

Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church

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1:0 Introduction

In societies where men and women did not have equal status there was always the potential for significant social disruption should gender atypical behaviour be encountered. The changes of the last 50 years, with the widespread use of contraception, the legalisation of homosexuality and the recognition of gender equality have greatly altered the present day perceptions and these are destroying the framework of male supremacy on which many structures were based. A major focus is the extent to which particular prohibitions which today are regarded as sexual taboos were instead primarily adopted for the preservation of the social order. Old Testament Judaism made no distinction between the sacred and the secular, so changes in social order can have a profound impact on the theology of religious belief.

This investigation is in two parts. The first is a neurophysiological and psychological investigation of self-identity and personality development. The second part considers the impact of this on the theology of the Church. It also summarises the neurophysiological and psychological material drawn from the analyses presented in the additional resource documents on “Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief” and “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”². The first of these documents takes an exclusively analytical approach so that within it; all of the faith dimensions are excluded, while the second document examines relationship concerns. The material in these resource documents is intended to be used for papers for future publication, and copies will be made available in due course.

1:1 History and Context

This investigation began as an exclusively neurophysiological and psychological study to examine the development of self-identity and personality in infancy and in early life. Gender dysphoria is used as a case study to model the process. It is demonstrated that the features which create the core gender and sexual identities of every person are physiologically rather than behaviourally or cognitively driven. Therefore as wide a range of moral attitudes, beliefs and behaviour are to be found amongst these people as those which exist in society at large. It is also demonstrated that a duality must exist whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways that conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies should be highly regarded, while those who misuse these relationships would be very severely condemned for their acts. That duality is contradicted by the traditional teaching of the Christian Church which condemns without exception every expression of gender and sexually variant behaviour as inherently sinful, and regards all of them as heinous acts. The second part of this analysis is therefore a critique of the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. This uses the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study to determine how and why this contradiction occurs.

¹ Personal Biography <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/SusanBiographyPapers.pdf>

² To access the full list of articles: go to: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

1:2 Neurophysiology and psychology

In the first part of this investigation the neurophysiological and psychological research work on early development which has been carried out by Gallese, Dawkins, Girard and others is combined with the more traditional cognitively based approaches employed by the psychodynamic and social learning theories. It is noted that a major advance in neural capability takes place around the age of two years. It is demonstrated that core elements of personality and identity develop at this time. The changes in brain physiology then lock these permanently in place, so that a constancy of personality is created. The lifetime tension between the contagious, feedforward and possessive forces of physiology which are present from birth and the feedback and restraining forces of cognition that become active after this transition period is understood to provide the stimulation whereby the highest achievements of humanity are gained. It is demonstrated that the physiological, neurological and psychological aspects of brain development together form a finely tuned system in which the maximum amount of individuality, possessiveness, intelligence and inquisitiveness, together with the minimum degree of energy expenditure is formed.

Two types of conflicts are identified. Conflicts which originate from before this transition period are defined as identity driven conflicts. In these conflicts behaviour is not the focus and as wide a range on moral attitudes, beliefs, inclinations and responsibilities are found as those which occur in the population at large. The later reward driven conflicts can rely on the cognitive abilities of intuition, perception and reasoning to link desire to reward. Behaviour in identity driven conflicts can be characterised by the rejection of what is wrong, while reward driven conflicts pursue the reward. The management techniques for both types of conflict are well known, but considerable harm can be done if the wrong ones are applied. It is shown that the greatest possible variation in personal identities is created. However the limitations imposed by Christian theology and the psychodynamic and social learning theories means the impact, and indeed the existence, of the first contagious development processes are ignored. That omission is addressed in this analysis Gender dysphoria is used as a case study to link the different processes. It is demonstrated that for all people, a continuous route for identity and personality development can be traced, which extends from infancy into adult life³.

2:0 Overview

This analysis takes an exclusively neuroscientific and psychological approach to look critically at the period of self development between the ages of zero and approximately two years of age. It uses the results of recent research, together with the analyses of early personality development in tribal conflict situations and it additionally employs transgender experience to examine the present understanding. Current psychological approaches largely consider this initial period to be one of disorganisation but the results of this study show that a structured integration process takes place. This initial integration period is of crucial importance since it develops the processes and capabilities which determine how infants begin to integrate themselves into society. During this first integration period the capacities of empathy and collective self identity are established and certain key features

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 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.

of personality are created. This research also identifies driving forces for self development which are innate and which are present from birth. This integration period is subsequently followed by a period of separation, during which the conscious and unconscious separation of the individual self begins to be created. This second period of separation corresponds to the type of self development which is predicted by the current theories. It also informs the processes of conscious thought, which eventually results in the formation of a "Theory of Mind". The reason why the current theories cannot deal with earlier integration period is because they are self limiting in the driving forces which are assumed. Of necessity a summary of this analysis can only be given in this document and a full account is given in resource document on "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief"⁴ The second part of this document examines church history and tradition in the light of this new understanding.

The traditional teaching on homosexuality which is adopted by the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian traditions argues that, while it is not sinful in itself to have homosexual desires, to give expression to these in any way whatever is a grievous sin. Although the Roman Catholic Church recognises that the origins of homosexuality have up to now been largely unexplained, its traditional teaching still presumes that any active response to the condition is a lifestyle choice and that it is driven by lust and the desire for inappropriate sex. These perceptions are held by many others in the Christian tradition. The possibility that the condition could be identity driven is therefore rejected and the idea that two people of the same sex could enter into any legitimate, loving, faithful and committed relationship is totally denied.

That view is challenged in this analysis. It is shown that that the foundations of gender identity and sexual orientation are first defined in relationship terms. Furthermore it is demonstrated that the key stages which are involved in their initial formation precede the awakening of sexual desires. This means that both transsexuality and homosexuality are identity driven and the fundamental need is for people to be true to themselves. Therefore in a loving same sex relationship the desire for engagement in any type of sexual action results from the outpouring of love. It is not from the lust for sex. The widespread introduction of contraception, the legalisation of same sex relationships and the enactment of anti-discrimination legislation has meant that most people now have personal and direct experience of relating to homosexual couples and others in same sex relationships. These observers do not need to have any special knowledge to distinguish between the behaviour of two people in as same sex heterosexual friendship and the behaviour of an equivalent couple in a homosexual partnership, even in situations when there is a total absence of sex.

The consequence of the suppression of all types of same-sex relationships by the Christian Church for over one thousand years has meant that the ability to make these key distinctions between love and lust has been lost. Therefore the belief that lust is always the driving force for these actions has been written into the doctrines of the Church. The outcome is that the principle that homosexuality is exclusively about promiscuity and sexual immorality would become universally accepted and that any engagement in homosexual acts has been made the scapegoat for abusive sex. For as long as the Christian church was able to retain its social monopoly there was no possibility of any change in these attitudes. However the social changes of the last fifty years mean that the true nature of the situation can no longer be hidden.

In 1998 the Church of England initiated a review which was designed to listen to the experiences of gay and lesbian Anglicans from around the world. The document "Some Issues in Human Sexuality" was intended to be an impartial reference document which would set the framework for the debate⁵. However it is shown in this analysis that this report fails on two counts. The first of these is the lack

⁴ For the full list of articles available go to: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

⁵ 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

of adequate independent and critical research, (even at the time it was written). The second is the reliance it places on the doctrines of Aquinas rather than those of the first millennium. The present document is inadequate for that purpose and it demands that new and correct terms of reference are set. It requires all of the participants to fully accept their own strengths and their weaknesses and for each side to be willing and to be prepared to act on its achievements and correct its mistakes.

There have been very many previous analyses which consider the theology of homosexuality and its place in the church and these analyses are reviewed elsewhere^{6 7}. However all of them have had to acknowledge that the neural and psychological factors underlying the development of homosexuality and transsexuality are not well understood. The new analysis is summarised in this document. However the full analysis is given in the resource document on “Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief”⁸. This provides a much more secure understanding of the origins of these conditions and this has major theological consequences for the Church. The results of this neuroscientific and psychological analysis are used to examine the changing attitudes of the church to sexually variant identity and to the resulting behaviour from the first century perceptions to those of the present day. It is symptomatic of ancient 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 that which is found in the love between two men. The Greeks had no word for homosexuality, but they had at least four words which described the different types of love. Homosexuality as it is presently understood was not recognised as a specific condition. No boundary was placed between strong heterosexual friendships on the one hand and on any 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. The issue of immediate concern is how this was matched in the Jewish tradition. Studies of contemporary first century Jewish literature show that strong male pair bonding occurred and that a similar outlook was taken. For example, in the Avot de-Rabbi Hathan, it is recommended that a friend should be someone with whom one can “Eat and drink, read and study, sleep, and share secrets of the Torah and personal secrets”⁹. The Jewish tradition includes many other instances where intimate social pairing was accepted and there are accounts where high degrees of intimacy between two male rabbis were encountered. These and other issues are more extensively discussed in the document on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships¹⁰. For another more detailed consideration of these topics, the book “Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition” by Steven Greenberg should also be consulted¹¹.

The contemporary Greek and Roman attitudes to same-sex relationships are discussed in greater depth elsewhere¹² and it is shown that that the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was made between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. With the exception of anal penetration this distinction was applied to heterosexual and to homosexual

⁶ For a review see Hensman, Savitri. (2012) “Journey towards acceptance – theologians and same-sex love” Available through the Ekklesia Website: http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/files/journey_towards_acceptance_oct_2012_0.pdf. This paper is also available through the Resources tab on the LGB&T Anglican Coalition website www.lgbtac.org.uk. Accessed on the 3 December 2012.

⁷ See for example “An Acceptable Sacrifice? Homosexuality and the Church” Edited by Duncan Dormor and Jeremy Morris. SPCK 2007. ISBN -10; 0-281-05851-2.

⁷ Additional references are given in the main body of the text

⁸ For the full list of articles available go to: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

⁹ See Maimonide’s commentary on the Mishnah, Avot 1:6 aseh lekha rav

¹⁰ Gilchrist, S. (2012). “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”. See footer for access

¹¹ Greenberg, Steven; (2004), “Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition”. The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN 10: 0-299-19094-3.

¹² For the full list of articles available go to: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

relationships in the same way. Thus biology was much less important than the quality of the relationship itself. The prohibition on anal penetration was for different reasons. This was due to the disruption of social order in a gender unequal society, where its primary purpose was for power and domination and for the humiliation of beaten enemies. In many Middle Eastern societies the social standing of citizens was of the paramount importance and the major concern was consistently about who took the active role and who took the passive role in anal penetrative sex. The strong contrast between these two activities should be noted. Thus anal intercourse between two male adult citizens was forbidden¹³ but in circumstances where neither citizen was seen to adopt a submissive role, same-sex relationships given in love could be celebrated using all other types of sexual acts.

There were massive changes in outlook during the first three hundred years of the Church. Later sections of this document examine the changing attitudes to gender and gender identity within the present day Christian Church. It is essential that the present day issues are urgently addressed. However the response of many in the Christian church has been to retreat into traditional values. In many places the call for an open listening process has not been heeded and little progress has been made. As a consequence the ability of the Church to relate to and to minister honestly and conscientiously to the many people who are now in same-sex relationships, including its own clergy, has been lost. This failure of the Church to address these issues, together with its retreat into fundamental viewpoints, has destroyed much of the credibility of the Church in the eyes of people who are outside it.

This exploration shows that there may be major difficulties to be overcome but no true listening process can ever succeed unless every issue is openly and honestly faced. The crisis that the church faces at present means that urgent and constructive action must be taken. This document offers a contribution to that debate.

3:0 Research and Analysis

Recent research in neuroscience and neurophysiology has opened up new insights into the fields of personality development, transgender experience and sexual orientation. These are fully described in the document on “Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief”¹⁴ In humans the importance of timing in early brain development is emphasized in the delayed development of the pre-frontal cortex. This is regarded as the part of the brain responsible for cognitive thought. The emergence of its functional capability is not uniform across the domains of the cortex and different abilities emerge at different times. The overpowering drive for possessive imitation in early infancy leads to the rapid acquisition of un-coordinated concepts and thoughts, and it would be expected that the ability to develop channels of communication which link and co-ordinate these elements would develop as rapidly as possible. However, while this true for the development of the parts of the brain which are concerned with the for the sensory-motor, auditory and visual systems, the response to stimulation and the acquisition of knowledge in the parts of the brain which are responsible for the development of analysis and cognitive thought do not reach the peak of their capabilities until between the ages of two and three years. This delay in development is important since the effect of delaying the onset of these cognitive processes is to maximise the acquisition experience. The transition from the creation of an intuitive and integral sense of self identity towards the more analytical separation of the self from the other begins at around the age of two years.

The core gender identity, in the sense of an elementary awareness of “being who one is”, is one of the first global concepts to be formed and it provides a model which can be used to examine the

¹³ Judaism applied this particular prohibition to everyone. In other societies the relative status of the partners was important and a citizen could penetrate anyone of lower status without any penalty being applied

¹⁴ For the full list of articles available go to: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

transition between intuitive and cognitive thought. The acquisition of this concept takes place mainly between the ages of two and three years. However the foundations may be present from a much earlier date and it is often considered that pre-natal influences are involved. By the end of three years at the latest this concept is permanently locked in place¹⁵.

There are two major outcomes which need to be considered. The first to note is that the goals which transgendered people seek are not defined in gender terms. Experience has shown that the conflict is not driven by the desire to adopt the gender which is opposite to that which was assigned at birth. It is driven instead by the rejection of the birth assigned gender and the fundamental need is for people to be themselves. The second is to recognise that gender identity and sexual orientation are independent of each other. Both of these foundations for the development of identity and orientation can be traced to intuitive processes which are driven by possessive imitation in early life. Moreover it can also be shown that the development of sexual desire depends on the later forming goal directed activities which require the possession of cognitive thought - and ultimately an adequate Theory of Mind¹⁶. This means that identity and orientation are first defined in relationship terms and their formation also precedes the awakening of sexual desires. It follows that the primary focus in infancy is to establish the correct relationships which promote integration with other people, and not to set oneself apart.

The analysis presented in these documents shows that comprehensive but intuitive senses of self identity are created during the first two years of life but with no overall control conscious command cannot be imposed. This is the time when many of the constant values which are associated with the personality of the individual are first formed. It is concluded that the need to restrain this self generating, feed forward process leads to the development of the control mechanisms imposed by cognitive analytical thought, and that this change begins to take place from around the age of two years. The process is unconsciously driven and the earliest age at which many transsexuals first become aware that there is something wrong with the sense of gender identity that they are expected to possess does not occur until around the age of four years.

The advances in this study come from the use of neuroscience and observed experience. The focus has been to examine the early period of integration and the driving forces which empower it. Most previous psychoanalytic studies have considered this period to be un-coordinated and without any directional goal - therefore its impact on personality formation has been largely ignored. By contrast the importance of that early period is emphasized in this analysis, which identifies the changes in the thinking processes that take place. These changes have a significant effect on the processes which drive the development of self identity. Two phases in its development are identified. The first of these periods is the earlier period of integration where infants try to relate to other people around them and to find their role in the group. The second period is that of separation, where the complexity of thoughts and relationships which have by then been formed requires the capability of self analysis and the need to interrogate one's thoughts.

The work on the development of tribal identity which is presented in the resource documents¹⁷ show that a high degree of interaction between the intra-personal and inter-personal relationships occurs during the first two years of life. With no overall sense of identity the concepts of self identity which are created during this time can only be expressed as relationship with others. In this analysis this is

¹⁵ Since this paper was published, other articles have become available: See: 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*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/207P-ReassessmentPsychologyExtended.pdf> and Gilchrist, S. (2015a) *Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>

¹⁶ The possession of a "Theory of Mind" is considered to be achieved when each individual is able to perceive his or her own self identity as if by viewing it as if from afar. The ability to self examine usually appears around the age of four years.

¹⁷ For the full list of articles available go to: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

described as the period of integration and it is associated with the acquisition process where each infant tries to define his or her place in the group, family or tribe. Therefore collective concepts of self identity are created but the unchecked integration results in the creation of vast amounts of often conflicting and uncoordinated thought.

In order to take control of this process it is necessary for each individual to learn to stand apart from his or her own processes of thought. The mental separation which this requires leads eventually to the development of a fully functioning Theory of Mind. It also marks the move from unconscious to conscious thought. This requires the ability to manage time in a coherent manner so that considered decisions can be made which are based on the analysis of cause and effect. Without this facility early memories are likely to be seen as snapshots of particular events, and these snapshots may resource the initial intuitive and automatic response.

Many current theories presume that a cognitive continuum exists during all stages of development - even though the delays in the physical and functional maturation of the pre-frontal cortex shows that different forms of learning processes are involved during the first two years of life. Freud considered that child development took place in a series of 'psychosexual stages' where each stage involves the satisfaction of a libidinal desire which can later play a role in creating the adult personality. However that process requires the ability to mentally separate the self from the other and this requires possession the cognitive values that are associated with the development of an adequate theory of mind. Because of these implications a psychosexual driving force cannot have any impact on earlier experiences. This early period coincides with the oral and anal stages in Freud's model of psychosexual development and these learning constraints relegate the Freudian interpretation of the early "integration and acquisition" period to be one which is without any purpose, except to satisfy the pleasure principle, which Freud described. Learning does take place during this period. The Id is considered to be a "seething cauldron of ideas", but it has no organisation and the learning processes at this time are assumed to be those of a primarily passive absorption¹⁸. This means that the structures of the early integration processes that are described in this analysis are considered either not to exist or not to be relevant. According to Freud the most significant stage in the organisation of personality - which is the phallic stage, begins between the ages of three and five years and this further implies that meaningful development is delayed until this time. Even though current understanding has now moved on the same implicit presumptions continue to be applied. Therefore almost all of the current analyses of child development continue to make the presumption that there is always a uniform relationship between intuitive and analytical thought and that the same type of continuum continues to exist throughout the whole period of childhood development.

Girard used his observations of the behaviour of very young children to put forward a theory of infant development in which the process is driven by the need to seek what another infant possesses. This is for possession in its own right. It is not possession for any purpose it may serve (Girard 1961¹⁹, Girard 1972²⁰, Girard 1978²¹). By doing this Girard had defined a driving force which is innate and is active from birth and the principles behind this approach have since been validated

¹⁸ Freud, Sigmund. (1933), "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis", Penguin Freud Library 2 p. 105-6 : "It is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality, what little we know of it we have learned from our study of the Dreamwork and of the construction of neurotic symptoms, and most of that is of a negative character and can be described only as a contrast to the ego. We approach the id with analogies: we call it a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations.... It is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts, but it has no organization, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle."

¹⁹ Girard, R., (1961) "Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965. [Originally published in French, 1961; translated by Yvonne Freccero.]

²⁰ Girard, R., (1972). "Violence and the Sacred". Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977. [Originally published in French, 1972; trans. by Patrick Gregory.]

²¹ Girard, R., (1978). "Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World". Research undertaken in collaboration with Jean-Michel Oughourlian and Guy Lefort. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987. [Originally pub. in French, 1978; trans. by Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer.]

through current neuroscientific and neurophysiological research. Far from inactivity during the first years of life this process of possessive imitation is capable of modelling the development of a collective sense of self identity in which the presence of empathy plays an important role. It is also a self reinforcing process where each feature builds on the preceding one and this action further increases the strength of the drive. The intensity of this struggle is largely hidden from the conscious mind. The ability to develop the right relationships is one of the first capabilities that must be achieved but the differential rates of maturation of the pre-frontal cortex have a strong influence on the timing and the nature of the learning processes that can be employed. Because it is actively driven, internal cues rather than external triggers may set the direction of development that is taken, and the initial learning capabilities focus principally on the actions of stimulation and immediate response. Once development starts in a particular direction it can become very resistant to change and it is shown how some people may develop a gender allegiance which is contrary to their biological sex.

It has already been indicated that the identification of a core sense of gender identity has become fixed at the latest by the age of three years²². It is the need to make sense of this identity which means that each person and the demands of society subsequently create an exclusive and polarised gender allegiance, which is either male or female and it is one to which total loyalty is required. For transsexuals it is the rejection of the assigned gender identity that drives the dynamics of the conflict, and this is the medium through which the discord is expressed. How this experience works out in practice is described in the paper “LGB and T People: Labels and Faith” (Gilchrist 2012)²³

Attempts to fight the conflicts do not succeed since the more they are fought or suppressed the stronger they become. This is because the sense of selfhood searched for does not have a firm base and also because the conflict is too deep seated for a satisfactory scapegoat to be found. A management approach is presented in a companion paper “Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality”; (Gilchrist 2011d)²⁴. This paper puts forward a management strategy for transsexuality which aims to calm the dynamics of the conflict. It does not itself remove the latency but it may enable people to find the correct path. Thus the failure of those methods which involve conquest, rejection and suppression means that the reverse approach of approval, inclusion and transcendence is required which aims to obtain the coherence of identity that brings its richness to life.

The total abstention from any type of expression can distance the conflict from the conscious mind. This may succeed when the outcome of succumbing to its demands is seen to be destructive and to be avoided. It is much more difficult to sustain this approach when the outcome is perceived to be one of fulfilment instead. When the tension becomes too great the explosive release of at times hidden emotions can lead to catastrophic collapse.

This analysis can also be applied to other situations where a similar lack of coherence exists since it sees the conflicts associated with gender identity as the symptom of the failure to build a coherent sense of self identity rather than the cause. Parallel dynamics can be seen in cases of addiction, alcoholism, depression, conflicts of sexual orientation and in other areas as well²⁵. This means that for everyone the development of gender identity proceeds in the same way. Transsexuals develop a gender allegiance which is contrary to their biological sex, but this is at least as firmly held as those

²² It is usually considered that the conditions which set the direction of development are present before or at birth and also that they arise from genetic influences and/or the action of hormones on the developing foetus

²³ Gilchrist, S. (2012) “LGB and T People: Labels and Faith”. See footer for access

²⁴ Gilchrist, S., (2011) “Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality”. See footer for access.

²⁵ Most medical concerns tend to concentrate on the difficulties, but this process includes the creation of positive values associated with personality development as well.

for who gender identity and allegiance follow a normal path. Indeed it may be argued that the gender allegiance for transsexuals is even more strongly fixed because it has to be fought for all along the way. When transsexuals are asked to explain their quandary a common answer is that of "Being a member of one gender who is trapped inside the body the other". That is not literally true but the commonality of the development processes creates an identical effect. At the age when transsexuals first become consciously aware of their predicament the neural pathways which determine their sense of core gender identity are already physically locked in place. Critics of gender reassignment surgery argue that surgical procedures should not be used to resolve a psychological condition. However when the unchangeable gender allegiance is an accurate representation of what any born member of that gender would encounter, to make the appearance of the body conform as far as is possible to it must be a valid approach.

In the case of gender variation and homosexual orientation the direction of development is atypical. However it is expressed entirely through the relationships sought. The reasons for this atypical development may relate to genetic influences or to the development process which is tuned to maximise individuality. The differential development patterns in the pre-frontal cortex in infancy also mean that goal directed influences and the expectations of rearing also have a minimal effect. If these fundamental conditions are to be properly understood it is essential to distinguish and separate the drive which searches for relationships from the drive which searches for sex and it is essential to note that the development of transsexuality and homosexuality predates the development of sexual desires.

This destroys the legitimacy of any attempts by the Church and others to use homosexuality as a scapegoat for abusive or inappropriate sex - for this could only work if it could be shown that homosexual orientation is derived not from identity, but from the results of sexual desire. However the consequence of the suppression of all types of same-sex relationships by the Christian Church for over one thousand years has meant that the ability to make those distinctions has been lost. The consequence of this is that the assumption that homosexuality is exclusively about promiscuity and sexual immorality became universally accepted. The denial of these distinctions has also led to the belief that it is entirely driven by desire and that it is a lifestyle choice. For as long as the Christian church could retain its social monopoly there was no possibility of change, and there can be little doubt that same-sex relationships have been considered the focus for abusive or improper sex. Promiscuity is often considered to be rife in homosexual relationships, but while there are those who do pursue sexual climaxes with many partners recent studies have confirmed that many do not²⁶. Before the advent of widespread contraception same-sex intercourse could provide safe heterosexual sex. As with gender there is a vast range of experience encountered and distinctions between the different types of behaviour must be based on the motives involved.

In every century the interplay between religion, identity and sexuality has been a contentious topic. Attempts to treat homosexuality as though it was the result of desire or a lifestyle choice prove disastrous. Because it is driven by rejection and the search for identity some relief can be gained by creating a sense of euphoria which transcends its demands. This is the approach taken by some religious groups who will claim that a "Cure" has been found, but this only lasts for as long as the euphoria can be sustained. After it is lost it is not something that willpower can regain. The problem with many such groups is that anyone who does not conform to their rules of behaviour may be ejected from membership. These people may be told that God still loves them but to be practicing or non-practicing is not the real issue. The act of rejection becomes a personal attack of the self identity of that individual and not of their practice. The hurt, guilt and self loathing caused by this can be enormous. It is also extremely destructive since any attempt to fight or suppress the conflict drives people deeper into distress. Whatever opportunity there is to rejoin the group or to keep control of the conflict is either diminished or destroyed

²⁶ For a full account see Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access

4:0 Historical Developments

What is today regarded as the traditional teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on homosexuality is largely based on the work of Thomas Aquinas. Just after the end of the first millennium Aquinas combined the principles of Natural Law which had originally been developed by Plato, Aristotle and others in Ancient Greece with the then current theology of the Church. The statement below is taken from the 1997 Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church²⁷.

“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.”

Quite clearly this statement fails to begin to meet the understanding of the origins of homosexuality which is presented in this analysis: Above all there is no consideration of any idea of identity. Even though it states that the origins are largely unexplained it presumes that the condition is driven by the desire for inappropriate sex, and the idea that two people of the same sex could enter into a loving, faithful and committed relationship is totally denied. Although it is not sinful to have homosexual feelings, to allow the expression of these feelings in any way whatever is considered to be a grievous act.

This statement can be contrasted with the first century attitudes in Greek and Jewish society which did not place a boundary between strong heterosexual friendships on the one hand and the expression of relationships that resulted from homosexual attraction on the other. Indeed the latter was preferred for the depth and intensity of the commitments that it provided and the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was set between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. The reasons for these changes are now discussed.

Aquinas had used the principles of Natural Law derived, from Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and others to interpret the religious attitude to moral structures. During the first century the Greek, Jewish and Christian sages did exactly the same, but different conclusions to those put forward by Aquinas were reached. Plato argued that the highest form of love, and the only type of real love, is the love between two men. However Plato also considered that all sexual acts were distractions and in his later works he argued for the sublimation of all sex acts. Nevertheless the love that Plato described was not to be considered the love of friendship (phileo) since Plato clearly associated it with the redirection of sexual love (eros) instead. Plato's student, Aristotle, writing in the Politics, dismissed Plato's arguments for the abolition of same-sex acts²⁸. He explains that barbarians like the Celts accorded it a special honour²⁹, while the Cretans used it to regulate the population³⁰. Aristotle did not write extensively about sexual issues, since he was less concerned with these appetites than Plato. However probably the best interpretation of his views places him in the mainstream of Greek society, where the main issue of concern is that of active versus a passive role in the act of anal

²⁷ 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

²⁸ Aristotle: Politics (2.4)

²⁹ Aristotle: Politics (2.6.6)

³⁰ Aristotle: Politics (2.7.5),

penetration³¹. Same sex acts were not themselves perceived to contravene the principles of natural law since, in the appropriate context they were seen to support the “Brightest Region of Being” in the “Form of the Good” and the expression of same-sex love was encouraged for the educational and philosophical benefits it brought.

Nevertheless the motives and dangers of abuse were of very considerable concern. In the Phaedrus Plato presents Socrates as the describer of the myth of the soul as a charioteer driving two horses. The ugly black horse is passion, the noble white horse reason and self-control. Though the beauty of the male beloved may lead the black horse to assault him, the lover must do everything he can to subdue and tame the animal. Only then will he grow the wings that will take the pair to heaven. The lover may touch, kiss, and embrace the beloved, but the pair must remain chaste. The degree to which different sexual acts were permissible in same sex relationships is discussed by Pausanias, who was the next speaker in the Phaedrus. Pausanias does this by introducing a famous distinction that has haunted much of Western moral thought for more than two thousand years. This is the distinction between “higher” and “lower” forms of love. The lower form of love is broadly that which satisfies the sexual appetites while the higher love focuses on commitment and ethical demands. Pausanias clarifies these contemporary attitudes in the second part of his speech, when he looks at the subject geographically. In Thebes, Elis, and Sparta, he claims, there is no restraint on physical relations and youths may freely gratify their lovers. However he notes that the Persians discouraged same-sex love affairs among their Greek subjects since such relations might lead to political revolt. There was a considerable variation between the different Greek cities and states however same sex love was celebrated and apart from the prohibition on anal penetration that love could be celebrated in same sex acts.

The Rabbis of the First Century also considered same-sex relationships to be potentially dangerous because of the potential for social disturbance and sexual abuse. In addition to the biblical prohibition on anal penetration there were four other reasons for this disapproval. The first of these was that same-sex relationships cannot result in procreation: and Jews were expected to use the seed of Abraham to populate the world³². 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 and 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 came from the debasement of citizenship and the use of same-sex rape to humiliate a beaten enemy.

However both the Greeks and the Jews were able to distinguish between the purposes of same sex relationships given in love and the motives for sex. This enabled homosexual relationships to be celebrated in circumstances where the correct conditions were established and where no social disruption occurred. That was normally within a single sex environment where the partners were able to respect each other as equals. The Greeks found these outlets in relationships that involved the pursuit of philosophy and in some cases, in military companionships. The Jews also did likewise in the form of chavruta partnerships and rabbinic study. Greenberg discusses this at length³³. At the time of Jesus the spiritual leadership of the Jewish people had been in the hands of five successive

³¹ Pickett, Brent, (2011) "Homosexuality", The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (Spring 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/homosexuality/>.

³²The argument that the bible considers this to be the focus of the sexual act may sometimes be cited but the biblical justification for this is not clear. See Gilchrist, S. (2012). “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”. See footer for access.

³³ Greenberg, Steven; (2004), “Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition”. The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN 10: 0-299-19094-3.

generations of zugot ("pairs") of religious teachers³⁴. The existence of this "pairs" culture, together with the intimacies that were encouraged within chavruta relationships, and the then current understanding that Leviticus 18:33 and 20:13 only prohibited anal penetrative sex³⁵ makes it clear that, instead of rejecting all expressions of homosexual attraction, the Jews, like the Greeks and Romans, encouraged its expression for the depth of understanding, the robustness of the discussions, the sense of purpose and the commitment it brought.

The need to make the same type of distinction between higher and lower forms of love has formed a fundamental part in Christian Theology. It is used in the encyclical letter "Deus Caritas Est" of Pope Benedict XVI, on Christian Love.³⁶ Both in the first century and in present day Christianity this higher type of love was described by the Greek word "Agape". It is a direct translation of the Jewish word Ahabà. However a major change in interpretation has taken place. In present day theology the word Agape now describes a strong committed and unconditional love which is devoid of all sexual content and which also excludes all sexual acts. However in the Greek Septuagint, which was used in the First Century by the Christian Church, and in the original Hebrew, the same word agape and its equivalent, was then used to describe committed, faithful and unconditional love which can find its fulfilment in sex³⁷. Therefore the early Christians who could read the document in the vernacular would know exactly what the word agape meant and this subsequent change in interpretation, from one which had included the expression of appropriate sexual acts to one which now excludes them has had profound consequences for the Christian Church.³⁸

The principal text in the Bible condemning same-sex activity is in Leviticus 18:33 and 20:13. It is well attested from independent first century sources that the interpretation of this passage was that it only prohibited anal penetrative sex and this is the interpretation that Jesus and Paul would also have understood³⁹. Same-sex relationships which did not contravene the rabbinic restrictions were otherwise endorsed. There is no prohibition in the Bible of oral sex. Several times in the Epistles Paul refers with disapproval to same-sex activities. However he always refers back to Leviticus for the source of his disapproval and he was very careful about the words he used. Paul endorses the rabbinic position and his concerns are not about today's definition of homosexuality⁴⁰. There were

³⁴ 515 BCE – 70 CE. Male pairing had a strong influence on the structure of Jewish Society. Homosexuality was not recognised as a separate condition and the term zugot refers to pairs generally. The Babylonian Talmud (Pesachim 109b-112a) contains an extensive discussion of dangers of zugot and of performing various activities in pairs.

³⁵ The ancient rabbis must have had some sense of this problem when they ruled nearly two thousand years ago that any homosexual sexual activity short of anal intercourse is not included in the biblical prohibition (Babylonian Talmud, Yevamot 54a-56a; Sotah 26b; Niddah 13a; Maimonides, Perush L'Mishnayot on Sanhedrin 54a).

³⁶ encyclical letter "Deus Caritas Est" of Pope Benedict XVI, on Christian Love

³⁷ 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, the word agape is used 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 agape deals 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 same word is also used to describe the relationship between David and Jonathan, (see for example 1 Samuel 18), and between Jesus and the beloved disciple in the Gospel of John

³⁸ The passage in John 21:15-17 is relevant to this discussion. Without separate words being available in English for the different types of love the meaning of this passage in translation is often lost. Here Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him. The first two times Jesus uses the word agape for love. Peter replies that he does, but each time he uses the word phileo in response. Jesus uses phileo the third time that he asks if he loves him, and it is to this definition of love that Peter gives his enthusiastic consent.

³⁹ All of these biblical interpretations are dealt with at length in Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

⁴⁰ The word "Homosexual" was coined in 1869 by Karl-Maria Kertbeny (Or Benkert) who largely considered it to be an identity driven condition. In 1886 Richard Von Krafft-Ebing published an account in Psychopathia Sexualis, which described homosexuality as biologically anomalous and originating in the embryonic and foetal stages of gestation which evolved into a "Sexual Inversion" of the brain. Freud and others took up the idea of inversion but gradually the association with same-sex activities instead of identity grew.

social and cultural clashes between Jewish and Greco/Roman society and Paul's condemnation describes how people are destroyed by lustful and immoral acts^{41 42}.

The different cultures led to different interpretations of morality. This appears to be what Paul was referring to in the Epistles. Although different standards were set down the Greek and Roman philosophers were concerned about the same issues. All three societies applied sanctions against sexual misuse, and these did not differentiate in ways that are done today, between heterosexual and homosexual acts. For Jews anal penetration could not be engaged in for any social purpose and the bible clearly states that both of the partners who are involved in acts of anal penetration are to be condemned⁴³. In Jewish society the social status was not relevant, even slaves were protected but for the Greeks and Romans anal penetration could be carried out without any social approbation provided the person who was being penetrated was of a lesser status than the person who was doing the penetrative act.

Aquinas aimed to combine the Aristotelian philosophies of natural law with the theology of the Church, and in some of his writing he provides answers which do not preclude the validity of certain types of same-sex relationships provided they are given in love. However when he is writing about sins against nature, he states: "The venereal act is rendered unbecoming through being contrary to right reason, and because, in addition, it is contrary to the natural order of the venereal act as becoming to the human race: and this is called the unnatural vice. This may happen by copulation with an undue sex, male with male, or female with female, as the Apostle states (Romans 1:27): and this is called the vice of sodomy⁴⁴. However Aquinas goes further than this by turning this abhorrence of sodomy into the abhorrence of any type of same sex act. He condemns kissing and cuddling within same sex relationships as mortal sins⁴⁵. Aquinas argues that engaging in any activity that consents to the pleasure these actions bring also consents to the act of sodomy and that all homosexual behaviour is driven by lust.

The changes in doctrine which Aquinas and the Church introduced at the end of the first millennium may on the surface appear minor, but the consequence of these has been centuries of persecution.

⁴¹ See also for example Walker, William O. Jr. (2008). "What the New Testament Says about Homosexuality". Westar's membership magazine—The Fourth R 21,3 (May-June 2008)

http://www.westarinstitute.org/Periodicals/4R_Articles/homosexuality.html

⁴² Paul's main condemnations are contained in Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10. In these passages Paul refers back to the Jewish interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 to give authority to his teaching. Therefore the extent of these condemnations is limited to what the prohibition contained in Leviticus meant to first century society. It is shown in this analysis that this prohibition related to anal penetration alone (by extension same-sex intercourse), and to no other same-sex act. Same-sex love could be expressed freely in these relationships provided that act was avoided. It is additionally shown that the reasons for the prohibitions in Leviticus were because of the abuses of power in individual relationships and also between subject and dominant societies. Paul also set his condemnations in the context of the worship of the creature rather than the creator and the resulting sexual abuse. As it is shown in this analysis, when issues of abuse of power and sex are absent, and within loving committed and faithful same-sex relationships, there should be no automatic prohibition of any same-sex act of sex. It is further shown that this is identical to the teaching of Jesus. However these matters are of strong contention amongst biblical scholars and more complete descriptions are given in other documents. See sections 7:14 and 8:12 of Gilchrist, S. (2015a): *Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process* and Gilchrist, S. (2013a) *An Unfinished Reformation*: for more complete accounts.

⁴³ Leviticus, Chapter 18. The emphasis on love contributed greatly to the culture clash between the Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions. For Jews and Greeks the freedom to engage in sexual activity was based on authority. A Greek or Roman citizen could engage with any unattached woman or a man of lesser status for the purpose of sexual gratification, including penetrative acts. For the Jews the freedom to engage such relationships was governed by love. Authority played no role and even a slave was protected by this requirement. Therefore the Greeks and Romans could be regarded as people who penetrated at will, but the Jews did not.

⁴⁴ Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 154, a. 11.

⁴⁵ Summa Theologiae II-II, 154, 4. Answer to Objection 3 "Wherefore since fornication is a mortal sin, and much more so the other kinds of lust, it follows that in such like sins not only consent to the act but also consent to the pleasure is a mortal sin. Consequently, when these kisses and caresses are done for this delectation, it follows that they are mortal sins"

Aquinas in fact liberalised the previous teaching of Augustine⁴⁶ but by associating every type of same sex expression with sodomy⁴⁷ and lust, Aquinas denied any possibility that these relationships and any actions that arose from them could be regarded in any way as the natural expressions of an outpouring of love.

The reasons for this change are discussed later in this document, but Aquinas was writing at a time when the Church was re-imposing its authority having been excoriated for scandals associated with the misuse of power and serial sexual abuse. In some part his motivation also arose from the need to counter the impact of the Cathar revolt and the sexual practices they pursued⁴⁸. Today these views of Aquinas have been enshrined as the “Traditional teaching on homosexuality” which is endorsed and affirmed in the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church.

Aquinas had codified the policy of the Church would adopt from the end of the first millennium and he was responding to its then current needs. However this view contradicts the first century attitudes to same-sex relationships where the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was set between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. If any meaningful discussion on the place of homosexuality in the present day Church is to be successful, it must not be based just on the writings of Aquinas or Augustine, but on the views of the early Church⁴⁹.

5:0 Anal Penetration

The interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 which declares that the prohibition contained in this passage is confined to acts of anal penetration alone is more restricted than that which is usually encountered. Despite this it is in line with rabbinic interpretations. More usually today the prohibition in this passage is taken as the prohibition of same-sex intercourse. However making the distinction the penetrator and the penetrated was extremely important in Greco/Roman culture. This is part of the reason why it is necessary for this more restricted, and accurate, definition to be used. When oral sex is considered (fellatio and cunnilingus), the situation becomes more complex. In Ancient Rome, fellatio was considered profoundly taboo. Sexual acts were generally observed through the

⁴⁶ Augustine taught that Adam and Eve have material bodies in Eden. Before the Fall Adam and Eve would have had children without intercourse and that after the Fall they engaged in intercourse in order to propagate. Therefore the original sin of the Fall is transmitted through intercourse. For Augustine intercourse is a necessary evil, it is only permissible in marriage and even then it should only be engaged in as a procreative act. (See: Augustine, *On the Good of Marriage*).

⁴⁷ The definition of the word sodomy has varied over time. In its original sense it referred simply to the act of anal penetration but it is mostly used in the context where lust and other sexual actions are also being condemned.

⁴⁸ Cathar theology is known mainly by what its enemies say about it and it is likely to show them in a less favourable light, but that is sufficient for this purpose. Cathars adopted theological positions directly opposed to Roman Catholic doctrine. This was at least partly on the grounds that enforcing this type of authority did nothing to exorcise the scandals in a corrupt organisation. The Cathars argued that sexual intercourse and reproduction propagated the slavery of spirit to flesh; they considered that informal relationships were preferable to marriage. After the Cathars were militarily defeated in the Albigensian Crusade the Cathar doctrine of encouraging sexual relationships outside marriage was reputed by Aquinas and the Church.

⁴⁹ In “*On the Good of Marriage*” Augustine argued very strongly for the imposition of the universal rule of celibacy on the priesthood of the Church. However he had to enter into convoluted arguments to justify this position. Peter was already married at the beginning of Christ's public ministry, and he and other apostles were all in committed relationships with their wives when Paul was writing the first Epistle to the Corinthians between 53 and 57 AD. According to Clement of Alexandria, Peter and Philip were married and had children. Clement also reported that Peter's wife was martyred before him, and the apostle encouraged her as she was led to her death. Eusebius writes of the relationship between Peter and his wife in these words, “Such as the marriage of these blessed ones, and such was their perfect affection.” There is an underlying presumption that all of the Apostles apart from John were married, however in most cases nothing is known about their wives. Therefore, in order to deal with this contradiction Augustine writes: “Therefore, those who marry only for procreation now—to perpetuate the human race—are not comparable to the holy fathers, who had children in a prophetic manner, for Christ's sake, for the race from which he was to be born”. There was a massive change in outlook between the outlook of the early church and that which is described in the Councils of Elvira and Ancyra which took place at a time just before the Church was accepted by Constantine and was made an instrument of the state.

prism of submission and control. The difference is seen in the two Latin words that are used for the act: "irrumare" (to penetrate orally), and "fellare" (to be penetrated orally). It was considered to be abhorrent for a male citizen to accept fellatio because that would mean that he was penetrated (humiliated), whereas, orally penetrating a woman or another man of lower social status was not humiliating. Known recipients were supposed to have foul breath and were often unwelcome as guests at a dinner table⁵⁰. In Judaism the situation was more complex. There is no ban on oral sex in the bible, and the prohibitions of Leviticus were not considered to apply to the act. Maimonides, who is usually quite conservative in these sexual matters, takes a more liberal approach. He writes: "A man's wife is permitted to him. Therefore a man may do whatever he wishes with his wife. He may have intercourse with her at any time he wishes and kiss her on whatever limb of her body he wants. He may have natural or un-natural relations, as long as he does not bring forth his seed in vain⁵¹. In addition to its own prohibition, same-sex intercourse is also considered an act of giving sperm in vain. Un-natural relations are defined as any sexual activity where ejaculation of sperm does not occur in the traditional place⁵². This includes oral sex, anal sex, or those activities which the rabbis termed "threshing within and without" (premature withdrawal). Talmudic sources talk freely about such activity, permitting it under certain circumstances between husband and wife. Thus un-natural relations is permissible only if it is occasional and not exclusive, and if the intent is mutual pleasure. Unlike the situation in Roman society, there is no absolute prohibition of the act. These differences provide the reason why the definition that Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 only prohibits anal penetration is used in this account.

This first century definition of the nature of the prohibition of anal penetration given in Leviticus 18:33 and 20:13 was very specifically intended. The same or similar definitions also appear to be common to other Middle Eastern societies where their primary application was normally for the purposes of power and domination and for the humiliation of their beaten enemies. Social standing was of paramount importance, that was its principal purpose and it was not to control the deeds of rape and the gratifications of sex. Although Judaism adopted a somewhat different interpretation it still took a similar view. Therefore both humiliation and the lack of hospitality are the reasons for the abhorrence expressed in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, where the Israelite visitors were to be subjected to same sex rape⁵³. The same themes involving power and domination underlie the other references to rape that are found in the Old Testament⁵⁴. For much of its history Israel was a vassal state. More usually the Israelites were on the beaten side but when they were the victors in battle, the bible also instructs them to take the conquered women for themselves and it authorises them to rape those they have conquered, it also spells out how such women were to be treated, and this shows a greater concern for women than may have been found in neighbouring states⁵⁵. The Greeks and Romans had their own but separate prohibitions on the acts of penetration. In same sex intercourse between two adult male citizens in Greco/Roman society only the submissive partner

⁵⁰ See for example: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/priap/prp105.htm> : Smithers, Leonard C. (1890): "Priapeia sive diversorum poetarum in Priapum lusum" or "Sportive Epigrams On Priapus by divers poets in English verse and prose translation" Translated by Sir Richard Burton: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/priap/prpa.htm> The Priapeia is a collection of short Latin poems in the shape of jocular epigrams affixed to the statues of the god Priapus. These were often rude carvings from a tree-trunk, human-shaped, with a huge phallus which could at need be used as a cudgel against robbers. They were placed in the gardens of wealthy Romans, for the twofold purpose of promoting fertility and for preventing depredations on the produce.

⁵¹ Mishnah Torah Issurei Biah 21:9: http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/960647/jewish/Issurei-Biah-Chapter-One.htm

⁵² Rashi on Yevamoth 34b: http://www.come-and-hear.com/yevamoth/yevamoth_34.html

⁵³ 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)

⁵⁴ See for example Judges, Chapter 19

⁵⁵ 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.

was condemned. In Greek society pederasty was also practiced, however this was condemned once the junior partner reached adulthood, and that point was demonstrated when he was able to grow a beard⁵⁶.

The relationships between power and sexual activity were well understood in first century society. However this understanding also led to some surprising conclusions. In Greek society pederasty could be regarded as an educational process since the power relationships that were active were well comprehended and strict regulations were used to control the practice. When it was properly used the child held the power to determine what happened to him and no humiliation was involved⁵⁷. In first century Judaism the prohibitions of Leviticus 18:33 and 20:13 to same-sex intercourse with boys under the age of nine years and one day were applied in a lesser way, or not at all⁵⁸. This is horrific to modern attitudes but it is well written up in the Jewish Halakhah literature. The age of nine years and one day is the age at which a boy was considered to have begun puberty. Below that age a boy was considered to be "Not a male" and he could not be humiliated by being anally penetrated in a sexual act. With girls a lower age limit was applied⁵⁹. It is clear from these examples that the concern was not so much about the act of anal penetration itself but its use as an instrument of power for domination, humiliation and rape. Therefore what is seen as abuse is culturally determined, and condemnation was on the abuse of power rather than the actual act.

The situation was somewhat akin to the sexual relationships in marriage in a gender unequal society. Before any marriage contract was signed a man who forced himself upon another woman might be accused of rape⁶⁰. After the contract was signed, the wife in effect became the property of the husband. Responsibility was expected but in many societies the man could then do what he liked. No humiliation was involved when the latter was socially accepted by the partners. However the Torah also commands that a husband must love his wife, or his wives just as much as, if not more than himself. Even though the man possesses an unrestricted internal and external authority,

⁵⁶ 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 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.

⁵⁷ Improper use was always a concern.

⁵⁸ Sanhedrin 54b-55a

⁵⁹ Modern society condemns sex between an adult and a child in inverse proportion to the age of the child. The younger the child is, the more serious the offence. Talmudic law worked on the reverse scale. Sex with younger children was less significant than sex with older children and in the case of intercourse with a girl the age limit was set at three years. Having intercourse with a girl of this age or above was considered to be an act of betrothal and the man was expected to take her as his wife. No crime was committed if the girl was younger than three years of age, for the sages believed that at this stage in her life the hymen would grow back. Although such acts were permitted in law the Jewish attitudes to love between two people and the other commandments in the Torah regulated the practice. This is made even more clear in Matthew 19:14 when Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." Here Jesus emphasised the purity of the child. What is seen as abuse is culturally determined. The requirement in Judaism that all such relationships are given and received in love is rightly used today to condemn all aspects of paedophilia, promiscuity and inappropriate sexual acts.

⁶⁰ Jewish law regarded the rape of a wife by another man as a crime against the husband, not the wife. Nevertheless in some respects consideration for women was given some status. For example In Deuteronomy 21:13-14 it is made clear that if any man has intercourse with an unattached woman, even if she is a captive or slave, he is required to take her as his wife; and in the case of a free woman the rapist must also pay the bride price to the father, (Deuteronomy 22:28-29).

it is on the tradition of the man as the servant of the family that the strength of family values in Judaism and the matriarchal tradition is based.

This analysis on the development of self identity which is presented in this document indicates that the sense of gender identity and sexual orientation are key foundations on which the rest of selfhood is built. Therefore nothing can compensate for the devastating destruction of self esteem and identity that is brought about by homosexual and heterosexual rape. The violation of the victim in this way becomes a violation of the whole sense of identity in which the ability to make future relationships is often severely damaged or destroyed. It can become a self driving process where the stronger the debasement the victims feel, the stronger their conflicts become. This is compounded when the violator is also a man of authority, who might be a priest in the Church. It is even further compounded when the Church refuses to take the necessary actions once the violation and violator become known. From the third century onwards the Church responded to every such instance with repeated and increasingly strong condemnations. The statements became extremely vitriolic but the Church did not, would not, or could not, counter the problem at source. Therefore an increasingly intemperate cycle of accusation and condemnation arose but this had little apparent effect, and the scandals of priestly sexual abuse would continue to damage the credibility of the Church.

These changes in outlook demonstrate how far attitudes have changed to the types of behaviour that can be regarded as rape since and before the time of Christ. Even though the actions may have changed, when these acts are used to enforce sexual power and domination the same abhorrence remains; and this taps the deepest emotions that people possess. Intercourse in heterosexual marriage expresses the highest degree of love and delight, but when the same physical actions are used for the purpose of rape it creates the greatest disgust. In same sex relationships the same arguments ought to apply. That is the outcome which the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study expect. When they are expressed in love no desire for power is involved and they should be expressions of delight. However such same sex acts possess the potential for social disruption in a gender unequal society, and the prohibitions that are set out in Leviticus 18:33 and 20:13 can still have considerable force. In a world-wide Church which is involved with societies that have many different attitudes to gender equality these cultural differences create the divisions which may destroy the unity of the Church.

Same sex relationships and anal penetration were always contentious issues in gender unequal societies, not just because they could threaten the social order, but also because of their misuse for promiscuity and the practice of safe sex - this is apart from their physical manifestation of the harm created by same sex rape. Therefore it is not surprising that instead of the condemnation of the Church being directed at the abuse of power in acts of anal penetration they became directed against the act of penetration itself. The condemnation by Aquinas is unequivocal and severe: "Wherefore among sins against nature, the most grievous is the sin of bestiality, because use of the due species is not observed. After this comes the sin of sodomy, because use of the right sex is not observed."⁶¹ Aquinas had already decreed that same sex acts of every type were harbingers of lust. This meant that the penalty to be applied to all acts of anal penetration⁶² without regard to the reason for them was to be the same as that which was applied to sexual abuse. As a consequence of this the death penalty for sodomy would be incorporated into in the laws of many states. In place of creating a celebration of relationships, homosexuality was made the scapegoat for sexual abuse.

6:0 Church Attitudes

⁶¹ Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 154, a. 12

⁶² The definition of the word sodomy has varied over time. In its original sense it referred simply to the act of anal penetration but it is mostly used in the context where lust and other sexual actions are also being condemned.

The need to preserve the social order together with the containment of sexual abuse has provided strong motives which the church has employed to make homosexuality become a scapegoat for inappropriate sex. However the first century attitudes also be seen as a culture of two ways. That duality is emphasised in the Greek story of the soul as a charioteer who is driving two horses where the ugly black horse is passion and the noble white horse is reason and self-control. A similar dualism is found in some early Christian liturgy such as the Didache⁶³, which makes the distinction between the way of darkness and the way of light.

It has already been noted that the boundary set between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in first century Greco/Roman and Jewish societies was made between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. There are many concerns which drive the rejection of all types of same sex acts and counter cultures are often found, which may bring together the emotions of distaste and respect. The conflict over whether gender and sexual orientation is identity or desire driven has an impact which extends across many areas both inside and outside the Church. The present doctrine which decrees that the practice of gender and sexually variant activities is always immoral requires the Church to view all other religions and social systems from just one perspective. Observing all other religious behaviour through the prism of its present doctrine forces the church to the view that many of these are fertility cults which revel in promiscuity and sexual abuse.

The neurophysiological and psychological analysis demonstrates that gender and sexually variant orientations are identity driven. The conclusions of this analysis therefore challenge the doctrines of the Church at source. There is no evidence to suggest that people in the first century were less concerned with the issues of morality than people in the present day, and removing the prison of Christian doctrine also shows that this is the case. Any valid judgements on morality must also be made in accordance with the standards which that particular culture or society imposes. Certainly in some, and maybe indeed many religions, promiscuity and sexual abuse may be rife; but as wide a range of moral perspectives can be found within every religious group as that which is found in everyday life. Therefore some people may choose the way of light where relationships which are given in love and commitment can find their true outlet and be fulfilled in the practice of the same-sex acts. However other people may choose the way of darkness which takes the self centred path of lust, physical gratification and greed.

For Greeks and Romans the freedom to engage in sexual activity was based on authority, so it was only the male citizen who adopted the submissive role in a same-sex relationship who was condemned. This also meant that Greek or Roman citizens could engage with any unattached woman or man of lesser status without penalty for the purpose of sexual gratification, and this included penetrative acts. For the Jews however the freedom to engage in penetrative relationships was governed by love. Authority played no role and even a slave was protected by this requirement. Therefore the Greeks and Romans could be regarded as people who penetrated at will, but the Jews did not.

It is easy for Judaism and Christianity to condemn a different culture or society by applying its own moral codes to that society. This attitude easily leads to the adoption of the doctrines which decree that the practice of gender and sexually variant activities is always immoral, but it should be noted that both societies made clear distinctions which separated their prohibitions on anal penetration from the practice of all other types of sexual acts. The moral expectations of these two societies

⁶³ The "Didache" or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles has been thought to originate at some unknown time between the original of the Apostolic Decree (c. 50 AD) and the early third century. The Didache contrasts the "Way of Darkness" with the "Way of Life". It gives a picture of the Church which could only be described as primitive, reaching back to the very earliest stages of the Church's order and practice in a way which largely agrees with the picture presented by the New Testament. At the same time it poses questions for many traditional interpretations of this first period of the Church's life. See for example: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/didache.html>

were clearly very different. The cultural clashes which these created were to dominate relationships during much of the first millennium and it may be argued that the development of these doctrines owes more to the reaction against the cultural clashes that were encountered than to the moralities of the sexual acts.

There were massive changes in the outlook of the Church in its attitudes to celibacy, sexuality and to the role of women during the first three centuries of its existence. The contrast between the outlook of the First Century Church and the Church just before it became the official state religion of the Roman Empire can be made by comparing the writings of the Church Fathers^{64 65 66 67 68} with the decrees of the Councils of Elvira and Ancyra⁶⁹. These took place not long before state approval was conferred on Christianity by Constantine the Great. The reasons for the changes are discussed in depth elsewhere⁷⁰. One major change was the inversion of the power structures from ones which gave worth to the individual, and which was first offered by Jesus in the Gospels, to ones which bestowed power to the state. This same transformation from a protesting religion to a state supported institution marked the transition of celibacy as an ideal to be followed to one where it became a discipline of the Church. The influences of Platonic thought and the pursuit of the ideal of celibacy in the Gospels also led to the desire to sublimate all penetrative sex. Augustine taught that Adam and Eve have material bodies, and that after the "Fall" they engaged in intercourse in order to propagate. Therefore the original sin of the "Fall" is transmitted through intercourse. Intercourse is a necessary evil, it is only permissible in marriage and even then it should only be engaged in as a procreative act.⁷¹ In his book, the "Good of Marriage"⁷² Augustine wrote in favour of the institution of

⁶⁴ Peter was already married (Matthew. 8:14–17) (Mark. 1:29–31) (Luke. 4:38) (1 Corinthians 9:5) at the beginning of Christ's public ministry, and Peter and other apostles were all in committed relationships with their wives when Paul was writing the first Epistle to the Corinthians between 53 and 57 AD. In 1 Corinthians 9:5, Paul wrote "Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas." According to Clement of Alexandria, Peter and Philip were married and had children. Clement also reported that Peter's wife was martyred before him, and the apostle encouraged her as she was led to her death. Eusebius writes of the relationship between Peter and his wife in these words, "Such as the marriage of these blessed ones, and such was their perfect affection." There is an underlying presumption that all of the Apostles apart from John were married, however in most cases nothing is known about their wives.

⁶⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, III, vi, ed. Dindorf, II, 276. Accessed at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/clement-stromata-book3-english.html>

⁶⁶ Clement of Alexandria, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. 2.541 (c. 195). Accessed at: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/early-church-fathers/ante-nicene/>.

⁶⁷ 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/>.

⁶⁸ 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/>.

⁶⁹ From as early as the years 306 and 314, bishops in the Christian Church had enacted legislation in the Council of Elvira and the Council of Ancyra which imposed the rule of celibacy on all who served as religious or priests. For those who were already married Canon 31 of the Council of Elvira declares "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". Accessed at: <http://faculty.cua.edu/pennington/canon%20law/elviracanon.htm> on the 21 August 2011. The Canons of the Council of Ancyra can also be found on the Web.

⁷⁰ For a full analysis see Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access

⁷¹ Under Augustine's doctrine of marriage the Church was reaching the position of condemning all sexual acts. Soon after his conversion Augustine wrote "I have decided that there is nothing I should avoid so much as marriage, I know nothing which brings the manly mind down from the heights more than a woman's caresses and that joining of bodies without which one cannot have a wife". Many believe this was Augustine's definitive conclusion about sex and as Manichee, Augustine was taught that all sexual relations, even for procreative purposes, were evil and were therefore to be avoided. However he later rejected Manichean Gnosticism as well as the strong Platonism of Ambrose. He believed that not to do so would diminish the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Resurrection. Augustine affirmed marriage as the source of three goods: it is (1) a form of human community that makes friendship possible, (2) an appropriate outlet for uncontrollable sexual desires, and (3) a sacrament of inseparable union dissolvable only by death.

⁷² Augustine (ca 401) "On the Good of Marriage". Accessed at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1309.htm>, 25 August 2012.

marriage. However, like the Apostle Paul, he regarded it as a falling from grace and he applied the strong disapproval to the practice of all non-procreative sexual acts.

There are fewer inhibitory factors that act to prevent the practice of same-sex intercourse since it can be indulged in without reproductive consequences or for the practice of safe sex. It can also be engaged in by heterosexual men when there is no other outlet available to them. One might expect sex issues to have been the major issues of concern, however by far the major condemnations in first century Greco/Roman and Jewish society seem to have been socially and status determined. The jurist Paulus stated in his Digest of Roman law, which was written around 300 A.D., that a male who voluntarily is passive to another male should lose half of his estate. He also reiterates an earlier edict barring such men from the legal profession. In 438 A.D. the Roman Emperor Theodosius II confirmed that just the submissive partners in homosexual relationships were to be put to death. The Roman Emperor Justinian, in amendments to his Novels⁷³ No.77 (dating 538) and No.141 (dating 559), declared that the sin of Sodomy was specifically due to same-sex activities and the desire for them⁷⁴. This was the first time that the same penalty of death was applied equally (for a time) to both partners who engage in same-sex intercourse. This declaration was the first Roman legal assignment of the term Sodomy to these activities. However it should be noted that this may not just be due to religious zeal, (which Justinian had) - but also because these people could be made scapegoats for reverses that occurred.

There were many much earlier condemnations of Sodomy which came from within the Church and these were often of great vehemence but they were not enacted in civil ordinances as the Church demanded, either by the Roman Emperors or by the later Carolingian Kings (with the principal exception being the Emperor Justinian). The Carolingian Kings for example republished the Canons of the Council of Ancyra on several occasions and Charlemagne ordered that these were to be issued as guidance for the laity to use. These canons prohibited bestiality and by extension anal penetration, but they did not prohibit other loving same-sex acts. Same-sex abuse and anal penetration as always was strongly condemned but same-sex relationships given in love could still be endorsed. The scandals of sexual abuse committed by the clergy and religious together with the disregard of the sexual prohibitions imposed on the laity eventually became so great that more severe action had to be taken. As always the response of the Church was to increase the penalties against those who broke the vows of celibacy rather than to question the policy of celibacy itself. This strategy was strongly pursued by Pope Gregory VII (1073–85) and his successors who imposed strict discipline on the clergy and vigorously asserted the secular authority and domination of the church.

Although the teachings of Augustine and the Desert Fathers⁷⁵ were seminal in establishing the Church doctrine which stated that any type of expression of gender or sexually variant behaviour is a grievous sin, it is the arguments of Aquinas at the end of the first millennium that have largely set the traditional teaching on homosexuality of the Roman Catholic Church. Aquinas was writing at a time when the failure of the Church to live up to its own doctrines on sexuality and the refusal of the laity to accept them, together with the scandals of priestly sexual abuse had led to a rebellion which threatened to destroy the power and authority of what was then perceived to be a corrupt organisation. The resulting Cathar Revolt was put down by an armed Crusade, but the Church was forced to respond to the charges that had been made against it. Aquinas relaxed some of the more

⁷³ Or New Laws

⁷⁴ Bailey argues the bestiality is the correct translation of the term. See Bailey, Derrick Sherwin; (1955), *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition*, Longmans, Green, pp 73-74, London

⁷⁵ The Desert Fathers were early Christian hermits, ascetics, and monks who lived mainly in the Scetes desert of Egypt beginning around the third century AD. The most well-known was Anthony the Great, who moved to the desert in 270-271 and became known as both the father and founder of desert monasticism. By the time Anthony died in 356, thousands of monks and nuns had been drawn to living in the desert, following Anthony's example, and had a major influence on the development of Christianity.

severe requirements of the previous Augustinian doctrines. However he also needed to counter the impact of the Cathar revolt and the sexual practices that they had adopted⁷⁶. The Cathars had argued that sexual intercourse and reproduction propagated the slavery of spirit to flesh and they considered that informal relationships were preferable to marriage. Therefore the refutation of this required the condemnation of any type of sexual practice or relationship outside marriage. The prohibitions on anal penetration were unaltered but the ability to distinguish between same-sex relationships given in love and those that were engaged in for lust was lost, for all were now condemned. Aquinas used the principles of Natural Law which were derived from Aristotle and others and he also employed the same arguments which had been put forward by the first century and earlier Greek philosophers. However different conclusions were reached. There is a continuous tension in the writings of Aquinas which comes from the need to reconcile the cardinal virtues of reason with the theological values of the Church⁷⁷. Aquinas writes for example that any act which includes fornication, adultery or even rape is not considered a sin at all if it is performed under the command of God⁷⁸. When Aquinas uses logic based on the cardinal values of reason, he provides answers which do not preclude the validity of certain types of loving same-sex relationships but any more movement in this direction is then trumped by the reasons which Aquinas derives from the doctrines of his contemporary Church. These changes in doctrine which Aquinas made shortly after the end of the first millennium may at first sight appear to be minor; but they have had enormous ramifications for the Church.

7:0 Cultural Interpretations

Same sex relationships that were given in love were highly esteemed in First Century Greek society because of the depth and commitment they brought. It was the quality of the relationship that counted, sexual passion was considered to be a distraction and the focus was on creating depth within the relationship rather than pursuit of the sexual act. This emphasis on the value of same sex love is clearly expressed by Plato and by many other Greek philosophers. Examinations of the contemporary Jewish literature show that a similar pattern was also followed. No rules for chavruta partnerships⁷⁹ are therefore found which imposed any boundaries that would approve of strong

⁷⁶ Cathar theology is known mainly by what its enemies say about it and it is likely to show them in a less favourable light, but that is sufficient for this purpose. Cathars adopted theological positions directly opposed to Roman Catholic doctrine. This was at least partly on the grounds that enforcing this type of authority did nothing to exorcise the scandals in a corrupt organisation. The Cathars argued that sexual intercourse and reproduction propagated the slavery of spirit to flesh; they considered that informal relationships were preferable to marriage. After the Cathars were militarily defeated in the Albigensian Crusade the Cathar doctrine of encouraging sexual relationships outside marriage was reputed by Aquinas and the Church.

⁷⁷ Summa Theologica I-II, question 94. Article 5, reply to objection 2. "All men alike, both guilty and innocent, die the death of nature: which death of nature is inflicted by the power of God on account of original sin, according to 1 Samuel 2:6: "The Lord killeth and maketh alive." Consequently, by the command of God, death can be inflicted on any man, guilty or innocent, without any injustice whatever. In like manner adultery is intercourse with another's wife; who is allotted to him by the law emanating from God. Consequently intercourse with any woman, by the command of God, is neither adultery nor fornication. The same applies to theft, which is the taking of another's property. For whatever is taken by the command of God, to Whom all things belong, is not taken against the will of its owner, whereas it is in this that theft consists. Nor is it only in human things, that whatever is commanded by God is right; but also in natural things, whatever is done by God, is, in some way, natural"....

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⁷⁹ Chavruta is a traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students work together to learn, discuss, and debate a shared text. It challenges the student to analyze and explain the material, point out the errors in his partner's

heterosexual friendships on the one hand and which would disapprove of homosexual relationships on the other. On the contrary the reverse outlook is expressed and high degrees of intimacy were encouraged. However the requirement to prevent social disruption also placed strict boundaries on its expression. Religious practice gave suitable outlets for this since these social restrictions could be set aside. Thus same sex relationships were encouraged in chavruta interactions and in Jewish history there are frequent accounts of rabbinic partnerships where strong degrees of intimacy were found⁸⁰.

On the other hand the rabbis of antiquity considered same sex relationships to be potentially very dangerous because of the consequences of abuse and the disruption to social order, particularly in a gender unequal society. The most obvious biblical prohibition is that in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, and in the Living Bible of today these passages have been translated as "Homosexuality is absolutely forbidden, for it is an enormous sin". However as it is noted the first century interpretation of these passages was that they only prohibited anal penetrative sex⁸¹. This early interpretation is well attested by first century sources and it is the one that Jesus and John would have understood. It is very different from the modern understanding and this is just one example of how translation drift and reinterpretation has changed the meaning of the text.

The rabbis also placed strong additional restrictions on the practice of same-sex acts. These were intended to promote social order and the advancement of the Jewish religion. However in Leviticus the biblical prohibition on anal penetration was very specific. There were no other rabbinic edicts or biblical prohibitions which restricted sexual behaviour in loving relationships in any other way, and this also includes engaging in oral sex⁸². At a first sight Paul's condemnations in Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10 do indeed appear to condemn every type of same-sex act. However Paul makes a very deliberate use of the relevant verses in Leviticus, as they are translated in the Greek Septuagint, when he coins the word "arsenokoitai", to describe people who engage in heterosexual and in same-sex promiscuity and prostitution as "Abusers of themselves with mankind"⁸³. By linking his invented word directly to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 he refers his first century reader back to that then recognised interpretation of Leviticus which prohibited only anal penetrative sex. Paul's concerns are therefore about abuse and anal penetration⁸⁴. They are not

reasoning, and question and sharpen each other's ideas, often arriving at entirely new insights into the meaning of the text. Chavruta is most associated with the Tannaim and Amoraim periods (0-500 AD) and it is almost certain that Jesus would have engaged in this didactic process.

⁸⁰ See Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access and Greenberg, Steven; (2004), "Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition". The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN 10: 0-299-19094-3.

⁸¹ There is little controversy in the rabbinic tradition about the meaning of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. It is translated in various ways but the basic meaning has always appeared quite clear. It is also cited by Josephus in "Against Apion"; and by Philo in "Abraham", and these latter two sources were contemporary with Jesus and Paul. The ancient rabbis also ruled nearly two thousand years ago that any homosexual sexual activity short of anal intercourse is not included in the biblical prohibition (Babylonian Talmud, Yevamot 54a-56a; Sotah 26b; Niddah 13a; Maimonides, Perush L'Mishnayot on Sanhedrin 54a).

⁸² This is the same interpretation as that adopted in December 2006 by the American Conservative Judaism's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards when they 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.

⁸³ There are many arguments over the interpretation of the word "arsenokoitai". See for example: Cannon, Justin R. (2008). "The Bible, Christianity, & Homosexuality". CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (July 14, 2008) ISBN-10: 1438249616. ISBN-13: 978-1438249612. Available at <http://inclusiveorthodoxy.yolasite.com/resources/biblestudy.pdf> See also Martin, Dale B. "Arsenokoités and Malakos: Meanings and Consequences" in Brawley Robert L. ed (1996) "Biblical Ethics & Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture". Westminster John Knox Press. ISBN 0664256384, ISBN-13:978-0664256388. Available at: <http://www.clqs.org/arsenokoit%C3%A9s-and-malakos-meanings-and-consequences> And Scroggs, Robin. (1984) "New Testament and Homosexuality". Augsburg Fortress Publishing (August 1, 1984). ISBN-10: 0800618548 ISBN-13: 978-0800618544

⁸⁴ Walker, Jr. William O. (2008) "What the New Testament Says about Homosexuality" Westar's membership magazine - The Fourth R 21,3 (May-June 2008) accessed on the 15 November 2012 at http://www.westarinstitute.org/Periodicals/4R_Articles/homosexuality.html

about sexual orientation⁸⁵. Thus Paul condemns all heterosexual and same-sex actions where lust is the motive but he does not condemn those which are given in love, and by doing this he confirms that the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was set between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex.

8:0 Eunuchs

These considerations also raise an interesting perspective on 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. For the social culture of the time that statement was very direct. For example Origen is commonly known to have taken this passage literally, however he was not the only person to self castrate and Hester lists many others⁸⁶. For these people the drive was for complete devotion by denying the temptations of sex. The activities were quite common and the Church was forced to take repeated action to condemn the practice⁸⁷.

The moral behaviour was of major concern and the type of eunuch which is described in Matthew 19:12 is a person that has long been viewed as a symbol of chastity and celibacy. However a great deal of other evidence reveals a highly sexed and morally dubious “third type of person” who exploits and embodies the worst fears of masculine vulnerability and sexual transgression. Those eunuchs were certainly not celibate; they were not even viewed as chaste, and indeed they were characterized by the frequency, ease of and adeptness with which they performed sex acts with both men and women. It was because of these ways in which they transgressed the sex-gender

⁸⁵ Paul's main condemnations are contained in Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10. In these passages Paul refers back to the Jewish interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 to give authority to his teaching. Therefore the extent of these condemnations is limited to what the prohibition contained in Leviticus meant to first century society. It is shown in this analysis that this prohibition related to anal penetration alone (by extension same-sex intercourse), and to no other same-sex act. Same-sex love could be expressed freely in these relationships provided that act was avoided. It is additionally shown that the reasons for the prohibitions in Leviticus were because of the abuses of power in individual relationships and also between subject and dominant societies. Paul also set his condemnations in the context of the worship of the creature rather than the creator and the resulting sexual abuse. As it is shown in this analysis, when issues of abuse of power and sex are absent, and within loving committed and faithful same-sex relationships, there should be no automatic prohibition of any same-sex act of sex. It is further shown that this is identical to the teaching of Jesus. However these matters are of strong contention amongst biblical scholars and more complete descriptions are given in other documents. See sections 7:14 and 8:12 of Gilchrist, S. (2015a): *Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process* and Gilchrist, S. (2013a) *An Unfinished Reformation*: for more complete accounts.

⁸⁶ Advocates against Christian ritual castration had an uphill battle ahead of them. Against them stood not only a teaching whose authority and authenticity were considered unassailable, but also a widely practiced and ancient act of religious devotion. Throughout Christian and European history there have been those who took and taught this statement literally: Valentinus (whose sect was centuries later declared heretical; mid-second century), Julius Cassianus (also declared heretical; also mid-second century), Basilides (also declared heretical; 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; early-third century) are among the most famous of thousands that chose ritual castration. Several early Christian encratite and ascetic movements (centred mainly in Egypt) are known to have members among whom were numbered eunuchs. The earliest report of the desire for castration among Christians comes from the second century writings of Justin. The cloisters of Egypt and Syria were centres of 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 Nicea is testimony to the degree to which castration was practiced. (Hester, J. David, (2005))

⁸⁷ 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

boundaries, and from their threat to the social structure of society⁸⁸, that they were despised and considered morally dubious and profligate.

However one chooses to read Matthew 19:12 it becomes very clear is that the profligate eunuch is not the type of eunuch presented in the New Testament. This eunuch is instead perceived as a figure of purity and trust, someone who transcends gender and who stands with honour against the abuses of sex, promiscuity, procreativity and marriage. Matthew has set this passage within the context of marriage and family-kinship relationships, and this linkage is clearly intended⁸⁹. Other passages in the Bible give this type of eunuch a very high status. In Isaiah Chapter 56, Verses 3-4 it is written: "Nor let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree". For thus says the Lord, "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off". In Acts the Ethiopian eunuch is the symbol who takes the Gospel to the wider world (Acts 8:26-40). Unlike Isaiah 56, where the eunuch is promised a return to society and a reward set in terms of that society's sex-gender ideology, in the New Testament it is the transgressive body of the eunuch that symbolizes the Kingdom of God, and who is charged with bringing its mission to the world. Thus this affirmation of relationships that are given in love, faithfulness or asceticism transcends both gender and sex. This is the type of transcendence which would enable Paul to write, without any qualification, in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus".

Concepts of transcendence of sex and gender played an important role in the early church.⁹⁰ However there were also conflicts over whether this passage about eunuchs should be literally or figuratively taken⁹¹. Even though the word eunuch was usually used to describe a castrated male it could also be given the broader meaning of a person who could not, or did not, or who chose not to engage in sexual intercourse either for procreation or anal penetration. Cultural differences were important. In Greek and Roman cultures the literal understanding would be more expected because castration was routinely practiced. However the rejection of castration in Jewish society meant that the figurative version is more likely to be employed⁹². This was also the position that the Church

⁸⁸ Castration was not usually voluntary and loyalty was always suspected

⁸⁹ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it." Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." [ESV]

⁹⁰ Transcendence is the opposite of repression. It requires self acceptance and a positive approach which can include the celebration of same-sex relationships when they are given in love. It aims to celebrate the whole of one's identity in bringing richness to life. However the transgression of sex-gender boundaries by inappropriate and licentious behaviour is strongly condemned.

⁹¹ Great rhetorical discussions were required to overcome the "natural" interpretation of this passage. Those who wished to condemn the practice of castration it could not simply dismiss it, since it was the authenticity of the authorship that secured its place. Cultural differences may however be important for the interpretation of this passage. Judaism did not condone physical castration for any purpose but that was not the case for other Middle Eastern religions. By including this statement, Jesus would have been directly addressing the Gallae and other equivalent religious groups.

⁹² Among the nations of antiquity, the Jews alone imposed a religious prohibition on the emasculation of men and even animals. Judaism has always forbidden all forms of castration. The Bible directly refers to the ban on castration by excluding castrated animals from serving as sacrifices on the altar (Lev. 22:24), also by banning a descendant of Aaron "who has his stones crushed" from the priestly service (Lev. 21:20), and a man "that is crushed or maimed in his privy

adopted⁹³. It can also be argued that if Jesus had intended this passage to be taken literally he would instead have used the more precise words, saris/sarisim (or possibly qedeshim/qedeshoth), since these were specific Jewish words for castrated males. In addition, the distinction between people who were eunuchs through no choice of their own, and those who wilfully made themselves eunuchs was recognized broadly within the ancient world and the same distinction is made in the statement by Jesus himself. This meant that the invitation of Jesus was extended to everyone and it also meant that the Gallae⁹⁴ and self-castrated priests of the other Goddess cults were included⁹⁵. The inclusivity contained in this passage may give comfort to transgendered people and to the gay and lesbian community. However the major issue to note is the serious degree of concern that was devoted to this issue. It will later be shown that the acceptance or otherwise of eunuchs within the Christian Church was based entirely on their commitment and behaviour, without regard to the nature of their emasculation⁹⁶. Thus the idea that all men could "Make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" conveyed important messages for the Christian attitudes to celibacy and to the role of priesthood in the Christian Church.

9:0 Transgender Issues and the Third Sex.

Any expression of gender and sexually variant behaviour tests the social expectations of society. Therefore in many societies and in different cultures throughout the world the expression of gender variant or sexually variant orientations creates complex emotions which may include various combinations of distaste and respect. This is notably true in societies where gender discrimination is enforced. Strong sentiments and extreme divergences of behaviour are often found. Therefore it is essential to make a clear distinction between the moralities involved in the use of transcendence, repression and transgression in the approaches which people adopt. Engagement in inappropriate behaviour by people whose principal aim is to transgress the sex-gender boundaries for gratification and lust can cause very great harm⁹⁷. Repression is often advocated instead and it may be argued for on theological grounds. It is the approach that many Christian Churches espouse, however the tension that it creates may lead to breakdown and distress and the frustration which results can lead

parts" from entering into "the assembly of the Lord" (Deut. 23:2). In the Talmud (Shab. 110b–111a) and codes (e.g., Sh. Ar. EH 5:11–14), the biblical interdict is widely extended to cover any deliberate impairment of the male reproductive organs in domestic animals, beasts, birds, and man, including the castration of a person who is already impotent or genitally maimed. However the need to accommodate people who had been castrated was important since the practice was widespread across the Middle East. The Bible and the Talmud also defines how such people were to be treated. (Encyclopaedia Judaica. 2008 , Gale Group. ISBN 13: 9780028659282. ISBN 10: 0028659287).

⁹³ Hester, J. David, as above

⁹⁴ Self castrated priests of the Goddess Cybele. The Gallae dressed as women and identified themselves either as the equivalent of women or members of a third sex. It was less the cross dressing and more the type of behaviour of some of the Gallae that was the major concern in contemporary society.

⁹⁵ This also has relevance to the passage in Deuteronomy 22:5 which 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". This is the standard passage which opponents often use to condemn cross gender behaviour. Traditional Jewish views in general are that it is intended to prevent deception for illicit purposes and indeed this law appears in Deuteronomy in the context of laws against deceit. However Christian interpretations take a different slant and they link these prohibitions to Deuteronomy 23:17, 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". The differences in interpretation are discussed more fully later in this document. Intriguingly Deuteronomy 22:5 was not used to condemn the act of cross dressing itself in the early Church.

⁹⁶ This may be contrasted with the traditions of Judaism which prohibited priestly service by those who has been castrated or genitally maimed.

⁹⁷ It is shown in this document that, apart from of anal penetration, the Jews and Greeks welcomed the expression of same-sex relationships given in love but they also strongly condemned what they considered as all types of inappropriate and licentious sexual behaviour. However condemnations were base on motives rather than acts and it must be remembered that the moral codes were also different from those of the present day. The prohibition on anal penetration was because of its use for humiliating beaten opponents, together with the disruption to social order and the harm adulterous relationships could create. This places a particular responsibility on gender variant and relationship variant people. While responsible behaviour can be welcomed and celebrated, irresponsible behaviour can cause great damage to personal relationships and to the wellbeing of society.

to issues of sexual abuse which for centuries have plagued the Church. On the other hand those people who seek to transcend gender may be understood to celebrate and express the ideals of both lives.⁹⁸ This demands both self acceptance and a positive approach and this type of inclusive transcendence may be highly regarded.

Some religions believe that holding both the male and female experience in one body is the closest that human beings can get to holiness and that in this relationship the worshipper "Receives the inner-most essence and power of a God."⁹⁹ In these traditions the descriptions of "Two spirit" or "Double gendered" may be used. A wide variety of approaches are encountered. In other cultures these people may be considered to belong to a "Third Sex". The possession of this inclusiveness is often considered to be appropriate to a priestly role and in those societies where the requisite outlets for behaviour are provided such people can have a very high status. Indeed the reverence which they are accorded can commonly exceed the esteem that is given to other people who conform to the normal expectations of their sex. In Ancient Rome the people who transcended the sex-gender boundaries could be described as "The Wise Ones, the Pure Ones and the Holy Ones"^{100 101}. However those who chose the path of transgression instead were severely condemned for their acts.

The same variations in attitude are found across all cultures and continents. In Judaism, and in early Christianity, perceptions equivalent to these can also be found. In Isaiah it is made clear that eunuchs were given a special place even though they were barred by the bible from taking a priestly role.^{102 103} There is no equivalent passage in the bible which refers to transgender people but the

⁹⁸ The relationship between transgender people and religion varies widely around the world. Religions range from condemning any gender-variant behaviour, to honouring transgender people as religious leaders. Views within a single religion can vary considerably. Buddhist scripture does not distinguish same-sex sexual activity from heterosexual activity. In Thai Buddhism, being katoey (an umbrella term that roughly maps to a range of identities from male to female transsexuality to male homosexuality) is seen as being part of one's karma. In Shinto, Shirabyōshi, female or transgendered kami are associated with same-sex love or gender variance. They are linked to Shinto priests of the same name, who are usually female (or occasionally transgender) and perform ritual dances in traditional men's clothing. In African religious beliefs the Akan people of Ghana for example, have a pantheon of gods that includes personifications of androgynous of transgender deities. The indigenous population of Australia have a shamanic religion, which includes a pantheon of gods, and the rainbow serpent god Ungud has been described as androgynous or transgendered. Third gender, or gender variant, spiritual intermediaries are found in many pacific island cultures. The pre-Christian Philippines had a polytheistic religion, which included the transgender or hermaphroditic gods Bathala and Malyari, whose names means "Man and Woman in One" and "Powerful One" respectively. Two-Spirit People is an umbrella term that is now sometimes used what were previously known as berdaches. These are indigenous North Americans who fulfil one of many mixed gender roles found traditionally among many Native Americans and Canadian First Nations communities. Two-spirit people were both respected and feared in many tribes. They frequently became practitioners of tribal medicine. Although success could bring high status they could be likely to be suspected of witchcraft in cases of failed harvest, or the death of a tribal member.

⁹⁹ Conner, Randy. (1993). "Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections between Homoeroticism and the Sacred" Harper, San Francisco, p 102. As cited in "Paul, the Goddess Religions and Queers: Romans 1:23-28" accessed 14 September 2012. at <http://www.jeramyt.org/papers/paulcybl.html>

¹⁰⁰ Abbott, Elizabeth (2001) "A History of Celibacy" James Clarke & Co., 2001 - 493 pages. ISBN 0718830067, 9780718830069

¹⁰¹ Costine, Lauren (2007) "Diana How Has the Repression of the Sacred Feminine in the Patriarchal Culture Affected Female Sexuality from a Depth Psychological Perspective?" ProQuest, 2007 ISBN 1109006705, 9781109006704

¹⁰² Most eunuchs were slaves and were people of very low status, who were often regarded with contempt. Some may have reinforced this contempt by the behaviour which they adopted. However castrated men were widely employed at the ancient courts to guard women and many also reached positions of high responsibility. This practice was adopted in the courts of the Assyrian empire. The bible remains largely silent on these issues but it strongly suggests that certain Jews taken into Exile were castrated to serve various kings. Thus Ahikar, the Jewish chief cupbearer to the Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon was a eunuch (Tobit 1:21-22). The same was almost certainly true of Nehemiah, who served as a cupbearer later to the Persian king Artaxerxes I (Nehemiah 2). Daniel and the other youths whom Nebuchadnezzar took from Jerusalem to Babylon to serve in his court (Daniel 1) were almost certainly castrated, as well as Mordecai, who is a major figure in the Book of Esther (2:21, 6:10), and who seems to have served as a palace doorkeeper for Ahasuerus (Xerxes I). Esther is a Jewish girl who becomes Queen to King Xerxes I, and through her bravery, she is able to thwart an attempt to slaughter all the Jews living in Persia at that time. In this story Jewish eunuchs

Mishna requires that such people are not to be harmed¹⁰⁴ and the Babylonian Talmud has extensive discussions which consider how both intersex and transgendered people can be incorporated into the rituals which Judaism required^{105 106}. The contemporary Judean, Greek and Roman attitudes to same-sex relationships have already been discussed earlier in this document and also in greater depth elsewhere¹⁰⁷. Purity of motive, responsibility and restraint were the guiding factors and it has been shown that the boundary line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was set between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. Loving same sex relationships were highly valued and First century Judaism also took the same approach even though there were important cultural differences which related to anal penetration. This meant that instead of rejecting all enactments of homosexual attraction, the Jews, like the Greeks and Romans, encouraged its expression for the depth of relationships and understanding, the robustness of discussion, the sense of purpose and the commitment it brought. Nevertheless in all of these traditions there were strong concerns about the consequences of inappropriate sexual behaviour and clear boundaries were set for its expression. In the following sections of this document the first century relationships between the Christian Church and Greco/Roman culture, and their attitudes to gender identity and sexually variant behaviour is examined. How the approach of the Church to all types of sexual and gender variant behaviour changed from those that were found in the first century societies at the time of Jesus to those of the present day is also discussed.

10:0 Cults and Traditions

One such transgender or “Third sex” culture is found today in the Hijras in India. The Hijras undergo emasculation in which part or whole of the genitals are removed, they adopt female costume and display female-like mannerisms. The place of the Hijras is clearly set out in the Ramayana and in the Hindu Epics so this “third gender” has always been acknowledged to be part of society¹⁰⁸. The Hijras were bestowed with the innate ability to curse or bless weddings and infant male children, and many do fear their curse if they are not appeased. Although the Hijras are most often uninvited to the wedding, the host will usually pay them a fee. The notion that the Hijras retain a special place in Indian society is not considered unnatural. Their role is sanctioned in the Hindu scriptures. However even though the Hijras are revered for their supernatural powers, their aggressive begging in the street, the lifestyles of some Hijras¹⁰⁹ and their use of threats also makes them despised.

play a dominant role and this is fundamental to the text. Jews read the story of Esther in the synagogue at the festival of Purim. It is usually an entertaining and rowdy occasion where the synagogue is crowded with men, women and children, some wear their best Sabbath clothes, but others dress up in colourful costumes and masks. It is a celebration of joy at the deliverance of the Jews from the slaughter that awaited them.

¹⁰³ Gerig, Bruce. (2010). “Homosexuality in the Bible”. Eunuchs in the OT, Part 2. Castration in Ancient Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia extracted from <http://epistle.us/hbarticles/eunuchs2.html> on the 26 August 2011

¹⁰⁴ Mishna, Seder Zeraim, Tractate Bikkurim, Chapter 4 [Tosefta Bikkurim, Chapter 2]. While the Mishna requires that such people should not be harmed, the Babylonian Talmud contains extended discussions on how these and intersex people should be integrated into Jewish society.

¹⁰⁵ Babylonian Talmud: Book 7: Tract Baba Bathra (Last Gate)

¹⁰⁶ Kukla, Rabbi Elliot (2006): “A Created Being of Its Own: Toward a Jewish Liberation Theology for Men, Women and Everyone Else” Accessed 2 July 2012 at http://www.transtorah.org/PDFs/How_I_Met_the_Tumtum.pdf

¹⁰⁷ Gilchrist, S. (2012). “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”. See footer for access

¹⁰⁸ Nanda, Serena; Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India; Wadsworth Modern Anthropology Library, ISBN 0-534-12204-3

¹⁰⁹ Most Hijras live at the margins of society with very low status. Few employment opportunities are available and many get their income from performing at ceremonies, begging, or sex work. They are often perceived as a third sex, and most see themselves as neither men nor women. However some may see themselves (or be seen as) females, feminine males or androgynous people. Unlike many Western transsexual women, Hijras generally do not attempt to pass as women. The usual partners of Hijras, and the similar Kothis, are masculine men, whose gender identity is that of a “normal” male who penetrates. While Kothis are usually distinguished from Hijras as a separate gender identity, both groups often dress as women, act in a feminine manner in public spaces, and use feminine language to refer to themselves and each other. However when the present day behaviour of the Hijras is being discussed it should be remembered that the years of western influence and colonisation are likely to have strongly affected the perception that is currently held.

A similar culture was found within the first century Roman Empire. A Gallus (or a Galla)¹¹⁰ was a male eunuch priest of the goddess Cybele. The Gallae castrated themselves during an ecstatic celebration called the "Day of Blood", which took place yearly on March 24¹¹¹. Kufler cites a second century description of the practice¹¹²: "The youth, for whom these things lie in store throws off his clothes, rushes to the centre with a great shout and takes up a sword..... He grabs it and immediately castrates himself. Then he rushes through the city holding in his hands the parts he has cut off. He takes female clothing and women's adornment from whatever house he throws these parts into". The Gallae dressed in women's costume, they wore their hair long and bleached and they wore jewellery and heavy make-up¹¹³. Cybele and the Gallae drew great ire from both Jews and the Christian Church. As with the Hirjas, 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 Philo¹¹⁴. Another early Christian denunciation was given by Clement of Alexandria¹¹⁵. A further third century Christian condemnation came from Julius Firmicus Maternus¹¹⁶ 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 "obscenities" that were "gross and immodest"¹¹⁷, describing them as "more unseemly than all scenic abomination"¹¹⁸. He 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"¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁰ Within the cult the female term was used. Since transsexuality is about identity and as transsexual people consider themselves to be members of the sex opposite to that assigned at birth the female term is also used in this document.

¹¹¹ Vermaseren, Maarten J. (1977). "Cybele and Attis: the myth and the cult", translated by A. M. H. Lemmers, London: Thames and Hudson, p.115

¹¹² The earliest detailed reference to this ceremony is from Syria in the second century C. E. Its author, called Pseudo-Lucian, says that the goddess worshipped might be Aphrodite, or Rhea, or Isis, or Hera. Kuefler, Matt: (2003) "The Practice of Self-Castration in Early Christianity." On the website of the Pacific School of Religion's Centre for Lesbian and Gay Studies, from a March 6, 2003 address. Available at: http://www.clgs.org/5/5_4_2.html.

¹¹³ The Roman State adopted and developed a particular form of the Cult of Cybele and claimed her conscription as a key religious component in their success against Carthage during the Punic Wars. An account of Cybele's recruitment to the Roman cause highlights the piety, moral purity and high status of the Romans who were involved. However the meaning and morality of her cults and priesthoods were topics of debate and dispute in Greek and Roman literature. They remain so in modern scholarship. Senior priests in Rome were expected to fund the running costs of their temples, assistants, cults and festivals however the Gallae represented an inversion of this power structure. As eunuchs, they were forbidden Roman citizenship and rights of inheritance and their living depended on the pious generosity of others. For a few days of the year, during the Megalesia, Cybele's laws allowed them to roam the streets and beg for money. They were unmistakably marked out as Gallae by their regalia, and their notoriously effeminate dress and demeanour, but as priests of a state cult, they were sacred and inviolate.

¹¹⁴ 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".

¹¹⁵ 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)

¹¹⁶ 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).

¹¹⁷ Augustine: *City of God* ii.5

¹¹⁸ Augustine: *City of God* vi.7

¹¹⁹ Augustine: *City of God* vii.26

The Gallae also identified themselves either as the equivalent of women or as members of an independent third sex¹²⁰. Given the strength of their views on sexual expression¹²¹ Augustine and Philo might have been thought to target most strongly the practices of promiscuity, prostitution and sexual abuse. However the tone of their rejection is not just concerned about sexual practice. It was their appearance and the feminine behaviour of these priests, as much as it was their physical emasculation that was most distressing. Both issues combined to reinforce the outward sense of gender transgression and both attacked the social structure that society enforced. Some of the practices of the cult paralleled those of Christian belief. The criticisms of Augustine and Philo judged the behaviour of the Gallae against Leviticus 18:22, 20:13 and 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". It may be surprising to note that contrary to many modern expectations, the denunciation which is given in Deuteronomy 22:5, which states that: "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whosoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God", is not directly used in these condemnations. The reasons for that omission are discussed later in this document.

The behaviour of the Gallae was also condemned by Greco/Roman society. This disapproval was largely for the impurity of motives and the excesses of their practices. From the Roman perspective the unacceptable excesses of sexual behaviour were further reinforced by their self-castration since their rejection of masculinity was an affront to the social status and to the male superiority which society enforced¹²². This is why a Roman citizen at first could not be legally castrated, although the situation changed with the greater acceptance of the cult¹²³. In Roman documents the close association of the Gallae with prostitutes and with other sex workers is also widely reported: one contemporary writer states that that Gallae and sex workers spent a lot of time together "As outcasts

¹²⁰ In line with the Greco/Roman moral codes they could then be anally penetrated by men without any censure being applied. It was impurity of motives coupled with the excesses of these practices that Roman society condemned.

¹²¹ It should be noted that, except for the purpose of procreation, under Augustine's doctrine of marriage the Church was reaching the position of condemning all sexual acts. Soon after his conversion Augustine wrote "I have decided that there is nothing I should avoid so much as marriage, I know nothing which brings the manly mind down from the heights more than a woman's caresses and that joining of bodies without which one cannot have a wife". Many believe this was Augustine's definitive conclusion about sex and as Manichee, Augustine was taught that all sexual relations, even for procreative purposes, were evil and were therefore to be avoided. However he later rejected Manichean Gnosticism as well as the strong Platonism of Ambrose. He believed that not to do so would diminish the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Resurrection. Augustine affirmed marriage as the source of three goods: it is (1) a form of human community that makes friendship possible, (2) an appropriate outlet for uncontrollable sexual desires, and (3) a sacrament of inseparable union dissolvable only by death. Augustine also taught that Adam and Eve have material bodies in Eden and that after the Fall they engaged in intercourse in order to propagate. Therefore the original sin of the Fall is transmitted through intercourse. Thus intercourse is a necessary evil, it is only permissible in marriage and even then it should only be engaged in as a procreative act.

¹²² Evidence from the ancient sources is abundant and easily accessible. Josephus, AD 37-100, used the term *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. *Malakos* can refer to many things: the softness of expensive clothes, the richness and delicacy of gourmet food, the gentleness of light winds and breezes. When it was used as a term of moral condemnation, the word referred to something that was perceived as "soft". For example : laziness, degeneracy, decadence, lack of courage. Were all summed as vices belonging to one ancient category: the feminine. For the ancients the connection between them was seen as having common sense and was natural. Women were weak, fearful, vulnerable and tender: they stayed indoors and protected their soft skin and nature: their flesh was more moist, more flaccid, and more porous than male flesh, which was why their bodies retained all that excess fluid that must be expelled every month. The female was quintessentially penetrable; their pores were looser than men's. One might even say that in the ancient male ideology women existed to be penetrated. It was their purpose (*telos*). And their "softness" or "porousness" was nature's way of inscribing on and within their bodies this reason for their existence. Martin Dale B. (1995). "The Corinthian Body" New Haven: Yale, 1995, pp 32-34,222,230-31, 241-42.

¹²³ Roman citizens were prohibited from becoming Gallae, primarily because of their repulsion of emasculation until 101 BCE, when the laws were altered to allow certain citizens to become members of the cult. Around 50 CE, Claudius removed all restrictions preventing citizens from becoming gallae. Eventually, the head of the gallae, the Archgallus, became a state-appointed position, and the gallae's primary festival, the Day of Blood, was incorporated into the public religious calendar along with Cybele's Megalensia, which then became a multi-week event.

often do”, and a large number of other stories of sexual impropriety are encountered^{124 125}. A less than flattering account of the festival behaviour is given by Ovid, however he is unusual among Latin love poets and Romans in general, for taking an aggressively heterosexual stance¹²⁶. The same practices were not just confined to the Gallae. Like the priests of Cybele the priests of Artemis and other goddess cults¹²⁷ were frequently eunuchs, described as effeminate, and they were sexually penetrated^{128 129}. The term Galli or Gallae may sometimes be used to cover all of the groups, and with all of them similar concerns over sexual practices were expressed.

However the motives may vary greatly. The act of self-castration during an ecstatic ritual is hardly an academic qualification for the priesthood, and a very wide range of outlooks may be found. Some may have taken advantage of their situation entirely for the misuse of sex, but there were other reasons for eunuch priests to offer themselves to men for anal penetration. It could be a method of transmitting the blessings of the virgin goddess to laymen who were seeking fertility in their own reproductive lives. A full discussion of this is presented later in this document. As the priests and agents for the goddess who acted in this capacity they were seen to transcend both gender and sex.

These sexual liberties may be considered to provide a strong justification for the condemnations by Philo, Augustine and others. However a strong dualism is encountered in the cult of Cybele and the sexual exploits are only part of the story. In the varying mythological accounts, Attis, the Phrygian shepherd, whose worship is integral to the cult of Cybele, castrates himself because of the jealousy and passions arising from their ill-fated love affair. His fate served as the model for the Gallae priests, who underwent castration to become Cybele's dedicated and chaste servants. Therefore instead of sex their story is one of intense loyalty and love. If the cult of Cybele and Attis was to reach its elevated status in Greek and Roman society and if Cybele was to come to be called the “Great Mother”, there had to be much more to its values than the pursuit of illicit sex. This means that the complete range of both gender and sexually variant behaviour must be considered and this will be used to model an alternative approach.

In complete contrast to the condemnations of sexual practice, the purity of the Goddess Cybele is emphasised in many of the Roman traditions. Rome's most virtuous matrons conducted the statue of the Goddess to the temple of Victoria when it arrived in Rome and the account of Cybele's recruitment to the Roman cause highlights the piety, together with the moral purity and the high status of the Romans who were involved, the success of their religious stratagem, and the power of the Goddess herself¹³⁰. Julian the Apostate; or Julian the Philosopher, who was the last Pagan Roman Emperor was also a noted philosopher and Greek writer¹³¹. He supported the restoration of

¹²⁴ Apuleius in the 2nd century CE (Golden Ass, 188-89) tells a story describing a travelling band of priests of the Goddess Cybele. “The eunuch whose name was Philebus, led me off to his lodgings. When he reached the door he called out: “Look, girls, Look! I have brought you a lovely new man-servant!” The girls were a set of disgusting young eunuch priests who broke into falsetto screams and hysterical giggles of joy, thinking that Philebus really meant what he said, and that they would now have a fine time with me... This queer family included one real man, a great big slave, whom they had bought with money collected by begging. When they went out, leading the Goddess in procession, he would walk in front playing a horn--he played extremely well--and at home they used in him all sorts of ways, especially in bed”..

¹²⁵ See also 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)

¹²⁶ See for example Ovid *Fasti*: Book IV: April 4 The Megalesian Festival of Cybele: accessed at <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/OvidFastiBkFour.htm> 16 October 2012.

¹²⁷ Artemis is described in the bible as Diana of the Ephesians. See Acts Chapter 19.

¹²⁸ Paul, the Goddess Religions and Queers: Romans 1:23-28

I. Romans 1:23-28—GLB or Idolaters?.

¹²⁹ Kroger, Richard Clark, Kroger Katherine Clark (1998) “I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence” Baker Academic (February 1, 1998).

ISBN-10: 0801052505 ISBN-13: 978-0801052507 also Kroger, Catherine Clark (1996) “Apostle Paul,” HR 35 (1996).

¹³⁰ This was black meteoric stone

¹³¹ He was a nephew of Constantine and he ruled from 361 to 363

Hellenistic paganism as the state religion and in his "Hymn to Cybele" Julian writes "Grant unto all men happiness, of which the sum and substance is the knowledge of the gods; and to the Roman people universally, first and foremost to wash away from themselves the stain of atheism, and in addition to this, grant them propitious Fortune, that shall assist them in governing the empire for many thousands of years to come! To myself grant for the fruit of my devotion to thee; -Truth in belief concerning the gods, the attainment of perfection in religious rites, and in all the undertakings which we attempt as regards warlike or military measures, valour coupled with good luck, and the termination of my life to be without pain, and happy in the good hope of a departure for your abodes!". Elsewhere he writes "...Who is then the Mother of the Gods? She is the source of the intellectual and creative gods, who in their turn guide the visible gods: she is both the mother and the spouse of mighty Zeus; She came into being next to and together with the great Creator; She is in control of every form of life, and the Cause of all generation; She easily brings to perfection all things that are made...She is the Motherless Maiden, enthroned at the very side of Zeus, and in very truth is the Mother of All the Gods."¹³²

In further of his writings Julian makes use of logic and argument to affirm his support of Hellenic paganism and his rejection of the dominance of Christian beliefs¹³³. Many other invocations to Cybele imply a similar purity of belief, and one such invocation states: "The Virgin in her heavenly place rides upon the Lion! Bearer of wheat, Inventor of law, Founder of cities, by whose gifts it is mankind's fortune to know the gods: therefore she is the Mother of the gods; Peace! Virtue! Cybele! - Weighing life and laws in her balance"¹³⁴. This type of praise is a world away from the condemnations of Augustine, Philo and others. However the enemies and supporters of the cult took from its activities the perceptions that they demanded and neglected or dismissed those which they did not. For Christians and Jews, the condemnation of sexual immorality was the sole public focus. However inside Roman, Greek and Oriental societies, Cybele was characterized by different qualities. Most prominent among them was her universal motherhood. She was the great parent not only of gods but also of human beings and beasts. Care, nurture and the promotion of female interests were of primary importance and that also included responsibility in sex. The female priestesses, who led the cult, largely remained in the temples so it was the castrated male priests who were responsible for most of the evangelising and the prophesying, which included the healing and missionary activities of the cult. It was these Gallae priests who transcended the sex-gender boundaries who were known as "The Wise Ones, the Pure Ones and the Holy Ones" and who, as Cybele's devoted and chaste servants, were understood to embrace and express the ideals of both lives.

The Roman attitudes to Cybele and the Gallae 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. Roller¹³⁵ 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. However a better understanding of the reasons for this duality may come from the analysis of homosexuality, transsexuality and personality development that is presented in this document. In this neurophysiological and psychological study it is shown that that the foundations of gender identity and sexual orientation are first defined in relationship terms, not in sexual terms. It is also demonstrated that the conflict cannot be fought and therefore methods of transcendence must be used in order to manage its demands. Furthermore it is demonstrated that the key stages which are involved in their initial formation precede the awakening of sexual desires. It is shown that both transsexuality and homosexuality are identity

¹³² Emperor Julian II from an Oration to Cybele composed at Pessinus in Asia.

¹³³ He did not reject the religion itself but considered that it should lose its dominance and be regarded in the same way as any other sect.

¹³⁴ <http://www.joanannlansberry.com/julia/cybele.html>

¹³⁵ 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.

driven. Therefore the fundamental need is for people to be true to themselves and the drive to self castrate and assume a female role is in pursuit of identity and not sex. As a consequence there was likely to be as wide a range of moral attitudes that existed amongst the Gallae and in the worship of Cybele as there was in normal society. The behaviour of the individual Gallae priests could range from the extremes of asceticism and piety on the one hand to promiscuity and lust on the other, and this distinction is not reflected in the Christian condemnations of the sect.

The cult of Cybele had an important influence on the development of Christian traditions. From the time of their first appearance in Rome the Gallae were objects of Roman fascination, disapproval and religious awe. However they also became widespread in the Roman Empire. In the early fourth century Eusebius complained that the Gallae had a shrine at Bethlehem - and the text may also imply that it was there at the time of Christ¹³⁶. Even if there was no shrine in the town at that time the Gallae would almost certainly have been known to Jesus and to his followers since the cult was widespread and they were also itinerant priests. They were also opposed as intruders on Jewish traditions, for Cybele and the Gallae reflected the moral traditions of a dominant society while those of the Jews belonged to a subject people and the difference in moral outlook that this created provided a source for many of the cultural clashes that occurred.

11:0 Fertility and Celibacy

As classical civilization developed, two ideals of celibacy were to appear. These were that of the ascetic philosopher and that of the priest of the mystery religions. Plato for example considered the expression of love between two males to be the highest form of love, but he also demanded the total sublimation of sex. This was on the grounds that sexual ecstasies distracted from the higher pursuits of knowledge and love. That was taken up by other philosophers, including Pythagoras and the Neo-Pythagoreans who emphasized the distinction between the soul and the body and declared that God must be worshipped spiritually by prayer and the will to be good. Also the soul must be freed from its material surroundings by an ascetic habit of life. Bodily pleasures and all sensuous impulses must be abandoned as detrimental to the spiritual purity of the soul¹³⁷. They employed the argument that "God is the principle of good, and matter is the groundwork of evil". These doctrines of Neo-Pythagoreanism provided the chain between the old and the new in pagan philosophy: they linked the teaching of Plato to the principles of Neoplatonism and they brought them into line with later Stoicism and also with the ascetic system of the Essenes¹³⁸. Therefore they had a significant impact on the Judean and the Greco/Roman philosophy, which was later carried onward into the Christian tradition.

Within the pagan mystery religions of the ancient Mediterranean, celibacy was also practiced in various contexts. In Rome the Vestal Virgins cultivated the sacred fire which must never go out. They took their vow of chastity in order to devote themselves to its guardianship and to the correct observance of state rituals that were off-limits to the male colleges of priests. Similarly in the mystery religions the control of sexual desire could also be used to divorce oneself from the basic

¹³⁶ Kuefler, Mathew. (2001) Eusebius, in his Life of Constantine see in "The Manly Eunuch Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity" University of Chicago Press ISBN: 9780226457390

¹³⁷ Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Neopythagoreanism". Encyclopædia Britannica (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. <http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Neopythagoreanism>.

¹³⁸ The Essenes were regarded as a group of sects of Second Temple Judaism. They flourished from the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century CE. Apart from the Essenes, the Pharisees and the Sadducees were the other two major groups. The monastery at Qumran may have belonged to an Essene sect. The Essenes lived in various cities but they congregated in communal life which was dedicated to asceticism, piety, daily immersion, voluntary poverty and the absence of personal property and of money. This included the strict observance of Sabbath, the abstinence from worldly pleasures and for some groups, it included celibacy. (See Flavius Josephus (c.75). "The Jewish Wars" 2.8.2–4, 7.) There are strong similarities between many of the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the Essenes. However there are also significant differences. Some of these can be attributed to different attitudes to the observance of the Jewish Law.

human biological drive in order to separate oneself from what was perceived as impure, or to distance oneself from a transient world¹³⁹. Thus celibacy could contribute to the creation of a certain status. It played a role in the construction of this transcendent identity and it served as a source of charisma as well. By mutilating themselves the Gallae gave up something that was fundamental to their manhood and to their own status in society. However castration also functioned to indicate the Gallae's devotion to their deity. It was regarded as an act of purification, and through this act of self-sacrifice others believed the Galli to be "The Wise Ones, the Pure Ones and the Holy Ones" in the way that has previously been described. Only those who were chaste could perform certain rites and this also endowed them with the innocence of virgins and children. The virtuous nature of this behaviour is in total contrast to that of the Gallae whose motives might have been, or were alleged by others to be, for sexual reward. Through being self-castrated the Gallae were considered to be utterly pure, and they were believed to possess far more spiritual power than the voluntary celibates, who could err at any moment. By taking such matters into their own hands, as it were, these self castrated eunuchs rejected their worldliness and they attained their instant superiority and holiness by the self sacrifice of their actions¹⁴⁰

About half of the Greek and Roman pantheons of goddesses and the vast majority of the subsidiary divine females were virgins. This is despite the fact that marriage was the central focus of a Greek or Roman woman's life. The purity of virgins had a high place and the penalty for any Vestal Virgin who lost her virginity was to be buried alive. The virgin goddess religions were the principal fertility cults within the Greco/Roman Empire¹⁴¹. Apart from the cult of Cybele, probably the most notable of these virgin cults were those of Athena, Hera, Artemis, Gaia, Demeter, Persephone, and the Gnostic Sophia^{142 143}. In a male dominated society the idea that any goddess could be penetrated to produce offspring was unacceptable to society's demands and this is where the reason for the virginity of these goddesses, including Artemis, is found. As a goddess of freedom, independence, and the untouched purity of wild nature, Artemis had to preserve an identity that was completely uninfluenced by any other being. She could not allow anyone else to cloud her individuality, and this meant that her virginity had to remain sacrosanct¹⁴⁴. The emperor Julian noted that Cybele, as a virgin, was both the mother and spouse of Zeus¹⁴⁵. In the equivalent legend of the birth of Cybele, Zeus ejaculated on the ground somewhere around Mount Dindymus, upon which an offspring sprung out of the earth which possessed both male and female sex organs. The gods feared the power and influence which this creature might bring and they had the hermaphrodite castrated upon reaching adulthood, thereby causing the creature to become a female being. The creature then became the mother goddess who was named Cybele. The Gods threw away the severed phallus and instantly an almond tree grew on that spot.

¹³⁹ Olson, Carl. (2007) "Celibacy and Religious Traditions" Oxford University Press, 7 Dec 2007 ISBN 0195306317, 9780195306316

¹⁴⁰ Abbott, Elizabeth (2001) "A History of Celibacy" James Clarke & Co., 2001 - 493 pages. ISBN 0718830067, 9780718830069

¹⁴¹ Borgeaud, Philippe. (204)." Mother of the Gods: From Cybele to the Virgin Mary ", Lysa Hochroth (Translator). The Johns Hopkins University Press (6 Oct 2004). ISBN-10: 080187985X ISBN-13: 978-0801879852

¹⁴² Greek philosophers of the fourth century BC separated a celestial Aphrodite (Aphrodite Urania) of transcendent principles with the common Aphrodite of the people (Aphrodite Pandemos). In the most famous version of her myth, her birth was the consequence of a castration: Cronus severed Uranus' genitals and threw them behind him into the sea. The foam from his genitals gave rise to Aphrodite, while the Erinyes (furies) emerged from the drops of blood. In another version of her origin, (Homer, Iliad Book V) she was considered a daughter of Zeus and Dione. According to one legend Aphrodite was parthenogenic, in another she was not. A similar syncretism is said to be found between Asherah and Astarte, however while some of this may be ancient in origin, it may also partly be due to modern interpretations which regard the activities of fertility religions to be focussed on sex.

¹⁴³ Rigoglioso, Marguerite. (2010)."Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity". Palgrave Macmillan (September 15, 2010). ISBN-10: 0230618863 ISBN-13: 978-0230618862

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.cataleos.org/essays/virgin.html>

¹⁴⁵ Emperor Julian II from an Oration to Cybele composed at Pessinus in Asia.

It follows that any goddess who is parthenogenic, (that is to be born without the participation of a male partner), must stand alone as a primordial creatrix who requires no male to produce the cosmos, the earth, life, matter and even other gods out of her own essence. As such a goddess, Cybele's own virginity must remain intact, and it is instead through the death and resurrection of Attis that fertility and renewal takes place. The castration of Attis meant that there could be no threat to Cybele's virginity, just as the castration of the Gallae priests removed any threat to the virginity of the priestesses in the temple and symbolically to the Goddess herself¹⁴⁶. This reasoning can also be applied to the other parthenogenic Middle Eastern goddess cults, and it includes that of the goddess Asherah in both the Judean¹⁴⁷ and the Canaanite traditions¹⁴⁸. Therefore even though these primary parthenogenic goddesses presided over the fertility religions, they provided power for others to act, rather than taking any action themselves; and this distinction is reflected in the imagery that is used. Cybele for example is usually portrayed fully clothed with a lion at each side, and in the Canaanite and Judean traditions the goddess Asherah¹⁴⁹ is often represented by an image of a woman who holds her cupped and strongly accentuated breasts in her hands. The portrayal of the genital region is usually absent and the features of the goddess may often be seen to grow from waist up as if from out of a staff or tree instead. These depictions make it clear that the breasts are intended to be the primary focus and the absence of any representation of the genital region strongly suggests that these goddess religions are principally about caring, nurture and the promotion of female interests instead of the sexual act. In addition the literary descriptions and the naming of Cybele as "The Great Mother" further shows that care, nurture, renewal and the protection of female interests were of primary importance. This strongly contrasts with some of the other goddesses such as Astarte¹⁵⁰, whose representations could be sexually provocative in the extreme. Therefore it appears that when these major goddess religions are being considered, it is necessary to separate the devotion to nurture, fertility and to motherhood from the act of human procreative sex.

These conclusions will be surprising to most modern day opinion which tends to believe that all of the fertility religions were centres of unadulterated sex. Thus instead of promiscuity, responsibility in sexual behaviour was expected and this included power over men in the practice of sex. This mistaken present day presumption that sex was always the main driver in fertility religions can lead to misconceptions. One such may relate to the Dactyls (from Greek word for "fingers") in Greek mythology, who were an archaic mythical race of small phallic male beings that were associated

¹⁴⁶ Comment on virginity of priestesses

¹⁴⁷ Some scholars speculate that between the 10th century BC and the beginning of their exile in 586 polytheism was normal throughout Israel; it was only after the exile that worship of Yahweh alone became established. It was possibly only as late as the time of the Maccabees (2nd century BC) that monotheism became universal among Jews. Many biblical scholars now accept that Asherah at one time was worshipped as the consort of Yahweh, the national god of Israel. The evidence includes, for example, an 8th century combination of iconography and inscriptions discovered at Kuntillet Ajrud in the northern Sinai desert where a storage jar shows three anthropomorphic figures and an inscription that refers to "Yahweh ... and his Asherah". Further evidence includes the many female figurines unearthed in ancient Israel up to the time of the Exile which support the view that Asherah functioned as a goddess and consort of Yahweh (Dever, William G. (2005), "Did God Have A Wife?: Archaeology And Folk Religion In Ancient Israel", Eerdmans, ISBN 9780802828521), (Binger, Tilde (1997), "Asherah: Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel and the Old Testament", Continuum International Publishing Group, ISBN 9781850756378).

¹⁴⁸ Asherah was worshipped directly as a goddess in the Ugaritic Canaanite traditions. This is discussed in the article: Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Gender and Sexual Variation in the Bible": (See footer for access). There were major cultural differences and the alternative concept that Asherah was only used legitimately within Judaism as an intermediary to enable people to relate more directly to Yahweh is considered. This means that, while representations of Asherah may have been found in pre-exilic Judaism, rather like the Saints in Christianity they could not be worshipped in themselves.

¹⁴⁹ Asherah was regarded as the consort of El, who was the father of all the Canaanite gods, in the same way that Cybele was regarded as the consort of Zeus. A comparison between Cybele and Asherah may therefore be made. Cybele was sometimes described as the "Queen of Heaven". The worship of a "Queen of Heaven" is recorded in the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, circa 628 BC: This passage is set in the context of the Prophet condemning her religious worship as blasphemy and a violation of the teachings of the God of Israel (Jeremiah 7:18 and Jeremiah 44:15-18). Ezekiel 8:14 also refers to the worship of an equivalent female deity in a similar way.

¹⁵⁰ In Canaanite mythology Astarte was the daughter of El and Asherah. According to this myth her birth was not parthenogenic and she could be much more associated with sex. Unlike Asherah, most images show her naked, with her genital region shown in frontal view.

with the Great Mother, whether as Cybele or Rhea. Excavations of the temples of Cybele find small clay figures of these dactyls in large numbers. Because of their accentuated phalluses it is often presumed that they were aids for sacred sex¹⁵¹. However the legends suggest otherwise for when Rhea, the mother of the gods, knew her time of delivery of Zeus was come she went to the sacred cave on Mount Ida. As she squatted in labour she dug her fingers into the earth (Gaia), upon which a clutch of fully-grown armed warriors sprung up to protect her infant child from the predations of Kronos, its cannibalistic father. These warriors were known as the Kouretes or the Dactyls who, as well as giving armed protection the child, also drowned out the infant's cries with their frenzied dances of clashing spears and shields to ensure that the infant could not be found¹⁵². Therefore, far from being tokens for sacred sex, it is much more likely that these figures were talismans of good fortune and protection which may have been given to the woman, and held during childbirth to relieve the pangs of birth.

Almost nothing of known about the practices of temple worship; although some reliefs show the goddess alongside young female and male attendants with torches, and vessels for purification. What does seem apparent is that the temples were places which were safe from male predation. They were places in which women's issues and concerns could be safely addressed and they might be refuges from sexual abuse. Only women and castrated men were allowed in the temples¹⁵³ and the lurid descriptions of sexual malpractice in temple worship which are given by opponents such as Firmicus Maternus¹⁵⁴ are refuted from other sources^{155 156}. This is not to say that behaviour which involved anal penetration did not take place. It did occur, but the disciplines of chastity and celibacy that were enforced through self castration still played an essential role amongst the Gallae who participated in the temple practices of the cult. Cultural differences must be taken into account and these could be horrific to Jewish attitudes; and indeed today's society. These acts of intercourse could fulfil a specific and separate role which is described later in this document and they enhanced rather than diminished the status of the priests.

The contrasts between the approaches of transcendence and transgression were described earlier in this account. The moral duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour, and the need for responsibility was indicated. The same moral duality in the behaviour of the self-castrated priests of the Goddess Cults has been described. It was noted that the engagement in inappropriate sexual behaviour by people whose principal aims were to transgress the sex-gender boundaries for the purposes of gratification and lust can create great harm. The harm that these excesses created were why all of the Gallae who chose to transgress the sex and gender boundaries in pursuit of such aims were strongly condemned, not just by the early Christian Church, but also by many people in Roman society. It was also indicated that those people who sought instead to transcend

¹⁵¹ Strabo, Geography 10. 3. 11 (trans. Jones) (Greek geographer C1st B.C. to C1st A.D.)

¹⁵² Pseudo-Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 1. 4- 5 (trans. Aldrich) (Greek mythographer C2nd A.D.)

¹⁵³ In addition to the other references see Plutarch, Life of Caesar 9-10: "The Romans have a goddess whom they call Good, whom the Greeks call the Women's Goddess. The Phrygians say that this goddess originated with them, and that she was the mother of their king Midas. The Romans say that she was a Dryad nymph who married Faunus, and the Greeks say that she was the Unnameable One among the mothers of Dionysus. For this reason the women who celebrate her rites cover their tents with vine-branches, and a sacred serpent sits beside the goddess on her throne, as in the myth. It is unlawful for a man to approach or to be in the house when the rites are celebrated. The women, alone by themselves, are said to perform rites that conform to Orphic ritual during the sacred ceremony".

¹⁵⁴ 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).

¹⁵⁵ Vigen, Aana Marie. Anderson, John. Jung, Patricia Beattie "God, Science, Sex, Gender: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Christian Ethics" University of Illinois Press, 2010 ISBN 0252077245, 9780252077241

¹⁵⁶ Willoughby, Harold R. (1929 republished 2003). "Pagan Regeneration: A Study of Mystery Initiations in the Greco Roman World". Kessinger Publishing, LLC (August 14, 2003) ISBN-10: 0766180832 ISBN-13: 978-0766180833 <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/pr/pr07.htm>

the gender and sexual boundaries could be given a high status, provided they were understood to embrace and to express the ideals of both lives. It has already been indicated that Plato for example considered expressions of love between two males to be the highest form of love, however he also demanded the total sublimation of sex¹⁵⁷. Others looked for responsibility of expression instead. The Gallae who took the equivalent approach were also considered to be utterly pure and to possess far greater spiritual power than any voluntary celibates through the commitment of their acts.

This examination of the Goddess Cults confirms the duality expected by the neurophysiological and physiological study. There it is shown that the features which create the core gender and sexual identities of every person are physiologically rather than behaviourally or cognitively driven. Thus as wide a range of moral attitudes, beliefs and behaviour are to be found amongst gender and sexually variant people as those which exist in society at large. It is also demonstrated that a duality must exist whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways that conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies should be highly regarded, while those who misuse these relationships must be very severely condemned for their acts.

The Roman attitudes to sexuality which are understood in the present day are exclusively derived from male sources. They also describe the male dominated approaches to sexual practice. Little is known about female sexuality but this must also be properly considered if a complete account is to be given. Even though women in ancient Rome were not allowed any direct role in politics they often took on powerful roles behind the scenes, whether in the realm of their own family, or in the elite world of government. Male excesses were tempered through the power of the Goddess religions, and the political influence of the Goddess cults was used to a substantial effect. There is no excuse for presuming that all sexual practice in Ancient Rome was driven by a rampant assertion of male authority in pursuit of penetrative sex. Oracles, prophecies and divination by women were major forces in the hands of the cults and in this account it has been shown how the cult acted to protect female interests and rights.

12:0 Cultural Differences and Morality

In the Greek and Roman societies the prohibition applied to anal penetration between two citizens was based on authority and only the submissive partner was condemned¹⁵⁸. In religious groups and ceremonies that social prohibition could well be set aside. This meant that same-sex acts between consenting citizens could be legitimately practiced in ways which might not offend the social structures of that society. Rituals could also be used to create the context in which these activities could legitimately take place. This gave licence to the wide range of sexual practices in Greek and Roman cults and such sexual practices are often described as the devotions of sacred sex. However instead of the acts of devotion to the god or goddess it might be better to describe these activities as sexual acts which could legitimately be engaged in when the religious framework enabled the social restrictions to be relaxed. The example of the god that was being worshipped would however be followed and the approval of the god would always be sought. This was good business Strabo claimed that the temple to Aphrodite in Corinth had more than 1,000 temple prostitutes and it was this business that made the city rich¹⁵⁹. The freedom with which these acts are depicted in Roman literature and art suggest that by the standards of that society, these were not considered immoral acts.

¹⁵⁷ This view as not shared by others, who demanded purity of purpose in same-sex acts.

¹⁵⁸ This is discussed in section ?? of this document.

¹⁵⁹ Strabo, Geography, 8.6.20 (trans. H.L. Jones; The Geography of Strabo v. 4; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924).

The three goddesses, Cybele, Bahuchara Mata, and Inanna/Ishtar stood at the head of the three major goddess cults which represented the dominant powers in Middle Eastern society. Because of this domination the attitudes of these Middle Eastern cults to moral issues could reflect the concerns about what happened within the dominant societies, and have little concern about what happened outside them. Therefore subject societies could be used to their advantage, and in Roman society very great extremes of cruelty could sit alongside a sophisticated civilisation and be represented in exquisite art. The male Roman attitudes to issues such as same-sex relationships, prostitution, promiscuity and castration were similarly based on authority, and not on the nature of the acts¹⁶⁰. However a very different situation was found in subject societies which were dominated by these major powers, and here the reverse views may be encountered. The complete 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, and the considerable degree of anguish about the castration that some Jews were subjected to during the time of the Exile is also found¹⁶¹. It follows that the magnitude of the changes in outlook which occur when the self-centred morality of the cults and religions of a dominant society are replaced with the all-encompassing morality which is required of a subject society is likely to be significant. This also implies that the transformation in attitude which is found when any religion places love and care for the victim and oppressed first in its agenda may also be expected to have a major effect.

A major challenge for Christianity, when it first faced up to the Greco/Roman culture, and later when it was becoming the recognised religion of the Roman Empire, was one of transferring the distinctive views of a minority and protesting Jewish religion into a dominant culture. The intense attacks by Augustine, Maternus and others on Cybele and the Gallae are vehement in the extreme partly because of the threats they brought to the orthodox views of Christian belief. Their agenda was to discredit the cult and any possibility of recognising the existence of a full range of moral attitudes is denied by the dogma of Christian church, when it decrees that all such behaviour is engaged in only for the pursuit of lust and immoral sex. There is no doubt that much of the focus of Roman worship was associated with prostitution, homeogenital and profligate sex. However many accounts of the cults which are available today have been written by their enemies and much of the remaining evidence may also have been manipulated, therefore it is difficult to decide where the true balance is. Nevertheless the major cultural and social clashes that existed between the Jewish and Greco/Roman societies played an important part in the nature of the Christian condemnation of the cult activities and in order to understand the actions and the theology of the cults it is necessary to view them and their approaches to gender and sexuality through Greco/Roman eyes.

It is argued that motives which were coupled to the demands of responsibility and restraint that were the principal guide for distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Therefore, there could be considerable fluidity in the determination of legitimacy in different sexual practices. This includes intercourse and same-sex acts. The purity found in some of the Gallae was respected from their devotion and chastity, their role in temple practices, and by the sacrifice of their acts. These priests would also be considered like Attis, to be symbolically married to the goddess herself, although their self castration and the need to preserve the virginity of the goddess meant that this relationship could only be seen as an expression of love and not for the purposes of sex. However if

¹⁶⁰ Responsibility and restraint were also major characteristics

¹⁶¹ Judaism has always forbidden all forms of castration. Among the nations of antiquity, the Jews alone imposed a religious prohibition on the emasculation of men and even animals. The Bible directly refers to the ban on castration by excluding castrated animals from serving as sacrifices on the altar (Lev. 22:24), also by banning a descendant of Aaron "who has his stones crushed" from the priestly service (Lev. 21:20), and a man "that is crushed or maimed in his privy parts" from entering into "the assembly of the Lord" (Deut. 23:2). In the Talmud (Shab. 110b–111a) and codes (e.g., Sh. Ar. EH 5:11–14), the biblical interdict is widely extended to cover any deliberate impairment of the male reproductive organs in domestic animals, beasts, birds, and man, including the castration of a person who is already impotent or genitally maimed (Encyclopaedia Judaica. 2008, Gale Group. ISBN 13: 9780028659282. ISBN 10: 0028659287. However the need to accommodate people who had been castrated was important since the practice was widespread across the Middle East. The Bible and the Talmud carefully defines how such people were to be treated.

any layman were to have intercourse with one of these priests some of that holiness and fertility could, as it were, rub off on himself. When intercourse is practiced for this purpose could provide an explanation for those activities which were so roundly condemned by Philo, Augustine, Firmicus Maternus and others. By their acts of self-castration the Gallae were unable to obtain the rewards of sexual climax but for the laymen who penetrated them, the blessing of fertility they sought from the goddess might be rewarded by the birth of children through later intercourse with their wives. Within the codes of Greco/Roman society there would be no immorality which was involved in these practices and as vessels for transmitting the power of the goddess the veneration of the Gallae would also be enhanced.

Even to think that castration and anal penetration could lead to any concept of holiness may have been an almost impossible task for Jewish society. These acts were utterly abhorred and they must have been even more severely condemned, when the two of them were combined. Crossing this cultural chasm can only happen when it is accepted that within each of the two conflicting dominant and subject societies a complete but different range of moral perspectives is found. This means that, if a valid judgement is to be made by one culture on another it is essential that every aspect, both positive and negative is considered. The strongest Christian and Jewish condemnations concentrate almost entirely on sexual impropriety and sexual abuse. Perhaps this is not surprising since prostitution and pederasty¹⁶² (involving sexual relationships between adult men and boys) were two other accepted and commonly practiced male same-sex activities in Greek and Roman society. Any true consideration of the cultural clashes must take full account of the cult of Cybele and the entire range of behaviour of the Gallae priests. Very strong contrasts are encountered. Maintaining social status played the key role, not only between the subject and dominant societies, but within each of the societies as well.

In this analysis it is argued that the Greek and Roman attitude to sexual morality which many of the cults accepted is not derived from each cult's individual theology, but that it comes instead from a commonly held, separate socially determined base. This approach therefore aims to separate the social base from the theological elements in each of the cult doctrines. The first requirement for this is to accept that this sexual morality provided a time-honoured frame of reference within Greek and Roman society and that any judgements on moral values must be made exclusively on the terms of that social morality. The second step is to use this separation as a means to unlock the barriers which prohibit a greater understanding of the theologies and the philosophies which were embraced by the cults. By isolating the conflicts and condemnations which arise because of the differences in sexual morality from all of the other elements in the theologies of the cults it is argued that a better understanding may be gained.

The attitudes to gender and gender identity in First Century Greco/Roman and Judean societies did not reflect the strict polarities between male and female that are found today. The fear of change also concerned Roman males¹⁶³. In Greek and Roman society castration was interpreted as being more than the removal of the genitals and the resultant eunuch was often considered to be a member of an independent third sex. The Gallae did not generally perceive themselves as men: they either considered themselves to be the equivalent of women or members of this third sex¹⁶⁴. In

¹⁶² This was strictly bound by regulations to ensure that according to the morality of Greco/Roman society it was not considered as sexual abuse and it should not be considered as being the same as paedophilia is today. This is a complex subject that cannot be fully dealt with here. See Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access

¹⁶³ Masculinity and femininity depend on relative levels of heat and cold in the body (and, secondarily, moisture and dryness). These factors determined the sex of developing fetuses, but even after birth an individual's gender status was subject to fluctuations in bodily heat. If men were not at risk of literally becoming females, they were in danger of being feminized by any number of causes. (see Roscoe, Will (1996) "Social origins and social meanings of gender transgression" in *History of Religions* 35(3) (1996): 295-330.)

¹⁶⁴ Judaism defined six sex/gender categories, male, female, saris, ailont, androgynos and tumtum, however for the purpose of religious ritual it tried to fit each of these into male and female categories. The Romans had many more, and

his poem which describes the myths on which the cult of Cybele and Attis is based, Catullus uses the female pronoun for the castrated Attis¹⁶⁵. Although a male citizen could penetrate another male of lesser status or a Galla without penalty, the social rules of responsibility and restraint were the major determinants in distinguishing between moral and immoral behaviour. Perceptions of sexual orientation and morality were also more flexibly defined. The Greeks and Romans had no specific word for homosexuality. In these societies the boundary line dividing acceptable from unacceptable behaviour involving any two male citizens was not determined on a gendered basis but was fixed by considerations of authority, and by distinguishing between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex.

The maintenance of social status was the dominant concern in Roman society and masculinity was measured by a capacity for governing oneself and others of lower status. This applied not only in war and politics, but in bed. Clear limits were set. The social disgrace for anyone who transgressed the gender defined boundaries of this gender unequal society was considerable, and the effeminate behaviour, which included the behaviour of the so-called "Soft men" was abhorred¹⁶⁶. The very idea that there could be a submissive partner in a same-sex relationship between two male citizens was anathema in Greco/Roman society. When that did occur it was only the submissive citizen who was condemned. However their self-castration reduced the Gallae to a lower status. Those who chose to do so could adopt the submissive and effeminate role, and be penetrated in a sexual relationship¹⁶⁷.

An analogous situation is also found in present day Iran where homosexual behaviour is punishable by death. In order to escape from this dilemma Iran offers such people the opportunity of gender reassignment so that they can legally adopt the female submissive role¹⁶⁸. However this procedure fails to recognise the full range of gender and sexually variant experience, and it also refuses to acknowledge that gender identity and sexual orientation are identity driven and that they are formed independently of each other. Transgendered people accept a self-identity which corresponds to the gender identity they are convinced they belong to, and on reassignment their sexual orientation may

the strict modern polarities of exclusively male and female were absent. Reviews of Greek and Roman medical texts reveal a notion of gender as grounded in physiology, but the physiology involved is inherently unstable.

¹⁶⁵ See Catullus Poem 63 (trans. C.H. Sisson; *The Poetry of Catullus*; New York: Orion Press, 1967), 103-106

¹⁶⁶ "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 also 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 during sex for money. It appears that this third meaning would be the most likely. It is especially likely to have been used in the Bible when found together with the word "arsenokoitai" and because it was found within a list of the worst possible sins. However in Paul's usage defining malakoi as meaning male prostitutes is also unlikely since Paul has already included pornoi, meaning male prostitutes, in his list of vices.

¹⁶⁷ Coincidentally, many of the gallae practices described in the early Greco-Roman texts are seen today in the Hijra, including castration, ostentatiously "effeminate" behaviours and dress, the public belief that Hijra and devadasi can bless and curse, the stigmatized nature of Hijra and devadasi, and the sexual use of these stigmatized individuals under the auspices of sacred sex practices. See Moni Nag, "Anthropological Perspectives on Prostitution and AIDS in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 36 (2001): 4025-4030; John O'Neil and Treena Orchard, RC Swarankar, James Blanchard, Kaveri Gurav, Stephen Moses Dhandha, "Dharma and Disease: Traditional Sex Work and HIV/AIDS in Rural India," *Social Science and Medicine* 59 (2004): 851-860; Gayatri Reddy, *With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Karuna Sharma, "The Social World of Prostitutes and Devadasis," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 9 (2007): 297-310.

¹⁶⁸ Iran carries out more gender reassignment operations than any other nation in the world except for Thailand. It is sanctioned as a supposed "cure" for homosexuality, which is punishable by death under Iranian law. The government even provides up to half the cost for those needing financial assistance and a sex change is recognised on the birth certificate

change or it may remain the same. For homosexuals who seek the submissive role in a same-sex relationship, self castration or gender reassignment may provide them with means of escape from the penalties which are imposed by a gender unequal society, but it may then put a gender conflict in its place. In each of these cases the knowledge that a capital offence can be negated by the act of gender reassignment is in itself admitting that the real underlying offence is the one of attacking the power structure in a gender unequal society rather than the abhorrence of the sexual act.

The Gallae priests obtained their religious holiness at great social cost. Their denigration was not just because of sexual improprieties, it was also because of their association with the outcasts of society. As a Goddess religion the cult of Cybele was a subject religion in a male dominated society. This male domination could not be overcome, but for women slaves and others the Goddess cults could provide protection against the rampages of male oppression and sex. It has been seen that the temples where only women and castrated men could be present provided places of refuge and could serve female needs. The power of the Goddess cults might ensure that responsibility and restraint were exercised in matters of protection and sex. As castrated men the Gallae transcended these boundaries for, not only could they participate in the temple activities they could also bring the blessings of the Goddess to the male sex.

The comments made here can only be indicators of what might have happened, since even though there is extensive evidence about the guiding principles of male sexuality, little is known about the nature and practices of female sexuality, apart from for what is detected through the behaviour of the cults. Nevertheless it has been shown in this document that celibacy, chastity and responsibility played an important role within the cult activities, as also did care, nurture, fruitfulness, fertility and the renewal of all forms of life.

The extreme range of behaviour found amongst the Gallae, from the holiness of transcendence to the immorality of transgression suggests that two and not one driving forces are involved. The high purity of the cult of Cybele, as it was perceived by first century Roman society, stood in extreme contrast to what is, and what has always been regarded both by Judaism and Christianity as the disgusting depravity of its festivals and banquets and the gross immoralities of temple prostitution. However sexual attitudes and practices in ancient Roman culture differed greatly from those in later Western societies. Roman religion and culture treated sexual practice as an instrument of prosperity for the state. Prostitution was legal, public and widespread. "Pornographic" paintings were featured among art collections in respectable upper class households and it was considered natural and unremarkable for adult males to be sexually attracted to teenage youths of both sexes. Acts of same-sex intercourse also provided safe sex. No moral censure was directed at any adult male who enjoyed sex acts with either women or men of an inferior status, as long as his behaviour revealed no weaknesses or excesses; or infringed on the rights and prerogatives of his male peers.

Despite these attitudes responsibility and restraint were the regulating factors, thus modesty was celebrated and shame was to be avoided. The sexual practices were governed by the traditional values which ruled over public, private, and military life. Earlier in this account it was argued that the Greek and Roman attitude to sexual morality which the cults adopted is not derived from the theology of the cults, but from a common and socially determined base. It was also concluded that a better understanding may be gained if the conflicts and condemnations which arise from differences in sexual morality are separated from the theologies of the cults. Even though the Goddess cults expressed the social moralities of Roman society, examining the cult myths and its beliefs leads to much wider perceptions. These views are reflected in the perceived high purity of many of its devotees. It also shows that there is much in the practices of the cult of Cybele and Attis which mirrors that which is found within the Christian Gospel and a vigorous rejection of all aspects of the cult was needed to protect the orthodoxy of Christian belief.

By rejecting these positive aspects of the Goddess cults, by separating the mothering, nurturing and caring elements which were within the cult and by considering only the sexual and cultural improprieties of the cult practices and the misdemeanours of its Gallae priests, Augustine, and other Christian evangelists gave a distorted view. Thus many of the difficulties in interpretation today arise from the adoption of this incomplete stance. More than that: it has led to the present day doctrines of many Christian Churches which perceive and totally condemn every type of gender and sexually variant expression as being exclusively in pursuit of lust, promiscuity, prostitution and all other types of sexually immoral acts.

13:0 Worship and Behaviour

The worship of Cybele evolved through the millennia, but the Goddess was always understood to be a symbol of the powerful female forces in the universe¹⁶⁹. Cybele was known in Rome as the Magna Mater ("Great Mother"). It has been seen that many of the myths included rites to the divine Phrygian castrated shepherd-consort called Attis, who represented the fertility and plants of the land. Through his castration, subsequent death and annual resurrection the land was given new life. Mountains and caves were sacred to Magna Mater, and her temples were often built near them. The female priestesses, who led the cult, largely remained in the temples, but little is known about their activities. By sleeping in a temple many women hoped to get help from the goddess, who was said to help mothers and children. Midwives were associated with the cult and many of the priests were healers. It was the castrated male priests who were responsible for most of the dance, divination, evangelising and healing of the cult¹⁷⁰. The cult almost certainly achieved its popularity by its devotion to women's issues, female purity, fertility and by advancing female social status rather than promiscuous sex, however by same-sex intercourse the Gallae could bring the blessings of the goddess to the male sex. Cybele's Gallae priests were associated with fortune telling for money. They were also known to compose spells, create philtres, fashion amulets and talismans (for lovers, farmers and travellers) and they were also supposed to hold power over wild animals. Some thought they could make rain, exorcise spirits and engage in rituals of purification. In many religious traditions this would be considered a shamanic function and their mission included a healing role¹⁷¹.

Some commentators today presume that the cult of Cybele, as a Goddess religion, would be concerned primarily with maternal interests. However there is one important element to consider and that is the need to assert female status in a male dominated society¹⁷². The three goddesses who stood at the head of the goddess cults in the three different cultural regions of the Middle East, - Cybele, Bahuchara Mata, and Inanna/Ishtar all shared important traits. All of the goddesses were credited with the power to inspire divine madness that could include the transformation of gender. In all of the three regions the respective goddess-inspired priests were believed to belong to a distinct gender category, and all of the goddess religions transgressed the patriarchal roles and structures of society just as much as their castrated male followers did. Their mythologies clearly placed them outside the patriarchal domestic sphere. Despite the common reference to all of these goddesses as "Mother" by their worshippers, there was much in their nature that exceeds and confounds the present-day connotations of maternal values. This gave a role for the cults which a present day women's liberation activist might value. The Greek rites and processions show Cybele as an essentially foreign and exotic mystery-goddess, who arrives in a lion-drawn chariot to the accompaniment of wild music, wine, and a disorderly, ecstatic following. The literary sources add

¹⁶⁹ 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

¹⁷⁰ Sandberg, Anders. *The Cult of Magna Mater*

¹⁷¹ Roscoe, Will (1996) "Social origins and social meanings of gender transgression" in *History of Religions* 35(3) (1996): 295-330

¹⁷² Roscoe, Will (1996) "Social origins and social meanings of gender transgression" in *History of Religions* 35(3) (1996): 295-330.

their own descriptions of joyous abandonment to the loud and overwhelmingly percussive music of tympanon, castanets, clashing cymbals and flutes; and of frenzied "Phrygian dancing", which appears to be a form of circle-dancing by women. This was carried out to the roar of the "wise and healing music of the gods"¹⁷³ ¹⁷⁴. This arrival of Cybele in a chariot pulled by lions is therefore a statement of power and authority. It is not a statement of submission and instead of the present day assumptions of the pursuit of sexual licence the public processions may instead be intended to enforce the authority of the cult. They may also be expected to challenge the normal social order, and the need to provide protection from male predation is evident in the myths of the cult. The evangelising activities of the male priests who had sacrificed their masculinity to the worship of the Goddess also presented major challenges to the social structure of society, but at the same time, through their act of sacrifice they affirmed the power of the Goddess herself.

A number of festivals were held throughout the year the year but the two most relevant are the "Day of Blood" which took place on March 24th, and the "Megalesia" which began on the 4th April. The programme for these festivals can be tentatively reconstructed from various sources. The "Day of Blood" was surrounded by other events. These included the festival of "Hilaria". The first event took place on the 15th of March when "The Reed Entered". The true significance of this is uncertain but the reeds may refer to the river bank where Attis was exposed as a child and rescued by Cybele. This was followed by a nine day period, involving abstinence from bread, pomegranates, quinces, pork, fish, and probably wine. Only milk was permitted as a drink¹⁷⁵. On the 22nd March "The Tree Entered". A pine tree from a wood sacred to Cybele was felled after the sacrifice of a ram at its roots. The tree was carried in procession through the city, as if it was a body in a funeral, to the Temple of Cybele on the Palatine Hill. The 23rd of March was kept as a day of mourning, and on the 24th of March the "The Day of Blood" (Sanguis) took place. The tree was symbolically buried and the frenzied rites associated with this day included scourging, whipping, and the self castration rituals of the newcomers to the Gallae were carried out. A bull was also castrated and sacrificed, and the initiates were drenched in its blood. The following day, the 25th of March was the celebration of "The Day of Joy". This was the "Hilaria" proper and it celebrated the resurrection of Attis. The rejoicing during the festival contrasted strongly with the mournful tone of the previous days. The following day, the 26th of March, was kept as a day of rest.

The festival of the "Megalesia" celebrated the arrival of the statue of Cybele in Rome. The festival lasted for six days, beginning on April 4th¹⁷⁶ but it gradually became a multi week event. The mood of this festival, like that of the whole month, was full of general rejoicing and feasting. The games that were held during the "Megalesia" were purely scenic and dramatic. They did not involve the cruelty of those in the Circus and therefore no chariot racing, gladiatorial combat or beast fights took place. The third day of the festival was especially set apart for the performance of scenic plays.¹⁷⁷ ¹⁷⁸ Slaves were not allowed to be present at these games, and the magistrates dressed in a purple garb.

The modern presumptions which tend to assume that these festivals were orgies which were dedicated to the practice of unrestrained sex is refuted in this analysis. The themes of the celebrations were much more associated with death and resurrection and the intention on the "Day

¹⁷³ Roller, Lynn E (1994)., "Attis on Greek Votive Monuments; Greek God or Phrygian?" *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1994), pp. 245–262.

¹⁷⁴ Lucretius (98-c.55 BCE): The Worship of Cybele. Accessed 27 October 2012 at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/lucretius-reruma.asp>

¹⁷⁵ Turcan, R. (1996). *The Cults of the Roman Empire*. p44.

¹⁷⁶ This depends on the Calendar used 3rd and 11th of April may have been opening (and presumably the closing) days for the events.

¹⁷⁷ Ovid, *The Festivals*, iv. 377: accessed at <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/OvidFastiBkFour.htm> 16 October 2012.

¹⁷⁸ Aelius Spartianus, *Antoninus Caracalla*. In *Historia Augusta*, Publisher: Loeb Classical Library (January 1, 1924). ISBN-10: 0674991559 , ISBN-13: 978-0674991552

of Blood” may simply have been to create states of hysteria instead. There are aspects of this behaviour which have equivalent counterparts in some modern day religious practices and instances of self-flagellation are found. The practice of self-flagellation is encountered in some traditions of Christianity, where it is used as a penance, or as a way to mirror the flagellation of Christ. In Islam some Shi'ite communities march in massive parades every year, while they flog themselves on the back with knives, blades and chains to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein, the second grandson of the prophet Mohammed. Hysteria is used in many religions and some Christian groups. It can find its expression in ecstatic healing services: where Miracle Cures are claimed to take place.

While those who are transgendered may be induced to self-castrate in pursuit of their gender identity, homosexuals, who are usually happy with their gender identity, will not have that need. However self-castration may instead be sought by homosexuals who seek the submissive roles in sexual acts. In this study it is argued that the rituals and ecstatic music of the “Day of Blood” were at least partly intended to produce a trance like state where the acts of self-castration could take place. In the spirit of its description of “The wise and healing music of the Gods” the celebrations could additionally support the cult’s healing role. Public celebrations were likely to attract a wide variety of people and one expects that there was as great a range of moral attitudes, identities and orientations as that which are found in any Gay Pride march of today. However this comparison cannot be taken too far since there were many different cultural values involved.

14:0 Power and Authority

As well as their religious and social roles the cults also had a profound impact on political behaviour in Greek and Roman Society. Although only women and castrated men could act as normal priests of the goddess the activities of the cult were ultimately governed by the senior Roman priests who were usually drawn from Rome's highest ranking and wealthiest citizens, and who were not castrated¹⁷⁹. These senior priests of Cybele in Rome were expected to fund the running costs of the temples, assistants, cults and festivals. Other male Roman worshippers of the goddess Cybele were organised into sodalities or male fraternities and their members were mostly men of social status and influence¹⁸⁰. The most notable were the Dendrophori ("Tree-bearers") and the Cannophori ("Reed-bearers"). On two occasions the Emperor Augustus personally funded the rebuilding of Magna Mater's Palatine temple, and the upper classes who sponsored her festivals staged lavish, private festival banquets in the honour of the goddess, at which her distinctive eunuch priests were conspicuously absent.¹⁸¹ Within the high degree of freedom that was allowed by the Greco/Roman codes of sexual morality, these banquets and festivals could of course include the orgies of same-sex acts. The extravagant habits and the good living during these festive days were probably carried to a very high level. For that reason the Roman senate issued a decree in 161 BC which limited the expenditure that could be incurred. However the banquets and other activities could serve another purpose, since emperors and those people who were in senior authority understood that it was necessary to conform to the divine edicts of the cults. Oracles and prophecies provided a further resource. Through the use of these mechanisms the cults could exercise a great deal of power over the decisions that were made.

¹⁷⁹ Since the cult of Cybele was a state recognised religion the head of the Gallae, the Archgallus, was also a state-appointed position. Since Roman law did not (initially) allow a Roman citizen to be castrated, the symbolic act of castration was carried out on a bull instead.

¹⁸⁰ Sandberg, Anders. (1991). "The Cult of Magna Mater". Accessed 17 September 2012 at <http://faculty.cua.edu/pennington/churchhistory220/lectureone/MagnaMater.htm>

¹⁸¹ Summers, 1996, pp. 337 – 9 in Lane, Eugene, (Editor) *Cybele, Attis, and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M.J. Vermaseren*, Brill, 1996.

The castrated Gallae priests instead represented the total inversion of this power structure and their living depended on the pious generosity of others. As eunuchs they were forbidden Roman citizenship and denied any rights of inheritance. Nevertheless this inversion of power structure could also give the Gallae a great strength. This type of transformation can occur when it exploits the scapegoat mechanism as described by Girard. Some aspects of Girard's work are discussed earlier in this document, and full accounts are given in the literature.^{182 183 184} However a very brief summary is given here. For Girard, the scapegoat is an arbitrary victim who is normally an outsider, who is on the border of the community, but is not fully alien to it. The scapegoat also has specific traits that separate him, or her, from the community ethos. When all else fails, the elimination and the rejection of the scapegoat should end the dissension which has been created. However if instead of being eliminated the scapegoat is able to transcend the divisions which were seen to be the cause of the conflict, the scapegoat can exert great power. In the Christian tradition Jesus Christ offered himself for death on the cross as a scapegoat for the sins of humanity. By his resurrection he transcended the boundaries of death and his sacrifice is seen as a once and for all propitiation for the sins of the world. For the Gallae it was their transcendence of the gender boundaries of society which offered them the 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.

As castrated males the Gallae could additionally bring the mission of the cult to the eunuch community. All eunuchs were considered morally dubious. They were perceived to be a threat to the masculine domination of society, and few exceptions were made¹⁸⁵. For some and perhaps for many this identification simply led, or it was perceived to lead, to an engagement in prostitution and inappropriate sex. However 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 society¹⁸⁶. Therefore the internal needs of such a community were likely to be as widely spread as those of the people around them and the Gallae could also minister to these needs within the same healing and shamanic roles¹⁸⁷. Some eunuchs could rise to positions of considerable power and authority. However no social recognition of this was given and their continued censure was largely due to prejudice, insecurity, fear and their perceived threat. The majority of eunuchs were confined to menial tasks. Eunuchs were therefore to be kept at the bottom of society and anyone who associated with them was considered in the same way.

¹⁸² Girard, R., (1961) "Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965. [Originally published in French, 1961; translated by Yvonne Freccero.]

¹⁸³ Girard, R., (1972). "Violence and the Sacred". Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977. [Originally published in French, 1972; trans. by Patrick Gregory.]

¹⁸⁴ Girard, R., (1978). "Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World". Research undertaken in collaboration with Jean-Michel Oughourlian and Guy Lefort. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987. [Originally pub. in French, 1978; trans. by Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer.]

¹⁸⁵ Few eunuchs were ever praised in the Greco/Roman literature. 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

¹⁸⁶ 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 these eunuchs political figures were powerful, widely feared and respected as, 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.

¹⁸⁷ 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) but no such recognition was given in the Greco/Roman tradition where universal condemnation seemed to apply

The importance of the goddess religions in the Greco-Roman period cannot be underestimated. During Paul's missionary travels, the goddess religions were undergoing a wide resurgence^{188 189}. Fear¹⁹⁰ notes that while "mystery religions in general were not a focus of Christian polemic, Attis and Cybele, on the other hand appear to have been a favourite target for the invective of Christian writers."¹⁹¹ In Rome, the Cybele/Attis temple was built in the heart of the city, on one of the Seven Hills of Rome. The Roman temple to another goddess, Aphrodite, was on another¹⁹². The image of Cybele was printed on some Roman coins and a statue of Cybele presided over the public games¹⁹³. Temples dedicated to Cybele/Attis, Artemis, Aphrodite, Demeter and Venus were in most large cities of the region. The temple to Artemis in Ephesus was also claimed to be the largest building in the world¹⁹⁴. Acts 19 describes a conflict between Paul and the followers of Artemis in Ephesus. Roscoe¹⁹⁵ and Fear argue that this was probably just one of many clashes that occurred. Paul alludes to the harm that was done to him by Alexander the coppersmith In 2 Timothy 4, v 14 and the prevalence and influence of the goddess religions would have created further problems for the missionary work of the early church.

15:0 Transcendence and Repression.

Like the disciples of Jesus the Gallae also set out on missionary journeys and like the disciples they were itinerant priests who relied on alms provided by their followers. Like the Gallae, who were associated with the lowest forms of society, Jesus also associated himself with outcasts and both groups brought their separate messages of transcendence to the communities they missioned to. The good news which each group brought was very different, but both religions engaged in healing and prophesying roles. The message of Jesus was the message of transcendence which replaced the constraints of the Law with the Gospel of Christian Love. The need to rise above the divisions of gender could give at least some of the Gallae a priest like transcendent status. While the cult of Cybele and the practices of the Gallae challenged the sex-gender boundaries of contemporary society, it is the transgressive body of the eunuch in the New Testament that symbolizes the Kingdom of God, and who brings its mission to the world. Thus in Christianity this affirmation of relationships that are given in love or asceticism transcends both gender and sex, so all are as one in the Gospel of Christ.

Although the theologies and practices of the two groups were very different the similarities are extremely important. The close association of the cult with eunuchs and Jesus with the outcasts of society led to the condemnations of both groups by people and organisations that had a vested interest in the social structures of society. 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.

From the point of view of this discussion, the major issue over commonality is about how both of these traditions sought to transcend gender and sex. In a polytheistic culture where there is a

¹⁸⁸ Timothy Pettipiece, "From Cybele to Christ: Christianity and the Transformation of Late Roman Religious Culture," SR 37 (2008): 41-61.

¹⁸⁹ Paul, the Goddess Religions and Queers: Romans 1:23-28.

¹⁹⁰ Eugene N. Lane (ed.), A. T. Fear's article, "Cybele and Christ" (pp. 37-50) in "Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren". Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996. ISBN 90-04-10196-99. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

¹⁹¹ Eugene N. Lane (ed.), A. T. Fear's article, "Cybele and Christ" (pp. 37-50) in "Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren". Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996. ISBN 90-04-10196-99. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

¹⁹² Eva Stehle, "Venus Cybele and the Sabine Women: The Roman Construction of Female Sexuality," *Helios* 16 (1989):

¹⁹³ Eugene N. Lane (ed.) (1996), "Cybele and Attis: The Myth and the Cult" In *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren. Religions in the Greco-Roman World* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996. ISBN 90-04-10196-9. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

¹⁹⁴ Tom Horner, *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 100.

¹⁹⁵ Roscoe, "Priests," 205.

pantheon of male and female gods and goddesses the distinction between the genders is divinely set. Even if full gender equality were to be achieved in such a divided culture the rewards could only be expressed in the terms of the sex-gender ideologies of that society. Therefore males and females would continue to be separated into their religiously determined and socially segregated roles^{196 197 198}. However instead of being divided by sex and gender defined gods and goddesses, the Christian Gospel brought both parity and a message which was the same for everyone. Thus the focus became extended beyond the sex and gender boundaries to one which valued the whole person instead. For both men and women who were devotees of the goddess Cybele, accepting this Christian message could bring rewards of fulfilment and liberation. The move from a gender divided religion and culture to one which worships the one single and all gender encompassing God, meant that gender equality should be made complete. When Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female"¹⁹⁹ there could be no limits applied to this declaration, and this perception was taken up by the early Christian Church. However that did not last, the early Church also found it necessary to accommodate the views of a gender unequal society and within the first three hundred years of its existence a major turnaround had taken place.

It was noted earlier in this article that a major challenge (and achievement) for Christianity when it first faced up to the Greco/Roman culture and later, when it was becoming the recognised religion of the Roman Empire, was the one of transferring the distinctive views of a minority Jewish religion into a dominant culture. That meant confronting the self-centred morality of its male dominated society and Paul's condemnations of sexual abuse which are contained in Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10 fulfil that purpose. It also meant challenging and usurping the power structures which are formed in dominant societies by placing the concern for all victims and the suppressed first on the religious and social agendas of those societies and by embracing an all-encompassing morality which is founded on compassion, nurturing and love. These moral characteristics were more typical of first century female expectations, and both Christianity and the

¹⁹⁶Frymer-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: Did Judeo-Christian religion really turn its back on women? These are some of the questions that Tivka Frymer-Kensky sets out to answer in a study of gender in religions past and present. Her argument, illustrated with accounts of myth and ritual dating back to the early days of Sumer, Assyria, and Greece, is that although polytheism did accord females an important role, the strict division between male and female actually served to keep women in a subordinate position. The goddesses were progressively "ghettoized": their sphere was eventually relegated to home and hearth, while male gods took over as patrons of wisdom and learning. This dualism was displaced by the Bible, which embraced a surprisingly egalitarian view of human nature in which women were not considered to be inherently inferior.

¹⁹⁷ 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)

¹⁹⁸ 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

¹⁹⁹ Note that a more accurate translation of the Greek which Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28 is "no male and female". 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. However the effect of all of these is to say 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. It should also be noted that in the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, the interpretation of "male and female" is very clearly meant when the same passage is repeated in this gospel and in other passages in the gospel as well. Either way there can be little doubt about the intention, which requires the total transcendence of gender in the message this gospel presents.

female led cult of Cybele took this approach. Therefore, far from supporting any perceptions of male superiority or the concept of an exclusively male priesthood, women occupied many key roles in the Gospels and they were found in leadership roles in the early church. No limits appear to have been applied to these activities and early Christianity endorsed a level of gender equality that would be acceptable in the present day²⁰⁰. Christianity did not just challenge sexual outlooks. It challenged all of the moral outlooks upon which a patriarchal society is based, but through its search for respectability in gender segregated Greco/Roman society that challenge was lost.

Within the Christian tradition the idea that the act of self-castration helped the Gallae to transcend gender is found in at least one sect of the Gnostic movement, the Naassenes who, "While equally regarding the Logos (Jesus) as the centre of their belief, held the equivalent deity to be Attis, and frequented the Phrygian Mysteries as the most direct source of spiritual enlightenment."²⁰¹ The apocryphal Gospel of Thomas also describes the belief in the desirability of transcending gender, where it states: "...when you make the male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female... then you will enter the Father's domain" (Saying 22).²⁰² In the Gospel of Thomas the same passage which was attributed to Paul in Galatians 3:28 now reads, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". In the Gospel of Thomas this passage is put directly into the mouth of Jesus himself.

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 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 practiced²⁰³.

When the early church chose the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), to be the symbolic messenger who was charged with bringing the message of the Gospel to the wider world, it was not just the

²⁰⁰ The restrictions Paul imposed on women's behaviour in 1 Corinthians 11:3-9 and 14:34-35 relates to the need for the Christian Church to conform to the social conventions of society. His arguments for this and the conflicts it created are discussed later in this account.

²⁰¹ Jesse Weston *From Ritual to Romance* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1997), 158

²⁰² Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 96.

²⁰³ 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

crossing of gender boundaries that was important. Because he was a member of a despised group of people who was now representing an all embracing God, it was an attack on the whole bastion of male supremacy. This was not just a challenge to the contemporary view of male female relationships or to the male privileges of engaging in profligate sex. It questioned gender inequality in the whole of Greco/Roman society. One consequence of imposing the moral views of a subject religion or those of a sexually or racially suppressed group of people on a dominant society is that the cultural values of the minority religion or group must be applied to everyone. That requires the expansion of the moralities of the minority cultures and their theologies to include all people, instead of just those who are within the sect. It applies both to Jews and Gentiles and to male and female alike. The idea that the Christian Gospel could be extended to Gentiles caused problems for Jews in the early Christian Church, in Greco/Roman society the change from a gender defined goddess to that of a gender transcendent god required a similar extension.

Syncretism was also a fact of Greco-Roman culture; resurrection myths were common to many of the religions, and the Roman world was awash with these cults²⁰⁴. Christianity also borrowed from the other beliefs. Fear and others²⁰⁵ argue that many concepts were shared between the cult of goddess Cybele and that of the Virgin Mary²⁰⁶. Both groups also sought in comparable ways to cross the barriers of social status and transcend the boundaries of gender and sex. However a gender defined goddess divided the gender roles in a way which limited the extent of equality that could be achieved. The compromises which the early Church made with Greco/Roman society for the sake of respectability meant that this challenge was lost. Christianity was also a mystery religion which came to adopt a Platonic school of thought and it is necessary to examine how this transition occurred.

16:0 Celibacy and the Early Church

Two different approaches to celibacy were encountered in the ancient world. One was that endorsed by the mystery religions and the other was that of the Stoics, Neo-Platonists and the Neo-

²⁰⁴ Two centuries before Christ the ancient Romans worshipped a mythical, all-knowing god named Mithras whose life, death, and resurrection were very similar to that of Jesus Christ. The founder of the third-century Gnostic Manicheans, of which St. Augustine was a follower for nine years before being converted to Christianity, taught that Mithras and Christ were one and the same. Mithraism was so popular in the Roman Empire and so similar in important aspects to Christianity that several Church fathers were compelled to address it. These included Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Julius Firmicus Maternus and Augustine (after his conversion). Most of the early church fathers considered Mithraism to be a cunning parody of Christianity which was devised by Satan. See (Meyer, Marvin (2006). "The Mithras Liturgy". in Levine, A.J; Allison, Jr., Dale C; and Crossan, John Dominic. Ed. "The historical Jesus in context". New Jersey: Princeton University Press. ISBN 0-691-00991-0. also Hopfe, Lewis M.; Richardson, Henry Neil (1994). "Archaeological Indications on the Origins of Roman Mithraism". In Lewis M. Hopfe. Ed. Uncovering ancient stones: essays in memory of H. Neil Richardson. Eisenbrauns. ISBN 978-0-931464-73-7).

²⁰⁵ Fear, A.T. (1996). "Cybele and Christ" in Lane, Eugene N. Ed. "Cybele, Attis & Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M.J Vermaseren" E.J. Brill, ISBN 9004101969, 9789004101968. See also Benko, Stephen (2003). "The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology" E. J. Brill. ISSN: 0169-8834. ISBN13: 9789004136397. Also Pelikan, Jaroslav, (1998) "Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture". Yale University Press (September 10, 1998). ISBN-10: 0300076614 ISBN-13: 978-0300076615. and Warner, Marina. (1976, 2000). "Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary." Knopf : distributed by Random House ISBN-10: 0394499131 ISBN-13: 978-0394499130

²⁰⁶ In a polytheistic culture two parallel structures are set up, with a god and goddess at the head of each group. Women can rely on the goddess to protect their interests and that is seen in the aggressive elements in the cult of Cybele which disrupt the social order and tests the male domination of society. However this polytheism leads to a divided and theologically sanctified structure where men engage in the social roles of power and politics while the women's domain is that of the hearth and home. The allegiance to an independent goddess in a polytheistic religion gave a woman considerable within her domain. However that protection is lost in a monotheistic religion in circumstances where the single god who, although transcending gender, is assumed to have male characteristics. In a patriarchal society that presumption will almost inevitably be the case. Gender equality is at the discretion of the male and on the terms that the male decides. In theory full gender equality should be achieved but in practice the situation may become worse, since there is now no goddess who could protect female interests

Pythagoreans. The approach associated with best practice within the mystery and the fertility religions viewed celibacy as an ideal to be achieved but encouraged marriage as second best. The aim of these religions was to foster good husbandry and responsible sex. However the Stoic and Platonic philosophers exalted the virtues of abstinence and self-control: they shunned marriage and all sexual relationships because they saw this as a sign of failure to control one's passions. Therefore for these people marriage could never be treated as a second best and, the adoption of Stoic attitudes together with a Neo-platonic approach eventually led the Church to shun or to suppress all sexual feelings and acts.

Celibacy has always had a high status in the Christian Church. The biblical arguments which were used to justify this policy of celibacy came from a wide range of texts²⁰⁷. In Luke 14:26. Jesus says for example: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, even their own life, such a person cannot be my disciple". The strength of these passages and the fact that Jesus was unmarried seem to make it very clear that Peter and the apostles were required to remain celibate or to abandon their marriages as well.

However the celibacy of the priesthood was not practiced or required in the earliest years of the church. Peter was already married (Matthew. 8:14–17) (Mark. 1:29–31) (Luke. 4:38) (1 Corinthians 9:5) at the beginning of Christ's public ministry. Peter and other apostles were all in committed relationships with their wives at the time when Paul was writing the first Epistle to the Corinthians between 53 and 57 AD. In 1 Corinthians 9:5, Paul wrote "Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas". According to Clement of Alexandria²⁰⁸, Peter and Philip were married and had children. Clement also reported that Peter's wife was martyred before him, and the apostle encouraged her as she was led to her death²⁰⁹. Eusebius writes of the relationship between Peter and his wife in these words, "Such as the marriage of these blessed ones, and such was their perfect affection"²¹⁰. The high degree of contrast between the teaching and practice suggests that, while total commitment to the Gospel is required, there is nothing to stop wives and other loved ones, from being helpers and supporters on the missionary journeys. According to Clement of Alexandria, their wives travelled with the apostles "Not as wives, but as sisters, in order to minister to housewives"²¹¹. One qualification mentioned by Paul for those who are seeking the office of bishop is that "The bishop therefore must be without

²⁰⁷ For example in Luke 9: 59-62 and Matthew 8: 21- 22 it is written that Jesus: "Said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." And in Mark 3 31-35 it is written "Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother". And in Matthew 19:27 where Peter said "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" And Jesus, in Luke 14:26.says: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, even their own life, such a person cannot be my disciple". And in Matthew 10:34-37 and Luke 12:51-53 it is also written. "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man's enemies will be the members of his own household. Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me". These passages and the fact that Jesus was unmarried seem to make it very clear that Peter and the Apostles were required to abandon their marriages as well and this is what the Councils of Elvira and Ancyra demanded. The reasons for this contradiction are given in the text.

²⁰⁸ Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, III, vi, ed. Dindorf, II, 276. Accessed at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/clement-stromata-book3-english.html>

²⁰⁹ Clement of Alexandria, Ante-Nicene Fathers. 2.541 (c. 195). Accessed at:<http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/early-church-fathers/ante-nicene/>.

²¹⁰ 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/>.

²¹¹ Clement of Alexandria Ante-Nicene Fathers 2.390, 391 (c. 195). Accessed at:<http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/early-church-fathers/ante-nicene/>.

reproach, the husband of one wife” (See I Timothy 3:2). The Early Church leaders also spoke out against those who preached against marriage²¹² and there is an underlying presumption that all of the Apostles apart from John were married, however in most cases nothing is known about their wives.

A conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees on marriage is described in Matthew 19: 3-12. “And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.” The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it” (ESV). In the comments which he makes about marriage in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul makes it clear that he is speaking in the context of having “No command from the Lord” (1 Corinthians 7:25). In them Paul recommends celibacy, but acknowledges that it is “not God's gift to all within the church”. This also reflects the passage in Matthew 19:11 where Jesus says “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given”. In 1 Corinthians 7:8–9, Paul also states “Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion”. There can be little doubt about the strength of the Christian commitment to the ideals of celibacy, and this is evident in the teaching of Jesus and in Paul. Christian celibacy transcends worldly values for the sake of the kingdom of heaven and this commitment takes priority over family relationships and life. However it is equally made clear that this type of celibacy is an ideal and that married life is second best. The Apostles and the early Church did not adopt celibacy for themselves but instead committed themselves to spreading the Christian Gospel in partnership with their wives.

The close conjunction of the statements in Matthew on marriage and that on eunuchs suggests that these two passages should be taken together. Both of these passages are contained in the same sentence. A directly equivalent form of words is also used, and the Jewish midrashic tradition imposes a very careful structuring and analysis of any biblical text. Jesus states that those who self-castrate for the kingdom of heaven's sake are not condemned for their action (Matthew 19:12) and eunuchs who observed the Jewish Law were given a high religious esteem (Isaiah 56:4-5)²¹³. No Jewish law is broken if the cross dressing is for honest purposes and it is not for deceit: A full discussion of Deuteronomy 22:5²¹⁴ is given below. Therefore transgendered people who seek gender reassignment, including those who cross dress to be true to themselves, are given a full place within the church and society. However, like marriage, this is an action which is welcomed as “Second best”. Just as it is 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. So, like

²¹² See for example Ante-Nicene Fathers 1:349, Irenaeus Against Heresies, chap. 24 also Ante-Nicene Fathers 1:353, Irenaeus Against Heresies, [Book I,] Chap. 28,. Accessed at:<http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/early-church-fathers/ante-nicene/>.

²¹³ Isaiah Chapter 56, Verses 3-4: “Nor let the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry tree”. For thus says the Lord, “To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off”

²¹⁴ Rabbi Lisa Edwards (21st century) Deuteronomy 22:5. This verse prohibits hiding your true self.

the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts (8:26-40), those transgendered people who use the breadth of their experiences to embrace and enrich the ideals of both lives may share in that priestly act.

The whole message of the Gospel centred on love²¹⁵. According to Eusebius the Apostle Peter seems to have had a very happy married life. Marriage can only be considered second best if it interferes with spreading the Gospel of Christ. The worship of an all embracing god means that cross dressing and self castration can no longer play any part in worship, but if the conflicts which transgender issues create lead to distraction and distress then, like marriage it is better to follow the path they direct, so that instead of burning with passion, lives can instead be filled with devotion to Christ (1 Corinthians 7:9).

Another concern relates to the Jewish rejection of castration as it is enshrined in Jewish custom and Law. However the experience of Peter when he saw the vision of a sheet let down from heaven three times (Acts 10:11-16) gave one answer to this. A voice from heaven told Peter to kill and eat, but Peter declined since the sheet contained unclean animals. This command was repeated twice, along with the voice saying, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean", then the sheet was taken back to heaven. The refusal of Jesus to condemn the act of self-castration in Matthew 19:12 gave the confirmation. However the clashes in cultural values between the Jewish and Greco/Roman traditions could result in two very different interpretations being adopted. The traditional objection to castration within Judaism encouraged a figurative rather than a literal interpretation and this could be applied to those people who did not, could not or who chose not to reproduce without engaging in any emasculative act. On the other hand self-castration in Greco/Roman society was commonly practiced as an act of extreme self devotion. People who engaged in it for noble purposes could be regarded with awe and great respect. The major problems caused by these differences in the early church are described earlier in this document. For some people the drive for self-castration was for complete devotion by denying the temptations of sex, but by the precepts of the time self-castration was also considered to be a change of sex. Paul declares in Colossians 3:11 that: "There is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all". In the Gospel of Christian love transgender and homosexual people are subject to this in the same way as is everyone else. Heterosexual, homosexual and transgender men and women are all to be people without labels, in the Love of Christ.

However moral responsibility is an important issue and the early Christians were (and are) to be distinguished from others by the purity of their lives. The Church also needed to adapt the expectations of a Jewish sect to meet the needs of its Gentile followers. The first major pronouncement on this came with the Apostolic Decree of around AD 50 when James the Just, speaking on behalf of the church said "Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood" (Acts 15 19-20). Paul also was not hesitant in creating virtue and vice lists for the gentile converts to adopt²¹⁶. The virtues, which for Paul are the "Fruits of the Spirit," are "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). Paul also lists the vices, which he calls the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21 where he states "Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these". In Galatians 5:26 he asks "Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another". Paul also contradicts the Apostolic Decree in I Corinthians 8:7-8 and 10:19-

²¹⁵ In Matthew 22:37-40 it is stated: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets".

²¹⁶ (Romans 13:8-14, Galatians 5:16-26, Ephesians 5:1-10, Colossians 3:1-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22, 1 Timothy 3:2-11, 1 Timothy 6:3-12, 2 Timothy 2:22-26, Titus 1:6-9, Titus 3:1-3. See also James 3:13-4:4 and Jude 1: 7-8)

29 as he allows "the strong" to eat food offered to idols, if it does not affect "the weak". The lists in the other epistles repeat these main points²¹⁷.

The Christian Church was required to make a difficult choice. If it wished to be highly regarded in contemporary Greco/Roman society it had to acknowledge the social expectations of that society and to work for change within what this demands. However a major challenge for Christianity was one of transferring the distinctive views and morality of a minority Jewish religion into a dominant culture. Instead of gender segregation gender equality was required in the worship of one transcendent God. Instead of just a Gospel of compassion and love the Christian message required the transformation of the whole structure of a male dominated patristic society, and the outcome of this struggle was to set the future direction of the Church. Deuteronomy 22:5 only applies to cross dressing for improper purposes. In a gender unequal society the expression of any gender variant or sexually variant activity challenges the respectability of the Church, and that places a particular responsibility on transgender people to ensure that their actions do not offend and that their intentions are correct.

17:0 Deuteronomy 22:5

Some people will consider that the statements contained in Deuteronomy 22:5 condemn every type of role where cross-dressing is involved²¹⁸. However this passage needs to be examined in more

²¹⁷ Romans 13:8-14 9 the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbour as yourself." 14 - let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Galatians 5:16-26 - 19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. 22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. 26 Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another. Ephesians 5:-0 - 3 But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving. 5 Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure person, or one who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Colossians 3:1-17 5 Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). 8 But now you must get rid of all such things-- anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another 13 Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 - 14 And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. 15 See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. 22 abstain from every form of evil. 1 Timothy 3:2-11 - Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. 11 Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. 1 Timothy 6:3-12 - 4is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words. From these come envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, 5 and wrangling among those who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. 11 But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 2 Timothy 2:22-26 - 22 Shun youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies. Titus 1:6-9 - [An elder must be] someone who is blameless, married only once, whose children are believers, not accused of debauchery and not rebellious. 7 For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain. Titus 3:1-3 - , 2 To speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone. See also James 3:13-4:4 14 But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. 15 Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. See also Jude 1:7-8 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. 8 Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.

²¹⁸ In the Revised Standard version of the Bible, 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". Young's

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.²¹⁹ 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. Those issues relating to respectability are extensively examined in other parts of this analysis²²⁰.

The Jewish concern in this passage is 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. No literal interpretation has ever been applied. Care is needed in translating Deuteronomy 22:5 in order to preserve the differences in the words, for unfortunately many of the freer translations of the Christian bible do not²²¹. It reads: "A man's item shall not be on a woman, and a man shall not wear a woman's garment; whoever does such a thing is an abhorrence unto Adonai". Here there are three clauses. (a) A man's item shall not be on a woman; (b) a man shall not wear a woman's garment and (c) whoever does such a thing is an abhorrence unto God. The first two of these clauses are not identical in structure and the differences are reflected in the various Jewish interpretations of the verse. One of the oldest documents, which is known as Targum Unkulus²²², (ca100 to 200 AD) interprets the verse as a prohibition against women carrying weapons, and against men using the "vessels" of a woman. Rabbi Eliezar ben Ya'akov (ca 226)²²³ declares that: "A woman must not wear instruments of war or go to war." The word used in the first statement (Keli) means "Mens" things i.e. clothes, armour, weapons and tools rather than just the clothes, while the word for women's things (Simlah) which is used in the second statement describes a type of women's outer clothing. The interpretation of the first clause as relating to "war gear" rather than clothes is also found in the Midrash Mishlei²²⁴. Josephus (ca. 37-100) states "Take care, especially in your battles, that no woman use the habit of a man, nor man the garment of a woman"²²⁵. In a further attempt to identify quintessential "Men's items," Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob (ca. 80–110) is quoted in the Talmud (edited c. 800 C.E.)²²⁶, asking: "What is the proof that a woman may not go forth with weapons to war?" He then cites this verse, which he reads to say: "A warrior's gear may not be put on a woman"^{227 228}.

Literal translation reads "The habiliments of a man are not on a woman, nor doth a man put on the garment of a woman, for the abomination of Jehovah thy God [is] any one doing these".

²¹⁹The 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/0209.htm> <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

²²⁰ See Gilchrist, S. (2015c): *Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*

²²¹ This can be a major problem. For example the New International Version of the Bible states. "A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this".. See www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Deuteronomy%2022:5 [accessed 16/11/2015]. Similar concerns are found elsewhere.

See Section 3:6 of Gilchrist, S. (2013a) *An Unfinished Reformation*:

²²²Targum Unkulus. <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/>

²²³ Babylonian Talmud, Nazir 59a, Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov (2nd - 4th C CE)

²²⁴ Proverbs 31:19

²²⁵ Josephus(ca 97) Antiquities, Book 4, 8:43 <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/josephus/ant4.html>

²²⁶ Eliezer ben Jacob, sometimes referred to as "the Elder" lived in the second part of the 1st Century. He was regarded as an authority on the Temple which he had seen, and because he was familiar with matters pertaining to Temple services and practices (e.g., Yoma 16b). Rashi claimed that his statements are few but they are reliable. The Babylonian Talmud states that his Mishnah was small in quantity but trustworthy (Yeb. 49b).

²²⁷Talmud: B. Naz. 59a. Access the Talmud at: <http://halakhah.com/>

Another of the Jewish Aramaic texts, Targum Yonatan ben Uziel²²⁹, which was written around the same time as Targum Unkulus, interprets the verse to be a ban on women wearing the tzitzit (tallit or prayer shawl) or the tefillin (phylacteries or prayer amulets worn by traditionally observant Jews) and on men trimming their groin or underarm hair. This regards "Men's items" as the tzitsit and the tefillin. This interpretation has gained the widest acceptance among the Jewish sages whose views are reflected in the mainstream legal codes²³⁰. The Shulhan Arukh (Yore De`a) says that the prohibition of a man wearing simlat isha "women's dress" or "women's fashion" refers to wearing a women's hairstyle, which includes specifically shaving one's underarm or pubic hair. Men may not shave their armpits and genital regions as women do, unless it is the local custom for men to do that.²³¹ The tzitsit and the tefillin are the quintessential "men's items". It is considered that these rules are imposed by the Halakha (Jewish law) and condemning the incorrect wearing of these or the inappropriate trimming of hair is the purpose of the verse.

The third major set of Jewish interpretations is concerned with the control of status and immoral activity. Ibn Ezra²³² (ca 1140) stated that "Womenkind is not created for anything other than procreation, and were a woman to go with men to war she would fall into prostitution en route." Other commentators take up these views on gender discrimination and sexual immorality. For example the Rabbi Shlomo Yizchaki (Rashi) (ca.1040-1105), who was one of the most highly-regarded Talmudists and Biblical commentators of all time, stated that: "(A woman dresses) that she should resemble a man in order to mingle with the men, which cannot be for any reason other than to fornicate". Rashi also argued that "A man's item should not be on a woman so she can go out among men, for this is only for the purpose of adultery." Likewise, he says, "A man shall not wear a women's garment: so he can go and be among the women."²³³ The same analysis is presented in the Shulhan Arukh²³⁴. This is the 16th century law code that has become a standard law text for most of the traditionally observant Jewish people. According to the analysis the danger of "cross-dressing," is that it might allow men to enter women's groups and women to enter men's groups. In this view the intent of the law is to prevent men and women from associating with what would normally be a single-sex group of the other gender under false pretences, in circumstances which might lead to adultery, or for "Abhorrent" behaviour²³⁵. In societies in which gender segregation and inequality was widely observed, this subterfuge was seen as a real danger. However in its discussion of the laws of the festival of Purim, the Code says men and women may cross dress during the festival because it is for the purpose of gaiety²³⁶. In all of these interpretations it is not the cross dressing itself that is being condemned, it is the purpose of the act.

The Bible makes it clear that cultic prostitution had no place in Judaism. There is a wide variation given to the interpretations of Deuteronomy 22:5 and to Leviticus 18:33 and 20:13²³⁷ in the present

²²⁸ See also Horton, David (1994) "Changing Channels? A Christian Response to the Transvestite and Transsexual" Grove code: E92-ebook. ISBN: 1851742581. This book is now out of print but it may be bought online at:

http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/cart.php?target=product&product_id=16755&category_id=346

²²⁹ on Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:5 <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/>

²³⁰ Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen on Cross Dressing and Deuteronomy 22:5 accessed at <http://www.beki.org/crossdress.html> 6 December 2012.

²³¹ Tur, Yoreh De'ah, Chapter 182 (14th century) Prohibitions on cross-dressing are defined by local fashion. In Shulhan Aruch Yoreh Deah 182:5 Rabbi Joseph Karo discusses if a male is allowed to remove under arm hair. The Ben Ish Hai, Rabbi Yoseph Haim of Baghdad (Rav Pealim 3 Yoreh Deah 18) addresses the issue of men shaving their body hair.

²³² The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch: Deuteronomy. Translated by Shachter Jay F. (2003) Ktav Publishing House, Inc. ISBN 0881257451, 9780881257458

²³³ Babylonian Talmud Nazir 59a (2nd - 4th C CE)

²³⁴ <http://www.torah.org/advanced/shulchan-aruch/>

²³⁵ Babylonian Talmud Nazir 59a (2nd - 4th C CE)

²³⁶ Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayyim 696:8)

²³⁷ Leviticus 18:22: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination". Leviticus 20:13: "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them". New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)

day. Some fundamentalist churches take a simple literalist view. However other modern Christian interpretations tend to assume that the motives for cross dressing prohibited in Deuteronomy 22:5 and same-sex intercourse condemned in Leviticus 18:33 and 20:13 were always connected with temple prohibition and inappropriate sex. In all of today's interpretations little account is taken of contrast between the privileges of power exerted in dominant societies and the oppression of submission in conquered ones: both in terms of the cultural differences that are established, and the use and abuse of sex. Evidence of the high degree of trauma and distress that these power conflicts create is present today: and that extends from the Christian practice of slavery in the Americas to the empires of the ancient world. This means that no examination of Christian theology and its attitudes to all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour can be complete without taking a full account of the relationships between power and sex, and that is an objective of this study²³⁸.

The Hebrew Bible uses two different words for prostitute, *zonah* and *qedesha* or *kedeshah*. The word *zonah* simply meant an ordinary prostitute or loose woman, but the word *qedesha* literally meant "consecrated (feminine form)"^{239 240}. The actions of the Jewish king Asa (913-910 BC to 873-869 BC) are described in 1 Kings 15:12 where it states: "He put away the "male temple prostitutes" out of the land, and removed all the idols that his ancestors had made." A later king, Josiah (641/640 to 610/609 BC) demanded the exclusive worship of Yahweh and he outlawed all other types. According to the biblical account, Josiah destroyed the living quarters for the "male cult prostitutes" which were in the Temple. He also destroyed the pagan objects in the Temple which were related to the worship of Baal or Asherah, "And all the hosts of the heavens"²⁴¹ (2 Kings 23). Deuteronomy 23:18-19 says that: "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a *qedesha*, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a *qadesh*. You shall not bring the hire of a prostitute (*zonah*) or the wages of a dog (*kelev*) into the house of the Lord your God to pay a vow, for both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God". The Hebrew word "*kelev*" may also signify a male dancer or

²³⁸ See Gilchrist, S. (2015c): *Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*

²³⁹ The meaning of the male form *kadesh* or *qadesh* is not entirely clear. In different bible translations the word has been defined in different ways, some of which are: Sodomites (5), male cult prostitutes (2), male prostitutes (2), shrine prostitutes, male shrine prostitutes, male temple prostitutes, sacred prostitutes, men of women's conditions, whoremongers and perverted persons.

²⁴⁰ Elements of the behaviour of the *Qedeshim* appear to closely match those of the Gallae priests of Cybele. As male priests dedicated to the female goddess Asherah they might be expected from the example of other religions to cross dress as well. This has been indicated by Maimonides (see later). However there is disagreement over the question of self-castration. Rosco and Murray argue that they did not do this on the grounds that the *qedeshim* seem to have lived within temple precincts. Others point out that the place where the "Women weave clothes for Asherah" (2 Kings 23:7) could also be beside the temple and not in its inner precinct. (This is not clear from the original text, and the bible translations differ) Hebrew law also forbade castration, and there is no direct evidence for the practice. (See: Murray, Stephen O; Roscoe, Will. (1997). "Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature" NYU Press, ISBN 0814774687, 9780814774687) Kufler on the other hand presents arguments for the adoption of the practice (see Kufler: "The Practice of Self-Castration in Early Christianity: The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity" (Chicago, 2001). A summary article is available (30 November 2012): at <http://www.transchristians.org/archive/the-practice-of-self-castration-in-early-christianity>

²⁴¹ Alan Hooker contributes an interesting blog on this topic. He argues that the context of 2 Kings 23:4-7 does not, in his opinion, legitimate a translation of "male temple prostitutes." The problem with these translations is that *qdš* denotes holiness, and a more fitting translation would be "holy ones," or "consecrated ones." (See the descriptions in this article of the Gallae priests). He notes that in King Josiah commands the accoutrements of Baal, Asherah, and the *šēbā haššāmāyim* ("heavenly host") to be taken away from the Temple. He puts away the priests, he removes the cult statue of Asherah from the Temple and he burns it in the Kidron valley (2 Kgs. 23:4-6). He also destroys the "houses of *haqqēdēšim*" which were in or by the Temple, where "the women weave clothes for Asherah." (2 Kings 23:7) Since the *haqqēdēšim* were located where the women wove for Asherah, it is probable, in his opinion, that *haqqēdēšim*, or the "Hosts of Heaven", are male priests consecrated to Asherah. See <http://awhooker.wordpress.com/tag/sacred-prostitution/>, accessed 28 November 2012.

See also: Olyan Saul M. (2010) "What Do We Really Know about Women's Rites In The Israelite Family Context?" Department of Religious Studies, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912-1927 Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden. Also available online at:

http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/docserver/15692116/v10n1_s3.pdf?expires=1354221085&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=C1008E53B58E5FEB73B2FB0E5457D559

prostitute²⁴² ²⁴³. Around 622 BC Josiah ordered the High Priest Hilkiah to renovate the temple. During this time Hilkiah claimed to have discovered the lost scroll of the “Book of the Law”, which was written by Moses. Most modern scholars consider that this scroll was a compilation of texts which are now found in Deuteronomy and Leviticus in their present form. The other books of the Pentateuch may have been codified at this time. Other passages may also be relevant. In an earlier pogrom Jehu (ca 842-815 BC) called an assembly of all the worshippers of Baal in Israel. 2 Kings 10:21-22 says that “They crowded into the temple of Baal until it was full from one end to the other. And Jehu said to the keeper of the wardrobe, “Bring robes for all the servants of Baal.” So he brought out robes for them”. After he was certain that only worshippers of Baal remained in the temple, he slaughtered them.

Judaism had to deal with some very unpleasant adjacent gods. Molech²⁴⁴ was a Canaanite god whose worship according to the bible required children to be sacrificed to him by “Passing through fire”. He is condemned four times in the bible, (see Leviticus 18:21, Leviticus 20:2–5, 2 Kings 23:10 and Jeremiah 32:35). The medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides said “Men in his day put on women’s clothing to invoke the aid of the goddess Venus and he found it was commanded in the books of the idolaters that men, when in the worship of Venus, and the Astarte or Ashtarothe of the Phoenicians²⁴⁵, should wear the dress of women, and that women, in the worship of Mars, and of Moloch of the East, should put on the armour of men”²⁴⁶ ²⁴⁷. The prophets railed against the

²⁴²Cross dressing and self castration was widely practiced in the Middle Eastern religious traditions. The priests of the very male god Hercules cross-dressed as women in honour of his time in service dressed as a woman to Queen Omphale. The gods could also appear in other genders. In The Odyssey Athena is described as often going to the aid of people in the guise of men. In the cult of Aphroditus, worshippers of both sexes cross-dressed, men wore women's clothing and women dressed in men's clothing. Ritual cross dressing is found in Canaanite fertility religion. Lucian of Samosata and Eusebius write of masquerade in the worship of Astarte, and in the Mishne Torah of Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Deuteronomy 22:5. is debated under the section dealing with idolatry. Gender transgression including self castration is common to many religious traditions. However cross dressing may be carried out in honour of the god or goddess is being worshipped rather than sex. See (“The Works of Lucian of Samosata: Volumes 1, 2, 3 & 4 (Forgotten Books)”, Fowler F. G. (Translator), Fowler H. W. (Translator) (2007). Print Edition: Publisher: Tredition (11 Nov 2011) ISBN-10: 3842462611 ISBN-13: 978-3842462618. Available free on Kindle.) also (Maimonides RN45, RN171; Meir MN28, MN164; Chinuch C467, C468).

²⁴³ An interesting aside is given by Cyrus Gordon, in his book “The Bible and the Ancient Near East” (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997), p. 160. Gordon wrote that: “Another biblical law that now can be explained through recourse to the Ugaritic texts is the prohibition against transvestism in Deuteronomy 22:5. This act is described in the Epic of Aqhat as well. After the hero is slain, his sister Pughat seeks revenge against Anat for the murder. To do so, Pughat disguises herself as a male, replete with rouge (the coloration of males, especially warrior heroes), man’s clothing and weaponry. The Israelite reaction is to forbid transvestism, another aspect of Canaanite society that they found reprehensible. Again, one needs to place this in its proper context. No doubt the average Canaanite male or female dressed in proper fashion throughout most his or her life. But since Canaanite epic literature describes transvestism in a noble manner, we may conclude that this act not only was practiced but also was countenanced”.

²⁴⁴ Although the Bible refers directly to Molech as the God of the Ammonites, little is known about this god. Phoenicia and Carthage were noted (or notorious?) for the practice. Other gods who demanded child sacrifice were Tanit, Cronus/Saturn and Set. However caution should be exercised. Child mortality was high in ancient societies and stillbirth was present. The discovery of a child cemetery near Carthage suggests at least some of these might have been ceremonies honouring children who already had died. Lobel Jarrett A. (2011). Child Burials - Carthage, Tunisia: *Archaeology Archive*: Volume 64 Number 1, January/February 2011 <http://archive.archaeology.org/1101/topten/tunisia.html>

²⁴⁵ The distinctions between gods and goddesses such as Astarte and Asherah are not always kept sharp. Often the two are combined and they are treated as the same. However it is also clear from their histories that they have to be treated as separate goddesses. Nevertheless in Ugarit Astarte, Baal's consort, Athtarat was also known as Ashtoreth. In Ugarit she also appears as Anat, where she is both the sister and the spouse of Baal. In this context she is the goddess of battle and she personified the planet Venus. However she was also “the female power of fertility operative in the production of offspring as well as the fertility of the soil” (Toombs, Lawrence. (1983) “Baal, Lord of the Earth: The Ugaritic Baal Epic, “In The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth” p621). Ashtoreth was additionally known as the western Semitic equivalent of the Roman Cybele or the Babylonian Ishtar, (see Drower, Margaret. (1975) “Ugarit,” in the Cambridge Ancient History, 3rd edition, II.2, 154). Genealogy gets confusing with the gods!

²⁴⁶ Townley, James. (2001). “The Reasons of the Laws of Moses from the “More Nevochim” of Maimonides. With Notes, Dissertations, and a Life of the Author”. London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1827. Reprinted 2001 by The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd. LCCN 00-066334. ISBN 1-58477-168-2.

importation of such beliefs and the acts of immorality into Jewish life. However in 1 Kings 11:7 it is said that Solomon built a high place for the worship of Molech in the mountain "That is before Jerusalem". It is generally accepted that in the last days of the Jewish kingdom human sacrifices were offered at a place called Topheth, "In the valley of the children of Hinnom." to Yahweh, as King or the Counsellor of the nation.²⁴⁸ In the standard biblical interpretations, the act of cross dressing is intimately linked to temple prostitution and to unacceptable sex. The Hebrew scripture also identified the surrounding states and religions as centres for all kinds of despicable activities and sexual acts. This evidence would have seemed incontestable before the discovery of the clay tablets and inscriptions found in Ugarit, which was one of the nearby city states that worshipped the same Canaanite gods. The religious and mythological texts give a comprehensive view of Canaanite religious practice and belief. They present an extended picture of the type of fertility religion, characteristic of an agricultural people, which many Israelites adopted in most periods of Israelite history. There is also much less evidence of the gross immorality and the strong sexual obsession that would have been expected from the Hebrew accusations²⁴⁹, and the main targets for the Jewish invectives could instead have been the practices of the dominant goddess religions of Middle Eastern society. It appears that these Jewish conflicts with other religions could be regarded as rehearsals for the later problems that the early Christian Church would face.

There is however a different way of reading Deuteronomy 22:5. This passage is found in the Holiness Code section of Leviticus, which is directly concerned with the behaviour of the priests. In this interpretation it is a direct instruction to the priests in their practice of worship. It also forms part of the rules of the Second Temple and when that temple fell in AD 70 those rules ceased to have effect. This priestly understanding does not preclude any more general expositions when it is applied to other situations, and this can be observed in the different interpretations which have been given. Every interpretation condemns cross dressing for dishonest or destructive action. None of them prohibit it for just purpose, and this passage is rightly put in the section of the Holiness Code in Leviticus which deals with deceit.

Although the prohibitions contained in Deuteronomy 22:5 implicitly support the condemnations of the Gallae by Augustine and the others, they are directed to the purpose of cross dressing, rather

²⁴⁷ However this might help explain one interpretation of the first clause in Deuteronomy 22:5 which associated women who cross dress with wearing the apparels of war.

²⁴⁸ Jewish Encyclopaedia: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10937-moloch-molech>

²⁴⁹ In the Canaanite texts from Ugarit the equivalent term for Quedeshim is used to describe cultic singers and diviners. Deuteronomy's prohibition of quedeshim and quedeshot has been widely interpreted as referring to ritual prostitution, and the attempted link to homosexuality is evident in the translations of Deuteronomy that render quedeshim as "sodomites." However the evidence supporting for this evaporates on closer scrutiny and the majority of scholars do not link this role to cultic prostitution in any way. The quedeshim in Ugarit were an important and esteemed class of sacred people whose status ranked immediately below those of priests. References to sexual behaviour of any sort are rare and incidental. Apart from one extremely doubtful passage there is no supporting evidence whatever from Ugarit that cultic prostitution or anal penetration was engaged in, either for the joy of sex or lustful acts. There are two texts from Ugarit which suggested that bestiality may have occurred. Prostitution is one of the oldest industries in the world and no doubt it was frequently practiced. Like the Gallae there may have been a duality between the followers who took the way of darkness and those who took the way of light. There are many points of commonality between the Jewish and the Ugaritic religious traditions. However morality has to be judged by the standards of the society in which questioned acts have taken place. No combination of the terms for prostitution and that for the sacred is found in any ancient texts and all of the ancient sources which describe cult related activities as "prostitution" are descriptions of outsiders. None of the passages in the Bible, with the possible exception of Deuteronomy 23:18 provide a contextual link between the quedeshim, prostitution and associated malpractice. However these biblical condemnations are associated with reforming Kings who sought to rid Judaism from the influence of foreign worship practices. For that to work it is necessary to assume the all of the other religions around the Jewish state were centres of depravity and irresponsible sex. The evidence that is now available does not demonstrate this and it has to be questioned as to whether the quedeshim who were within the Judean religious tradition were as immoral as the bible leads people to expect. (See: Kimuhu, Johnson M.(2008) "Leviticus: The Priestly Laws and Prohibitions from the Perspective of Ancient Near East and Africa" Peter Lang. ISBN 1433102005, 9781433102004. See Also Greenspahn, Frederick E. (2002) "Homosexuality and the Bible" CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly <http://data.ccarnet.org/journal/1102fg.pdf> and Balch, David L. (1999) "Homosexuality, Science, and the Plain Sense of Scripture" Erdmans. ISBN-10: 080284698X ISBN-13: 978-0802846983)

than to the act of cross dressing itself. The use of the specific condemnation of cross dressing in Deuteronomy 22:5 would be far more relevant to a Jewish audience than to a Greco/Roman one, and this may be why it does not seem to have a prominent place. Even though sexual impropriety and effeminacy may have been the stated reasons for the condemnations of the Gallae by Augustine, Maternus and others, another, and perhaps a more accurate reason, may have been that of maintaining the respectability of the Church.

This is part of a much larger investigation²⁵⁰ which fuses the results of a neurophysiological and psychological analysis with the theology of the Church. An extended analysis of the teaching of Jesus is separately given²⁵¹. Paul outlines that teaching in Galatians 3:26-28 when he states: "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". This statement can be tested both from the scientific and the theological perspectives. The neurophysiological and psychological study demonstrates that as wide a range of moral attitudes exist among gender and sexually variant people as there are in the population at large. Jesus makes exactly the same distinction in his teaching in the Gospels and the New Covenant, where the prohibitions that were previously based on the letter of the Law are now to be interpreted in the context of love and on the intention of the acts. It is demonstrated that in the teaching of Jesus, all transgendered, transsexual, lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves; must be accepted alike. All behaviour is governed by the purity of intention and there is no automatic condemnation of any cross-gender or same-sex act.

Over the centuries a great deal of effort has been put into determining the correct interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5. However it is also clear that the accepted interpretation of the verse has changed as society changes. The use of one single Old Testament verse also gives a very weak foundation for the different fundamental theological and pastoral judgements which have been applied to it, especially in light of 1 Samuel 16:7 "God does not see as mortals see: they look on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart"²⁵².

18:0 Changing Attitudes

It has already been shown that a major challenge for Christianity was one of imposing the moral perceptions of a subject religion onto a dominant culture and it was through the outcasts and the dispossessed of society that the Gospel message was preached. The presence of male and female gods and goddesses in a polytheistic society means that the division of gender roles is divinely determined. Two parallel social structures are established, with a god and goddess at the head of each group. Women can therefore rely on the goddess to protect their own particular interests and that is seen in the aggressive elements in the cult of Cybele which disrupt the social order and test the male domination of a patriarchal society. However this polytheism leads to a divided and theologically sanctified structure where men are free to engage in the social roles of power and politics while the women's domain is confined to hearth and home. The cult of Cybele was both an advocate for and a protector of female interests. The allegiance to an independent goddess in a polytheistic religion gave a woman considerable power within her domain but the existence of the

²⁵⁰ Gilchrist, (S. 2015 a): *Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*

²⁵¹ See sections 7 and 8 of: Gilchrist, (S. 2015 a): *Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*. Other analyses are given in: Gilchrist, S. (2014a): *Christianity and Crisis: An Overview of Gender and Sexual Difference in the Early and Modern Christian Church* and Gilchrist, S. (2013a): *An Unfinished Reformation*.

²⁵² Horton, David (1994) "Changing Channels? A Christian Response to the Transvestite and Transsexual" Grove code: E92-ebook. ISBN: 1851742581. This book is now out of print but it may be bought online at: http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/cart.php?target=product&product_id=16755&category_id=346

separate god and goddess structures in the dominant patriarchal Roman society meant that the ultimate male authority could not be challenged, and so it reigned supreme. Greco/Roman culture demanded that responsibility and restraint were expected of all its citizens. Sexual power was a male prerogative and its morality was based on authority, so with anyone of lesser status, male non citizen, woman or slave, provided the man was seen to act responsibly by the standards of that society, he could do what he liked.

As well as protecting female, fertility and nurturing interests the goddess cults also exerted a political role in tempering male domination. The processions of Cybele in Rome with their noisy confrontations and the gender ambiguities of the cult's followers was an effective weapon in ensuring that this voice was heard. The repudiation of their masculinity by the Gallae was an important weapon in this armoury and the effeminate nature of their behaviour may have added further to this effect. All of the major Middle Eastern goddess religions challenged these male attitudes and within their myths and stories the gender transformations and ambiguities are common. However the gender defined nature of the god and goddess religions meant that there was a set limit to the full extent to which equality could be achieved. Conversely when there is a gender transcendent god in a monotheistic religion these gender barriers can be broken down. This was a Christian ideal expressed in the New Testament texts. The message of Christianity was the same for everyone; so gender difference was transcended and in the Gospel of Jesus and in the Church of the apostolic era true gender equality was sought.

In this analysis of the cult of Cybele it has been demonstrated that there were two ways. The way of darkness contravened the socially determined moral values of Greco/Roman society: it involved attitudes and activities which led to fornication, licentiousness, prostitution, self-centredness and promiscuity and the gross irresponsibility of this behaviour was strongly condemned, not only by the early Christians but also by many people in Greco/Roman society. The opposite way of light was expressed by the theology of the cult through its pursuit of the more typically female values of care, nurture, and responsible sex. These principles were embraced by those of the Gallae who, while also disrupting the gender divisions of Greco/Roman society, sought instead to transcend them by living true to the ideals of both lives. These people were regarded as "The Wise Ones" and "The Holy Ones", but even though they could be attributed with great religious awe, they could never be integrated into the male dominated society - which they had rejected by their actions, and this meant that the divisions enforced by a polytheistic society were kept.

If Christianity was to succeed it had to overcome the gender confrontations of a polytheistic society, so instead of creating a challenge to male supremacy a different approach of persuasion was required. Therefore the Christian Church sought to gain high respect from others in Greco/Roman society by setting a good example through its work of helping the suffering and dispossessed, their love for one another, and in the purity of their actions and beliefs. This need for this respect is evident in all of Paul's epistles. Therefore Christians had to be seen as paragons of virtue within a male dominated Greco/Roman society, but that also required them to work within the conventions of that society in order to achieve the moral transformations which they sought. This required the suppression of certain activities such as the acts of self-castration which had been carried forward²⁵³ from the traditions of the mystery religions into some parts of the early Greek and Roman church. It also demanded an accommodation with the gender expectations imposed by Greco/Roman male dominated society, and also an agreement to work from within them to spread the Gospel of Christian Love.

There is little evidence that Jesus sought respect from the authorities when he overthrew the moneychangers in the Temple, or contravened the Jewish ritual laws or sat down with people who were regarded as sinners to eat. There is also little sign of the need to gain the respect of the

²⁵³ Without official approval

establishment when the early church challenged the sex and gender standards which society kept. Therefore this marked one of the major changes in the outlook of the Church. In order to gain this universal respect it became imperative for the Christian Church to reject all public identification with the goddess religions and that required the rejection of all forms of behaviour which the Gallae had used to disrupt the excesses of a male dominated Roman society. This meant that, instead of the goddess religions being seen as past allies on a journey they were to become the targets for extreme attack. Cybele and the Gallae were picked out for the most severe condemnation. In an almost total inversion of the early Christian attitudes which had challenged the gender divisions of Greco/Roman society all gender variant behaviour became the subject of merciless denunciation. Male and female gender stereotypes became strongly enforced. Effeminacy was utterly condemned as being incompatible with the conduct of Christian Life. Clement of Alexandria states: "A true man must have no mark of effeminacy visible on his face, or any other part of his body. Let no blot on his manliness, then, ever be found either in his movements or habits."²⁵⁴ Considering the nature of their attitudes to sexual expression, Augustine, Maternus and other Church Fathers might have been expected to condemn most strongly the practices of promiscuity, prostitution and sexual abuse. However the outward appearance and the effeminate behaviour of the Gallae priests were often the primary focus for their attacks. Although sexual transgressions were always condemned, the need to maintain respectability was also a major concern of the Church.

The cost of seeking respectability within a gender unequal society brought the misdemeanours of gender discrimination. However there was another area where inequality occurred and that was found in the arena of accepting equal responsibility by both sexes for the conduct of sexual acts. Christianity had two models of celibacy that were available to it. One belonged to the Mystery Religions and the other was that pursued by the Neo-Platonists. The celibacy that was advocated by Jesus in the Gospels was that of the mystery religions, but the conflicts created within Greco/Roman society by pursuing the type of gender equality which the Gospels demanded influenced the transfer from the doctrines of the mystery religions to those of the Neo-Platonists, and that led to the condemnation of all sex²⁵⁵.

There was a massive turnaround from the outlook of the Apostolic Church to the one which is described in the Councils of Elvira²⁵⁶ and Ancyra²⁵⁷ which took place in the years 306 and 314. These councils imposed the rule of celibacy on everyone who served either as religious or priests. Canon 27 of the Council of Elvira states: "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." And Canon 31 of the same Council declares "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". Some of the reasons for these changes have already been outlined, but the activities of an organised body of voluntary celibates could also be of great advantage to the state.

The start of the transformation in attitude from the approach of the Mystery Religions to those of the Neo-Platonists is seen in Paul's epistles. In the early epistles which were written with the certainty that the sinful world which will soon end Paul says to the Corinthians that "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (1 Cor. 7:1). He also advises unmarried Christians of both sexes to remain unmarried and to stay celibate, as Paul has done, for those who are married "care for the things of

²⁵⁴ St. Clement of Alexandria (c. 195, E), 2.289.

²⁵⁵ Except for the purpose of procreation, under Augustine's doctrine the Church was reaching the position of condemning all sexual acts. Augustine taught that Adam and Eve have material bodies in Eden and that after the Fall they engaged in intercourse in order to propagate. Therefore the original sin of the Fall is transmitted through intercourse. Intercourse is a necessary evil, it is only permissible in marriage and even then it should only be engaged in as a procreative act.

²⁵⁶ For the text see: <http://faculty.cua.edu/pennington/Canon%20Law/ElviraCanons.htm> accessed 26 November 2012.

²⁵⁷ http://www.synaxis.org/canon/ECF37THE_COUNCIL_OF_ANCYRA_HISTORICAL.htm for the text. Accessed 26 November 2012

the world," such as how to please their partner, when, because of the shortness of time, one should be caring instead about "how he may please the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:32-34). The imminent passing of this world is also why Paul expresses no interest in procreation, but if a man and a woman cannot contain their sexual desire for the short time that is left to them, Paul says "let them marry", "for it is better to marry than to burn" (1 Cor. 7:9). He also advises married couples to "come together" regularly, except for any agreed periodic abstentions, to avoid extramarital temptation (1 Cor. 7:2-5). However there is an urgency in all of Paul's actions at this time, for "the time is short and" "the fashion of this world is passing away" (1 Cor. 7:29-31). In anticipation of Christ's second coming and the end of the world (cf. Matt. 16:28; James 5:8-9) no account need be taken of the gender inequalities that were built into the social fabric of Jewish and Greco/Roman society.

The changes in attitude become more evident as the coming of the end of the world seems to be increasingly delayed. In contrast to the discouragement of marriage in Paul's epistles to the Corinthians and the Romans, marriage and procreation are instead encouraged in the later letters to Timothy and Titus. 1 Tim. 5:14 says: "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house". The deferral seems to have promoted a change in attitude to one where marriage and procreation begin to play a more important role. The delay in the second coming also meant that it became easier to pursue justice, charity, good works and the Gospel of Christian Love within the existing framework of society rather than outside it. An example of that is found in the Letter to Philemon where Paul²⁵⁸ sends a runaway slave, who has since converted to Christianity back to his master. In his letter Paul asks Philemon to regard Onesimus as his Christian "brother" and "partner" in the faith (Philemon vs 16-17). Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon for their reconciliation. Even though master and slave have now become two people who are equal in Christ, Paul requests Onesimus's emancipation but he does not demand it. Paul was prepared to work within the conventions of Greek and Roman society although Christianity did not approve of slavery in any way and this account reflects the difficulties which he encountered when he sought to balance the radical demands of the Christian Gospel against the requirement to maintain the respectability of the Church.

As time moved on the need for conformity increased, and this meant putting women in their culturally understood place. According to the letter to Titus, women are to "be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God" (Titus 2:5). "Let a woman learn in silence with full submission," states 1 Tim. 2:11, for "I permit no woman to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent." This was reinforced by what appears to be an addition to 1 Corinthians (14:34): "Let your women keep silence in the churches", but this passage is out of character with the rest of Paul's text. This subordination was not to be seen as just a matter of social custom for, when referring to Genesis 1 Tim. 2:13-14 makes it clear that it was Adam and not Eve, who was formed first and that it was also the woman, and not the man, who was deceived. Therefore it is the woman who "became a transgressor" however "she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty". (1 Tim. 2:15). This is not a code which owes anything to religious doctrine or belief. It relies in its entirety on the social and gender stratifications of Greco/Roman society.

These changes became even greater as the Church found an increasing need to integrate into the social structure of society. In the early church women had held prominent roles. These women included Lydia, Priscilla, Phoebe, Junia, Tryphena and Tryphosa (Acts 16:14-15; Rom. 16:1,3,12). However patriarchy was the world's social standard and with Christ's second coming now appearing to be postponed indefinitely, the time had come to get women out of leadership roles in the church.

The authorship of these passages is an important issue; for many scholars suspect that the letters to Timothy and Titus were not written by Paul, but that they were written by someone else who

²⁵⁸The authorship is uncertain. Many scholars doubt that this letter was written by Paul.

wrote in his name after his death. The severity of the attacks continued to increase. Tertullian²⁵⁹ wrote "Do you not realise that Eve is you? The curse God pronounced on your sex weighs still on the world. Guilty, you must bear its hardships. You are the devil's gateway, you desecrated the fatal tree, you first betrayed the law of God, you who softened up with your cajoling words the man against whom the devil could not prevail by force. The image of God, the man Adam, you broke him, it was child's play to you. You deserved death, and it was the son of God who had to die!" Later Jerome would state "As long as a woman is for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman, and will be called a man."²⁶⁰ Female ascetics were also expected to reject their femininity in their search for a holy life. Macrina was a fourth-century ascetic who was famous for her wise counsel. She is known about through her brother Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote in great detail about the life of his sister. After he referred to her as a woman, he then asked himself the question: "if indeed she should be styled woman for I do not know whether it is fitting to designate her by her sex, who so surpassed her sex." Macrina was not alone, for another mystic, Amma Sarah, refers to her own gender transformation in this way: "According to nature I am a woman, but not according to my thoughts." Many fourth-century female ascetics in early Christianity were praised (and praised themselves) in words which emphasized the putting off of femininity.²⁶¹

The idea that women have an instant sex change when they die and enter heaven as men was also of common parlance in the early church. Augustine devoted one complete chapter to the topic in his work, the "City of God" (Chapter 17 Book XXII - Whether the Bodies of Women Shall Retain Their Own Sex in the Resurrection)²⁶². In it he wrote that: "some conclude that women shall not rise women, but that all shall be men, because God made man only of earth, and woman of the man. For my part, they seem to be wiser who make no doubt that both sexes shall rise. For there shall be no lust, which is now the cause of confusion", and: "They shall be equal to the angels in immortality and happiness, not in flesh, nor in resurrection, which the angels did not need, because they could not die". For Augustine equality is found in heaven but not on earth.

Ironically, even though it is the woman who represents corruption personified, it is through the male issue that the Original Sin is actually transmitted: for it is the semen which is the bearer of death. Therefore in creating a new creature, it is the woman who provides the body from her substance, but it is the man who gives the soul through his semen, which is already corrupt^{263 264}. Jerome considered celibacy to be a moral virtue which he describes as of not living in the flesh but outside the flesh²⁶⁵. For him and the Church celibacy prohibited not just engagement in sex, and not only avoiding or refusing lustful desires or any involvement in lascivious behaviour. It required the denial of all of the sinful thoughts or desires of the flesh. In the views of other leading figures Methodius considered that this loose behaviour was unseemly and Arnobius thought it was filthy and degrading. For John Chrysostom the loss of virginity brought trouble and death. Some apocryphal writings from early Christian times describe sex as "an experiment of the serpent" and marriage as

²⁵⁹ Tertullian, *Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works* (New York, 1959), translated by Rudolph Arbesman, Sister Emily Joseph Daly, and Edwin A Quain, SJ, and quoted in Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, p 58.

²⁶⁰ St Jerome, *Comm. in Epist. ad Ephes. III, 5* (St Jerome, Letter 22, to Eustochium, A Selected Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, translated and annotated by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, 14 vols. (Oxford, 1890-1900)

²⁶¹ Kidd, Erin (2007). "The Virgin Desert: Gender Transformation in Fourth-Century Christian Asceticism" *Lyceum*, Volume VIII, Number 2. Spring 2007 ISSN number 1934-2438. The *Lyceum* is a publication of the Philosophy Department of Saint Anselm College. Accessed 12 December 2012 at: <http://lyceumphilosophy.com/8-2/Lyceum-8-2-Kidd.pdf>

²⁶² Augustine. *City of God Book XXII Chapter 17.* - "Whether the Bodies of Women Shall Retain Their Own Sex in the Resurrection". Accessed <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers2/NPNF1-02/npnf1-02-28.htm> 19 December 2012.

²⁶³ This theory is called Traducianism.

²⁶⁴ Mabry, John R. (1990) "That Naughty Bishop of Hippo: Disfunctional Theological Innovations of St. Augustine" Accessed 6 December 2012 at: <http://www.apocryphile.org/jrm/articles/augustine.html>

²⁶⁵ Celibacy, clerical, in *Dictionary of Moral Theology*. Compiled under the Direction of H. E. Cardinal Roberti. Ed. Mgr. Pietro Palazzini. London: Burns & Oates Publishers of the Holy See 1962

"a foul and polluted way of life"²⁶⁶. According to one Gnostic view women were wholly creations of the Devil, as were men from the waist down²⁶⁷. Such views enjoyed considerable currency in the early Church. Ambrose (339-397) held views that were similar to those of Jerome and Augustine, and it was primarily through their combined influence that attitudes of the Church to sexuality developed in the way that they did. However none of these Church Fathers could ignore the statement by Paul in Galatians "There is neither Jew nor Greek, male and female". Therefore redemption was available for women, but it came solely through the blessings of childbirth, equality was found only in heaven, and it required the rejection of femininity and the refusal of all earthly sexual passions or acts. The standard view was that women were subordinate in all ways to men, but few would take this doctrine to Augustine's extremes.

In a Church which had learned to embrace the gender discrimination which was inherent in Greco/Roman society, the ascetic doctrines of Neo-Platonism, at least to some people, seemed to be a more appropriate way of interpreting the Gospel of Christ. Augustine was fond of saying that his Platonist God "is never disturbed by any passions." Neo-Platonism had freed Augustine from his materialism, and it had convinced him of the reality of an unseen world. He wrote "Let Thales depart with his water, Anaximenes with the air, the Stoics with their fire, Epicurus with his atoms."^{268 269} Augustine is often perceived as the primary crusader for Neo-Platonism but he was only the latest in a line of advocates. Earlier Christian philosophers, such as Justin and Athenagoras had attempted to connect Christianity with Platonism and the teachings of Ambrose had also influenced Augustine's thoughts. Although he later moved away from Neo-Platonism, it had grounded the framework of his thinking which would reinforce and consolidate this type of Christian ascetic approach.

However this approach to Christian asceticism was in direct contradiction with the understandings of the apostolic fathers. Clement of Alexandria criticized those celibates "who say that they are "imitating the Lord" who never married, nor had any possessions in the world, and who boast that they understand the gospel better than anyone else."²⁷⁰ In his attempts to deal with these serious contradictions, Augustine's response was to assert that: "Therefore, those who marry only for procreation now - to perpetuate the human race - are not comparable to the holy fathers, who had children in a prophetic manner, for Christ's sake, for the race from which he was to be born". Reuther²⁷¹ notes that Augustine's detestation of earthly sex also won him accusations of promoting Manichaeist²⁷² teachings; a criticism which he refuted by claiming that these abominable sexual means ultimately achieve good results through the blessings of birth. Other advocates of Neo-Platonism encountered similar difficulties. Jerome referred to marriage prohibition for priests when he argued in "Against Jovinianus" that Peter and the other apostles had been married before they were called, but they subsequently gave up their marital relations after that had happened^{273 274}.

²⁶⁶ McDonald, James (2011). "Beyond Belief: Two thousand years of bad faith in the Christian Church": Garnet Publishing ISBN-10: 0863723454 ISBN-13: 978-0863723452

²⁶⁷ Mabry, John R. (1990) "That Naughty Bishop of Hippo: Disfunctional Theological Innovations of St. Augustine"

Accessed 6 December 2012 at: <http://www.apocryphile.org/jrm/articles/augustine.html>

²⁶⁸ Azkoul, Michael The Influence of Augustine of Hippo on the Orthodox Church (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), p. 7.

²⁶⁹ Russell, Bertrand, quoting Augustine A History of Western Philosophy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), p. 358

²⁷⁰ Pagels, Elaine (1988) "Adam, Eve, and the Serpent", Random House. p. 21

²⁷¹ Reuther, Rosemary Radford "Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church" from Religion and Sexism, Rosemary Radford Reuther, ed. (New York: Touchstone, 1974), (O'Faolain, Julia and Lauro Marines, eds. Not in God's Image (New York: Harper, 1973)

²⁷² The Gnostic sect which Augustine belonged to before his conversion to Christianity

²⁷³ Peter was already married at the beginning of Christ's public ministry, and he and other apostles were all in committed relationships with their wives when Paul was writing the first Epistle to the Corinthians between 53 and 57 AD. According to Clement of Alexandria (Stromata, III, vi, ed. Dindorf, II, 276. Accessed at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/clement-stromata-book3-english.html>), Peter and Philip were married and had children. Clement also reported that Peter's wife was martyred before him, and the apostle encouraged her as she was led to her death (See Ante-Nicene Fathers. 2.541 (c. 195). Accessed at: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/early-church->

However this account also contradicted by the evidence of the Apostolic Fathers, for Clement and Eusebius give descriptions which show that the Apostles after their calling continued to live apparently happily married lives²⁷⁵.

It seems clear that the major reasons for these changes lay in the rejection of the culture of the mystery religions and in the search for respectability in the Church. The celibacy which Jesus encouraged in the Gospels was for the pursuit of duty. It was not that of Neo-Platonism and it was not to promote male domination or for the negation of sex. It has been shown that the latter two elements came to dominate as a result of the attempts by the Church to gain respectability through its integration into Greco/Roman society. However many people would find that the reasons which were stated by Augustine and Jerome for the adoption of Neo-Platonism were unconvincing or incorrect and it is difficult to accept their justifications for the changes that were made. To find other reasons it is necessary to examine the developing nature of the relationships between the secular authorities and the church, and these will be considered later in this document. However in the face of these contradictions it was also an advantage for Augustine and others to cover their tracks. This was the time for the condemnations of the Goddess religions to be redoubled in order to remove every idea that any concepts of morality or celibacy could exist within them, and to prove that their focus was entirely on promiscuity, prostitution and all types of immoral sex.

Today there are few people who would condone in any way the immense degree of gender discrimination that was present in the Church during the first three centuries, but the presumption of male leadership still remains and even though full gender equality is now strongly argued for, the Church still retains the sacred separation of gender role. That view should also be challenged since the early Church transcended and challenged gender inequalities in very way. This was not just in the prominence that is given to the role of women in the Gospels, or to the task of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts or to the witness that is given in the New Testament texts. St Paul's frequently quoted statement that "in Christ... there is neither male nor female"(Galatians 3:28) does not mean that gender equality is only found in heaven as Augustine argued, for it refers not just to heaven but also to life on earth, since we are all "In Christ" now. (Galatians 2:20). Fear²⁷⁶ and others have argued that the roles of the goddess Cybele and that of the Virgin Mary in Christianity achieve similar purposes their respective traditions. Perhaps it is more relevant to consider some of what is absent. For example it is hard to imagine that a present day Virgin Mary would take part in a Women's Liberation movement, or to ride like Cybele through the streets of Rome on a chariot, accompanied by two lions, in a noisy raucous procession which would certainly draw the attention of every male observer to the purpose of the cult. Some liberal Catholics today consider the traditional image of the Virgin Mary, as viewed by the Catholic Church to be an obstacle towards the realization of the goal of womanhood, and that it is a symbol of the systemic patriarchal oppression of women within the Church²⁷⁷. However women played a radical and important part in the ministry

fathers/ante-nicene/). Eusebius writes of the relationship between Peter and his wife in 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/>). There is an underlying presumption that all of the Apostles apart from John were married, however in most cases nothing is known about their wives.

²⁷⁴ Aduersus Jovinianum I, 7. 26 (PL 23, 230C; 256C)

²⁷⁵ According to Clement of Alexandria, Their wives travelled with the apostles "Not as wives, but as sisters, in order to minister to housewives" Clement of Alexandria Ante-Nicene Fathers 2.390, 391 (c. 195). Accessed at:<http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/early-church-fathers/ante-nicene/>.

²⁷⁶ Eugene N. Lane (ed.), A. T. Fear's article, "Cybele and Christ" (pp. 37-50) in "Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren". Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996. ISBN 90-04-10196-99. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

²⁷⁷ See John Paul II (1987). Redemptoris Mater. On the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the Pilgrim Church" Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on March 25, 1987 for a description of current Roman Catholic thinking. "In effect, Mary's mediation is intimately linked with her motherhood. It possesses a specifically maternal character, which distinguishes it from the mediation of the other creatures who in various and always subordinate ways share in the one mediation of Christ, although her own mediation is also a shared mediation."... "From the text of John it is evident that it is a mediation which is maternal. As the Council proclaims: Mary became "a mother to us in the order of grace." This motherhood in the

of Jesus and it was a woman who first brought the news of the resurrection to the disciples. These roles for women, and their portrayal, in the Gospels were almost unheard of in first century society. Women were not just confined to the roles of motherhood, intercessor, hearth and home, and the Gospel claim for gender equality was a revolutionary act.

Instead of just gender neutrality these attitudes provide an agenda for women and it is not surprising that women figure prominently in the early church. Christianity at first spread through the creation of house churches and these were part of the women's domain. However even though these important roles were given to women in the early church, the social constraints meant that the public spokespeople for this new religion could only be men. The allegiance to an independent goddess in a polytheistic religion gave a woman considerable power within her domain. However that protection is lost in a monotheistic religion in the circumstances where the single god, who is in theory gender transcendent, is also assumed to have male characteristics. In a patriarchal society that presumption will almost inevitably be the case. So gender equality is at the discretion of the male and on the terms that the male decides.

The massive turnaround from the outlook of the Apostolic Church to the one which is described in the Councils of Elvira and Ancyra, which took place in the years 306 and 314 arose through the transformation in outlook and status as Christianity developed from a protesting minority religion which valued the role of women to a male dominated Church of Authority in a patristic society which served both God and the state. Christianity took the moral values of a subject people and translated them into a dominant culture. This changes that this brought applied, not just to the national cultures; it also applied to the relationships between men and women. For more than two thousand years the Christian Church has based its doctrines on the argument that all personal relationships outside marriage which involve sexual attraction can only be for the purposes of lust and for immoral intent. In its pursuit of this agenda and by its search for authority and respectability it has disconnected the doctrines of the Church of the Apostles from the traditions and the doctrines adopted by the later Church. The theological justifications which today are used to validate the presumptions of a male leadership, together with its male prerogatives and its argument for an exclusively male priesthood are founded on these later traditions. They do not come from the Apostolic Church.

It has been shown that amongst the Gallae and other groups in the Ancient World that there were two ways. One of these was the way of darkness and the other was the way of light. The condemnations of Augustine and others attacked the way of darkness but the closeness of the two

order of grace flows from her divine motherhood. Because she was, by the design of divine Providence, the mother who nourished the divine Redeemer, Mary became "an associate of unique nobility, and the Lord's humble handmaid," who "cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the Saviour's work". Mary places herself between her Son and mankind in the reality of their wants, needs and sufferings. She puts herself "in the middle," that is to say she acts as a mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as mother. She knows that as such she can point out to her Son the needs of mankind, and in fact, she "has the right" to do so. Her mediation is thus in the nature of intercession: Mary "intercedes" for mankind. In the light of Mary, the church sees in the face of women the reflection of a beauty which mirrors the loftiest sentiments of which the human heart is capable: the self-offering totality of love; the strength that is capable of bearing the greatest sorrows; limitless fidelity and tireless devotion to work; the ability to combine penetrating intuition with words of support and encouragement".... Groups of liberal Catholics view the traditional image of the Virgin Mary as presented by the Catholic Church as an obstacle towards realization of the goal of womanhood, and as a symbol of the systemic patriarchal oppression of women within the Church. Moreover, some liberal Catholics view the cultivation of the traditional image of Mary as a method of manipulation of Catholics at large by the Church hierarchy. (Progressive Christianity by William A. Vrooman 2005 ISBN 1-4179-9829-6 page 150) Other liberal Christians argue that the modern concepts of equal opportunity for men and women do not resonate well with the humble image of Mary, obediently and subserviently kneeling before Christ. (Hail Mary?: the struggle for ultimate womanhood in Catholicism by Maurice Hamington 1995, ISBN 0-415-91304-7, pages 2 and 36). Extracts from "Redemptoris Mater" accessed at : http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html

traditions led to an even more important condemnation, and that was the condemnation of the way of light. When the present doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church and of the other churches which rely on the same traditions are applied to these religions it becomes easy to be driven to the conclusion that all of them were fleshpots of promiscuity, prostitution and havens for inappropriate sex. Some would have been more than others and there could have been well justified concern about the appropriate use of sex. However this was not the only type of experience encountered and the centuries of suppression have removed much of the evidence for anything else. This analysis tries to redress the situation by the application of recent research on personality development and transgender experience to re-examine the situation. It has shown that these conditions are identity driven and that within both the gender and the sexually variant communities the entire range of moral attitudes is found. Therefore as well as those people who seek to transgress the sex-gender boundaries in pursuit of gratification and lust there were those who transgress the sex-gender boundaries in their search for relationships which are given to each other in lifelong commitment, faithfulness and love. Human nature does not change and the same attitudes have been found across cultures and centuries, despite the condemnations of society which have been enforced or promoted by the Church. The equivalent range of behaviour is found amongst the devotees of Cybele and her Gallae priests, for as well as those who simply looked for a sexual reward, there were those who sought to transcend the boundaries of gender and sex by fulfilling the ideals of both lives. The cultural clashes were also a major issue and the approach which is here adopted seeks to separate the social from the theological elements within the practices of the Greco/Roman cults. By separately examining the conflicts and the condemnations which arise through the differences in sexual morality between Jewish and Greco/Roman society, and then by isolating the behaviour within the cult practices which arise from these sources from the types of behaviour which are determined by the theologies of each cult, it is argued that better understanding may be gained.

19:0 Attitudes to Homosexuality

The lack of reproductive consequences has allowed cultures of promiscuity to develop in the lesbian and gay community. The imposition of the discipline of celibacy has meant that issues of same-sex abuse in particular have been of constant concern to the Roman Catholic Church since it is well known that heterosexual men will engage in same-sex activities when no other outlet is available. Some transsexuals may find that working in the sex industry is the only way they can earn enough money to pay for the gender reassignment they seek. The criminalisation of homosexuality during the past centuries has prevented the possibility of any stable same-sex relationships being formed. The total rejection by the Church also produces a counter rejection within the lesbian and gay community. Therefore what the church most disapproves of may also be most willingly endorsed. There is little incentive among many in the lesbian and gay community that would encourage them to try to conform to the ideals of a religious organisation that totally condemns every expression of who they are. The rejection that many such people encounter leaves them believing that there is no place for them in a church that ought to proclaim the Gospel of Christian love; and so this rejection of their identity by religious believers becomes expressed by some in an active rejection of the ideals of the Church.

Even though the direction of affection may be different the process of forming transgender, heterosexual and homosexual identities develops in the same way. The quality of relationship in a homosexual or transgender partnership can therefore be of the same intensity and character as that of a heterosexual marriage, with the same degree of commitment and loyalty being expressed. In any relationship of love as close as this it is also reasonable to expect that it would find its fulfilment in sex. However this is sex that comes through the outpouring of love. It is not engaged in for improper acts. While this has been accepted by society, it has not been accepted by the Church,

which has used its traditions and theological interpretations to deny the legitimacy of these types of relationships and to make homosexuality a scapegoat for all types of abusive sex.

The total opposition to all homosexual practice is a perfectly understandable position to take for those who have come to believe that homosexuality is an outcome of sexual desire and that it is a lifestyle choice. Particular scriptural texts are quoted as justification for this rejection but these must be interpreted in the context of the time when they were written and the distinctions must be made between same-sex acts that are engaged in for lust or safe sex, and those which express the outpouring of love. However the freedom from reproductive consequences and the fact that they have broken through the social divisions of a gendered society leads others to exploit the situation to their own advantage. Using the language of the Didache these differences may also be compared to the way of darkness and the way of life. The total contrast between these divergences in outlook places considerable demands on the lesbian and gay community of today. The distinctions between sexual activity engaged in for lust or for gratification and those which express the outpouring of love must be very clearly made, and a proper understanding of these differences must be communicated. It is essential that a proper process of encounter and dialogue is employed.

However the scapegoating and blaming processes used in these homosexual condemnations can only work if it is presumed that homosexuality is driven by the pursuit of sexual desire and that it is not an identity based condition. To satisfy this requirement it must therefore be proved that homosexuality is totally and exclusively linked to promiscuity and to improper sex. Many groups have attempted to prove that this is the case, but their arguments have been decimated through more critical analyses of their data and from the results of current research. Nevertheless some continue to try to prove this approach and they often claim that a cure can be found. The lack of validity of the data that has been used, its contradictory nature, and the views expressed within the medical profession and in the homosexual community that this condition is about identity and making relationships is simply not heard. Above all this is where a major breakthrough is needed. For that to happen it needs a reversal of the traditional teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the teaching of the Church of England, together with all of the other churches which pursue the belief that homosexuality is totally driven by the desire for inappropriate sex.

The analysis presented in this document makes it clear that homosexuality is identity driven and it is about the need for people to be themselves. It is also necessary to recognise that many of the sexual excesses which have occurred in recent years have come from the release of repressed demand. That release of sexual expression is found in Gay Pride parades and those who cling to the traditional church position can find many things in such parades to support the arguments they present. However this ignores the fact that many Christian groups also take part in these activities and they support a totally different view. It is difficult to know the precise figures but it would appear that there are some 1500 lesbian and gay clergy in the Church of England alone, all of whom long to be able to express their relationships with their partners in a spirit of commitment, faithfulness and love. The present attitude of the Church of England denies them that liberty as it denies the expression of any loving same sex relationship in their lives.

20:0 Current Concerns

In the last fifty years the loss of Church authority, the widespread introduction of contraception, the legalisation of same sex relationships and the enactment of anti-discrimination legislation has meant that most people now have personal direct experience of relating to homosexual couples and others in same sex relationships. These observers do not need to have any special knowledge to distinguish between the behaviour of two people in as same sex heterosexual friendship and the behaviour of an equivalent couple in a homosexual partnership, even when there is a total absence of sex.

The distinction between sexual relationships which are given in love and those engaged in for lust is equally easily made. Despite this, with the notable exceptions of some senior clergymen²⁷⁸, the response of many in the Christian church has been to retreat into traditional values. As a consequence of that retreat, the ability to relate to and to minister honestly and conscientiously to many people who are in same-sex relationships, which include its own clergy, has been lost.

Today in societies where gender and social inequality between men and women still exists the restriction on anal penetration continues to apply, and it is imposed with considerable force. However this is for social reasons which remain cloaked with the canopies of religious belief. In Western societies where gender and sexual discrimination is outlawed and has largely vanished, many of these social prohibitions that a gender unequal society once relied on have disappeared. Thus there is now no reason for the prohibition of anal penetration in loving relationships within gender equal societies. However this condemnation remains a real issue of concern and division in societies where gender discrimination is still practiced and it contributes to the divisions which now threaten to split the Church. Nevertheless the need to act responsibly still remains and it would seem appropriate for the Church, without differentiating between heterosexual or homosexual relationships, to apply the same codes of moral behaviour to everyone, irrespective of sexual orientation. It means that it is necessary for the Church to recognise that homosexuality is identity driven, that fulfilment is found in the relationships that are sought and that this does not require any diminution of its moral demands.

21:0 The Church of England Listening Process

In 1998 the Church of England initiated a review which was designed to listen to the experiences of gay and lesbian Anglicans around the world. Despite this it is no secret that the listening process in the Church of England has been, by the most generous estimate, patchy. There are parts of the church where listening has taken place and has been fruitful, but many parts of the Church have failed to engage in any meaningful way. LGBT people have often felt that they were listened to but not heard. Even where genuine listening and engagement has taken place, that process has not led to a greater openness within the national church. There is a reluctance to face the real issues and the Bishops and others still feel constrained from openly expressing their own views. The document "Some Issues in Human Sexuality" was intended to be an impartial reference document that would set the framework for the debate. It has shown in this analysis that it fails on two counts. The first is the lack of adequate independent and critical research, (even at the time it was written). The second is the reliance it places on the doctrines of Aquinas rather than those of the first millennium.

These failures increase rather than decrease the need for a thorough two-way and truly open listening process where each side is able to fully acknowledge and accept its own strengths and weaknesses and is also willing to act on its own achievements and mistakes. This exploration may show that there are major difficulties to be overcome but no true listening process will succeed unless every issue and its resolution is honestly faced and discussed.

²⁷⁸ See for example the report of the interview given by the Anglican Bishop of Salisbury in the Times Newspaper on the 3 February 2012 and his Presidential Address to the Salisbury Diocesan Synod, 18 February 2012: <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/whos-who/bishops/the-bishop-of-salisbury>. The full text of the Bishop of Salisbury's address to the Cutting Edge Consortium can be found on the LGBT Anglican Coalition Website at <http://www.lgbtac.org.uk/documents/SuC0422a-BishopOFSalisburyAddressToCECCConf-21apr12.pdf>. The text of a letter to the Times written by a number of bishops can also be found on the website at: <http://www.lgbtac.org.uk/documents/SuC0421a-TimesLetter17apr12-Same-sexMarriage.pdf> as can the interview with the Archbishop of Wales published in Wales Online on Apr 18 2012 at <http://www.lgbtac.org.uk/documents/SuC0418a-Archbishop%20of%20Wales%20gay%20marriage.pdf>

22:0 Conference on Sexuality and Human Flourishing

On Saturday February 6th 2010 a conference on “Sexuality and Human Flourishing” was held Church of the Ascension, Stirchley, Birmingham. The aim of the conference was to “explore and celebrate our relationships with God, with each other, and with our inner selves”. The event was organized by members of The Centre for the Study of Christianity and Sexuality, Inclusive Church, Changing Attitude, LGCM, The Sibyls, and Church members in Norwich and Birmingham. There were 106 participants. Attendance at the conference was almost equally split between people who labelled themselves heterosexual and people who labelled themselves lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered. A copy of the full proceedings can be accessed through the events tab on the LGB&T Anglican Coalition Website²⁷⁹.

Within the conference, severe instances of rejection of people by churches were described. During the discussions the heterosexual group felt at least as strongly about the same issues around acceptable sex. It was considered that it is a lack of understanding that imposes the greatest threat. Issues of sexuality (apart from rejection) tend not to be addressed and ignorance amongst clergy and congregations is high. Homosexuality is perceived as a desire to pursue the sexual act, and the core issues of relationships are ignored.

The Church of England states that it is engaged in a listening process with Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgendered people. For this to happen the conference agreed that the Church must come to recognise that most Lesbian Gay and Bisexual people in the Church seek loving and faithful relationships with their partners, and that they wish to engage in relationships where their sexual acts are expressed in fulfilment of that love. It must also listen to those in heterosexual relationships as well.

If the Church is to move forward on the issues of sexuality and human flourishing, the conference concluded that there are additional objectives that must be addressed. Four priority areas were identified from the post-it notes created during the discussions. These are expressed in terms of need:

- The Need for Communication: The current lack of communication means that negative attitudes about the “Other” grow in ignorance and fear. Therefore without the ability to be open and honest with each other prejudices and misconceptions develop and are reinforced.
- The Need for Understanding: This can work both ways. The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community wants to be understood, but it must also take note of the signals it gives. Any minority group has a particular responsibility to ensure that its position is known, and that its views can be clearly separated from other groups with similar interests who do not follow its path.
- The Need for Interpretation: The conference made a clear distinction between acceptable and unacceptable sex. The distinction is based on relationships given in love. For this to be understood it is necessary to examine the Old and New Testament texts in the light of this perception and in the context of the societies within which they were written
- The Need for Authenticity: Many referred to the hypocrisy of a church which takes a moralising attitude on sexual relationships and attempts at the same time to hide itself from its own situation by silencing people within it who possess dissenting views. The discussion

²⁷⁹ <http://www.lgbtac.org.uk/events/Conference6feb10/proceedings.htm>

of this topic raised the greatest anger. The refusal of the church to engage with these issues of honesty and authenticity gave the greatest concern.

The discussions made it clear that there is an urgent need for the Church of England to come to terms with the reality of its own situation and to adopt a pattern of engagement which deals with the issues involved in an atmosphere of trust and love. This requires a process of disclosure and honesty. The pretence that these issues do not exist and the hypocrisy which results must be avoided. This engagement has to be present in each person's own mind and with each other. It demands that everybody must acknowledge their own weaknesses and their strengths. Storytelling must take place in which people of all sexualities and gender identities (including people in the heterosexual community) can be heard and be listened to. There is a need to establish a range of "Safe Places" in which this can happen.

The implications of these raised a number of issues which extended beyond the lectures and discussions in the conference itself. The refusal of the church to engage with the issues of sexuality and human flourishing eliminates the possibilities of openness and it also reinforces prejudices which associate homosexuals only with promiscuity and sexual licence. Labelling becomes a means of control and minority groups can be made scapegoats for other ills. Statements by some senior Vatican clerics have suggested that these attitudes are present in the highest positions²⁸⁰. An illustration of what can happen is seen in the consequences of the opposition by the Bench of Bishops in the United Kingdom House of Lords to the sexual and gender measures included in the 2010 Equality Bill, and their effect on the legislation that was subsequently passed. In addition to permitting discrimination on the grounds of sexuality it impugns the integrity of the people against whom it is directed. In a society where the loss of secular authority by the Church means that it can no longer conceal the misdemeanours of the past, it is not just the issues of sexuality that are involved, it is the integrity of the church.

Impediments

By removing the threat to hereditary dynasties the Church was able to create an organisation which had the stature and the strength to undertake many of the key civil and social functions. During the time of the Jewish Exile this problem was dealt with by castration and this allowed individual Jews to rise to high places in the Assyrian Empire. The practice of physical castration for this purpose is well known from antiquity and it was a necessary sacrifice for advancement in the Chinese Civil Service²⁸¹. It was also practiced in the Babylonian Empire at the time of the Exile, as the Book of Esther and other literature attests²⁸². The background to this practice is well told in the book of Esther

23:0 Power and Abuse

If this is the case then the actions of the Councils of Ancyra and Elvira had overstepped the mark. Complaints over priestly sexual abuse began early and they were a constant presence during the first millennium. From around the year 300 the Church hierarchy began to single out all types of same-sex actions for a special condemnation. There were many such condemnations that were often of great vehemence which came from within the Church. However these were not acted on in

²⁸⁰ in 2010

²⁸¹ Mote, Frederick W. Twitchett, Denis. Fairbank, John King. (1988). *The Cambridge history of China: The Ming dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 1*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0521243327

²⁸² Gerig, Bruce. (2010). *Homosexuality in the Bible. Eunuchs in the OT, Part 2. Castration in Ancient Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia*. Extracted from <http://epistle.us/hbarticles/eunuchs2.html> 26 August 2011.

civil ordinances as the Church demanded, either by the Roman Emperors or by the later Carolingian Kings (the principal exception being the Emperor Justinian). The Carolingian Kings for example republished the Canons of the Council of Ancyra on several occasions and Charlemagne ordered that these were to be issued as guidance for the laity to use. These canons prohibited bestiality and by extension anal penetration, but they did not prohibit other loving same-sex acts. This would mean that up to the end of the first millennium the original range of standards for the clergy and the laity continued to be applied. Same-sex abuse as always was strongly condemned but same-sex relationships given in love could still be endorsed. The scandals of sexual abuse committed by the clergy and the religious together with the disregard of the sexual prohibitions imposed on the laity eventually became so great that more severe action had to be taken. As always the response of the Church was to increase the penalties against those who broke the vows of celibacy rather than to question the policy of celibacy itself. This strategy was strongly pursued by Pope Gregory VII (1073–85) and his successors who imposed strict discipline on the clergy and vigorously asserted the secular authority and domination of the church.

Some of this misunderstanding is created by the attempts to impose celibacy as a discipline of the Church. This became an ever more restrictive demand from the time of the Council of Elvira and the Council of Ancyra, in the years 306 and 314 onwards, which confirmed the rule of celibacy on all who served as religious or priests. These councils only slightly predate that of the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 and they reflect the time when the role of the church was changing from one of an often persecuted minority religion to an organisation supported by the state. The universal imposition of the discipline of celibacy on the priesthood gave the church opportunities to create complementary power structures and empires which did not threaten the hereditary dynasties. After these structures had been established the rule of celibacy became increasingly difficult to remove and the response of the church was to continually increase the penalties for priestly failings in relation to celibacy and sexual abuse. It did not look for the cause. There is a sad litany of documents, written over the centuries, which describe the penalties for this priestly sexual abuse. One prominent example of this can be found in the translations of the 11th Century book by Peter Damian, "Liber Gomorrhianus [Book of Gomorra]²⁸³". This was presented to Pope Leo IX, who at first praised the work but he then came to conclude that it was exaggerated. He softened Peter Damian's suggestions by excluding only the clergy who had offended repeatedly for a long period of time^{284 285}. In some modern translations of this book the references to sodomy or sexual abuse are often replaced with the word homosexuality instead.

There are fewer inhibitory factors that act to prevent the practice of same-sex intercourse since it can be indulged in without reproductive consequences or for the practice of safe sex. It can also be engaged in by heterosexual men when there is no other outlet available to them. One might expect these issues to have been the major issues of concern, however by far the major condemnations in first century Greco/Roman and Jewish society seem to have been socially and status determined. The jurist Paulus stated in his Digest of Roman law, written around 300 A.D., that a male who voluntarily is passive to another male should lose half of his estate. He also reiterates an earlier edict barring such men from the legal profession. In 438 A.D. the Roman Emperor Theodosius II confirmed that just the submissive partners in homosexual relationships were to be put to death. The Roman Emperor Justinian, in amendments to his Novels²⁸⁶ No.77 (dating 538) and No.141 (dating 559), declared that the sin of Sodomy was specifically due to same-sex activities and the

²⁸³ Pierre J. Payer (ed.): (1982) Book of Gomorrah: An eleventh century treatise against clerical homosexual practise, Waterloo, Ont. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

²⁸⁴ Doyle, Thomas P. (2003): "Roman Catholic Clericalism, Religious Duress, and Clergy Sexual Abuse," in Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 51, No 3, January 2003.

²⁸⁵ Doyle, Thomas, J.C.D., C.A.D.C. A Very Short History of Clerical Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church. Accessed at <http://www.crusadeagainstclergyabuse.com/htm/AShortHistory.htm> on the 24 August 2011

²⁸⁶ Or New Laws

desire for them²⁸⁷. This was the first Roman legal assignment of the term Sodomy to these activities. There were many much earlier condemnations of Sodomy which came from within the Church and these were often of great vehemence but they were not enacted in civil ordinances as the Church demanded, either by the Roman Emperors or by the later Carolingian Kings (with the principal exception being the Emperor Justinian). The Carolingian Kings for example republished the Canons of the Council of Ancyra on several occasions and Charlemagne ordered that these were to be issued as guidance for the laity to use. These canons prohibited bestiality and by extension anal penetration, but they did not prohibit other loving same-sex acts. Same-sex abuse and anal penetration as always was strongly condemned but same-sex relationships given in love could still be endorsed. The scandals of sexual abuse committed by the clergy and the religious together with the disregard of the sexual prohibitions imposed on the laity eventually became so great that more severe action had to be taken. As always the response of the Church was to increase the penalties against those who broke the vows of celibacy rather than to question the policy of celibacy itself. This strategy was strongly pursued by Pope Gregory VII (1073–85) and his successors who imposed strict discipline on the clergy and vigorously asserted the secular authority and domination of the church.

Celibacy had the consequence of creating temporal power structures for the church, both at a national and a supra-national level which did not threaten the power of the hereditary dynasties. The reasons for this are discussed in the report. At the supra-national level the Church could exercise enormous secular power for these dynasties could be loyal to the Church without feeling under undue threat. However the imposition by Pope Gregory VII of such unbridled Church authority threatened this concordance and amongst other groups it produced resistance and revolt. According to the *Dictatus Papae*²⁸⁸ published by Pope Gregory VII in 1075, the Pope was to be judged by no one, the Roman Catholic Church had never been, and would never be, wrong and it declared the Pope's authority to depose emperors.

The importance of maintaining the universal rule of celibacy should not be underestimated. By removing the threat to hereditary dynasties the Church was able to create an organisation which had the stature and the strength to undertake many of the key civil and social functions. Progression was on the grounds of ability and the role of the Church as a social and welfare organisation became essential to society. Amending or relaxing the rule of celibacy had the potential for destroying all of this, and this is probably one reason why it could not have been contemplated in the social structures of the time. From a pragmatic point of view that may have been the right decision, but it left the problem of how to deal with sexual abuse. During the time of the Jewish Exile this problem was dealt with by castration and this allowed individual Jews to rise to high places in the Assyrian Empire. The background to this practice is well told in the book of Esther. That was not available to the Church and metaphorical castration by the rule of celibacy was adopted.

Sexual abuse was not the only problem. The Cardinals, as the Princes of the Church could access great wealth. Their patronage, power and ostentation was seen and at the highest levels of the hierarchy, at the end of the first millennium the Church was regarded by many a corrupt institution. It is not surprising that the attempts by Pope Gregory to exercise supreme power would be resisted. One rejection was that of the Cathars who adopted theological positions directly opposed to Roman Catholic doctrine, at least partly on the grounds that enforcing this type of authority did nothing to exorcise the scandals in a corrupt organisation. The Cathars argued that sexual intercourse and

²⁸⁷ Bailey argues the bestiality is the correct translation of the term. See Bailey, Derrick Sherwin; (1955), *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition*, Longmans, Green, pp 73-74, London

²⁸⁸ From: "Pope Gregory VII," in E. F. Henderson, ed., *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (London: George Bell, 1892), pp. 366-367, 365. Reprinted in Brian Tierney, ed., *The Middle Ages, Vol. I: Sources of Medieval History*, 4th ed., (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983) pp. 142-143. Available online 30 October 2011 at <http://www.thenagain.info/classes/sources/dictatuspapae.html>

reproduction propagated the slavery of spirit to flesh. They considered that informal relationships were preferable to marriage, and this led to charges of sexual perversion being made. The Dominican Order was established to counter the Cathar revolt. However Dominic himself showed that he was not afraid to listen to the Cathars and to criticize the hierarchy of the Church for the power, wealth and ostentation it expressed. Thomas Aquinas was also a member of the Dominican Order, and this set the background to his work. The Cathar revolt was violently suppressed in the Albigensian Crusade, but the Church also had to accede to the need for some change. One of the reforms 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 were developed by Plato, Aristotle and others with the then current theology of the Church. This work by Aquinas has become the foundation of present day teaching. The statement below is taken from the 1997 Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church²⁸⁹.

24:0 Jesus and John

Plato for example considered expressions of love between two males to be the highest form of love but he also demanded the total sublimation of sex. Others, including Aristotle, disagreed and Ancient Greek literature concentrates on the place of sex.

Same sex relationships have to be considered in the context of first century expectations. At this time learning was often a didactic process where chavruta²⁹⁰ partnerships were formed. Elsewhere the tradition of pairing was a strong element in Jewish tradition. Like contemporary Greeks, Jews did not make a global distinction between a strong heterosexual friendship on the one hand and relationships driven by same sex affection on the other. Indeed the latter was encouraged since it was considered to promote the learning process.

The reasons for the first century interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 which prohibited only anal penetrative sex are considered by Greenberg²⁹¹. This restricted interpretation is well attested by contemporary first century sources²⁹² and modern Christian theologians²⁹³. Why it was subsequently expanded into interpretations which prohibit all types of same-sex acts is examined in the document on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships²⁹⁴.

Homosexuality was not a term that was understood in the Greek and Jewish traditions. However the Greeks had at least four different words of love and the nature of the relationship that was being defined was represented by the use of the appropriate word. Therefore the way in which the different words are used in the Gospel of John 21: 15-17²⁹⁵ would give a clear understanding of the

²⁸⁹Catechism 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

²⁹⁰ In common with the practice in many other societies, a traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study involved chavruta partnerships in which a pair of students work together to learn, discuss, and debate a shared text. The rabbis in the academies repeatedly encouraged their students to adopt ever increasing degrees of intimacy. No rules for chavruta partnerships are found which set boundaries that approve of strong heterosexual friendships on the one hand and disapprove of homosexual relationships on the other. The emphasis given to zugot and chavruta relationships is a measure of the institutionalisation of male pair bonding within Jewish society. The main threat to chavruta relationships was considered to be the loss of respect in society and not matters of sex

²⁹¹ Greenberg, Steven; (2004), "Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition". The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN 10: 0-299-19094-3.

²⁹² For example Philo of Alexandria, Abraham 134-136 ca AD 35 and Josephus, Antiquities 1.11.1,3 [2] - circa AD 96

²⁹³ See for example: Mein, Andrew; (2007) "Threat and Promise: the Old Testament on Sexuality" Chapter 2 in "An Acceptable Sacrifice? Homosexuality and the Church" Edited by Duncan Dormor and Jeremy Morris. SPCK 2007. ISBN - 10; 0-281-05851-2.

²⁹⁴ Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access

²⁹⁵ The passage in John 21:15-17 is relevant to this discussion. Without separate words being available in English for the different types of love the meaning of this passage in translation is often lost. Here Jesus asks Peter three times if he

nature of the relationship that was being defined. Unfortunately these differences are lost in translation and the church over the centuries, by redefining the word agape, has tried to modify the intention of this text.

This leads to the obvious question to ask, which is “Were Jesus and John in a homosexual relationship”. For the purpose of this report there is no need to answer this question since the only requirement is to know that this type of relationship could legitimately exist. However there are positive reasons for giving an answer and the evidence in the Bible suggests that they were. It is also of particular interest to note that when the Gospel texts are examined in the context of these arguments there does not seem to be any attempt to hide these relationships. Nor need there be! There is no evidence whatever to suggest that Jesus and John engaged in any impropriety and it would be important for first century readers to know what the relationships were. One such instance of this is in the passage in the Gospel of John (John 21:15-17), where Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him. However today the real meaning of this passage is hidden in translation and it is necessary to get back to the original Greek words. One of these is phileo which is the love of friendship, and the second word is agape. Agape is a direct transliteration of the Jewish word ahabà. 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. By contrast the current Christian definition of agape has been changed to refer to committed and faithful love but this definition now demands the total absence of sex. The reasons for this change are discussed in the report and this is another instance where alterations in interpretation and translation drift, have altered the meaning of the text. 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’s response is enthusiastic when, on the third occasion, Jesus uses the word phileo instead. One interpretation suggests that, while both Peter and John both loved Jesus, they did so in different ways and Peter wanted this distinction to be made. However the structure of this passage suggests 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 also demonstrates the unique nature of this Gospel and it shows why, and in what way, the Gospel of John should be regarded as complementary to the Synoptic texts. If the 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. So instead of reacting with a condemnation or a disapproval of the possibility of any same-sex relationship perhaps the offer of thanks is more appropriate response.

Homosexuality as a separate condition was not recognised in the first century societies. The contemporary Greek and Roman attitudes to same-sex relationships are discussed in the resource documents and it is shown that that the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was made between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. With the exception of anal penetration this distinction was applied both to heterosexual and to homosexual relationships in the same way. Biology was much less important than the quality of the relationship itself.

The Rabbis of the First Century disapproved of same-sex relationships for four main reasons. The first is that same-sex relationships cannot result in procreation: and Jews were expected to use the seed of Abraham to populate the world²⁹⁶. The second reason was stability in marriage: in a society

loves him. The first two times Jesus uses the word agape for love. Peter replies that he does, but each time he uses the word phileo in response. Jesus uses phileo the third time that he asks if he loves him, and it is to this definition of love that Peter gives his enthusiastic consent.

²⁹⁶The argument that the bible considers this to be the focus of the sexual act may sometimes be cited but the biblical justification for this is not clear. See Gilchrist, S. (2012). “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”. See footer for access.

where arranged and early marriages were the normal practice the sexuality of each of the partners was not taken into account and 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.

There would be no reason for Jesus and John to be exempt from this, and when the bible is read in the context of this first century environment the conclusion that Jesus and John were in an intimate but celibate same sex relationship becomes difficult to avoid. Apart from the prohibition on engaging in intercourse via anal penetration there is no biblical proscription of any other type of sexual or other intimate expression, and the bible reports without any embarrassment on the degrees of intimacy and type of relationship that was publically expressed. However there were strong rabbinic restrictions placed on the nature of this type of expression and there is no evidence whatever to suggest that Jesus and John contravened the social standards of the time. If this is shocking to present day society, it is hardly less shocking than the price that people have had to pay through the actions of the church in making homosexuality the scapegoat for abusive or inappropriate sex.

This analysis will be uncomfortable to many readers. However if the principles are accepted they clarify many of the bible texts. The identification of the beloved disciple as John in the Gospel of John and the relationship between Jesus and John is clarified by this, as is the way in which during the Last Supper John is described as the disciple who leant on Jesus' breast. This closeness may be the explanation of why Mary the mother of Jesus with some other women and only John were the people at the foot of the cross. It also adds to the poignancy of the words that Jesus then used (see John 19:26-27). The nature of this relationship would again explain why the disciples of John felt the need to create a new and independent written Gospel even though at least Mark of the Synoptic gospels should have been available to them. It is evident from reading it, that John had some special insights to give. The bible makes no attempt to hide these relationships and the tradition of depicting John as the only beardless disciple in early and medieval art; (and indeed in much later art), is also of significance. Perhaps the most provocative of these is found in Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper, where John is made to look so feminine that some have interpreted the image to be that of Mary Magdalene instead. This would have been an effective protest about the changes in church dogma. It has been noted that In Greek Society the upper age limit at which it was acceptable to be involved in a pederastic liaison was determined by the age at which it became possible for the junior partner to grow a beard. It is not suggested that Jesus and John were in a pederastic relationship; however the imagery that is used suggests what the true nature of their relationship was.

Expressions of intense same-sex affection were very familiar to the rabbis at the time of Jesus, and in the early Christian era. Young men who were engaged in the study of the Torah were expected to seek deep and abiding affection among their fellow students. Throughout the Talmud there stories of famous rabbinic couples whose discussions in the study hall are interpreted as expressions of deep and intimate love. In the Avot de-Rabbi Hathan it is recommended that a friend should be someone with whom one can "eat and drink, read and study, sleep, and share secrets of the Torah and personal secrets"²⁹⁷ Perhaps the most intriguing story is that of the relationship between the second century Rabbi Yochanan bar Nappacha who was noted for his beauty, and Resh Lakish, whose occupation when they first met, was fighting as a gladiator. However Resh had previously studied the Law. This story is given in the Talmud and in other Jewish literature ²⁹⁸. Resh Lakish saw Yochanan bathing in the Jordan. Mistaking him for a woman, he was beside him in one bound. However Yochanan said to him "Your strength would be more appropriate for studying the Law",

²⁹⁷ See Maimonide's commentary on the Mishnah, Avot 1:6 aseh lekha rav

²⁹⁸ See Baba Metzia 84a

and Resh Lakish answered “Your beauty for women”. Yochanan promised his sister’s hand in marriage if Resh Lakish would return to his studies. He did so and this led to a partnership between the two of them which came to be described as that of the “Two Great Authorities”. Rabbi Yochanan was inconsolable after the death of Resh Lakish and he died soon afterwards.

The account does not reveal anything about the nature of the physical relationship between Resh Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan but the degree of intimacy is clear. What is interesting is the freedom that is allowed in such relationships, the way in which the rabbis were able to describe them and how they could interpret what is permitted in the bible and in Jewish Law. Rabbinic partnerships were between two equals. The study environment was one which encouraged close companionship. It was also one in which social disruption did not occur. The expression of same sex relationships was permissible provided they were given and received in love and they did not include anal penetrative sex.

This would have caused no problem in first century Greece, which was influenced by Platonic thought. Plato believed that the highest type of love, and the only real love, was the love between two men in which the bodily desires are suppressed to leave the soul free to search for knowledge and truth. However this was not to be considered the love of friendship (phileo) since Plato clearly associated it with the redirection of sexual love (eros) instead. It was the quality of the relationship that counted. Embracing such a relationship enabled two people to be free to express their love and care for each other without restriction or penalty. Provided the social and moral requirements were satisfied the Jewish and Greek cultures did not concern themselves with the presence or absence of such sexual acts.

Advocating these relationships was not always confined to antiquity. Writing around 1160, Aelred²⁹⁹, the Cistercian Abbot of Rievaulx, encouraged his monks to express their love for each other, not just generally, but individually and passionately. He cited the example of Jesus and John as guidance. He said; “Jesus himself, in everything like us, patient and compassionate with others in every matter, transfigured this sort of love through the expression of his own love. for he allowed only one - not all - to recline on his breast as a sign of his special love; and the closer they were, the more copiously did the secrets of their heavenly marriage impart the sweet smell of their spiritual chrisom to their love”

Later Church teaching may make these precepts difficult to accept. However, rather than reacting with disapproval it is better to see the benefits instead. If the Gospel of John is the product of such a relationship then we have 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. The evidence presented in this account does indeed suggest that Jesus and John had a special relationship, and the fact that Jesus was unmarried in a society where marriage was almost compulsory gives more strength to this argument. We cannot know what Jesus and John did together in private but the social intimacy of their behaviour is described in the Gospel texts³⁰⁰. There is no evidence whatever to suggest that

²⁹⁹ Aelred was also superior of all the Cistercians in England. He wrote several books on spirituality, among them *Speculum caritatis* ("The Mirror of Charity") and *De spiritali amicitia* ("On Spiritual Friendship"). Copies of these are available in translation. His public works encouraged virginity among the unmarried and chastity (not abstinence) in marriage and widowhood, and he warns against sexual activity outside marriage. In all his works he treats same-sex and opposite-sex attraction as equally possible, and equally dangerous to the oath to celibacy. Consistent with this outlook is the value he places on all such relationships when they are given and received in love.

³⁰⁰ The suggestion of a homosexual Christ is not new. Boswell opened the field of lesbian and gay Christian history with the publication in 1980 of his book "Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality." First published in 1980 and republished in 2005 by the University Of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226067114 (ISBN13: 9780226067117). There have been many other publications since this work was first published. Boswell’s work is commented on in the Church of England document “Some Issues in Human Sexuality” . The statement that “His controversial claim has not been widely accepted by historians” (Section 1.2.25) in this document is a challenge to these views, but it is not followed up.

they transgressed the moral standards of the time. Instead of reacting with condemnation or disapproval then perhaps the offer of thanks is more appropriate response.

25:0 Historical Changes

In order to establish the correct framework for the debate it is necessary to get back as far as one can to the outlook of the early Church. The relationship between Jesus and the Apostle John must be looked at again, not within the framework of modern understanding, or the theology of the Church at the end of the first millennium, but through understanding the nature of acceptable relationships within the first century Greek and Jewish societies. This may create difficult challenges but these must be faced. The historical defences that the Church could once rely on have now been lost and the continuing refusal to address these issues is destroying the credibility of the church.

It is not surprising that there is a disjuncture between the teachings of Aquinas on sexuality and sexual relationships and those which were found in the first century church. Aquinas was writing at the time when the church was seeking to recover from the scandals of power, corruption and priestly sexual abuse. The Dominican Order was set up as an order of preaching to counter the abuses of power and sexuality which had taken place within the Church, which led in part to the Cathar revolt, which was put down by the Albigensian Crusade. It is against that background that Thomas Aquinas, as a member of the Dominican Order, was writing and a time when the dominant need was to re-establish the moral authority and discipline of the Church.

26:0 First Century Attitudes

It is absolutely right for the Church to stand up without compromise for the principles which it believes in but these must be governed by the universal and inclusive Gospel of Christian Love and not by the power and traditions of the organisation. The need to act responsibly still remains and it would seem appropriate for the Church, without differentiating between heterosexual or homosexual relationships, to apply the same codes of moral behaviour to everyone, irrespective of sexual orientation.

The House of Bishops of the Church of England had published the report on "Some Issues in Human Sexuality" In November 2003, which was intended to set the framework for the debate on these topics. Many of the presumptions made in that document date from the time of St Thomas Aquinas onwards. The document also accepts that the statement on homosexuality, taken from the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church has become recognised as the traditional teaching on homosexuality. However in the analysis contained in this report it has been shown that the doctrines which are expressed in it do not represent the original understandings of the early Church³⁰¹. They reflect instead the position of the Church just after the end of the first millennium. Even though Aquinas relaxed some of the more severe requirements of the previous Augustinian doctrines there is a continuous tension in Aquinas' writing which comes from the need to reconcile the cardinal virtues of reason with the theological values of the Church. Aquinas writes that any act which includes fornication, adultery or even rape is not considered a sin at all if it is performed under the command of God³⁰². When Aquinas uses logic based on the cardinal values of reason, he provides

³⁰¹ Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access

³⁰² Summa Theologica I-II, question 94. Article 5, reply to objection 2. "All men alike, both guilty and innocent, die the death of nature: which death of nature is inflicted by the power of God on account of original sin, according to 1 Samuel 2:6: "The Lord killeth and maketh alive." Consequently, by the command of God, death can be inflicted on any man, guilty or innocent, without any injustice whatever. In like manner adultery is intercourse with another's wife; who is allotted to him

answers which do not preclude the validity of certain types of loving same-sex relationships. However any more movement in this direction is then trumped by the arguments which Aquinas derives from the doctrines of his contemporary Church.

27:0 Current Implications

Currently the Anglican Church is being driven apart through arguments and disagreements about homosexuality. This preoccupation is at the expense of disregarding the need for the Church to consider and examine the changing attitudes to sexuality as a whole. Much of the difficulty arises from a lack of understanding of the true nature of the origins and the driving forces behind homosexuality and transsexuality. It is crucial to separate the drive which searches for relationships from the drive which searches for sex. It is also essential to note that the development of transsexuality and homosexuality predates the development of sexual desires.

Traditionally the church has only approved of intercourse or sexual expression that takes place within marriage but not outside it. This belief largely stems from the way in which Aquinas applied the principles of Natural Law to define what was regarded as inappropriate and sinful behaviour. This was actually a relaxation of the earlier church attitudes which had reluctantly approved of sexual acts for the purpose of procreation alone. The failure of the clergy to live up to the standards that the Church had set for itself combined with its attempts to impose an equivalent discipline on the laity led to scandals and ultimately to a crisis in which the Church had to act.. Apart from the temporal authority the moral authority had to be restored and Aquinas associated relationships with what he called the Venereal act. Sodomy which had previously been act defined also became associated with relationships and a de facto definition of homosexuality was created, which was used by the Church to condemn all types of same sex relationships outside marriage and appropriate sex.

Homosexual relationships disrupted the balances expected in a gender unequal society, and this meant that only the penetrated or submissive partner was condemned.

The dominant partners and slaves were exempt. The situation was different In Judaism and in Leviticus the penalties for both parties are spelt out. However same sex relationships are indulged in for many reasons. Heterosexual men engage in same sex acts when there is no other outlet available to them and the lack of reproductive consequences also means that there is less inhibition in the gay and lesbian community on the practice of same or safe sex acts. Today the widespread use of contraception has totally changed the situation and there is no longer any reason for heterosexual men or women to engage in same sex acts for the purpose of safe sex. The culture of promiscuity continues to be found among people who are in the gay and lesbian community, but it is this pursuit of promiscuity and not homosexuality that is the lifestyle choice.

The listening process fails because the gaps in communication have not even begun to be bridged. For heterosexuals it is the need to learn to understand that homosexuality is identity and relationships driven. It is a fundamental element of self identity and it is not a lifestyle choice. Just like everyone else homosexuals are equally capable of forming loving faithful and committed lifetime relationships and that these are independent of the use or abuse of sex.

by the law emanating from God. Consequently intercourse with any woman, by the command of God, is neither adultery nor fornication. The same applies to theft, which is the taking of another's property. For whatever is taken by the command of God, to Whom all things belong, is not taken against the will of its owner, whereas it is in this that theft consists. Nor is it only in human things, that whatever is commanded by God is right; but also in natural things, whatever is done by God, is, in some way, natural"....

For the lesbian and gay community there is the need to communicate this to the heterosexual majority community and that means that those who wish to gain acceptance by the church must be able to clearly separate themselves from others in the same community who engage in what may be regarded as promiscuity and the abuse of sex.

This destroys the legitimacy of any attempts by the Church and others to use homosexuality as a scapegoat for abusive or inappropriate sex - for this could only work if it could be shown that homosexual orientation is derived not from identity, but from the results of sexual desire. However the consequence of the suppression of all types of same-sex relationships by the Christian Church for over one thousand years has meant that the ability to make those distinctions has been lost. The consequence of this is that the assumption that homosexuality is exclusively about promiscuity and sexual immorality became universally accepted. The denial of these distinctions has also led to the belief that it is entirely driven by desire and that it is a lifestyle choice. For as long as the Christian church could retain its social monopoly there was no possibility of change, and there can be little doubt that same-sex relationships have been considered the focus for abusive or improper sex. Promiscuity is often considered to be rife in homosexual relationships, but while there are those who do pursue sexual climaxes with many partners recent studies have confirmed that many do not³⁰³. Before the advent of widespread contraception same-sex intercourse could provide safe heterosexual sex. As with gender there is a vast range of experience encountered and distinctions between the different types of behaviour must be based on the motives involved.

28:0 Same-Sex Marriage

The recent statement by the House of Bishops of the church of England raises similar issues in its opposition to the separation of religious marriage from civil marriage as is proposed in current legislation. The bishops rightly quote Matthew etc but by tying the religious and civil elements together they are acting as agents for the point of view that they do not intend to make. Historically marriage has been an unequal contract between a man and a woman. In UK law one has to go back less than 100 years to find

And this inequality of relationships goes back with increasing extremity to first century values.

The idea of same sex marriage was total anathema to first century Jewish Rabbis and this was because of the social implications³⁰⁴. However instead of prohibiting all same sex relationships other associations through chavruta partnerships were put in place in which the relationships between two equals could be expressed in love.

Similar arrangements were made within the early Christian Church. Manuscripts with liturgies for a ceremony of Adelphopoiesis (which literally translates as "brother-making") which date from the 9th to the 15th Century are found in the archives of the Byzantine Church.^{305 306} There is evidence that

³⁰³ For a full account see Gilchrist, S. (2012). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access

³⁰⁴ There 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).

³⁰⁵ Viscuso, Patrick (1994) New Oxford Review. December 1994, Volume LXI, Number 10

³⁰⁶ 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.adelphopoiia. Retrieved; 16 August 2011.

this ceremony was practised in the Western Church as well.³⁰⁷ ³⁰⁸ These were not institutions of same-sex marriage, since carnal knowledge was prohibited, but kinship relationships similar to marriage were applied. Although Boswell³⁰⁹ does not classify these as forms of same-sex marriage many people have interpreted them in this way.

It is important to note emphasise that there are not a form of same-sex marriage as the early Christians would have understood. Viscuso and xxx are quite right . There were also many types of same-sex relationships which at various times have been blessed by the church but for this purpose it is necessary to look at the services for which liturgies survive. In place of a marriage contract a contract between two equals which embraced all of the other civil rights of marriage were established. In the ceremonies carried out by the Byzantine church much of the liturgy, symbols and ceremony of marriage was used. However acts of intercourse were prohibited. When these arrangements are compared with today's legislation for civil partnerships it is difficult to tell them apart and these civil partnerships were turned into religious partnerships through the blessing of the Church

If these ceremonies are compared with the present definition of marriage as a relationship between two equals given in love, the difference between them becomes lost. What remains is the determination of the church authorities to deny any religious legitimacy or blessing on homosexual relationships given to two people of the same sex who wish to enter a loving faithful and committed relationship who wish to celebrate and affirm that commitment by asking for the blessing of the church

The archbishop's statement shows a new found enthusiasm for civil partnerships but still denies them any legitimacy. To others outside the church the opposition smacks of hypocrisy and the pursuit of doctrine over the gospel of love. The Church should have had something to say about marriage, civil partnerships and the relationships between them but as far as civil society is concerned that has been lost. Had the Church been prepared to institute an appropriate form of blessing which acknowledged and affirmed their lifelong commitment to each other, would the demand to create the institution of same-sex marriage ever occurred?

Currently there is pressure amongst the gay and lesbian communities for the institution of same-sex marriage. In modern society this would be a legitimate term. However historically marriage was a contract which institutionalised an unequal relationship and the idea of same-sex marriage would have been an anathema to first century Judaism. The Jews found other ways of endorsing same-sex relationships and marriage may not be the best term to use. Whatever term is decided on it must affirm the value in the eyes both of God and man of same-sex relationships given in love.

29:0 Discussion and Conclusions

The formal analysis which is summarised in this paper gives a substantiated If these conditions are to be properly understood it is essential to distinguish and separate the drive which searches for

³⁰⁷ Bray, Alan (2003) "The Friend" University of Chicago Press.

³⁰⁸ 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

³⁰⁹ Boswell opened the field of lesbian and gay Christian history with the publication in 1980 of his book "Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality." First published in 1980 and republished in 2005 by the University Of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226067114 (ISBN13: 9780226067117). There have been many other publications since this work was first published. Boswell's work is commented on in the Church of England document "Some Issues in Human Sexuality". The statement that "His controversial claim has not been widely accepted by historians" (Section 1.2.25) in this document is a challenge to these views, but it is not followed up.

relationships from the drive which searches for sex and it is essential to note that the development of transsexuality and homosexuality predates the development of sexual desires

The celebration and Christian blessing of two people in a loving faithful and committed homosexual relationship within a Church setting does not require any diminution of its moral demands

The changes in doctrine which Aquinas and the Church introduced at the end of the first millennium may on the surface appear minor, but the consequence of these has been centuries of persecution. If the arguments contained in this analysis are correct, the Church has succeeded in condemning its founder for mortal sin and one of its most heinous acts.

The retreat of members of the Church to what is regarded as its traditional teaching on sexuality, together with the scapegoating of homosexuality and the attitude of Clergy hierarchy to the current scandals of priestly sexual abuse, notably within the Roman Catholic Church, has already destroyed a great deal of the moral authority that was previously held by all the churches, particularly as seen by those outside its ranks. The current version of the motion to be put to the General Synod of the Church of England on the approving the appointment of Women Bishops in early July 2012, which contains clauses that would enshrine in Church legislation a degree of gender discrimination that is no longer acceptable to secular society, and indeed would be illegal except for the exemptions in law that have been given to the Church by government legislation is a measure of how much the Church has departed from what outside society can regard as acceptable standards of religious belief. The decision by the United Kingdom Government to enact legislation allowing Civil Same Sex Marriage irrespective of the views of the Church is a measure of how the Church has already lost its voice.

There is an urgent need for greater understanding. From both sides there is the strong need to recognise the circumstances of the other. If same-sex relationships are to be fully accepted within the church the consequences of any culture of homosexual promiscuity must be addressed from within the gay and lesbian community. The church must recognise the way in which it has made homosexuality the scapegoat for all illicit sexual acts. It must also face up to and learn from its own history and repent for the distress it has caused. The standards which the church sets for moral behaviour must be the same for everyone. However nothing should or need to diminish these standards in any way. Others people may agree or disagree with the values that the church does set but hypocrisy and inequity must be destroyed.

The requirement is not just that the Church of England acts promptly on these issues. It must also be seen to act. That requires the full and open publication of all of the deliberations entered into by the Church committees, the Houses of Laity, Clergy and Bishops, the working parties and the Church consultations as well.

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