jesus, but that they did so in different ways. It also confirms that and in the relationship between Jesus and John there was a special intimacy, with some sort of sexual element involved. The structure of this passage also provides a deeper meaning, for it clearly positions the relationships between the two disciples by affirming the supremacy of Peter and the Church in Rome, while at the same time authenticating the use of the term "The disciple who Jesus loved" in John's Gospel. It demonstrates the unique nature of this Gospel and it also shows why, and in what way, the Gospel of John should be regarded as complementary to the Synoptic texts. If John's Gospel is indeed the product of such a relationship then it is a unique and intimate account of the ministry of Jesus, which has a depth which reaches far beyond that which any other relationship could bring. These conclusions have the effect of affirming the reliability of other Christian texts.

¹¹⁴ See Section 3:1:9 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

¹¹⁵ Chavruta, which is also spelled chavrusa or havruta comes from the Aramaic word for "friendship" or "companionship". It is a traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which pairs of students independently learn, discuss and debate a shared text. It is a primary learning method in yeshivas and kollels. The traditional phrase is to learn b'chavruta (i.e. in partnership). The word has come to refer to the two study partners as a single individual, though it is logical to describe them as a pair. In modern Orthodox parlance, a chavruta always refers to two students, but Reform Judaism has expanded the idea of chavruta to include study groups of up to five individuals.

¹¹⁶ Gilchrist, S. (2011) "Issues on the Sanctity of Same Sex Relationships".

secrets"¹¹⁷. It has already been noted that throughout all of the first Century Greek, Roman and Jewish societies the boundaries that were placed between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour were not primarily determined by biological features, they were instead established to separate the noble pursuits of love from the carnal misuses of sex. Responsible behaviour and a committed relationship were also required but any loving same-sex or homosexual relationships which possessed an equivalent degree of attachment to those of heterosexual relationships could be endorsed provided the correct social boundaries were met¹¹⁸.

A question of particular interest is how far these acts of expression in Judaism could be taken. The answer from the bible and rabbinic sources is that all sexual acts were permissible apart from that of anal penetrative sex. However even though the rabbis encouraged expression of same-sex relationships within the correct circumstances, they were also concerned about their misuse¹¹⁹. Because of this, rabbinic teaching put strong restrictions on the ways in which these could be expressed. However anal penetration was the boundary which could never be crossed, and those people who offended against this law could be harshly condemned for a "lack of respect"¹²⁰. This reflected the differences between the subject and the dominant societies and the absolute horror of the threat of same-sex rape being carried out on the Israelites by the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah is very clearly expressed within Judaism itself. Despite these serious rabbinic concerns, those same-sex relationships which were expressions of love inside chavruta partnerships were understood to enhance rather than to diminish the sanctity of the relationships. Many chavruta partnerships would have simply developed into strong heterosexual friendships, but intimate same-sex relationships could also be fostered within them, and it is reported that the bonds between these same sex chavruta partners could often be stronger than those within a heterosexual marriage.

¹¹⁷ See Maimonide's commentary on the Mishnah, Avot 1:6 aseh lekha rav

¹¹⁸ See Gilchrist, S. (2011) "Issues on the Sanctity of Same Sex Relationships". The prohibition of anal same sex intercourse was made to preserve social order in gender unequal societies where same-sex rape was considered an instrument of humiliation, where married women were treated as the property of their husbands and where women were not regarded as having any personal rights. In today's western societies where men and women are treated equally and in situations where the relations between any two people are given to each other in love and faithfulness, these rabbinic arguments disappear. Judaism questions the purpose and applies two meanings to any biblical text. The first is the original meaning and the second is what the text means within the current situation. In same-sex relationships which are given in love in a gender equal society should be no prohibition of anal penetrative sex.

¹¹⁹ The four main reasons for the rabbinic opposition rely on the need to preserve social order and their interpretations of other bible texts. The first argument is that same-sex relationships cannot result in procreation, and that the bible considers this to be the focus of the sexual act. Having children was of great importance in the Jewish tradition and the avoidance of reproductive consequences could also lead to prostitution and promiscuous acts. The second reason was stability in marriage: in a society where arranged and early marriages were the normal practice the sexuality of each of the partners was not taken into account, therefore the condemnation of all homosexual behaviour was a way of ensuring that the marriage remained intact. The third reason was the disruption of the social order: in a society where men and women are treated unequally the gender based power structure is broken by homosexual and transgender acts. The fourth reason comes from the debasement of citizenship and the use of same-sex rape to humiliate a beaten enemy.

¹²⁰ The word chavruta, like marriage, came to be used in the singular to describe two people in a relationship. The Talmud (Yevamot 62b) states that 12,000 pairs (sic) of students of Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph (ca.50–ca.135 AD) died of plague between Passover and Shavuot, "because they did not treat one another with respect". The context of the passage indicates that each pair of students formed a chavruta. The text also implies that this plague was diphtheria, but this may be a disguise for sexual misbehaviour, and for the massacres that took place after the Jewish Revolt in 70 A.D.

In Jewish history the Zugot period lasted from about 515 BC to around 70 AD. The term zugot simply refers to pairs. This was a time when Jewish religious leadership was in the hands of successive pairs of male teachers, and deep male pair bonding could occur¹²¹. These expressions of intense same-sex affection were very familiar to the rabbis at the time of Jesus and in the early Christian era, and it is necessary to consider what the appropriate behaviour would be within any first century rabbinic relationship¹²². The rabbinic partnership would have to be seen as a fully committed, responsible and ethical relationship between these two people who would also relate to each other as equals. Judaism dictated that there must be no anal penetration. However all other types of sexual acts and expressions of love and intimacy could be accepted since no other physical sexual acts between two men are forbidden, either by Jewish law and teachings, or in any bible texts.

5:8 First Century Relationships

There can be absolutely no doubt that Jesus, John and the other disciples had the total trust and admiration of all their followers, with the certainty that no impropriety could ever have occurred. Therefore differences in acceptable behaviour have to be attributed to the differences in cultures between the present day and the first century societies. The application of modern day labels of heterosexuality and homosexuality puts people into boxes which people in first century societies would not recognise. Although different words were employed at that time to describe the various types of love, these were not usually used on a gendered basis, and therefore the present day polarisations were avoided.

The Christian tradition which shows the Apostle John as the beardless disciple might additionally suggest a relationship of intimacy, because the maximum age at which pederasty could be practiced within Greek society was determined by the age at which the junior partner in the relationship was first able to grow a beard. There is absolutely no allegation that Jesus and John were engaged in any such practices, but this symbolism of the beardlessness of John would be relevant to Greek society. Neither Jesus nor John was married. John is also described as a virgin in the Pistis Sophia and additional pointers to the nature of their relationship may also be found.¹²³

Many other instances of such close rabbinic relationships are encountered in Jewish history. Perhaps the most notable of these is that between Resh Lakesh (Rashi) and

¹²¹ The Babylonian Talmud (Pesachim 109b-112a) contains an extensive discussion of dangers of zugot and of performing various activities in pairs.

¹²² The full argument is presented in Gilchrist, S. (2011) "Issues on the Sanctity of Same Sex Relationships". However Greenberg, Steven; (2004) "Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition" The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN 10: 0-299-19094-3 gives a very complete account. Wrestling with God and Men is the product of Rabbi Steven Greenberg's ten-year struggle to reconcile his homosexuality with Orthodox Judaism. Employing traditional rabbinic resources, Greenberg presents readers with relevant biblical interpretations of the creation story, the love of David and Jonathan, the destruction of Sodom, and the condemning verses of Leviticus. But Greenberg goes beyond the question of whether homosexuality is biblically acceptable to ask how such relationships can be sacred. In so doing, he draws on a wide array of nonscriptural texts to introduce readers to occasions of same-sex love in Talmudic narratives, medieval Jewish poetry and prose, and to traditional Jewish case law literature.

¹²³ Pistis Sophia The complete text of Pistis Sophia in the translation of G.R.S. Mead is given in <http://gnosis.org/library/psoph.htm>

Rabbi Yonathan¹²⁴. This was a relationship which possessed very great intimacy but it was likewise one to which any of the present day classifications of heterosexuality, bisexuality or homosexuality cannot be applied. What this analysis reveals is that the relationship between Jesus and John appears to be very similar to that which might be expected within any first century (or later) rabbinic partnership. In the bible, John is singled out as the disciple who Jesus loved, and when the Gospel is read from this perspective it no longer appears to be coy on this subject. In a companion paper it is shown how these types of relationships could subsequently be carried over, and how they could be formalised through services of “Adelphopoiesis”, or “Brother Making” in the Christian Church¹²⁵.

Anal penetration was absolutely barred in every relationship of adelphopoiesis, but many other degrees of close bonding can be found¹²⁶. Liturgies for such ceremonies exist and these have at least some of the symbolism of marriage¹²⁷. In place of terms like mother-in-law, the term cross-mother was used¹²⁸. In practice similar ceremonies could be held for a wide variety of purposes, and there is strong disagreement about what they were meant to represent¹²⁹. Nevertheless it is principles and not numbers which count. It would be tempting to regard at least some of these ceremonies as ways of sanctifying “Same-sex” marriages, however that idea should be treated with great caution because, as a relationship between two equals; that would have been

¹²⁴ For a full description of these relationships see Greenberg, Steven; (2004) “Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition” The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN 10: 0-299-19094-3. The topic is also covered in Gilchrist, S. 2011. “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”.

¹²⁵ Gilchrist, S. (2011). “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”. And: Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Reform and the Christian Church”. See footer for access.

¹²⁶ Tulchin, A.A, (2007), “Same-Sex Couples Creating Households in Old Regime France: “The Uses of the Affrurement”. Journal of Modern History, Vol 79, No.3 pp 613-647, University of Chicago Press. ISBN ISSN 0022-2801

¹²⁷ Viscuso, Patrick (1994) New Oxford Review. December 1994, Volume LXI, Number 10

¹²⁸ Mantzouneas, Fr. Evangelos K. (1982) Secretary of the Greek Synod Committee on Legal and Canonical Matters; “Report on Adelphopoiesis 1982: “Fraternization from a Canonical Perspective” Athens 1982”.

¹²⁹ The ceremony of Adelphopoiesis, or Adelphoioia, (which literally translates as “brother-making”), was practiced in previous centuries by various Christian churches. The purpose of the ceremony was to unite together two people of the same sex who were normally men. Manuscripts with liturgies for a ceremony of Adelphopoiesis which date from the 9th to the 15th Century are found in the archives of the Byzantine church, but it seems to have begun at a much earlier date (see Viscuso, Patrick (1994) New Oxford Review. December 1994, Volume LXI, Number 10). John Boswell in his book (Boswell, John. (1995): “Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe”. Villard. Published in Britain as “The Marriage of Likeness”), argues that the purpose of this ceremony was to unite two people of the same sex in a marriage-like union. However this interpretation is contradicted by the Greek Orthodox Church where the practice is interpreted as “fraternization” instead. (Mantzouneas, Fr. Evangelos K. (1982) Secretary of the Greek Synod Committee on Legal and Canonical Matters; “Report on Adelphopoiesis 1982: “Fraternization from a Canonical Perspective” Athens 1982”. English translation by Efthimios Mavrogeorgiadis. Accessed at:

http://www.qrd.org/qrd/religion/judeochristian/eastern_orthodox/Church_of_Greece_on_adelphoioia. Retrieved; 16 August 2011). The ceremony was mainly but not exclusively practised in Eastern Christianity and the British historian Alan Bray, who also rejects Boswell’s claims, in his book “The Friend” (Bray, Alan (2003) “The Friend” University of Chicago Press), gives a Latin text and a translation of a Latin Catholic Rite of “Ordo ad Fratres Faciendum” which he saw as serving the same purpose in the Western Church. Allan Tulchin describes a variation of this type of relationship as was conferred in the ceremony of “Affrurement”, which took place in Old Regime France (Tulchin, A.A, (2007), “Same-Sex Couples Creating Households in Old Regime France: “The Uses of the Affrurement”. Journal of Modern History, Vol 79, No.3 pp 613-647, University of Chicago Press. ISBN ISSN 0022-2801). What is clear from these accounts is the wide variation that occurs. Nevertheless it is the principles and not the number that counts, and it is tempting to regard at least some of these as “Same-sex” marriages. However as a relationship between two equals that would have been abhorrent to first century society (see Gilchrist, S. (2013): “Reform and the Christian Church” and Gilchrist, S. (2011): “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-sex Relationships”. However the paradox is that in today’s gender equal societies, the reasons for this distinction are now lost.

abhorrent to first century society¹³⁰. Despite this, the paradox now is that in today's gender equal societies, the reasons for making this distinction have been lost.

5:9 Paul

The passages which are most often used to condemn gender and sexually variant behaviour are found in the epistles and the letters of Paul¹³¹. In Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10, Paul, makes use of the verses in Leviticus, as it is translated in the Greek Septuagint, when he coins¹³² the word "arsenokoitai"¹³³, to describe those people who are engaged in heterosexual and same-sex promiscuity and prostitution as "Abusers of themselves with mankind". By linking his invented word directly to Leviticus he made it clear that the Jewish rather than the Greek view should be understood. This directly refers a first century reader back to the specific interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 which Jesus, John and Paul would have known, and which refers to anal penetration alone. The interpretation of this word is controversial. Without a clear definition of the word no absolute distinction between loving and abusive same-sex relationships can be made, or any firm interpretation of Paul's attitude to loving relationships can be established. The careful use of the word "arsenokoitai" strongly suggests that Paul condemns all same-sex actions where lust is the major motive, but it does not condemn those which are given in love. Paul was certainly targeting issues of rape, respectability and sexual immorality as these were understood from the Jewish and Christian standpoint - and from that point of view Paul's condemnation of the sexual behaviour of many people within Greco/Roman society was entirely correct. However for a clearer interpretation is necessary to look elsewhere. That is further considered in section 6:4 of this document¹³⁴. In contrast to Paul, Jesus was addressing the relationships within that same society which were built on love and respect and in his attitude to the Gallae priests and in the story of the Centurion and the slave, Jesus demonstrated that this did not demand any automatic or universal condemnation of those loving same-sex relationships which involve anal penetrative sex^{135 136}.

¹³⁰There is little reference to same-sex marriage in the Jewish literature, however the Talmud teaches against same-sex marriage in Chullin 92a, saying that the nations of the world, however sinful, corrupt or perverse, still have the merit of at least three behaviours, one of which is "they do not write a ketubah (marriage contract) for two males." In a commentary on Genesis Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi Joseph, "The generation of the Flood was not wiped out until they wrote marriage documents for the union of a man to a male or to an animal." (Genesis Rabbah 26:5; Leviticus Rabbah 23:9). There was opposition from other sources, which was often based on the Leviticus texts.

¹³¹See also sections 3:1:2 and 3:6:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Reform and the Christian Church". See footer for access

¹³²"Arsenokoitai" is a Greek word that appears to have been created by Paul when he was writing 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. No record remains of any writer having using the term before Paul. In the King James Version this has been translated as "abusers of themselves with mankind". If Paul wanted the meaning to be "homosexual" he could have used the Greek word, "paiderasste" instead

¹³³The interpretation of the word "arsenokoitai" has been the subject of intense discussion. Many different ideas have been put forward but none of them significantly alter the purpose of the analysis given in this document.

¹³⁴Insert comment

¹³⁵If any doubt remains about the purpose of this prohibition, then the attitudes taken within the Jewish tradition to sex with children should also be examined. See Gilchrist, S. (2011) "Issues on the Sanctity of Same Sex Relationships". This makes it doubly clear that humiliation and its avoidance was the reason for the prohibition of anal penetrative sex.

¹³⁶This analysis identifies three reasons for the prohibition of anal penetration. These were: first, the humiliation of an enemy or stranger through the use of same-sex rape: second, the disturbances to status and social order in a gender unequal society and third, the misuse of relationships for the gratification of lust and for the practice of

5:10 Prohibited Sex

Several aspects of the teaching of Jesus; his teaching about women; his attitude to the social structures of society; his attitude to sexual behaviour and also to gender and sexual variation have been examined in this analysis. They reach challenging conclusions, which contradict nearly two thousand years of the Church teaching, and careful study is required.

Despite its great concerns about sexual moralities and procreation the Bible has relatively little to say about the prohibition of same-sex acts¹³⁷. Nevertheless same-sex rape was treated with particular horror¹³⁸. It is shown in this analysis that that this is because of its use for humiliation and domination; for sexual substitution¹³⁹, for the practice of safe sex and also to confirm the power differences between the subject and the dominating societies. The Talmudic tradition interprets the sin of Sodom as lack of charity, where the attempted rape was seen as evidence of the city's violation of the social customs of hospitality¹⁴⁰. Jesus imposes the same condemnation when, in Matthew 10:14-15 he tells his disciples that the punishment for houses and towns that will not welcome them will be worse than that of Sodom and Gomorrah¹⁴¹.

safe sex. In situations where two people of the same sex are in loving, faithful and chaste relationship, only the second reason for prohibiting anal penetration remains. With all other types of sexual acts the distinction which is made between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is made by distinguishing between the motives of love and lust. In a society and in relationships where true gender equality exists is argued that the same rules should also apply to the anal penetrative act.

¹³⁷While there is much debate amongst Bible scholars about which, if any scriptures specifically address homosexuality there are eight references that are commonly used by some people to condemn it. These are commonly referred to as "the clobber passages". Of these eight, only six are still used with any regularity as two have been accepted by most as not relating to homosexuality. Four of these (Genesis 19:1-5, Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 23:17) are found in the Old Testament while the other four (1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:9-10, Romans 1:21-31 and Jude 1:6-7) are located in the New Testament. The two that have been widely discarded are Deuteronomy 23:17 and Jude 1:6-7. Deuteronomy 23:17 is essentially about what is called cult prostitution. The passages from Leviticus have been fully discussed in this account. Genesis 19:1-5 is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude 1:6-7 states that Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. Any relationship to homosexuality only works amongst those Churches or individuals who have chosen to make homosexuality the scapegoat for inappropriate or immoral sex.

¹³⁸The bible itself takes an equivocal attitude to conquest and rape. The passages in Zechariah 14:1-2, Deuteronomy 20:10-14, Numbers 31:7-18 and Judges 21:10-24 make it clear that when the Jews were the victors in battle they were expected to take the conquered women for themselves. Deuteronomy 21:13-14 spells out how such captive women were to be treated. There is no evidence to suggest that the Jews used same-sex rape to humiliate those they defeated. However there is horror at the prospect of same-sex rape being used to humiliate them when the Jews are instead the defeated side. This is the real meaning of the story in Genesis Chapters 18-19. When the men of Sodom and Gomorrah congregated to gang rape their Jewish visitors, Lot sought to placate their demands by offering them his two virgin daughters instead (Genesis 19:5-8). This text in Genesis 19: 4-5, refers to an act of sexual violence, degradation, and male rape, as also does the passage in Judges 19:22. Neither of these passages are about consensual sex.

¹³⁹This is heterosexual substitution for sexual gratification, between heterosexual men. According to the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher Philo (1st century AD); "They (the pagan temple priests) would apply themselves to deep drinking of strong liquor and dainty foods and forbidden forms of intercourse. Not only in their mad lust for women (these were heterosexual men) did they violate the marriages of their neighbours, but also these men mounted males (they were promiscuous men)... Then, little by little they accustomed those who were by nature men to submit to play the part of women.... (On Abraham, Chapter 26, pages 134-136.) For a full consideration of what was involved and the attitudes that were adopted, see: Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

¹⁴⁰J.A. Loader, "A Tale of Two Cities: Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament, Early Jewish and Early Christian Traditions".

¹⁴¹Crompton, Louis (2006). *Homosexuality & Civilization*. Harvard University Press. pp. 37–39

Later accounts which describe the sin of Sodomy, such as that in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, regard this act as an illicit form of heterosexual intercourse¹⁴². In Jude 1:7 the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are considered to have been "Giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh," which might refer to homosexuality or to the lusting of the mortals after the angels¹⁴³. The Jewish writers Philo (d.50) and Josephus (37-c100) were the first to clearly assert that these same-sex relationships were to be counted amongst the sins of Sodom¹⁴⁴. However it is necessary to understand what they meant. According to the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher Philo¹⁴⁵: "They (the pagan temple priests) would apply themselves to deep drinking of strong liquor and dainty foods and forbidden forms of intercourse. Not only in their mad lust for women (these were heterosexual men) did they violate the marriages of their neighbours, but also these men mounted males (since they were promiscuous men)..... Then, little by little they accustomed those who were by nature men to submit to play the part of women...." This is heterosexual substitution for sexual gratification, and this account makes it clear that the motives for sodomy were those of lust and rape. This does not consider relationships that arise from the outpouring of love and consensual sex.

Virulent condemnations of heterosexual and same-sex abuse occur in the decrees (or the Canons) of the earliest Councils which set out the regulations of the early fourth century Church¹⁴⁶. While all of these canons impose severe conditions for the celibacy of the clergy and religious, those relating to sexual behaviour focus entirely on the condemnation of sexual abuse. That also reflects a consistent pattern within the pre-Nicene Church, and the first indication that the condemnation of all types of same-sex behaviour should in addition be applied to every type of loving same-sex

¹⁴²Greenberg, David F. (1990) "The Construction of Homosexuality" University of Chicago Press 1990 ISBN 978-0-22630628-5

¹⁴³ Powell, Mark Allan. (2011) Harper Collins Bible Dictionary 2011 ISBN 978-0-06207859-9.

¹⁴⁴Greenberg, David F. (1990) "The Construction of Homosexuality" University of Chicago Press 1990 ISBN 978-0-22630628-5

¹⁴⁵ On Abraham, Chapter 26, pages 134-136

¹⁴⁶The most relevant Canons are quoted here:- Canons from the Council of Elvira (306 AD): Canon 27. A bishop or other cleric may have only a sister or a daughter who is a virgin consecrated to God living with him. No other woman who is unrelated to him may remain. Canon 33. Bishops, presbyters, deacons, and others with a position in the ministry are to abstain completely from sexual intercourse with their wives and from the procreation of children. If anyone disobeys, he shall be removed from the clerical office. Canon 71. Those who sexually abuse boys may not commune even when death approaches.

<http://faculty.cua.edu/pennington/Canon%20Law/ElviraCanons.htm> . Canons from the Council of Ancyra: Canon 16 Let those who have been or who are guilty of bestial lusts, if they have sinned while under twenty years of age, be prostrators fifteen years, and afterwards communicate in prayers; then, having passed five years in this communion, let them have a share in the oblation. But let their life as prostrators be examined, and so let them receive indulgence; and if any have been insatiable in their crimes, then let their time of prostration be prolonged. And if any who have passed this age and had wives, have fallen into this sin, let them be prostrators twenty-five years, and then communicate in prayers; and, after they have been five years in the communion of prayers, let them share the oblation. And if any married men of more than fifty years of age have so sinned, let them be admitted to communion only at the point of death. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3802.htm> . Canons from the Council of Nicaea (325 AD). Canon 1: If any one in sickness has been subjected by physicians to a surgical operation, or if he has been castrated by barbarians, let him remain among the clergy; but, if any one in sound health has castrated himself, it behoves that such an one, if [already] enrolled among the clergy, should cease [from his ministry], and that from henceforth no such person should be promoted. But, as it is evident that this is said of those who wilfully do the thing and presume to castrate themselves, so if any have been made eunuchs by barbarians, or by their masters, and should otherwise be found worthy, such men the Canon admits to the clergy. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3801.htm>

relationships comes through the writings of St Augustine, when he declares: "You shaped the rules, either by making wrong use of the things which You allow, or by becoming inflamed with passion to make unnatural use of things which You do not allow"¹⁴⁷. However this was also a time when the Church considered every type of sexual activity to be a necessary evil resulting from the fall of Adam and Eve, which must only be indulged in for procreative acts. This viewpoint in turn masks some of the distinctions between heterosexual, homosexual and abusive sexual acts.

It is shown elsewhere¹⁴⁸ that the same situation continued through most of the first millennium, and that what is presently regarded as the traditional teaching of the Christian Church stems from the work of Thomas Aquinas during his attempts to re-establish Church Authority after the Cathar Revolt, which had exposed the level of corruption in the Church. The major thrust of the reforms that Aquinas introduced was to increase the freedom of sexual expression within marriage, while at the same time denying all sexual relationships outside it. To do this Aquinas combined the principles of Natural Law which had been developed by Plato, Aristotle and others with the then current theology of the Church. Aquinas in effect restored some church doctrines to their pre-Nicene values but by then the changes which are discussed in this analysis had already occurred. This work by Aquinas has become the foundation of present day teaching which does not condemn homosexual orientation but which condemns every homosexual activity, and so by implication any sexual and gender variant act.

In the present day there are the intense debates about the meaning of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and also over the verses in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Some authors¹⁴⁹ consider that these verses condemn either homosexuality itself, or that they condemn all homosexual relationships and every type of expression of them, while other authors maintain that these texts condemn only males who penetrate, or who are penetrated by other males, and they state that this condemnation is applied exclusively to the acts of anal intercourse alone¹⁵⁰. This investigation adopts the

¹⁴⁷ Saint Augustine (354-430) is categorical in the combat against sodomy. He writes: "Sins against nature, therefore, like the sin of Sodom, are abominable and deserve punishment whenever and wherever they are committed. If all nations committed them, all alike would be held guilty of the same charge in God's law, for our Maker did not prescribe that we should use each other in this way. In fact, the relationship that we ought to have with God is itself violated when our nature, of which He is Author, is desecrated by perverted lust." Further on he reiterates: "Your punishments are for sins which men commit against themselves, because, although they sin against you, they do wrong in their own souls and their malice is self-betrayed. They corrupt and pervert their own nature, which you made and for which, You shaped the rules, either by making wrong use of the things which You allow, or by becoming inflamed with passion to make unnatural use of things which You do not allow": (St. Augustine, Confessions, Book III, chap. 8 <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/110108.htm>)

¹⁴⁸ Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

¹⁴⁹ Greenberg, David F. (1990) "The Construction of Homosexuality" University of Chicago Press 1990 ISBN 978-0-22630628-5; Wenham, Gordon, The Book of Leviticus, 1979; Kahn, Yoel, "Judaism and Homosexuality: The Traditionalist/ Progressive Debate," Homosexuality and Religion, ed Richard Hasbany 1984

¹⁵⁰ On December 6, 2006, The Conservative Judaism's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, adopted three distinct responsa reflecting very different approaches to the subject. One responsum substantially liberalized Conservative Judaism's approach including lifting most (but not all) classical prohibitions on homosexual conduct and permitted the blessing of homosexual unions and the ordination of openly gay/lesbian/bisexual clergy. The two others retained traditional prohibitions. Under the rules of the Conservative movement, the adoption of multiple opinions permits individual Conservative rabbis, congregations, and rabbinical schools to select which opinion to accept, and hence to choose individually whether to maintain a traditional prohibition on homosexual conduct, or to permit openly gay/lesbian/bisexual unions and clergy. The liberalising responsum maintained a prohibition on male-male anal sex, which it described as the sole Biblically prohibited homosexual act. (Dorff,

latter viewpoint. There is strong evidence that this latter interpretation is correct, for it is supported by the first century sources¹⁵¹, and it is also affirmed by these results¹⁵².

5:11 Exegesis

The good news of Jesus as presented in the Gospels upended the social structure of society. In sections 3:4 and Part 4 of this document it is demonstrated that the social and political consequences which arose through the introduction of Christianity had a major impact on the surrounding Jewish and the Greco/Roman cultures, and that the consequences of this cannot be ignored.

This analysis demonstrates that the same-sex acts which are engaged in for power and physical gratification must be clearly separated from those which come through the outpouring of love, and it shows that instead of the blanket ban on anal penetration which the present day Church enforces, any judgement on these activities must be made on responsibility in action, and upon the intention of the sexual act. The same conclusions are supported by the neurophysiological and psychological analysis, which shows that a clear distinction between identity driven and goal driven conflicts must also be made. The methods which are essential to manage the different types of conflict are almost opposite to one another, so that attempting to provide even well intentioned support, or to manage both gender and sexual variation by adopting the conviction that they are invariably goal driven conflicts can produce very damaging counterproductive effects. That dual nature has been denied by the doctrines of the Christian Church which presume that only the goal driven conflicts can exist, and this presumption has led to the belief that all gender and sexually variant behaviour is engaged in for the pursuit of lust and for immoral or inappropriate sex. It is demonstrated in this analysis that the gender and sexually variant conditions are identity driven, thus, in contradiction to the traditional teaching of the Christian Church, as large a range of moral attitudes and behaviour can be encountered within the gender and sexually variant communities as there is in society at large, and any correct assessment must also take a truthful account of the duality that is found. Therefore improper behaviour will still be rightly condemned, but those relationships which are founded on the principles of Christian Love can be celebrated in the fullness of Christ.

Elliott N. Nevins, Daniel and Reisner, Avram. (2006). "Homosexuality, Human Dignity, and Halakha". Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, Rabbinical Assembly, December 6, 2006)

¹⁵¹Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 54a and b; Josephus, Against Apion 2.199; and Philo, Abraham 135.

¹⁵²Some modern authors stating this view include: Alter, Robert, The five books of Moses: a translation with commentary, 2004; Boyarin, Daniel, "Are there any Jews in 'The History of Sexuality'?", Journal of the History of Sexuality, Vol 5 no 3 (1995) p343; Brooten, Bernadette, Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism, 1996 p61; Cohen, Martin, "The Biblical Prohibition of Homosexual Intercourse," Journal of Homosexuality, Vol 19(4) (1990) p6; Daube, David, "The Old Testament Prohibitions of Homosexuality." Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte Romantische Abteilung 103 (1986) p447; Milgrom, Jacob, Leviticus 17–22, 2000 p1568. Olyan, Saul, "And with a Male You Shall Not Lie the Lying Down of a Woman": On the Meaning and Significance of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13", Journal of the History of Sexuality, Vol 5, no 2, (1994) p185; Thurston, Thomas, "Leviticus 18:22 and the Prohibition of Homosexual Acts," in Homophobia and the Judeo-Christian Tradition, ed. by Michael L. Stemmeler & J. Michael Clark, 1990. p16 Walsh, Jerome, "Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: Who Is Doing What To Whom?" Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol 120, No 2, (2001) p208.

To carry a convincing argument it is important to understand the conclusions that a non-religious reader would reach. It is also appropriate to apply Jewish exegeses to what is a Jewish text. The Mitzvah lists the 613 commandments (or Mitzvoth) which are given in the Torah (plus seven additional rabbinic commandments) which a religious Jew is required to follow: Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are two of these. Some mitzvoth are now impossible to fulfil and others may be irrelevant to today's society. This is why Judaism questions the purpose and applies two meanings to any biblical text. The first is the original meaning and the second is what the text means within the present day situation. In December 2006, the American Conservative Judaism's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards reaffirmed the original interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 in words which state that in loving same sex relationships all forms of sexual acts are permitted short of anal penetrative sex. Judaism made no distinction between the sacred and the secular and, like the other 611 commands in the mitzvah, the response to those in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 must be treated in the same way. That demands that issues of anal penetration must be examined in the light of this analysis, and that makes it clear that the prohibition of anal same-sex intercourse was made to preserve the social order in societies where same-sex rape was considered an instrument of humiliation, where married women were treated as the property of their husbands and where women were not regarded as equals in their own right. With the equality of the sexes in present day society these biblical reasons of the prohibition of anal penetration have now disappeared. Therefore in a society where men and women are treated equally and where the relations between the two people are given to each other in love and faithfulness, there should be no prohibition of anal penetrative sex.

If there is any criticism of this approach, it is because it is re-active to the changes in society. That was not the attitude taken by Jesus. Jesus upended the social structure of society when he gave ownership of Christianity to women, the poor, the outcast and the dispossessed. From his own identification with the poor, the rejected and the outcast Jesus likewise turned this searching for authority completely on its head. His own rejection of all worldly power led to his sacrifice and death as a scapegoat on the Cross, and the emphasis within Christianity has always been on the power and the significance of this redemptive act. Many recent theological studies have used the research of René Girard to model these dynamics¹⁵³ and Girard demonstrates the great power and reconciling influences which the scapegoat can exert. These are also pro-active rather than reactive acts and that is reflected in the teaching itself.

Under the New Covenant all acts become incorporated into the Gospel of Christian Love. The new ways in which the Jewish law should be interpreted from then on are described in Mark 7:1-23¹⁵⁴. Therefore, if the Old Testament prohibitions of the Law in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 condemned all acts of anal penetration; then the coming of Jesus, in fulfilment of the Law, meant that judgements were no longer to be made

¹⁵³ Apart from Girard's own work, James Alison is perhaps the most notable exponent. His books include, *Broken Hearts and New Creations: Intimations of a Great Reversal*, *Undergoing God: Dispatches from the Scene of a Break-In*, *On Being Liked*, *Faith Beyond Resentment: Fragments Catholic and Gay*, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes*, *Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination* (2nd edition), *Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination : Living in the End Times: The Last Things Re-imagined*, *Knowing Jesus*. See: <http://www.jamesalison.co.uk/eng/books.html> for details.

¹⁵⁴ The full text is quoted in section 3:5 Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

in literal terms, by literally applying the words of the law, but through love and upon the intentions of the acts¹⁵⁵. When the passages on eunuchs and the Centurion are considered in this light it can be seen that the teaching of Jesus remains entirely in line with the New Covenant. It is also in accordance with the first century attitudes to sexual behaviour which Jesus and John would have known; which likewise demands responsibility in all sexual actions, and which fixes the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in terms of the difference between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. So, instead of contradicting the conclusions of the neurophysiological and psychological analysis, as the traditional Church teachings on sexual and gender variance have done, these results affirm them instead. They also do more than that, for instead of being just passers-by in society, this requires people to change it, and this message should be part of the mission of the Church.

5:12 Implications

These results do nothing more than put same-sex intercourse on the same level as heterosexual intercourse, where it can be a way to rejoice in the delights of love, but its abuse is condemned through the horrors of rape. Nobody is ever likely to know what Jesus and John might have done in private or the full degree of intimacy of their relationship. However that is not the point. The relationship between Jesus and John was unlikely to have been greatly different from other rabbinic partnerships. Neither Jesus nor the early Christian Church sought to change traditional Jewish teaching on sexuality or sexual relationships. Paul in the epistles lays great stress in maintaining the sexual morality of Jewish society, and that was carried forward into the Christian Church. The nature of these transformations is described in Part 6 of this document. Part 7 describes how these have been carried forward into the present day.

The Christian Gospel makes no especial pleading for gender transcendence or for gender equality, but this is implicit within the Gospel texts. Neither does it explicitly discuss sexual and gender variation but that also is inherent in the texts. The acts of sexual domination that were approved by legal and cultural codes of Greco/Roman society are correctly and strongly condemned in the bible, yet the expectation of the

¹⁵⁵The purpose of Jesus' life and work was to fulfil both the Law (the books of Moses) and the Prophets (other Old Testament books). He did not destroy the Old Testament and in Matthew 5:17-18 Jesus said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." (NRSV). However changes were so dramatic that some laws were "set aside" or declared "obsolete" In Hebrews. 7:18-19 it is declared that "There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment because it was weak and ineffectual (for the law made nothing perfect); there is, on the other hand, the introduction of a better hope, through which we approach God."(NRSV); and in Hebrews 8:13 it states that "In speaking of "a new covenant," he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear" (NRSV). In Galatians 3:23-25 Paul describes some of the liberation that Jesus brought "Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith" (NRSV). In Ephesians 2:14-15 Paul declares, " For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace (NRSV). However the most relevant passage comes from Jesus himself in Matthew 22:37-40. "He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

same act of same sex anal penetration being carried out in circumstances when it is given and received in love, as it is described in the story of the Centurion and slave, gives rise to little or no concern. The attitude which Jesus took to eunuchs and to the Gallae priests¹⁵⁶ indicate that it is neither the acts nor the gender transformation that is condemned; it is the purposes to which some might have put their acts. Therefore all people, lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual who live their lives within the full love of Christ and who express their own identities in ways that are true to themselves; must be accepted alike.

It is this intertwining of the sacred and secular values which continue to cause real difficulty. In societies and religions where men and woman are still treated differently or unequally the prohibitions of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 continue to have a strong point. This is a particular problem for churches which are surrounded by the other religious traditions and governments which have institutionalised inequality between the sexes¹⁵⁷. In the Anglican Communion this division is most strongly seen in the disputes between African and Western churches¹⁵⁸. On the 24th February 2014 the president of Uganda signed a law allowing those convicted of homosexuality to be imprisoned for life, defying international disapproval from western donor nations¹⁵⁹. In an interview with Russian and foreign television stations broadcast on Sunday 12th January 2014, Vladimir Putin equated gays with paedophiles and spoke of the need for Russia to "cleanse" itself of homosexuality if it wants to increase its birth rate, and these comments reflect the misinformation which still continues to be propagated by many branches of the Church.

These arguments do not change the teaching and doctrines of the Christian Church when they are applied to sexual immorality or sexual abuse in any way. Instead they expose the true nature of the situation. They provide no excuses for sexual licence, and the fundamental need is for the Church to tackle the major issues of promiscuity and prostitution which are endemic in many areas of the world. There may be very

¹⁵⁶ and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it: Matthew 19:12

¹⁵⁷ This is most dramatically seen in the attitude to homosexuality and transgender issues in present day Iran. Homosexuality and displays of cross gender activity are punished with extreme severity but transsexuality - when it is accompanied by physical gender reassignment is not. Transsexuals reinforce the social order when they engage in sexual activities which are appropriate to their new role. There is the danger that some homosexuals may undergo gender reassignment to escape from the penalties that they would otherwise face.

¹⁵⁸ In Mauritania, Sudan, and northern Nigeria, homosexuality is punishable by death. In Uganda, Tanzania, and Sierra Leone, offenders can receive life imprisonment for homosexual acts. In addition to criminalizing homosexuality, Nigeria has enacted legislation that would make it illegal for straight family members, allies and friends of the LGBT to be supportive. According to Nigerian law, a straight ally "who administers, witnesses, abets or aids" any form of gender non-conforming and homosexual activity could receive a 10-year jail sentence. Nigeria's LGBTQ-Cleansing Law", <http://www.laprogressive.com/african-anti-gay-laws/>. South Africa's constitution has the most liberal attitudes toward gays and lesbians, with a constitution which guarantees gay and lesbian rights, and legal same-sex marriage. Even there, gay rights have been described as an "exclusive privilege of the white and well-heeled, a small but high-profile subset". See: "Confronting homophobia in South Africa", University of Cambridge, <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/confronting-homophobia-in-south-africa>
¹⁵⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/24/uganda-president-signs-anti-gay-laws> "The new law is blunt and uncompromising. Having spelled out its definition of homosexuality - which includes touching another person "with the intention of committing the act of homosexuality" - the act concludes that convicted offenders will be sentenced "to imprisonment for life" The offence of "aggravated homosexuality" - which includes having sex with "a person living with HIV" or being "a serial offender" - will also lead to life imprisonment. Homosexuality was already illegal in Uganda. Critics may take small comfort from the fact that a death penalty clause has been removed, as has the requirement that Ugandans denounce gays to the police". (Andrew Harding. BBC Africa correspondent) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-26320102>

severe health and hygiene concerns which arise today from misuse of heterosexual and homosexual penetrative sex; and these campaigns are not helped by making homosexuality and all forms of sexual and gender variant behaviour the scapegoat for abusive sex. Instead it diverts these concerns from the real issue, which is about the practice by heterosexual men of illicit and promiscuous sex.

Sensitivity is required. No one should be in the business of accusing the other. The response of everybody to these differences must be applied compassionately for all heterosexual, homosexual and transgender relationships. The acceptance, care and concern for each other must always be paramount, for it is through this commitment that the Gospel of Christian Love can be most fully revealed. People must start from where they are on the journey of finding their own lives, and when showing to others around them the true love of Christ. This analysis expects the same high standards to be applied to everybody, without exception, so that in the framework of Christian love, all people, regardless of whether they are heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transgendered or transsexual can truly be free, and are totally able to express their love, care and concern for each other, in ways which are true to their own identities, secure with the knowledge that they do this with the full support and blessing of the Christian Church, and the Gospel of Christ.

6:0 Adaptation and Change

6:1 Social Implications

To ask any first century male Roman citizen if he practices gender discrimination, he might answer that he does not. Instead he might consider that he practices gender complementarity, where men and women are divided into exclusive gender defined and divinely sustained gender roles which possess equal esteem. Rather than using any modern perception of human rights, that policy is determined by the most useful contribution which each of the sexes can make to the wellbeing of society. It is hardly correct to condemn any person in first century society by comparing them against twentieth century ideals. For Paul, a male Roman citizen, who was born in the city of Tarsus inside modern day Turkey; this perception would be the natural Roman world view. For Peter an equivalent Jewish view of gender complementarity would also apply, and it would be the one in which to place the Christian Church. It is also the outlook which expressed the ideals of the Greek philosophers, and adopting it would provide respectability for the Church.

6:2 Compromises of the Church

As a revolutionary Jesus was a disappointment to the Jewish nation, for instead of conquering an oppressing empire in order to destroy it, the Gospel demanded that people work within that society and its empire to change it instead. This delivers a major challenge which can too easily be lost. Throughout history and throughout the world many Churches have conformed to the moral values of unjust societies, so much so that they have become part of them. Instead of the agents for reconciliation they become the centres for conflict instead.

The need to transform society and still to work within it had initially led the church to try to combine the attitudes to gender complementarity adopted by the surrounding first century societies with the gender transcendence which was embraced by the Gospel message. However the desire for the Church to obtain respectability and authority in Greco/Roman society meant that these transcendent ideals were lost. Instead of an advance, the blaming of women for the Fall, the presumption of a male god, and the removal of an independent Goddess to protect women's interests only made the situation become even worse for women than it had previously been in the Jewish and Greco/Roman societies from which the Church developed¹⁶⁰.

6:2 Timescales for Change

The Gospel message of Jesus had expressed radical views which attacked at their roots the social structures of first century societies. However is shown in this analysis that from early in the existence of the Church these radical views were lost.

The rapid speed of these changes is not considered in much of the current research. Elaine Pagels maintains that the majority of the Christian churches in the second century went with the majority of the middle classes in opposing the trend toward equality for women. She argues that by the year 200, the majority of Christian communities had endorsed as canonical the "pseudo-Pauline" letter to Timothy. That letter, according to Pagels, both stresses and it exaggerates the antifeminist element which is found in Paul's views: "Let a woman learn in silence in all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or have authority over men; she is to keep silent." (1 Timothy 2:11) Pagels believes the letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians, which order women to "be subject in everything to their husbands," do not express what she considers were Paul's own very favourable attitudes toward women, and she argues that these were also "pseudo-Pauline" forgeries.¹⁶¹

The earliest Christian gatherings, most notably those of Paul were very attractive for wealthy women and widows. They often opened their houses for worship.¹⁶² In the first century a woman's place was in the home and in the otherwise private areas of life. Turning the private domestic setting into the public religious setting opened up opportunities for religious leadership. According to Pagels, Pauline Christianity did

¹⁶⁰For the full discussion of the severity of this, and the contrast with other religions, see section 2:2:5 of Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access. In traditional Judaism, women are for the most part seen as separate but equal. Women's obligations and responsibilities are different from men's, but no less important. The equality of men and women also begins at the highest possible level. In Judaism, unlike traditional Christianity, God has never been viewed as exclusively male or masculine, and Judaism has always maintained that God has both masculine and feminine qualities. Both man and woman were created in the image of God. According to many Jewish scholars, "man" was first created (in Genesis 1:27) with a dual gender, and was later separated into male and female. The rights of women in traditional Judaism were much greater than they were in the rest of Western civilization until the 20th century. These rights and freedoms seem to have remained comparable to those experienced by women in First Century Greco/Roman and Judean society. Women had the right to buy, sell, and own property, and make their own contracts. These are capabilities which women in Western countries (including America) did not have until about 100 years ago. Proverbs 31:10-31, which is traditionally read at Jewish weddings, speaks repeatedly of business acumen as a trait to be prized in women and some traditional sources suggest that women are closer to God's ideal than men.

¹⁶¹ Elaine H. Pagels (1992). *The gnostic Paul: gnostic exegesis of the Pauline letters*. Trinity Press Intl. ISBN 978-1-56338-039-6.

¹⁶² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1994). *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. The Crossroad Publishing Co. ISBN 978-0-8245-1357-3.

not honour its rich patrons: instead it worked within a "motif of reciprocity" by offering leadership roles, dignity and status in return for patronage. By building up their own house church, women could experience relative authority, social status and political power and renewed dignity within Paul's movement. This concept is reflected in Paul's own relationships with Phoebe¹⁶³, Chloe¹⁶⁴ and Rufus's mother¹⁶⁵. However this analysis ignores the social challenges of the Gospel message on society as a whole. Like the Gallae priests, Jesus upended the whole of society and the potential political implications could be enormous. Pagels and others seem to perceive only a gradual change in these social attitudes during the first 200 years of the Church.

However perhaps the most important areas where the speed of these changes are not taken into account, are found in the epistles and letters in the New Testament itself. If the Christian Church was to become an effective agent for spreading the Christian message throughout the Greco/Roman world it had to integrate itself into it. This need for these labels of acceptability and respectability is evident in the context of missionary activities of the early Church; and this strong and pressing demand for respectability is evident throughout all of the Pauline epistles and letters. It is argued in this analysis that as a consequence of this urgency, the transformation in attitudes had to take place much more quickly than present scholarship expects. This means that those passages which today are considered as uncomfortable and misogynistic attitudes to women can no longer be distanced from Peter and Paul. This means that they must be interpreted instead as the opinions which Peter and Paul did actually possess. However to judge Peter and Paul by the moral perspectives of present day society does not do justice to the attempted integrity of their approach.

Nothing about the larger social and political implications involving gender disruption within Greco/Roman society are considered, and instead of a timescale which would involve maybe hundreds of years as Pagels and others imply, these have to be dealt with within the short timescales of political effect. This refusal to consider the political imperatives seems to be common to much of the theological analysis and a further example of this is the failure to consider the political implications of the development of the Goddess Cults¹⁶⁶. That demands a re-evaluation of the Epistles and Letters themselves, and the disregard of the rapidity of these changes has major consequences for the present day Church.

If the first major failure on gender and sexual variance is the refusal to recognise the duality in gender and sexual behaviour, then the second is the refusal to consider the nature and impact of the political tensions within first century Greco/Roman society, together with the important role which this played in enabling the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus and the early church. That background is described in section 3:4 of this document. This rebuttal continues in the later relationships between Church and state, and the implications of this on the particular doctrines of celibacy and the Arian controversy have also to be considered, both within the political and the theological contexts as well¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶³ Romans 16

¹⁶⁴ 2 Timothy 4:21

¹⁶⁵ Romans 16

¹⁶⁶ See section 3:4 of this document

¹⁶⁷ See sections 3:1:9 and 3:3:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

6:4 Choices

Within the moral compasses of all religions and of all people there is the freedom to choose between good and evil. This choice can sometimes be summarised as the difference between “The way of darkness” and “The way of light”.

The prophet Jeremiah states:

“This is what the Lord says: See; I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Whoever stays in the city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; they will escape with their lives” (Jeremiah 21:8-9).

These verses from Jeremiah provide the theme which underlies the duality within much of the early Christian teaching, which also distinguished between “The way of Darkness” and “The way of Light”. The recognition of that duality is clearly expressed in early Christian worship¹⁶⁸. Within the usual Christian teaching the “Way of Light” is intended to celebrate with delight the course which is right.

In this particular passage Jeremiah was forcing the Israelites to choose between two evils, and there may not always be an easy choice. A similar dilemma was faced by the early Church, and like the situation described by Jeremiah, the choice was also not between right and wrong. Therefore a decision to conform to the social structure of a gender unequal and gender complementary society, while continuing to oppose the sexual immorality it saw on in that society, may well have been correct. The major failure was to turn this practical decision into the doctrine of the later church. This meant that in place of true gender transcendence and equality a strong and exclusive heterosexual orthodoxy, together with the form of gender complementary which demanded the submission of women had to be imposed. This was not to be an outcome of the Gospel message. It was a pragmatic choice.

The impact of this philosophy is found in Paul’s letter to Philemon, the owner of a runaway slave. Paul does not demand that the contract of slavery should be broken but instead he asks his master to treat the slave as an equal partner in the love of Christ, now that they have both been converted to Christianity. The letter asks for the slave to be accepted by his master on these Christian terms. The slave remains a slave, who is subject to his master, but now within the Christian community the slave

¹⁶⁸ The “Didache” is considered the first example of the genre of the Church Orders of Service. The first section (Chapters 1-6) begins: “There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between these two ways.” Lightfoot and Holmes, note that: “The Two Ways material appears to have been intended... as a summary of basic instruction about the Christian life to be taught to those who were preparing for baptism and church membership. In its present form it represents the Christianization of a common Jewish form of moral instruction. Similar material is found in a number of other Christian writings from the first through about the fifth centuries, including the Epistle of Barnabas, the Didascalia, the Apostolic Church Ordinances, the Summary of Doctrine, the Apostolic Constitutions, the Life of Schnudi, and On the Teaching of the Apostles (or Doctrina), some of which are dependent on the Didache.” (See: Holmes, Michael W.(2006) “Apostolic Fathers in English”, Baker Academic; ISBN-10: 0801031087 ISBN-13: 978-0801031083, and The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings. Trans. by J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harner. 2nd ed. Edited and revised by Michael W. Holmes. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.)

and master are to be treated completely as equals and brothers, and this is because all are one in Christ. However, instead of asking for the emancipation and for the release of the slave, the author supports the social conventions on slavery in society.

It would appear that the initial aim of the Church was to accept that social divisions had to be endorsed for relationships with outside society, but inside the Church and within the Christian Community, complete equality for all was still to be maintained. Comparable master and servant relationships are also to be found between men and women in a gender complementary society. While few people would probably reject a voluntary gender complementarity which delights in the differences between the sexes, the problem with the discipline of gender complementarity that was adopted from Greco/Roman society by Peter and Paul is that this demanded the submission of women to men, and they applied it not just in relation to outside society, but also within the Church. By these actions the concept that the Church could continue as a true beacon of gender transcendence and equality within a gender unequal society was lost. Today nobody (one hopes) would employ the letter to Philemon to justify slavery¹⁶⁹. Equally no one should use these arguments on gender complementarity to impose that requirement on laity or priests in 20th Century life.¹⁷⁰

6:4 Attitudes to Gender and Sexual Variance

The need to take account of the cultural differences between various societies is a key feature of this analysis. There were major clashes over anal penetration where in the dominant society only the submissive party was condemned, whereas inside a conquered and dominated society the reverse the case. It is further necessary to recognise the cultural differences between first century societies where sexual acts were not principally governed on a gendered basis but on responsibility in action and by separating the actions based on the noble pursuit of love from the carnal abuse of sex. Social status was all important and any male citizen could penetrate any man of a lesser status without penalty, but stronger restrictions applied between two equal citizens, and any type of behaviour which compromised the social status was totally condemned. The need to obtain respectability demanded that the Church separated itself as far as it was possible for it to do so from the gender disruptive behaviour of the Goddess cults.

¹⁶⁹ It is interesting to note the parallels in social attitudes that are encountered in first century society and in the Christian context of slavery between master and slave in the New World. The film "Ten years a Slave" is a powerful witness to the injustices which occurred

¹⁷⁰ It would appear that the initial aim of the Church was to accept that gender complementarity had to be endorsed for relationships with outside society, but within the Church and the Christian Community, complete gender transcendence was still to be maintained. A parallel to this is found in the letter to Philemon, where the author deals with the issue of the runaway slave who is about to go back to his master after they have both been converted to Christianity. The letter asks for the slave to be accepted by his master on Christian terms. However, instead of asking for the emancipation and the release of the slave, the author supports the social conventions on slavery in society. The slave remains a slave, who is subject to his master, but now within the Christian community the slave and master are to be treated completely as equals and brothers, and this is because all are one in Christ. Equivalent master and servant relationships are found between men and women within a gender complementary society. However the problem with the attitude to gender complementarity adopted by Peter and Paul is that it demanded the submission of women to men, not just in relation to outside society, but also within the Church. By this action the concept that the Church could be a true island of gender transcendence and equality within a gender unequal society was lost.

The social disgrace for anyone who dared to transgress the gender boundaries of this gender unequal society was considerable, and all effeminate behaviour, which included the behaviour of the so-called “Soft Men” was abhorred¹⁷¹. This is reflected in Paul’s own condemnation of “Soft Men” in 1 Corinthians 6:9. There are many other condemnations of the lack of self-control and indulging in bodily pleasures in Paul’s letters (see for example 1 Corinthians 7:5 & 9 and Titus 3:3.). However it is also necessary to consider the context in which these were set. It was considered that Deuteronomy 22:5 only prohibited acts of cross dressing for unapproved purposes or for deceit^{172 173}. The public behaviour of the Gallae was a major Christian and Jewish concern. In AD 35 their public flaunting of sexuality was severely condemned by the Jewish writer Philo¹⁷⁴ and another early Christian denunciation is that of Clement of

¹⁷¹ “Soft men”, or “Malakoi” were considered to be effeminate, but this term had a much broader definition than in the present day. In the context of the ancient world this effeminacy threatened whole structure of society by crossing the fragile line between man and woman where to be male was to be superior and to be woman was to be intrinsically inferior. Josephus, AD 37-100, used malakos to describe men who appeared soft or weak through lack of courage in battle or who were reluctant to commit suicide in defeat, or who enjoyed too much luxury. “Malakoi” was a fairly common word, which seems to have at least 3 possible meanings. The first was “soft”, “fine” or “expensive” as used in Luke 7:25 and Matthew 11:8 when talking about a rich man’s clothes. The second meaning was “effeminate” or “woman like”. However this is not necessarily in the context of the “limp wrist or gay” implication which is given to those words today for it included the concepts of someone being “undisciplined”, “self-indulgent”, “decadent”, “lazy”, “easily influenced”, “without courage or stability” or “gentle in nature-like a woman”. The third meaning is that of a young male prostitute or call-boy, a youth who consciously imitated feminine styles and ways and took on the passive role of a woman. However in Paul’s usage defining malakoi as meaning male prostitutes is unlikely since Paul has already included pornoi, meaning male prostitutes in his list of vices.

¹⁷² The Jewish concerns in Deuteronomy 22:5 are not about creating or reinforcing gender differences but in preventing the gender associations of clothing, or possibly body hair from being used to deceive others for purposes leading to sexual immorality, or to dishonest behaviour. Every interpretation condemns cross dressing for dishonest or destructive action or to condemn the practice in other cults. None of them prohibit it for just purpose. In the ancient world no literal interpretation has ever been applied to this passage and it is rightly put in the section of the Holiness Code in Leviticus which deals with deceit. For a full discussion and an account of the various interpretations see Gilchrist, S .2012. “Sexuality, Gender and the Christian Church”.

¹⁷³ Deuteronomy 22:5 states “A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God”. However this passage needs to be examined in more detail. One of the most relevant sources for this is an Early Church Father, Clement of Alexandria. Around AD 195 Clement wrote: “What is the purpose in the Law’s prohibition against a man wearing woman’s clothing? Is it not that the Law would have us to be masculine and not to be effeminate in either person or actions - or in thought and word? Rather, it would have the man who devotes himself to the truth to be masculine both in acts of endurance and patience - in life, conduct, word, and discipline”. In the Paedagogus (the Instructor) Clement gives an extensive discussion which defines the appropriate standards for Christian clothing and behaviour. This makes it clear that the respectability of the Church is the major concern. It is the attack on the male dominated social structure which effeminacy presents, and not cross dressing by itself. (The Paedagogus (Clement of Alexandria) (ca 195) The Instructor (Book III) Translated by William Wilson. From Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.) Also available 27 November 2012 at:

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02093.htm> . See also: Bercot, David W. Ed. (1998) “Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs”. p 445. Hendrickson ISBN-10: 1565633571 ISBN-13: 978-1565633575 ISBN 1-56563-357-1)

¹⁷⁴ Philo of Alexandria, Abraham 134-136. Here Philo expressed a view on transgender shrine prostitution. Writing in about AD 35 he said “And I imagine that the cause of this is that among many nations there are actually rewards given for intemperance and effeminacy. At all events one may see men-women continually strutting through the market place at midday, and leading the processions in festivals; And some of these persons have even carried their admiration of these delicate pleasures of youth so far that they have desired wholly to change their condition for that of women, and have castrated themselves and have clothed themselves in purple robes...” Philo is describing the castrated Gallae priests who served Cybele and other goddesses throughout the Roman Empire. He links their behaviour to Leviticus 18:22, 20:13 and also to Deuteronomy 23:17, the latter of which states “None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, and none of the sons of Israel shall be a cult prostitute”. Perhaps surprisingly Philo does not highlight the passage from Deuteronomy 22:5 “A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God”.

Alexandria¹⁷⁵. An additional third century Christian condemnation came from Julius Firmicus Maternus¹⁷⁶ and around AD 425 Augustine delivered an invective against the Gallae which was particularly harsh. Here Augustine speaks of their “shameful rites” and also of their “obscenities” which were “gross and immodest”¹⁷⁷, describing them as “more unseemly than all scenic abomination”¹⁷⁸. Augustine also declares that “These effeminate no later than yesterday, were going through the streets and places of Carthage with anointed hair, whitened faces, relaxed bodies, and feminine gait, exacting from the people the means of maintaining their ignominious lives”¹⁷⁹. It is notable that in all of these statements the condemnations of social disorder were at least as important as the condemnations of the sexual acts.

Judaism demanded circumcision as the badge of membership. The early Church also faced considerable conflicts about requiring acts of physical mutilation as a sign of religious belief. Some of the conflict which is related to the role that circumcision should play in the Church is addressed by Paul in Philippians Chapter 3: 2-12. This passage is usually taken to refer to circumcision on its own but the text of verse 2 which states: “Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh”¹⁸⁰ suggests that a much broader scope was here envisaged. This reference to dogs may refer back to the qedeshim or qedeshot mentioned in the Old Testament, who could be regarded as an earlier manifestation of the Gallae Priests¹⁸¹. Reumann¹⁸² considers that this passage can be taken to refer to a large number of equivalent groups. The Apostolic Decree of AD 50 in effect dealt with all

¹⁷⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Protreptikos*, 2.14; Firmicus, *The Error of Pagan Religions*, 4.2; Martial, *Epigrams*, 3.81 (vol 1; ed. and trans. D.R. Bailey; *Martial Epigrams*; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993)

¹⁷⁶ Firmicus Maternus wrote in the mid-fourth century (ca 346), “In their very temples can be seen deplorable mockery before a moaning crowd, men taking the part of women, revealing with boastful ostentation this ignominy of impure and unchaste bodies (*impuri et impudici*). They broadcast their crimes and confess with superlative delight the stain of their polluted bodies (*contaminati corporis*)” (See *De errore profanarum religionum*, 42, translated by Clarence A. Forbes as *The Error of the Pagan Religions*, Newman Press, 1970).

¹⁷⁷ Augustine: *City of God* ii.5. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm>

¹⁷⁸ Augustine: *City of God* vi.7. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm>

¹⁷⁹ Augustine: *City of God* vii.26. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm>

¹⁸⁰ The word dog is used as a word of contempt and abasement in many places in the Bible (See 1 Samuel. 17:43, 24:14; 2 Samuel. 9:8; etc). Deuteronomy 23:17-18 states: “None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, and none of the sons of Israel shall be a cult prostitute. You shall not bring the fee of a prostitute or the wages of a dog into the house of the Lord your God in payment for any vow, for both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God”. Since paganism and its male prostitutes were abhorred, the word dog became to mean a “male prostitute.” Some interpreters have tried to find a connection with the word “dog” and homosexuality but it is also argued that at least some heterosexual male and female prostitutes had homosexual sex because they were brainwashed to go against their nature (See Romans Ch. 1). These arguments do not recognise the duality in gender and sexually variant behaviour which is part of this analysis.

¹⁸¹ The relevant passage is Deuteronomy 23:17-18. This is often taken to refer to cultic prostitutes, but recent studies, including those which make use of the material obtained from the Canaanite city of Ugarit countermand this view. Christian and Jewish propaganda has condemned all of the surrounding cultures simply to be havens for prostitution and illegitimate sex, however that view is changing the more new information becomes available. See Tikva Frymer-Kensky's *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth*. (Ballantine Books; (First Edition February 10, 1993) ISBN-10: 0449907465 ISBN-13: 978-0449907467). This blasts apart the argument that cultic prostitution existed for its own sake in the ancient Near East. There were cultic functionaries who offered themselves of sex as a function of their duties and money was paid into the temple for this. The purpose of this was for the transmission of fertility, and that was a role of the later Gallae Priests. To understand the morality of this it is essential judge this conduct against the standards of the society in which this took place, and not by anything else. This topic is extensively deal with in Gilchrist, S. (2012). “Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church”. See footer for access.

¹⁸² Reumann, John. (2008). “Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary”, Yale University Press. ISBN 0300157703, 9780300157703

of these issues¹⁸³ however Paul's condemnation of the Gallae had to be made in the strongest terms in order to separate the Christian Church from any association with the goddess cults.

In contrast to Paul's own straightforward and outright condemnations of the socially gender disrupting behaviour and the demands for physical transformation imposed by the Goddess cults, when it comes to the condemnation of same-sex intercourse in Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10, Paul takes a much more nuanced view. In these passages Paul makes it absolutely clear that he condemns its use for sexual abuse, but also leaves open the question as to whether this applies to consensual and loving sexual acts. Any examination of this passage on its own does not give a direct answer¹⁸⁴, but this becomes clearer once the context in which it is presented is understood.

Had Paul wanted to condemn all forms of same-sex relationships there are plenty of words which he could have used for this purpose. He did not do so and he invented instead a word which concentrated on sexual abuse. Paul is also much more likely to remain silent than he is to speak favourably about any type of consensual same-sex relationships, because of the need for the Christian Church to obtain respectability in Greco/Roman society and also to separate itself from the goddess cults. Therefore in these passages it would appear that Paul is keeping open the endorsement of same sex relationships which are encountered within the first century rabbinic partnerships and in the teaching of Jesus himself. However the focus of this passage is not just on relationships, for the whole point of the discussion was on anal penetration and, as with Jesus and the Centurion, Paul does not condemn this in the context of loving acts

6:5 Submission and Complementarity

This urgent need for respectability puts a different emphasis on the Pauline Epistles and instead of presenting these aspects of the Pauline Epistles as late forgeries, the possibility has to be considered that at least some of them should be attributed to Paul himself¹⁸⁵. The comments contained in 1 Timothy are certainly reminiscent of

¹⁸³The decree dealt with the arguments as to whether Gentile converts had to be circumcised. In this Peter states: "Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:19–20). Although the decree appears to deal only with circumcision the same arguments can be applied to all forms of physical transformation, and that would apply to the Gallae Priests. The usually accepted date for the writing of Philippians was around 62 AD. This was about 12 years after the accepted date of the pronouncement of the Apostolic Decree by the early Christian Church.

¹⁸⁴ See section 5:9 of this document

¹⁸⁵ Some statements attributed to Paul are as follows: "Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church." (1 Corinthians 14:34–35). On instructions for Timothy it is declared: "I desire that the men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting, and the women likewise" (1 Timothy 2:8), also "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet." (1 Timothy 2:11–12) ". (I desire) that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God." (1 Timothy 2:9–10). "Let a woman learn, quietly, in all subjection (to God)." (1 Timothy 2:11). Finally Paul says: "Now I permit a woman neither to teach nor exercise authority over a man, but let her be in quietness. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived (when he

the teaching of the second century Church, and they could indeed be later additions. However there is some evidence that Jesus did not fully carry the apostles with him in his teaching on gender equality and the role of women. The Apostles had little respect for the witness of Mary Magdalene, and that of the other women, when they brought the first news of the Resurrection, saying they "seemed as idle tales." (Luke. 24:11). In 1 Peter 3:1-6 an equivalent teaching about the submission of women to that of Paul is presented¹⁸⁶. Peter's own marriage seems to be a model for the gender complementarity which had come to be adopted by the Christian Church¹⁸⁷. However that viewpoint did not reduce the demand for the submission of women, as the references to Peter in the Pistis Sophia¹⁸⁸ and the Gospel of Thomas¹⁸⁹ appear to indicate^{190 191}.

sinned); but the woman, having (first) been thoroughly deceived, became (involved) in the transgression (of Adam), and she will be saved by the Child-bearing if they abide in faith, and love and sanctification with self-restraint." (1 Timothy. 2:12-15)

¹⁸⁶ Peter "Wives, in the same way you may be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. (1 Peter 3:1-6)

¹⁸⁷ The apostles Peter and Philip were married and also had children. Clement also reported that Peter's wife was martyred before him, and that the apostle had encouraged her as she was led to her death. Clement of Alexandria, Ante-Nicene Fathers. 2.541 (c. 195). (Accessed at: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/early-church-fathers/ante-nicene/>). Eusebius further describes the relationship between Peter and his wife using these words, "Such as the marriage of these blessed ones, and such was their perfect affection" Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book III, Chapter XXX. This excerpt was found in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4, p. 49. Accessed at: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/early-church-fathers/ante-nicene/>.

¹⁸⁸ In the apocryphal 'Pistis Sophia', Christ calls upon Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Martha and Salome to answer his questions concerning an exegesis of scripture and the Gnostic mysteries to create the Greater Soul. These women discourse at great length amongst the male disciples which vexes Peter. He protests when Mary Magdalene answers again and he wants the women to be excluded. In Pistis Sophia, saying 146 Peter said: "My Lord, let the women cease to question, in order that we also may question." But Christ gently corrects Peter's error and calls upon Martha next. (Pistis Sophia The complete text of Pistis Sophia in the translation of G.R.S. Mead is given in <http://gnosis.org/library/psoph.htm>). Peter also protests at the inclusion of Mary Magdalene in the Gospel of Thomas in Saying 114: Simon Peter said to them, "Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life."

¹⁸⁹ See section 2:3:4 of Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

¹⁹⁰ Bruce, F. F. (1974) "Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament", pp. 153-154. Eerdmans Pub Co (Jun 1974). ISBN-10: 0802815758 ISBN-13: 978-0802815750 writes: "This is not the only place in Gnostic literature where Peter expresses impatience at the presence of Mary Magdalene in their entourage. (In Pistis Sophia, when Mary has expounded the 'mystery of repentance' in a Gnostic sense and been congratulated by Jesus for her insight, Peter protests: 'My Lord, we are not able to bear with this woman, speaking instead of us; she has not let any of us speak but often speaks herself' (54b). In the John Rylands University Library of Manchester there is an early third-century Greek papyrus fragment (P. Ryl. 463) of a Gospel according to Mary (Magdalene), in which the disciples discuss revelations which Jesus is said to have given exclusively to Mary. Peter is unwilling to believe that Jesus would have committed privately to a woman, truths which he did not impart to his male disciples, but Levi rebukes him and defends Mary. (Part of the same work survives in a Coptic version in the Berlin papyrus 8502.) For Mary see: Saying 21 (p. 122).) The general rabbinic idea that women were incapable of appreciating religious doctrine - compare the disciples' astonishment at Jacob's well when they found Jesus 'talking with a woman' (John 4.27) - was reinforced in Gnostic anthropology, where woman was a secondary and defective being. Yet none could deny Mary's fidelity: to an objective observer, it surpassed that of the male disciples. Jesus's promise that she will become a man, so as to gain admittance to the kingdom of heaven, envisages the reintegration of the original order, when Adam was created male and female (Genesis 1.27). Adam was 'the man' as much before the removal of Eve from his side as after (Genesis 2.18-25). Therefore, when the primal unity is restored and death is abolished, man will still be man (albeit more perfectly so), but woman will no longer be woman; she will be reabsorbed into man. (This is the point of the mystery of the bridal chamber (cf. Saying 75, p. 141); it was a form of initiation calculated to reverse the process by which death

This analysis concludes that what were initially pragmatic decisions made by Peter and Paul had become transformed into doctrines of the Church. The consequences of transforming dogma into a doctrine were condemned by Jesus in Mark 7:1-23, and the words in this passage speak for themselves:

“Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles). So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, ‘Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?’ He said to them, ‘Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

“This people honours me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.”

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.’

Mark 7:1-8

Instead of the true vision of gender transcendence that was portrayed by the Gospel message shining out into Greco/Roman society as a beacon of its Christian witness to the Gospel message, Christianity chose to follow society’s demands. The Church had failed to maintain the teaching of the Gospel and the consequences of this have flowed through the centuries into present day life.

entered. 'When Eve was in Adam, there was no death; but when she was separated from him, death came into being' (Gospel of Philip 71)."

¹⁹¹ Grant Robert M. and Freedman, David Noel. (1993) "The Secret Sayings of Jesus", pp. 143-144, : Barnes & Noble Books; First Edition (January 1, 1993). ISBN-10:1566192749 ISBN-13: 978-1566192743 write: "As in the Gospel of Mary (pages 17-18 of the papyrus) and in Pistis Sophia (chapter 146), Simon Peter is not enthusiastic about the presence of Mariham (mentioned in Saying 21), just as in John 4:27 the disciples of Jesus are amazed because he is speaking with a woman. Male and female must become one (Saying 23 and Commentary). Jesus will 'draw' her (John 12:32) so that she will become 'one spirit' with him (1 Corinthians 6:17). She will become a man; just so, Ignatius of Antioch says that when he receives the pure light he will 'become a man' (Romans, 6, 2; for another parallel to Ignatius see Commentary on Saying 82). In order to enter into the kingdom of heaven, women must become men. We might be tempted to take this notion symbolically were it not for the existence of Gnostic parallels, for example in the Gospel of Mary (page 9), in Clement of Alexandria (Excerpta ex Theodoto 21, 3), and among the Naassenes. The 'house of God' is reserved 'for the spiritual ones alone; when they come there they cast off their garments (see Saying 38) and all become bridegrooms (Saying 75), having been made male by the virginal Spirit' (Hippolytus, Ref., 5, 8, 44). The high point of Thomas's eschatology is thus reached, at the end of his gospel, with the obliteration of sex." (The Secret Sayings of Jesus, p. 198) Robert M. Grant and David Noel Freedman write: "Indeed, Jesus says of Mary (presumably Mary Magdalene, as in most Gnostic revelations) that he will make her a male so that she may become a 'living spirit' like the male apostles: 'for every woman who makes herself a man will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven' (114/112). According to the Naassenes, spiritual beings will come to 'the house of God'; there they will cast off their garments and all of them will become bridegrooms, having been made male by the virginal Spirit. (Hippolytus Ref. V. 8. 44.) This teaching is close to that of Thomas." (Gnosticism & Early Christianity, p. 188)

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Glilchrist, S. (2014). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity".

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7:0 Present Day Attitudes

People engage in same-sex activities for many reasons and there were fundamental cultural clashes between the Jewish and the Greco/Roman cultures. Within the dominant Greco/Roman societies same-sex rape was used as a weapon to humiliate a beaten enemy, and the codes of sexual morality were determined by responsibility and authority. Therefore these societies condoned what today would be regarded as heterosexual and homosexual rape. To begin to consider those bible texts which in the present day, are used to condemn homosexuality, and particularly the writings of Paul, becomes a gross trivialisation, both of their meaning and their intent. By his careful use of words, Paul also skirts round any references to consensual sex. That does not mean that gender and sexually variant people are immune to inappropriate behaviour¹⁹². The absence of reproductive consequences means that one barrier to promiscuous behaviour is removed and the centuries of criminalisation of same-sex behaviour also prevents any long term stable relationships being formed. There is little incentive for a group of people who are completely rejected by the surrounding society to conform to the standards which the condemning society would expect¹⁹³.

One consequence of this total rejection is that a counter-culture is created within the gender and sexually variant groups and their opponents can capitalise on this to condemn all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour as being in pursuit of illicit, immoral and inappropriate sex. That has happened in the Christian Church, but it has been demonstrated in this account that this interpretation is totally incorrect. The results of the neurophysiological and the psychological studies, and in particular the conclusion which demonstrates that these conditions are identity driven, and that as wide a range of moral attitudes and behaviour will be encountered within the gender and sexually variant communities as there are in society at large, invalidates the assumptions which Christianity demands. Instead of these a duality is shown to exist whereby those people who attempt to live to the highest moral standards which their society expects can live according to the ways of light. The people who do the reverse follow the paths of darkness instead. Equivalent dualities are encountered across cultures and continents, where those people who attempt to transcend the sex/gender boundaries by living in the ways which are true to the ideals of both lives

¹⁹² Clearly the distinction has to be made between those whose principal purpose is to engage in same-sex behaviour and relationships for reasons of love and those who engaged in this behaviour for the physical gratifications or the practice of safe sex. However within the lesbian, gay and transgender communities there is also a large incidence of promiscuity, one night stands and multiple partnerships. Some of this may be because of economic necessity and being forced into the sex trade by the rejection of society, or it may be through the counter culture of sexual licence which has been promoted by the rejection of lesbian and gay people by both society and the Christian Church. Others may feel free to indulge in these activities because of the absence of reproductive consequences, however with the widespread availability of contraception, that issue has now moved from an area which was of specific gay and lesbian concerns, to one which challenges the attitude of the Christian church to all aspects of the practice of heterosexual and homosexual sex.

¹⁹³ Homosexuality was only made legal during the 1960's (in Britain in 1967) but the discrimination still continued. For homosexuals who were coming out of the religious and legal repression, the two opposite reactions of flaunting it or of hiding it still possessed considerable force. There was little incentive to conform to the ethics which were demanded by the religious and state institutions which had condemned them, and the challenges of confrontation were always present.

may be given a high and often a priestly status. However those who follow the path of transgression are ruthlessly condemned for their acts.

For as long as the Christian Church held the power to maintain its secular authority these traditional views on sexual and gender variance, with the traditional teaching about homosexuality could not be usurped. In some Churches the social changes arising in the last fifty years have promoted a re-evaluation of Christian teaching, but these have also resulted in the retrenchment into literalism and fundamentalism in others. That has been accompanied with their rejection by the mainstream of society. The consequences of this are shown by the threats of schism within the Church.

Current social developments have included the disappearance of Church authority, the rejection of religious belief, the widespread introduction and use of contraception, the social acceptance of same-sex relationships, the enacting of anti-discrimination legislation, legalisation of same-sex relationships in the form of Civil Partnerships, and also, since June 2013, the legalisation of Equal (or same-sex) Marriage. These same changes have also meant that most people now have had personal and direct experiences of relating to homosexual couples and to other people who are gender variant or in other same-sex relationships. Such observers do not need to have any special knowledge to understand that the same values of love, care and commitment can be expressed within loving same-sex partnerships as there are in heterosexual marriages, and that is supported by recent research¹⁹⁴. It is also easy for them to distinguish between the behaviour of any two people who are involved in a strong heterosexual friendship and that of an equivalent couple who are involved in a loving homosexual relationship, even in the circumstances where there is a total absence of sex. It is these clashes between what is perceived today as the common sense values, and the fervent reliance on the traditional doctrines which is destroying the credibility of Christianity in the eyes of the world.

7:1 Church Responses

On the 28th August 2013 the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, told an audience of traditional born-again Christians that they must “repent” over the ways in which gay and lesbian people have been treated in the past. In a speech which he gave to the Evangelical Alliance¹⁹⁵ he said that the vast majority of people

¹⁹⁴ A common misconception is that the goals and values of lesbian and gay couples are different from those of heterosexual couples. Instead, research has found that the factors that influence relationship satisfaction, commitment, and stability are remarkably similar for both same-sex cohabiting couples and heterosexual married couples. There is no reliable evidence which support allegations that homosexuals are promiscuous, predatory, or unable to sustain long term relationships (American Psychological Association. (2008). Answers to your questions: For a better understanding of sexual orientation and homosexuality. Washington, DC: Office of Public and Member Communications 202.336.5700. Available on: www.apa.org/topics/orientation.pdf). However there is a small minority whose behaviour is used to justify the stereotypes that are applied. An American dating agency found that just 2% of gay people are having 23% of the total reported gay sex. (www.okcupid.com . For a summary see: “So you think Gay Men are Promiscuous?” by Patrick Strudwick, Guardian Newspaper Tuesday 19 October 2010). In a society which now treats homosexuals and heterosexuals equally people can also see this for themselves. This is not the attitude that is found within many Christian churches and that is why all of those people in loving caring and stable same-sex relationships who seek to have the church bless their relationship feel totally betrayed by the prejudices that still exist.

¹⁹⁵ On Wednesday, 28 August, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby visited the Evangelical Alliance's new home in Copenhagen Street, King's Cross, London, to officially open the building.

under 35 think that the Christian attitude to lesbian and gay people is “wicked” and “incomprehensible”, and that most young people considered Christians to be no better than racists on the issue.

The recent news that Pope Francis has called an extraordinary synod of the Roman Catholic Church in October 2014 to discuss the subject of the family is a welcome development. A questionnaire has been sent to the Bishops asked them to provide local views on issues of premarital cohabitation, birth control and same sex marriage and it is hoped that significant changes can be made, however it is also made clear that the synod will not be expected to change or to reverse the traditional teachings of the Church.

This awareness and concern is a welcome development. Within the Anglican Church a number of reports have been published. The two which are the most significant are the Church of England report of the House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality, or the Pilling Report¹⁹⁶ which was commissioned by the House of Bishops of the Church of England in January 2012, and was published on the 28 November 2013. The previous report on “Some Issues in Human Sexuality: A Working Party of the House of Bishops” was published by the Church of England on the 4 November 2003¹⁹⁷. Both of these reports advocate a “Listening Process” in order to further the debate.

Despite their advocacy of the “Listening process” a particular concern is the hesitant progress and also the seeming lack of awareness of the urgency of the situation. A further concern involves the limitations which both of these reports, which are and were, intended to be frameworks to inform the debate, seem to impose in regard to the questioning of the traditional teaching and doctrine of the Christian Church. Many of the presumptions which were made in the 2003 report date from the time of St Thomas Aquinas onwards. As this report says: “Where St Thomas led the Christian tradition has followed” and the statement which is taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church¹⁹⁸ is also accepted as the traditional view on homosexuality, without regard to the developments in the earlier Church¹⁹⁹. The later Pilling report notes that attitudes to same sex attraction, both in English society and also amongst Christians in many parts of the world, have changed markedly since the report on the “Issues in Human Sexuality” was published, and that a new review is needed, but in Paragraph 61 it also cautions against major change.

Evangelical leaders from across the country joined national newspaper and broadcast journalists and members of staff from the Evangelical Alliance at the event, which also celebrated the Alliance's work over the past 170 years and looked ahead to its future. More information and a video of the speech is available on the Evangelical Alliance website: <http://www.eauk.org/church/stories/official-opening-with-the-archbishop-of-canterbury.cfm>

¹⁹⁶ Report of the House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality (The Pilling Report) Published: 28/11/2013: Church House Publishing ISBN-13: 9780715144374 ISBN-10: 0715144375

http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling_report_gs_1929_web.pdf

¹⁹⁷ Church of England 4 November 2003 Some Issues in Human Sexuality: A Working Party of the House of Bishops. Church House, Westminster ISBN No: 9780715138687

¹⁹⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church: Paragraph 2357. The Second Edition English Translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with corrections promulgated by Pope John Paul II on 8 September 1997

¹⁹⁹ For an account of these see Gilchrist, S. (2011). “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”. See footer for access.

The concern about facing change is also present in the Roman Catholic Church. On the 5th February 2014 the United Nations accused the Vatican of systematically turning a blind eye to the decades of sexual abuse of children by the priests, and it demanded that immediately turns over all the known or suspected offenders to civil justice. In this scathingly blunt report, the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child said that Church officials had imposed a "code of silence" on the clerics, and that it moved the abusers from parish to parish "in an attempt to cover up such crimes"²⁰⁰.²⁰¹ Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, in giving his response to the criticisms in the report on the Church's stance on homosexuality, abortion and contraception, said the world body cannot require the Church to change its "non-negotiable" moral teachings²⁰². Despite this refusal, this analysis has demonstrated both on the psychological and the theological grounds precisely why the Christian Churches need to change their teaching on these matters. The historic development of sexual abuse is chronicled in a companion document which forms part of this research²⁰³.

If the Pilling Report at least leaves these matters open to some discussion inside the Church of England, this is not the case at present within the Roman Catholic Church, where it has been made clear that no changes of the traditional Church teaching on homosexuality or on gender and on sexual variance will be contemplated. Yet this analysis makes it clear that this is precisely what is required; and there seems to be little immediate prospect for it to take place. Without such change those Christian Churches will continue to create perpetrators and victims of sexual abuse.

7:2 The Pilling Report

In relation to the pastoral care and the acceptance of lesbian and gay people inside the Church there is much that should be welcomed in the Pilling Report (regrettably transgendered people were excluded from consideration in the report by the working party itself). However it is good that the Pilling report endorses the need for a greater understanding of the physiological and psychological processes which lie behind the gender and sexually variant conditions. It is also good that the report recognises the diversity of theological views on these issues, including those within the evangelical wings of the Church. Nevertheless there are still the concerns about the depth of the theology which it expects from future debate and that is indicated by the level of the consideration that is given within the report itself. Recommendation 11 of the report states that: "Whilst abiding by the Church's traditional teaching on human sexuality, we encourage the Church to continue to engage openly and honestly and to reflect theologically on the circumstances in which we find ourselves to discern the mind of Christ and what the Spirit is saying to the Church now". Nevertheless paragraph 61 states that: "Because of the centrality of Scripture in the life of the Church, changes

²⁰⁰"Scathing U.N. report demands Vatican act against child sex abuse". By Stephanie Nebehay And Philip Pullella. Reuters, 5 February 2014. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/02/05/uk-vatican-abuse-un-idUKBREA140LM20140205>

²⁰¹"UN denounces Vatican over child abuse and demands immediate action. Devastating UN report demands Vatican 'immediately remove' all clergy who are known or suspected child abusers". The Guardian, 5 February 2014. Lizzy Davies and Henry McDonald. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/05/un-denounces-vatican-child-abuse>

²⁰²"Vatican says U.N. report on child sexual abuse is distorted, unfair". Reuters, 5 February 2014. See: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/02/05/uk-vatican-abuse-tomasi-idUKBREA1414820140205>

²⁰³ Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

which imply that Scripture has been interpreted wrongly or too narrowly in the past, or that the meanings of Scripture once considered certain are, in fact, uncertain, will only be contemplated with great caution. Yet such conclusions remain a possibility, precisely because of the inadequacies of fallen humanity and the fact that it is God's nature to go on revealing himself afresh in every generation".

If this is a cautious welcome, the hope for this possibility of openness had since been seriously damaged by the issue of the Church of England House of Bishops Pastoral Guidance Document on Same Sex Marriage, which was issued 14 February 2014 in response to the Pilling Report²⁰⁴. This guidance which this contains has caused a great deal of anger and dismay among the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Communities, not least because its tone and action has foreclosed on many of the issues which should be the subject of the facilitated discussions that are called for in the Report. Not only is this disastrous for the Church. There is already evidence from the advice that is being given by the individual bishops to their clergy of a witch hunt beginning in some dioceses but not in others, and that can only lead to greater schism in the Church.

A consequence of this guidance has been to increase the censures imposed on gay and lesbian clergy with an implied threat of exclusion from office by the Church. That dismay is clearly expressed in the statement issued by the LGBTI Anglican Coalition which responded to the Church of England House of Bishops Pastoral Guidance Document on Same Sex Marriage²⁰⁵. This statement notes that the new guidance emphasises the well-known fact that same-sex couples will not be able to marry in Church of England churches, even when equal marriage takes effect. Furthermore, despite the recommendations of the Pilling Report, the prohibition on the blessing same-sex couples is also reinforced. The guidance also excludes people who are married to members of the same sex from ordination, and it forbids all LGBTI clergy to marry same-sex partners. It states that this is cruel and unjust to clergy who have faithfully served the church, hitherto with the full knowledge and support of their bishops, and it will also impoverish the ministry by driving away LGBTI ordinands. Only those who are prepared to lie will remain. It further notes that the guidance was prepared without any consultation with openly gay people, and fails to acknowledge that some of the bishops who are signatories to the guidance are understood to be gay themselves. This also heightens the corrosive sense of hypocrisy and cynicism with which this issue is surrounded within the Church. On the 16th February Bishop Steven Croft in an interview on the Sunday Programme on BBC Radio 4²⁰⁶ made it clear that the foundations for this reinforcing document are based on the traditional and the un-negotiable teaching on homosexuality, which is held by the world wide Church. If that is the argument which is being made, it has already been shown that the foundation on which it is based is destroyed by this analysis.

²⁰⁴ Statement from the College of Bishops on the Pilling Report 27th January, 2014

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2014/01/statement-from-the-college-of-bishops.aspx>

²⁰⁵ 16 February 2014. LGBTI Anglican Coalition Response to the Church of England House of Bishops Pastoral Guidance Document on Same Sex Marriage. Issued 14 February 2014. See the Press Releases Tab on the LGBTI Anglican Coalition Website: www.lgbtac.org.uk

²⁰⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qnbnd/episodes/player>

Progress can only be made when a dialogue for change has been opened, and that is the case with the Pilling Report. However discussions which take place exclusively within the House of Bishops of the Church of England, where it is suspected that a number of its members are themselves homosexual, but who are also too concerned to be open about it, is not a good start. It is said that the Church of England exists as much for those who are outside it as those who are within it, and the numbers and strength of lesbian and gay people in society as a whole must be fully represented in any discussions that take place. It is not sufficient to use a framework for discussion where only a selected group which represents all shades of opinion in the Church of England alone, is given equal weight in the discussion. The urgency and the need for this full and proper representation is reflected in the address which the Archbishop of Canterbury gave to the Evangelical Alliance meeting on the 28th August 2013, as is described earlier in this document. The Pilling report makes recommendations for a programme of facilitated discussions during the next two years. The nature and the scope of this facilitation are crucial. That demands the full inclusion of all LGBTI²⁰⁷ people in the discussion, and it requires the abandonment of previous approaches in the Church of England, which have been described by LGBTI people as “Talking about us without us” if these conversations are to have any credibility with LGBTI people themselves. This investigation makes it clear that an intense and unrestricted level of debate is needed. If the discussions do not, or cannot take place at this deep level then the Pilling report be seen as a document which is characterised by “Too little, and too late” and its impact will be lost.

It is nobody’s interest to continue these battles, and the routes to dialogue must be re-opened. In an open letter addressed to the House and College of Bishops²⁰⁸ the LGBTI Anglican Coalition asked a series of questions in the hope of re-opening the debate. It also notes the long history of events in which the Church of England asked for a listening process to take place, whereby understanding may be gained. First, it notes the affirmation of the traditional Anglican ‘insistence upon the duty of thinking and learning as essential elements in the Christian life’ (Lambeth Conference 1930) and ‘facing with intellectual integrity the questions raised by modern knowledge’ (Lambeth 1958). Secondly it notes the repeated calls from the Lambeth Conference since 1978 for deep study of sexuality, including dialogue with homosexual people, which has been echoed by the Church of England from 1979. Given that the 1988 Lambeth Conference urged that such study and reflection should take full account of ‘the socio-cultural factors that lead to the different attitudes in the provinces of our Communion’, it enquires how the House of Bishops has approached the difficult task of seeking to understand the socio-cultural factors which might have influenced its members’ views on sexual ethics. Finally it asks how the House of Bishops intends to resolve the issues of the presumed bipolarity of male and female in gender and sexual orientations, and in their relationships, in the light of the latest scientific and theological knowledge, so that all people whether they are, intersex, transgendered, lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual, who seek to enter into committed, loving and

²⁰⁷ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People

²⁰⁸ 21 February 2014. LGBTI Anglican Coalition Open Letter to House Of Bishops Regarding Pastoral Guidance On Same Sex Marriage, Issued 14 February 2014. See the Press Releases Tab on the LGBTI Anglican Coalition Website: www.lgbtac.org.uk

faithful relationships, can find their rightful places within a renewed Church, which draws its teaching from the New Covenant and the unconditional love of Christ.

Although the Church of England and the Anglican Community have made overtures about the need for listening, true listening is an interactive process. There is a key element which is heard but not listened to and that is the claim which is made by LGBTI people that the motives for same-sex relationships and gender and sexually variant behaviour is about being themselves. It is not determined by drives for the goals of promiscuous, illicit or inappropriate sex. This analysis should never have been needed, for this point of view has been so strongly and consistently made, and the refusal of the Christian churches to hear what LGBTI people have been saying for centuries is a measure of how much, and how strongly, the Christian Churches have needed to maintain their traditional teaching on gender and sex.

There is much evidence for that opposition. The bishops of the Anglican Communion in the 1998 Lambeth Conference upheld the traditional Christian teaching, which stated that that marriage is between a man and a woman and that those who are not called to marriage, as so defined should remain celibate. A resolution was passed stating that homosexual acts are "incompatible with Scripture" by a vote of 526-70.²⁰⁹ It also included a statement which "calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex,". It noted importantly: "We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ." As a consequence of the controversy over the ordination of gay bishops and the blessing of same-sex unions, on 15 October 2003, the Anglican leaders from around the world met in Lambeth Palace in an attempt to avoid a schism on the issue²¹⁰. In 2004, the Lambeth Commission on Communion issued a report on the issue of homosexuality within the Anglican Communion, which became known as the Windsor Report. This report adopted a strong stand against homosexual practice. It recommended that there should be a moratorium on all further consecrations of actively homosexual bishops and on blessings of same-sex unions,²¹¹ and it called for all who were involved in the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson's "to consider in all conscience whether they should withdraw themselves from representative functions in the Anglican Communion".²¹² However, they did not recommend imposing any discipline on the Episcopal Church or Anglican Church of Canada. During February 2005, the Primates of the Anglican Communion held their regular meeting at Dromantine in Northern Ireland, where the issue of homosexuality was heavily discussed. Of the 38 Primates, 35 attended. The Primates issued a communiqué which reiterated most of the Windsor Report's statements, but it also added a new element. The Episcopal Church and Anglican Church of Canada were

²⁰⁹ David Skidmore, 7 August 1998, Lambeth Conference 1998 Archives
<http://www.lambethconference.org/1998/news/lc098.cfm>

²¹⁰ BBC News, 16 October 2003, Anglican leaders' statement. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3198992.stm>

²¹¹ The Windsor Report 2004. On public Rites of Blessing of same sex unions.
http://www.anglicancommunion.org/windsor2004/section_d/p3.cfm

²¹² The Windsor Report 2004. On elections to the episcopate
http://www.anglicancommunion.org/windsor2004/section_d/p2.cfm

asked to voluntarily withdraw from the Anglican Consultative Council, until the next Lambeth Conference which took place in 2008. In January 2014 the Archbishops of Canterbury and York used the conciliatory elements in the Dromantine statement to comment on and to condemn the criminalisation of homosexuality on a worldwide basis²¹³. However this was also after a campaign to take action on this matter by members of the Church.

Other changes have taken place. However these have largely been driven by the social changes in society which have overpowered the theological objections of the Church. The Church of England affirmed in July 2005 that that all lay homosexuals and lesbians who have entered into civil partnerships still remain eligible for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and communion²¹⁴ and that a celibate person of homosexual or lesbian orientation is to be eligible for ordination, even if the person has entered into a civil same-sex partnership, noting "The Church should not collude with the present assumptions of society that all close relationships necessarily include sexual activity."²¹⁵ Now the major concern in the Church of England and the Western Churches is not about the sincerity and social values of these relationships, but over any gay and lesbian sexual acts, (most notably the acts of anal penetration

²¹³Following questions regarding the Church of England's attitude to new legislation in several countries that penalizes people with same-sex attraction, on 29 January 2014 the Archbishops of Canterbury and York wrote to all Primates of the Anglican Communion, and to the Presidents of Nigeria and Uganda, recalling the commitment made by the Primates of the Anglican Communion to the pastoral support and care of everyone worldwide, regardless of sexual orientation. Their letter includes an extract from the Dromantine Communiqué issued after a meeting of Primates from across the Communion in 2005. It states

"Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

In recent days, questions have been asked about the Church of England's attitude to new legislation in several countries that penalises people with same-sex attraction. In answer to these questions, we have recalled the common mind of the Primates of the Anglican Communion, as expressed in the Dromantine communiqué of 2005.

The Communiqué said;

'...we wish to make it quite clear that in our discussion and assessment of moral appropriateness of specific human behaviours, we continue unreservedly to be committed to the pastoral support and care of homosexual people.

The victimisation or diminishment of human beings whose affections happen to be ordered towards people of the same sex is anathema to us. We assure homosexual people that they are children of God, loved and valued by Him and deserving the best we can give – pastoral care and friendship.'

We hope that the pastoral care and friendship that the Communiqué described is accepted and acted upon in the name of the Lord Jesus.

We call upon the leaders of churches in such places to demonstrate the love of Christ and the affirmation of which the Dromantine communiqué speaks."

Yours in Christ,

+Justin Cantuar +Sentamu Eboracensis

<http://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2014/02/04/human-sexuality-the-archbishops-statement-and-the-dromantine-communiqué/>

²¹⁴ Church of England News, 25 July 2005. House of Bishops issues pastoral statement on Civil Partnerships. <http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2005/07/pr5605.aspx>

²¹⁵ Church of England News, 25 July 2005. House of Bishops issues pastoral statement on Civil Partnerships.. <http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2005/07/pr5605.aspx>

in gay relationships), even though engagement in any type of same-sex behaviour still remain life or death matters in many parts of the world.

There is a fundamental deceitfulness over situations where in one part of the world the Church can seek to welcome loving same-sex relationships, and then condemn as evil the sexual behaviour which is the outcome of such loving acts, while in other parts of the world the same Christian Church advocates and endorses the extreme penalties that are imposed by the civil authorities on any form of same-sex act.

Although the Pilling report does make recommendations which could be immediately implemented, its remit was to create the framework for the debate. Recommendation 3 of the Pilling Report states that: "Consultation on this report should be conducted without undue haste but with a sense of urgency, perhaps over a period of two years". Whilst it is important that theology is properly and fully discussed, the Church seems to be obsessed with internal matters concerned with the preservation of the institution, and blind to the changes that are taking place in the world outside.

However welcoming the Christian Church may become to the presence, and to the ministry and the witness of the gender and sexually variant people who are within it, however many services of blessing and of endorsement of same-sex relationships that are provided, these core issues of the Christian teaching must be fully and unreservedly addressed. Without that total commitment, the fundamental questioning and the unease about the legitimacy of the status of all gender and sexually variant people who worship within the Christian Church provides a road which leads to even more hypocrisy instead. In a keynote address which the Anglican Bishop of Salisbury presented to the Cutting Edge Consortium Conference on "Making Space for an Honest Conversation", held on the 21st April 2012²¹⁶ the Rt. Rev. Nicholas Holtam declared: "In British society, the game is up. Gay people are equal members of our society". There is other evidence that many other people in the Christian Churches are also aware of what has to happen, but only limited movement has been made. A full and unhindered engagement is now essential, and committed action is urgently required.

7:3 Embracing Change

The results of the neurophysiological and psychological analysis have demonstrated that the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on homosexuality and on gender and sexual variance cannot be correct. Therefore this is not a neutral analysis, and it is perhaps significant that that the primary objective of this investigation was not to examine the theology of the Church, it was intended for use as a case study to test the validity of theories of personality development which were then being explored. Because of that distancing it became possible to remove the veil on the assumptions that are applied to the relationships between sexuality and personality development which have come through the centuries of influences on society which arise from the theology of the Church. This analysis has clearly demonstrated that there is a duality in all forms of gender and sexually variant heterosexual and homosexual same-sex

²¹⁶ Available at: <http://www.lgbtac.org.uk/documents/SuC0422a-BishopOFSalisburyAddressToCECConf-21apr12.pdf>

behaviour that distinguishes between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex, and it is also shown that this distinction and this duality was understood and acted on by Jesus himself.

Not only does the refusal to recognise or to accept this duality have a major impact on the interpretation of the teaching of Jesus, it profoundly influences the theological understandings of the present day. So it is the denial of this duality which forces the Church into declaring that the traditional teaching of the Church on homosexuality and gender and on sexually variant behaviour is correct and it is the removal of this denial which enables it to be shown that it is not the acts of same-sex relationships or the gender transformation which is condemned by the teaching of Jesus; it is the purposes to which some people might have put their acts. Therefore, as with St Paul, in Galatians 3:28, it is demonstrated that all people, lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual who attempt to live their lives within the full love of Christ and who seek to express their own identities in ways which are true to themselves; must be accepted alike, and that this does not demand any automatic or a universal condemnation of those in loving same-sex relationships which involve anal penetrative sex.

It is the same denial of this duality which has profoundly affected the understanding of the development of the early Church. In this analysis the development of the early Church within the surrounding Greco/Roman society has been examined by applying the dual perspective. It is shown that the political actions of the Goddess cults were powerfully challenging the gendered security of the first century male dominated society. However the presence of the gender defined Gods and Goddesses within a polytheistic society created a boundary which could not be crossed and Christianity with its gender transcendent God could cross this void. Because of this Christianity was able to transfer the moral values of a suppressed minority culture into those of a dominant state, and it was the movement for the liberation of women which enabled that to occur. For that transformation to be possible it is shown in this analysis that a period of complete gender transcendence and equality must have existed within the early Church. Nevertheless, however long or short this early time of gender equality and transcendence was, it was destroyed by the compromises which were made in order to conform to the gender expectations of Greco/Roman society, together with the imposition of the male dominance which was needed to gain the respectability of the Church.

The understanding that changes took place in the early Church to accommodate the expectations of Greco/Roman society is well known, and these have long been the subject of an intense debate. However the reasons which are presumed for these changes have been based on expectations of gender and sexual behaviour, which consider that the driving forces that lie behind them come exclusively through the gender stratification of Greco/Roman society, and from the repugnance of the sexual acts. However the neurophysiological and psychological analysis has demonstrated that a duality exists in which the methods which are essential to manage the different types of conflict are almost opposite to one another, so that any attempt to provide even well intentioned support, or to manage both gender and sexual variation when using the conviction that they are invariably goal driven conflicts can produce very damaging counterproductive effects. Applying the same principles to this analysis

opens up the political compass of the debate and, it is shown in this analysis that the driving forces powering the development of the early Christian Church were primarily those of the political consequences rather than the moral consequences which were associated with the gender and sexually disrupting behaviour of the Goddess cults. However there were also severe cultural clashes between Jewish and Greco/Roman societies and the moral conflicts provided a strong weapon of attack.

These transformations lead to a simple and direct conclusion which states that what today are considered to be the traditional doctrine of the Christian Church on sexual and gender variance are built on a false foundation. They were driven by the need to gain respectability in Greco/Roman society and they do not come from the teaching of Jesus himself. However an even greater reversal was required, because in order to obtain respectability in this society, Christianity quickly had to separate itself from the still continuing social and gender disrupting behaviour of the Goddess cults. This meant that instead of just adopting the social structures and gender complementarity which were a cornerstone of the gender unequal Greco/Roman society, Christianity had to be seen to take a proactive role in its enforcement of them, and it is shown that this pursuit of respectability has led to the imposition of a strong heterosexual, gender defined and exclusive orthodoxy in which all types of expression of gender or sexually variant behaviour is automatically considered to be a mortal sin and an immoral act. This has also led to the great severity of the Christian condemnations of all gender and sexually variant behaviour as being second only to bestiality in the heinousness of these acts.

Although the Pilling report has kept to its brief, which it required it to prepare a report of the House of Bishops Working Group on human sexuality, there are other major challenges that must also be met; for is not only the issues of gender and of sexual variance which must be addressed as a consequence of this analysis. These results also question the present teaching on gender equality, and on the presumptions for male authority, and the roles of women, both in ministry and in governance. This applies not only to the Churches that are within the Anglican Communion, it applies even more strongly to the Roman Catholic Church. The prevalence of sexual abuse in these Churches is also a major concern. That strongly suggests that the correct terms of reference for a full debate must include all of these areas, and that this must consider not only attitudes and the traditions, but also the organisational structures of certain churches which have been founded on this base. That debate may demand a radical change, and the prospect of this could be why any movement, in even one of these areas, is strongly resisted.

There is a strong irony in paragraph 147 of the Pilling Report, when it declares that: "But the most effective missionaries, following the example of St Paul, have always sought aspects of the indigenous culture which they could affirm and thus lead their hearers deeper into Christ". The question which then has to be asked is: What did both Peter and Paul need to take from Greco/Roman society? That is answered in terms of the ability to transform the Christian movement from one which had first belonged to an oppressed and a conquered society into one which became able to identify itself with a dominant state. Jesus had first usurped and inverted the power structures of society, but in the processes of gaining respectability that process was

reversed. It also resulted in the adoption of a strong heterosexual orthodoxy in order to separate itself from the politically challenging behaviour of the Goddess cults.

In the social context of that time those decisions may even have been correct, but the major departure has been to turn those pragmatic decisions into the immutable doctrines of the Church. For as long as the Christian Church holds to this viewpoint it will continue to be plagued by the issues of gender discrimination homophobia, and sexual abuse.

7:4 Discipline or Doctrine

This investigation has also made it clear that the traditional attitudes of the Church to gender and sexuality must be regarded as disciplines; and not as the doctrines of the Church. Even though an apostolic imprint is present, these views do not come from the teachings of Jesus and the witness of Gospel Church. Evidence that Peter and Paul thought in the same way is present in the Epistles and the letters themselves. Perhaps the most telling way to consider the arguments is to examine the authority which the Apostles invoke. In 1 Corinthians 14:34, Paul was urging Christian women to keep silent in Church because that would be a disgrace to society, and there is no direct reference to Christ. For Peter likewise (1 Peter 3:1-16) the need for women's submission was because the esteem of the Church had to be nurtured within society at large. Paul's comment in Ephesians 5:22-24 again refers to the absolute authority and control exercised by the "Pater familias" in Greco/Roman society. All of these statements reflect the urgent need for the Church to gain respect in that society, and to provide models for the Church. Unlike Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28, which endorses true gender equality and transcendence, none of them attempt to derive their authority from the teaching of Christ²¹⁷.

The Gospel message of Jesus demanded that people work within society to change it, rather than destroy it. This means that it is the responsibility of Christianity and of the Christian Churches within every generation to work out anew what all of these relationships should be. Those relationships change with time, and in present day society, where complete gender equality is now determined by the belief in universal human rights, and not because of the compulsory complementarity of first century Greco/Roman and Jewish views which maximise the perceived usefulness of men and women in society; a totally different approach is urgently required.

This demands a radical change, but when the Christian Church is destroying itself in the eyes of society, these are changes which must urgently be made. This is also the change in viewpoint which should enable the Christian Churches of the present day to establish without any diminution of the moral values or the precepts of Christian

²¹⁷Paul in Galatians 3:28 declares a doctrine of a complete transcendence of gender. This statement draws its authority from the Gospel itself. However there are many other statements within the Pauline Epistles which are concerned with how Christian men and women should behave in a first century society. Paul provides a whole compendium of these: 1 Corinthians 7:1-17, 32, 35, 39; 1 Corinthians 11:3-17; 1 Corinthians 14:33-37; Philippians 4:3; Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:21-31; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 1 Timothy 5:1-16. Also 1 Peter 3:1-6 is at least as important as these others. Unlike the statement in Galatians 3:28 all of these statements draw their authority from the requirement for the respectability of the Christian Church. They do not rely on the teaching of Jesus for that, and it is argued that these must be regarded instead as contemporary rules of conduct that were determined by the needs of the Church in relation to Greco/Roman society.

teaching, and without any degree of departure from truth of the Gospel message, an approach to gender and to sexuality, to gender equality and to gender and sexual variance, which is entirely appropriate for present day world.

8:0 Author

Susan Gilchrist, now retired, has taught in higher education for over forty years. She has also been involved in the work of reconciliation in tribal conflict situations for approximately the same length of time. In 1976 she was responsible for setting up an organisation which co-ordinated this work throughout mainland Britain. She has been involved in research into the driving forces behind tribal conflict, identity formation and the interactions that are encountered. She has undertaken similar research on gender dysphoria and she is currently preparing this work for publication. Susan writes poetry and she has documented her journey through an anthology of poems. Through her counselling involvement she aims to help others who may learn from her experiences. She has served on Government and NHS Advisory panels. Susan is actively involved in Church of England activities and in ecumenical work. She is currently a committee member of the Sibyls, which is a Christian Spirituality group for transgendered people, their friends, families and supporters. Together with members of the clergy and with others she was involved in the organisation of a conference in Birmingham in 2010 on "Sexuality and Human Flourishing", the proceedings of which can be accessed on the LGBTI Anglican Coalition Website at www.lgbtac.org.uk. She created and continues to manage the LGBTI Anglican Coalition website. She also serves on the executive committee of the LGB&T Anglican Coalition and she is a past co-chair of the Coalition.