

Christianity and Crisis: An Overview of Gender and Sexual Difference in the Early and Modern Christian Church

Susan Gilchrist

SuG0129a

Abstract

The assessment of gender and sexual difference in the early and modern Christian Church is examined using the results of a new neurophysiological and psychological research study. The conclusions of this study show that the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexuality cannot be correct.

By removing the veil of the theological presumptions on gender and sexuality, which dominated both Church and society for the last two thousand years, new insights are gained, which include previously barred interpretations of biblical texts. It is shown that the teaching of Jesus on gender equality and gender and sexual variance would be completely accepted in the present day, and that 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. It is shown that the abandonment of these doctrines and their replacement with doctrines that were more representative of those of a gender polarised Greco/Roman society came from the requirement to give respectability to the Church. It is also shown that this has led to the enforcement of a strong heterosexual, gender defined and an exclusive orthodoxy within which every method of expression of gender and sexually variant behaviour is considered to be a mortal sin and a disordered act. These transformations lead to the direct conclusion which states that what today are considered to be the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church on gender equality, and sexual and gender variant behaviour are built on a false foundation. They come from the need to obtain respectability in Greco/Roman society and they do not come from the teaching of Jesus himself.

For as long as the Christian Church was able to dominate the social structures and the moral values of society these doctrines could not be challenged. The changes in present day society mean that this control has now been broken, but no effective change will be possible until these core issues are properly addressed. This paper examines the changes that are required. It is the clashes between what is perceived today as the common sense values, and upon the fervent reliance on the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church which is destroying the credibility of Christianity in the eyes of the world.

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1:0. Preface

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 within society at large. It is additionally 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.

This article is an overview of a set of companion documents which make use of new developments in neurophysiological and psychological research to present a fresh understanding of gender and sexually variant behaviour within the Christian Church. These documents may be read either as standalone papers or together. The first of these papers: Gilchrist, S. (2014): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach" considers the neurophysiological and the psychological processes which are involved in the early development of personality and self-identity without making any reference to the teaching and the doctrines of the Christian Church. That aspect is covered in the second document: Gilchrist, S. (2013), "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach". This paper examines the Christian doctrines from the neurophysiological and psychological standpoints. The third paper: Gilchrist, S. (2014). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church" covers parallel ground to that of the second paper

but instead it investigates these issues through an examination of the history and theology of the Christian Church. A fourth paper: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Reform and the Christian Church" considers the consequences for the Christian Church in the present day. See the footer to obtain access to all of these documents.

2:0. Introduction

For much of the last two thousand years Christian teaching on gender and on sexual variance was predicated on the doctrines that, while it was not by itself a sin to have these specific feelings, to take any action which would express them in any way was a heinous and a sinful act. That doctrine is challenged from three directions. The first comes from the conclusions of the new neurophysiological and psychological studies which examine the development of personality and self-identity during the first few years of life¹. This demonstrates that two distinct and opposing driving mechanisms are involved, in which the techniques that are required to manage the traumas which arise through the two different types of conflict are almost opposite to one another. Therefore the attempts to enforce the doctrines of the Church, which has determined that only the goal driven types of conflict can exist creates severe counterproductive effects².

It is shown in this analysis that the goal driven conflicts which arise during infancy are associated with the later stages in the creation of self-identity, and that these are formed in conjunction with the increasing abilities of the individual to relate actions to effect. It is further demonstrated that the even earlier identity driven conflicts arise from the sources which are present before these cognitive capabilities can begin to develop³. These later goal driven conflicts have a concept of the end result and they can therefore be associated with the notion of reward. With the earlier identity driven conflicts the behavioural implications which are associated with goal driven conflicts do not arise. The driving forces which lie behind them are instead associated with the rejection of what is wrong, the establishment of personality traits and defining a place in society⁴. Their dynamics are powered by contagious and self-reinforcing processes where compulsions and intense feelings may be encountered. Extended

¹ Gilchrist, S. (2014): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". This paper considers the neurophysiological and the psychological processes which are involved in the early development of personality and self-identity. 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> : Also use the footer to access these documents.

² The complete analysis of this is given in: 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> . See footer for access

³ Gilchrist, S. (2014): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See the footer to access.

⁴ The full explanation is given in Gilchrist, S. (2014): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See the footer to access this document.

research on gender dysphoria has demonstrated that conflicts that arise because of atypical gender identification and through same-sex attraction are identity driven in nature. It is also shown that the identification with a specific core gender identity has become firmly and irrevocably locked in place before the cognitive abilities that are needed for a goal driven conflict can develop. This can be used to link experiences of early infancy to those of later life. This means that as extended a range of moral attitudes, principles, beliefs and behaviour will be found to exist among such gender and sexually variant people as there are in society at large⁵. Behaviour is not the primary issue and the driving forces behind the conflicts that arise from gender and sexual variation come from the need for people to be true to who they are.

The conclusions of these neurophysiological and psychological studies demonstrate that there is no scientific justification for the traditional teaching and doctrines of the Christian Church, which considers all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour to be engaged in for lust, promiscuity, prostitution and immoral or inappropriate sex⁶. However these doctrines could not be challenged for as long as the Christian Church was able to impose its total domination over the social political and legal structures of society, and a great deal of harm has been done during the centuries by pursuing doctrines which the neurophysiological and the psychological analyses demonstrate cannot be correct.

The historical analysis which additionally forms part of this investigation confirms these conclusions, and an examination of the first century cultural backgrounds is provided in the companion papers where the conflicts between the Christian Church and the Goddess cults of the Greek and Roman empires are more fully described⁷.

In a complete contrast to the vehement condemnations of the Goddess cults by the fourth century Christian Church it is shown in this investigation that, as well as the way of darkness there was also a way of light and that in the core of the theologies of the Goddess cults there was also a calling for responsible sex⁸. Not only did this

⁵ For a complete account see: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

⁶ See for example the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Paragraph 2357. The Second Edition English Translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with corrections promulgated by Pope John Paul II on 8 September 1997: "Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, Tradition has always declared that "Homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They choose the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved."

⁷ See Parts 4 and 5 of this paper,

⁸ The close association of the cult of Cybele and Jesus with the outcasts of society led to the condemnations of both groups by people and organizations which had a vested interest in the social structures of society. Like the disciples of Jesus the Gallae also set out on missionary journeys and, like the disciples, they were itinerant priests who relied on the alms that were provided by their followers. Like the Gallae, who were identified with the lowest forms of society, Jesus also associated himself with the outcasts. Both of the groups brought their separate messages of transcendence to the communities which they missioned to. The care for the dispossessed, and the adoption of an all-embracing moral philosophy of a subject culture was common to both groups. Both groups suffered denigration and attack. For those of the castrated Gallae who followed the "Way of Light" it was their transcendence of the gender boundaries of society which offered them their shamanic and

duality in gender and sexual matters exist in first century Greco/Roman society it is shown to exist in Judaism as well. Sexual misconduct was strongly condemned as were the threats to the social structures of societies created by gender and sexually variant acts⁹. In all of the first century cultures an equivalent type of duality is found whereby those gender and sexually variant people who attempt to live to the highest moral standards which their society expects can live according to the way of light. People who do the reverse follow the paths of darkness instead. Equivalent dualities are encountered across cultures and continents, whereby those people who seek to transcend the sex/gender boundaries by living in ways which are true to the ideals of their lives may be given a high and frequently a priestly status. However people who instead embrace the paths of transgression are very ruthlessly condemned for their acts¹⁰.

This dual nature is still denied by many Christian Churches which demand that only the goal driven conflicts could exist¹¹. This means that this analysis is not a neutral investigation. Its objective is to find out why the fundamental duality which has been demonstrated by the psychological and neurophysiological studies has come to be rejected by the Christian Church. A second objective is to try to understand what was known in first century society about this duality, and how this was acted on in the teaching of Jesus himself.

The outcomes of these historical, theological, neurophysiological and psychological analyses demand that the traditional teachings of the Church are reconsidered. New perspectives can be created by removing the veil of sexual presumptions and the social and legal constraints which for nearly 2000 years have dominated much of Christian theology, psychology and psychiatry. By taking account of this duality and by examining the histories and cultures which belonged to the surrounding societies, as well as the development of the early Christian Church, it is demonstrated in this analysis that these decrees have had major consequences for the interpretation of the doctrines and the teaching of the Christian Church.

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

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.

⁹Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

¹⁰Gilchrist, S. (2013), "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian teaching on Homosexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach". See footer for access Refer to relevant section of this document

¹¹See for example the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in Footnote 6 of this document.

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sgen4144@gmail.com

from these two different perspectives, the starting points and the ending points of its early development can be more readily identified, and the differences can therefore be more accurately mapped. These changes can then be compared with the results of the neurophysiological and psychological studies and from the use of this three sided approach it is considered that a better understanding can be gained¹². The fourth perspective examines these conclusions in the light of the teaching of Jesus himself.

3:0. Politics and Sex

One of the most noteworthy inputs which this neurophysiological and psychological analysis brings to an understanding of the development of these Church traditions occurs because it breaks through those sexual barriers which have presumed that the Christian condemnations of the social malpractices of surrounding societies were driven only through disgust of the sexual acts. While these sexual practices in many cases could be rightly condemned it is shown later in this analysis that the principal driving forces which directed the development of the early Christian Church were not those of sex, they were instead set by the politics of power and control which were determined by the activities of the Goddess cults and from the need to establish the respectability of the Church within a gender unequal Greco/Roman society¹³. This is in complete contrast to the traditional Christian approach whereby the condemnations of sexual practice were identified as the only weapon of attack.

As a revolutionary Jesus was a disappointment to the Jewish nation since, instead of conquering an oppressing empire in order to destroy it, the Gospel demanded that people should work within that society and its empire to change it instead. Jesus had usurped and inverted the power structures of society, but in the processes of gaining respectability to help spread the mission of the Church, that process was reversed. The social structures of society were then supported and that radical social message of the early Gospel was lost. This pressing requirement for respectability is evident in all of the Pauline epistles and in the Letters. It was also embraced by Peter, and the transition to it is documented elsewhere in the history of the early Church. This study examines how this transformation occurred and it considers how early Church had come to accept the social norms of the surrounding societies and then tried to adapt these to fit in with its own theology, doctrines and beliefs¹⁴. The decision to embrace these cultures has set the Church on a trajectory where the original Gospel teaching on gender transcendence and on the essential duality of gender and sexually variant conditions was lost, therefore all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour was

¹²A more complete analysis is given in: Gilchrist, S. (2013), "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian teaching on Homosexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach". See footer for access.

¹³For a complete account see:

¹⁴ Common practice in Christianity. Pilling Report. Report of the House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality (The Pilling Report) Published: 28/11/2013: Church House Publishing ISBN-13: 9780715144374 ISBN-10: 0715144375 http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling_report_gs_1929_web.pdf

presumed to be for the goal driven pursuits of immorality and lust. By the time of St. Augustine (354-430) and that of the early fourth century Church, an almost complete transformation in outlook had taken place.

4:0. Cultural Clashes

The cultural differences played an important role. Activities which were considered to be totally moral inside the culture of one society could also be horrific in another, and within the dominant and subject societies almost the reverse outlooks were adopted.

Inside Greco/Roman society the standards of sexual morality were determined by responsibility and authority. This meant that any Greek or Roman male citizen could engage with any other woman or a man who was of lesser status without any form of penalty for the purposes of his own sexual gratification, and this included the anal penetrative acts. Same-sex rape was also employed as a weapon to humiliate a beaten enemy. This meant that the only protection which such people had against heterosexual or same-sex rape were the social obligations for responsibility in action, and slaves had no choice¹⁵. Maintaining the social status was given absolute priority, and where there was a public expression of any same-sex relationships between two male citizens who were of equal status, it was only the penetrated or the submissive partner who was condemned.

Within a victimized and subjugated society the reverse situation is encountered. The horror of same-sex rape being inflicted upon the Israelites is very obvious within the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and this resonates through all of the Jewish tradition. Therefore the Greeks and the Romans could be regarded as people who penetrated at will, but the Jews did not. There were many condemnations of sexual abuse which were issued by the authorities of the Church¹⁶. These became ever more and more vehement, however, despite the presence of Christian Emperors from Constantine onwards (273-337) they were not acted on in the civil ordinances in the ways which the Church had demanded, either by most of the Roman Emperors or later by the Carolingian Kings and it was not until 559, in the reign of the emperor Justinian that equal penalties to partners in same-sex relationships were applied¹⁷.

¹⁵ Roman Citizens were expected to exercise high social responsibility in all of their actions, and misuse or abandonment of responsibility could invoke legal penalties against them. However the primary decisions, even over life and death matters, lay with the head of the household, the "Pater familias" in each case

¹⁶ The full account is given in Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"

¹⁷ One might expect any type of same-sex act to have been a major area 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 Novels 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 them. Initially both of the offending partners were to be put to death, but this was later relaxed. This was the first Roman legal assignment of the term Sodomy to these activities. During the remainder of the first millennium a number of Church Councils increased the penalties

5:0. Social Transformation

A major challenge (and achievement) that was met by Christianity was its success in transferring the distinctive views of the minority Jewish religion into this dominant culture. That meant confronting the self-centred moralities of the dominant culture and sexual values that were characteristic of Greco/Roman male dominated society. This additionally meant challenging and usurping the power structures which are formed inside these powerful societies by placing the concern for the victims and the suppressed first on the religious and the social agendas of those cultures, and by embracing an all-encompassing morality which is founded on compassion, nurturing and love. These moral characteristics were more typical of the first century female expectations, and women were also a subject group. By the time of the first century many women had become well educated, had responsibility and they were making significant contributions to society; nevertheless they were still denied any form of power and authority over their own lives¹⁸. This was also a time of religious upheaval within Greek and Roman society. Many of the traditional religions had lost credibility, the Goddess cults were undergoing a major resurgence, there was a proliferation of new religious beliefs, and the male domination of society was being put to the test¹⁹.

6:0. Gender Challenges

Traditional Christian teaching focusses on the subservient status of women in all of the first century societies. While that may be true in many areas such as Palestine it is much less true in Greco/Roman society because of the powerful influence of the Goddess cults, in particular that of Cybele. It is notable that this Anatolian cult was introduced into Athens around 412 BC at a time when the Athenians were suffering severe defeats in the Peloponnesian wars²⁰, the male population was called away to fight, it was being decimated in the process, the state was in financial ruin, and it was

against same-sex acts, but these could not be enforced without the support of the civil authorities. See Gilchrist, S (2011) "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"

¹⁸ Contrary to traditional Christian Teaching

¹⁹ This analysis gives a very different perspective on the role and function of the Goddess cults from that the traditional Christian viewpoint, which regards them as havens for lust, promiscuity and inappropriate sex. In this analysis it is demonstrated that the rituals and activities of the Goddess cults also embraced the attributes of protecting female interests against the attacks of male aggression and domination. They additionally included support for women's concerns, for birthing and nurture, for fertility and renewal, and in total contrast to the Christian condemnations, they further emphasised the requirement for responsible sex. Therefore, far from any thoughts that their existence was purely to promote the sexual orgies, the cult's activities had an important role. This included fortune telling, the production of charms and healing and welfare activities. They were also associated with the power struggles within these gender unequal societies, and the diversity, disruption and the nature of this behaviour caused both a strong disapproval and a high respect. A full analysis is given in Gilchrist, S. (Pub.2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults" see also Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

²⁰ Peloponnesian War, (431–404 BC), war fought between the two leading city-states in ancient Greece, Athens and Sparta. Each stood at the head of alliances that, between them, included nearly every Greek city-state. The fighting engulfed virtually the entire Greek world.

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sgen4144@gmail.com

under external threat²¹. The same occurred in 204 BC when the cult of Cybele was brought from Athens to Rome. Rome was by then in a similar situation, many in the male population had been killed or called away to war²², the state faced the threat of imminent defeat, and the power of the Goddess was invoked in order to win the fight.

The official reasons for this importation are attributed to prophetic statements of the sibylline oracles. However there could have been other practical concerns. Invoking the power of Cybele could help unite all sections of society in pursuit of the fight, and the popularity of the cult was such that its influence could not be ignored. Giving the official cult of Cybele high status in Greco/Roman society also gave the state power to control it. However the Goddess cult, because of its concern for the underdog was popular not only with women, but with eunuchs, slaves and all of those people who fell below the rank of citizenship in Greco/Roman society. None of these people had vested interests in promoting the domination of a dictatorial male dominated political establishment and that also gave the cult a disruptive side. Not only did the Goddess cults make particular contributions to the advancement of women, their myths were far from maternal in nature, they championed the power of wild nature, they included gender transformations which disrupted the security and status of a male dominated society, and they involved wild ecstatic processions which depicted the power of the Goddess, rather than the Christian condemnations of wild sex^{23 24 25 26}. Although the

²¹When the parochial Greek city-states became a worldwide empire great changes occurred in society and mores. Women exercised political power with skill. Political and economic power made some women equal in status to men. Other women became competent professionals in athletics, music, poetry, literature, philosophy, oratory, medicine and various crafts. Class barriers were breaking down and the institution of the family was weakened. Traditional social roles of the sexes were challenged and this resulted in controversy and conflict. A man could no longer presume his wife's compliance with a role of seclusion, passivity and silence. The challenge had come, not from a change in philosophic or social ideals, but from the concrete fact of historical women who possessed real economic power and who used it to struggle for freedom and equality. From: Tetlow, Elisabeth M. (1980): "The Status of Women in Greek, Roman and Jewish Society" from "Women and Ministry in the New Testament". Paulist Press, 1980 pp 5 - 29. Accessed July 2014 at:

<http://www.womenpriests.org/classic/tetlow1.asp>

²² The Punic Wars were a series of three wars fought between Rome and Carthage from 264 BC to 146 BC. At the time, they were probably the largest wars that had ever taken place

²³ In 395 BC, just nine years after Athens had suffered catastrophic defeat in war the comic playwright Aristophanes wrote and produced a play called Women in the Assembly (Ecclesiazusae). The plot is simple and striking. The women of Athens are fed up with the mess men have made of the city and its affairs. They infiltrate the political assembly and persuade it to hand over all power to the women. It is a comedy, and the demand for true gender equality is taken to excess so that for example if a man wanted to have sex with a pretty woman he had to have sex with an ugly one first. In ancient society the different roles assigned to men and women were determined by their perceived usefulness to society and not by modern ideas of universal equality. In Greece at this time plays were used to criticise authority and society. This play illustrates the parity of esteem that was given. See Gilchrist, S. (Pub.2014). "Christianity and the Goddess Cults". Or Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access..

²⁴Frymer-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.

²⁵ 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

codes of conduct protected Roman citizens from the excesses of sexual abuse, the restraints did not apply in the same way to non-citizens, and prostitution was rife²⁷.

At the time of the first Century the Greek and Roman societies were caught between two extremes. In both there was the tension of opposites between the patriarchal ideal of the silent and obedient wife, working in seclusion within the home, and the reality of historical women who owned wealth and property and exercised a role in political society. Real women of history were constantly challenging the patriarchal ideal of male dominance and superiority²⁸. However there was a significant problem. Because of the gender stratification which was inevitably imposed by the Gods and Goddesses belonging to polytheistic society who were themselves gender defined, any struggles for the equality of status or for complete gender equality could only be carried so far²⁹. Even though women had achieved considerable power inside their own domains, the divinely decreed orders of difference meant that the fundamental gender divisions could not be broken, and this created a glass ceiling which could

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)

²⁶ 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

²⁷This gave Roman citizens the freedom to do what they liked. However temple prostitution is also complex subject. Perhaps surprisingly, celibacy was valued in the Goddess Cults. By their acts of self-castration the male Gallae priests irrevocably renounced all sexual feelings. They lost the ability to penetrate and they became symbolically married to the virgin Goddess herself. Through this identification with Cybele and Attis they transcended their gender to become more like the gods they served. Because of the irreversibility of their actions they could be given an even higher status than voluntary celibates, and this idea is reflected in the instances of self-castration in the early Christian Church. However their inability to penetrate or have sexual feelings did not prevent them from being able to serve as male temple prostitutes. This is where cultural clashes between Greco/Roman and Jewish society can reach their heights. It seems that the worshipper by engaging in the sex act with the gallae "Received the inner-most essence and power of a god". This behaviour was absolutely horrific to Christianity and there is little doubt that it was abused for money. However for those worshippers who sought fertility in their own lives this could be a positive and moral act. See for example: Conner, Randy. (1993): "Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections between Homoeroticism and the Sacred". Harper San Francisco, 1993.

²⁸ Roman women had a legal right to inherit. They amassed great fortunes. The role of a wife was to manage the household. All chores were done by slaves, although the ideal wife was still expected to spin and weave like her ancient ancestors. The women of the upper classes were in reality free from work. They were able to go out: to market, to festivals, to attend banquets in mixed company. Status in Roman society was sought through public display of wealth. Some women in the imperial court were actually proclaimed gods in the state cult of emperor worship. Shrines were erected to them in the provinces and their images were found on coins. Statues and buildings were erected in Rome to honour important men and women. Women were able to petition the Senate and even held protest demonstrations against oppressive laws". From: Tetlow, Elisabeth M. (1980): "The Status of Women in Greek, Roman and Jewish Society" from "Women and Ministry in the New Testament". Paulist Press, 1980 pp 5 - 29. Accessed July 2014 at: <http://www.womenpriests.org/classic/tetlow1.asp>

²⁹ This analysis shows that within the cult of Cybele there was a way of darkness and a way of light. Cybele's myths embraced sex and spirituality, they gave an earthier caution against lust and other sins of excess and they showed that sex and gender were less important to the soul than love. The need to rise above the divisions of gender could give at least some of the Gallae a priest like transcendent status, and this is in stark contrast to the condemnations of immorality and the eventual total repression of the cult by the Catholic Church,

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never be crossed³⁰. What was required to make the breakthrough was a religion that worshipped a single gender transcendent God, and which additionally possessed a social perspective which was close to the Goddess cults. Waiting in the wings was another religion whose social messages likewise disrupted the gendered security of a male dominated society, and whose founder had been put to death on the cross because of the fear of the disruption that this could create. Because of its agenda for women, together with the moral values of a subject society, Christianity could bridge that void³¹. This could not happen under the rules of gender complementarity which were demanded by Greco/Roman society, and for that glass ceiling to be crossed an initial period of true gender transcendence and equality was required.

7:0. Jesus and the Goddess Cults

The cult of Cybele was served exclusively by female priestesses and self-castrated male priests, and the act of self-castration was an affront to the social structure of a male dominated and patriarchal society. Therefore it is hardly surprising that those who sought respectability within Greco/ Roman society attacked the sexual abuses which undoubtedly did occur. It has already been noted that in all of the first century cultures an equivalent type of duality is found whereby those gender and sexually variant people who attempt to live to the highest moral standards which their society expects can live according to the way of light. People who do the reverse follow the paths of darkness instead. Equivalent dualities are encountered across cultures and continents, whereby those people who seek to transcend the sex/gender boundaries by living in ways which are true to the ideals of their lives may be given a high and often a priestly status. People who instead embrace the paths of transgression are very ruthlessly condemned for their acts. However the institutional structures of an established society have a great deal more difficulty in dealing with people who remove themselves from the normal rules of respectability and status in society, but who nevertheless still continue to live up to the highest moral values expected of that society and its cults.

³⁰ Gilchrist, S. (2014): "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church". See footer for access". Or Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

³¹ While the cult of Cybele and the practices of the Gallae could only challenge within the sex-gender boundaries of a polytheistic society, it is the transgressive body of the eunuch in the New Testament that symbolizes the Kingdom of God, which breaks through these gender-defined frontiers, and who brings its mission to the world. Thus in Christianity this affirmation of relationships that are given in love or in early asceticism transcends both gender and sex. Christianity sought to transcend gender so that all people are treated as one in the Gospel of Christ - and this theme is present throughout the Gospel message. It is also notable that the more correct translation of the text in Galatians 3:18 reads "...male and female..." rather than the more usual version "...neither male, nor female..." The result of this change is to emphasise the social and political challenges that are brought by this interpretation of transcending gender in the love of Christ. The translation "neither male nor female" is more usually used since this reflects the normal expectation of gender duality of today's society. However, given that this concept of gender duality breaks down in the ancient world and that the Gallae were considered a third sex, a number of other possible interpretations follow. The effect of all of these is again to further confirm that more than just gender equality is sought, and that everybody is as one in Christ. See Gooder Paula, Sr (2008) "Searching for Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the New Testament". Westminster John Knox Press, ISBN 0664231942, 9780664231941.

Not only do these actions of self-sacrifice establish an even greater esteem among the cult's own followers, by confronting the authority of the institutions of their society they also usurp the power structures on which that society is built. This also makes the Gallae priests uniquely equipped to bring the moral values and the teachings of the cult to those who have been oppressed by the state. That outcome can most particularly be found when it exploits the scapegoat mechanism as it is described by Girard; and this is discussed elsewhere in this investigation, as is the discussion of the attitude of Jesus himself to gender and sexual variance, and also to the Gallae priests³².

From his own identification with the poor, the rejected and the outcast Jesus likewise turned this searching for authority completely on its head. His rejection of all worldly power led to his sacrifice and death as a scapegoat on the Cross, and the emphasis in Christianity has always been on the power and the significance of this redemptive act. Many recent theological studies have used the research of René Girard to model these dynamics³³ and Girard clearly demonstrates the great power and reconciling influences which the scapegoat can exert. It has been shown that the demand for gender equality and for the protection of women meant that the male dominated patriarchal society was challenged both by Christianity and by the Goddess cults. Cybele's myths and doctrines embraced both sex and spirituality, they gave earlier cautions against lust and the other sins of excess, and they also demonstrated that sex and gender were less important to the soul than love. Contrary to the Christian condemnations, these included the activities of nurture, birthing, care, protection and responsible sex³⁴. When it is also understood that these Gallae priests, together with

³²Gilchrist, S. (2014). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church". Or Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

³³Apart from Girard's own work, James Alison is perhaps the most notable exponent. His books include, Broken Hearts and New Creations: Intimations of a Great Reversal, Undergoing God: Dispatches from the Scene of a Break-In, On Being Liked, Faith Beyond Resentment: Fragments Catholic and Gay, The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes, Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination (2nd edition), Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination : Living in the End Times: The Last Things Re-imagined, Knowing Jesus. See: <http://www.jamesalison.co.uk/eng/books.html> for details.

³⁴Cybele was just one among a number of Goddesses who had a similar role. Juno in Rome was the Goddess of marriage, pregnancy and childbirth. She was also the Queen of the Gods and part of the Capitoline triad that also included Minerva and Jupiter. Juno was an embodiment of the traditional female roles of wife and mother. One of her titles was Lucino (or light) since she helped to bring children into the light of the world. She was also Goddess of conception, who was called upon during labour and a Goddess who helped settle disagreements between spouses. Another Goddess in Roman mythology was Diana, who was the goddess of the woodlands, of wild animals, and of hunting. Diana also acted as a fertility goddess, who helped women conceive and to give birth to children. With growing contact between Greece and Rome Diana became increasingly identified with the Greek goddess Artemis and she also came to be identified with Juno Lucina herself. However the Romans viewed Diana as a many-sided goddess who was also associated with forests and hunting. Artists usually portrayed her as a virgin hunter, often with a bow and quiver, accompanied by maidens, hunting dogs, or deer. Although Diana held an honoured place among women, she was also identified with Hecate, the Greek goddess of darkness and witchcraft, and she served as goddess of the kingdom of the dead. Diana's nature was as varied as the range of her associations. As goddess of forests and hunting, she was considered to be pure and virginal. Yet she could also be arrogant and vengeful. As goddess of the moon, she had a changeable, unpredictable nature. As goddess of the world of the dead, she was unforgiving and bloodthirsty. She was also regarded as protector of the lower classes, particularly of slaves. In Roman culture Cybele was identified as the Great Mother of the Gods.

their counterparts, were itinerant missionary priests who moved widely through the Roman Empire, who were known in first century Palestine, who were engaged in fortune telling, shamanic, and in healing activities, then the contest between the cult and Christianity can hardly be missed³⁵.

In ancient Middle Eastern religion (and later in Greece, Rome, and Western Asia), this mother goddess was regarded as the great symbol of the earth's fertility. As the creative force in nature she was worshipped under many names, including Astarte (Syria), Cybele (first in Phrygia, only later in Greece and Rome), Demeter (Greece), Ishtar (Babylon), and Isis (Egypt). The later forms of her cult involved the worship of a male deity (her son or lover, e.g., Adonis, Osiris), whose death and resurrection symbolized the regenerative power of the earth. In the 5th century B.C. the cult of Cybele spread to Greece and later to Rome. She was primarily a nature goddess, responsible for maintaining and reproducing the wild things of the earth. Her annual spring festival celebrated the death and resurrection of her beloved Attis, a vegetation god. However instead of resurrection in human form, the resurrection of Attis was in the form of a pine tree, symbolising the renewal of the Earth. This did not preclude Cybele from being called on to aid human childbirth and conception, many of the earlier images show her seated in a chair and giving birth. However the image most usually seen does not make childbirth evident. The Emperor Julian II wrote: "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. Without pain, she brings to birth ... She is the Motherless Maiden, enthroned at the very side of Zeus, and in very truth is the Mother of All the Gods ..." (from an Oration to Cybele composed at Pessinus, AD 363). The myths associated with all these goddesses have a great deal in common, and this suggests that they have all to be treated as a single group. Involvement in childbirth is common to all of them. There would also be other reasons to call on Cybele during childbirth. The Kuretes and Dactyls were three, five, or nine rustic Daimones (Spirits) appointed by the Mother of the Gods to guard the infant god Zeus in a cave on Mount Ida in Crete. In order to keep him safely hidden from his cannibalistic father, the Titan Kronos (Cronus), they drowned out his cries with a frenzied dance involving clashing spears and shields. These Kouretes were gods of the wild mountainside however they were also the inventors of the arts of metalworking, shepherding, hunting and beekeeping. They were in addition considered to be the first armed warriors. The five Daktyloi ("fingers") were usually regarded as identical to the Kouretes. These also had an equal number of sisters named Hekaterides, who together appeared to have represented all ten fingers of the human hand. The male and female Daktyloi were also joined in marriage, which might be imagined as a harmonious "finger to finger" folding of the hands. From this union many others were born who represented gods and goddesses of trades or professions in ancient society. Appealing to Cybele during birth was not only a supplication for the successful delivery of the baby; it was also a portent for the protection of the child and success in future life. However none of these Goddesses and their cults seems to exist just to support maternal and fertility interests. All of them use gender and sex to disrupt and challenge the social order imposed by a male society and in the case of Cybele in particular, (but also with all of the other goddesses), the disreputability caused by that disruption, and the condemnations of sexual impropriety by the Gallae, may be used to argue that Cybele could not have had a role in human childbirth. However the great purity attributed to the Goddess Cybele herself suggests otherwise. The presence in the temple of only female and castrated male priests and priestesses who are following these ideals give a safe place for women to inhabit, but the cult of Cybele was never fully integrated into Roman Society and the protection she offered could have been more attractive to those who were not Roman Citizens, than to the citizens themselves. The existence of a self-castrated priesthood for all of these Goddess cults was not well accepted by Roman society, not just because of sexual abuse but because of the political and social challenges it made. However it was common to all of the cults, as was the practice of these priests offering themselves to men (as argued in this analysis) in order to channel the fertility of the Goddess to the lay population. That became a very profitable activity as is evident in Acts 19:24, it was horrific to Christianity and Judaism but when this is judged by the moral codes of Greco/Roman society, in principle that activity would not have been an immoral act.

³⁵The seventy-two disciples (known in the Eastern Christian tradition as the Seventy Apostles) were early followers of Jesus who are mentioned in the Gospel of Luke 10:1–24. According to Luke, Jesus appointed them and sent them out in pairs ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. Like the disciples the Gallae engaged on similar missionary journeys and they also relied on the hospitality of their supporters. If the initial degree of common interest between Christianity and the cult of Cybele, the Great Mother is striking, their later condemnations of each other are no less extreme. Time and again, the Christian apologists cited the Gallae as representative of all they abhorred in pagan culture. Of all

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sgen4144@gmail.com

That then begs the question about the attitude Jesus took to the Goddess cults and the removal of the presumption that all gender and sexual variant behaviour is goal driven and in pursuit of lust, promiscuity, immorality and inappropriate sex opens up the possibility of a new interpretation of the statement on eunuchs in Matthew 19:3-12. Modern interpretations attempt to construe that this reference to eunuchs is limited to an exhortation by Jesus for people not to marry, or to abstain from sexual intercourse, or just to embrace a celibate life. However that interpretation ignores the widespread endorsement in the surrounding first century cultures of the act of self-castration as an expression of supreme religious devotion, together with the major problems which its continued practice would cause throughout the early church^{36 37}. The close conjunction of the statements on marriage and eunuchs in Matthew 19: 3-12 strongly suggests that these two statements should be considered together. Both statements are included in the same sentence; the directly equivalent form of words is also employed, and the Jewish midrashic tradition of interpretation imposes a very careful structuring and analysis of any biblical text³⁸. Thus in regard to marriage, the usual interpretation³⁹ that is given to this passage declares that Jesus considered that marriage should be considered as a “Second best” option, and the same close relationship between these two statements further implies that those people “Who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” and the coupling with: “He that is able to receive it let him receive it”, should be treated in the same way⁴⁰. The eunuchs who kept the Law were given a high place within Jewish

the behaviour of the Gallae, none horrified them more than the radical manner in which they transgressed the boundaries of gender. See Roscoe, Will. (2010) “Priests of the Goddess”. (The full article with notes can be found in *History of Religions* 35(3) (1996): 295-330. A summary is available online at: <http://www.willsworld.org/priests.html>).

³⁶ 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

³⁷ This was the subject of the first Canon in the Canons of the Council of Nicaea: Canon 1: Castration among the clergy: “If anyone due to sickness has undergone a surgical operation, or if he has been castrated by barbarians, he is allowed to remain among the clergy. But if anyone enrolled among the clergy has castrated himself when in perfect health, it is good for him to leave the ministry. From now on, no such person should be promoted to the clergy. But since this applies only to those who wilfully castrate themselves, if anyone has been made a eunuch by barbarians, or by his master, and is otherwise fit for office, church law admits him to the clergy”.

³⁸ In the Goddess cults the priests could be considered as being symbolically married to the Goddess herself. Therefore the contrast is not as strong as it might seem.

³⁹ This term is the author’s own but it is implicit in almost all scholarship and in the bible texts. See for example: Deming, Will (2004) “Paul on Marriage & Celibacy” Publisher: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN 13: 9780802839893 ISBN 10: 0802839894

⁴⁰ These issues caused very real difficulties for the early church. The most relevant passage in the Bible which describes the attitude of Jesus to celibacy and ritual castration is that in Matthew 19:12 which states “For there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it”. The third phrase in this statement implies that this is an active act and for the 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),

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society (Isaiah 56:4-5) and it was considered that Deuteronomy 22:5 only prohibited actions of cross dressing for unapproved purposes or deceit⁴¹. However these were eunuchs who were forcibly castrated by others. In this passage Jesus is extending that status to those who have castrated themselves. Therefore their actions too should be regarded as another “Second best” approach. The worship of a gender transcendent God meant that these acts of physical transformation were no longer required but, as with circumcision, the early Church faced considerable battles with the people who demanded them, and this has coloured the later interpretations of the Church⁴².

This statement of Jesus is a direct contradiction of the teaching and doctrines of the later Church. Not only did Jesus recognise the inherent duality which is found in gender and sexually variant behaviour, he acknowledged it, and he sided with the challenges to the male domination imposed by the Goddess cults. Therefore just as it is with the transgressive body of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts (Acts 8:26-40) who symbolizes the Kingdom of God, and who is charged with bringing its mission to the world, then those transgendered people^{43 44} who use the breadth and range of their

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 enkratite and ascetic movements (centred mainly in Egypt) are known to have members who were eunuchs. The cloisters of Egypt and Syria were centres of self castration, and Coptic monasteries continued to perform castration well into the Islamic period. Indeed, the criminalization of eunuchs in the church at the Council of Nicaea is testimony to the degree to which self castration was practiced. For the full account see Gilchrist, S .2012. “Sexuality, Gender and the Christian Church”.

⁴¹ The Jewish concerns in Deuteronomy 22:5 are not about creating or reinforcing gender differences but in preventing the gender associations of clothing, or possibly body hair from being used to deceive others for purposes leading to sexual immorality, or to dishonest behaviour. Every interpretation condemns cross dressing for dishonest or destructive action or to condemn the practice in other cults. None of them prohibit it for just purpose. In the ancient world no literal interpretation has ever been applied to this passage and it is rightly put in the section of the Holiness Code in Leviticus which deals with deceit. For a full discussion and an account of the various interpretations see Gilchrist, S .2012. “Sexuality, Gender and the Christian Church”.

⁴² See Philippians Chapter 3: 2-12. A full description is given in: Gilchrist, S. (2014). “From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church”. See footer for access

⁴³ In the Apostolic Church gender differences were surpassed because of the transcendent power of God's Spirit at work in the community and in the world. Therefore this early Christianity challenged gender in every way. Unlike the requirements for physical castration which was demanded by the Goddess religions this action was no longer required, but many Christian men still continued to self-castrate as an act of extreme devotion. Origen was the most notable of these, but there were also many others. In early Christianity a woman's identity and spirituality could also be developed independently from her roles as wife and mother (or slave), whether she actually withdrew from those roles or not. This meant that women and men could equally exercise leadership in the Church on the basis of their spiritual achievement alone. Gender had no impact on these leadership roles. However this attitude also contravened what were regarded as the “respectable” division of gender roles in a male dominated patriarchal society. In the desire to gain respectability within Greco/Roman society, that gender transcendence was lost. (See for example King, Karen (1998) “Women In Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries”. Accessed 27 March 2013 at:

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

⁴⁴ Christian examples of male to female transgendered people are hard to come by because gender reassignment in that direction would become so suppressed by the later Church. However there is much more evidence of transgender behaviour in the female to male direction. The early Church sought to transcend all divisions of gender and the nature of this type of transgender influence may be due more to the growth of gender

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

8:0 Same-Sex Relationships

These same concerns also demand a reconsideration of the teaching of Jesus and the first century societies to same-sex relationships and same-sex acts. First century attitudes to same-sex relationships are considered in greater detail in the companion papers which investigate how the same duality was managed within the spheres of first century and earlier Greek and Roman philosophy⁴⁵. It is symptomatic of Greek society that it was assumed that love as a serious emotion ordinarily meant love between two males. Plato further argued that the highest form of love, and the only type of real love, is the love that existed between two men. There was no boundary placed between strong heterosexual friendships on the one hand and relationships which had resulted from homosexual attraction on the other. Indeed the latter was preferred for the depth and intensity of the commitments it provided. A host of writers demonstrate that this understanding was common not just to Athens but throughout the Greek world. Different words were used to define the different types of love, but these were not principally used on a gendered basis. What was then demanded was full responsibility in all behaviour, and the boundary which divided acceptable from unacceptable behaviour was fixed between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal

discrimination within the Church because of the ways it sought to gain respectability by conforming to the polarised gender role expectations of a male dominated Greco/Roman society. Thus, for example saying 114 in the Gospel of Thomas reads: "Simon Peter said to them, "Make Mary leave us, for females don't deserve life." Jesus said, "Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of Heaven." Most scholars now tend to attribute an early date to the Gospel of Thomas. (See: <http://gnosis.org/naghamm/gosthom.html>). The significance of this Gospel is discussed elsewhere in this analysis. One of the most famous woman leaders was Thecla, a virgin-martyr who was converted by Paul. She cut her hair, donned men's clothing, and took up the duties of a missionary traveller. Threatened with rape, prostitution, and twice put in the ring as a martyr, she persevered in her faith and her chastity. Her lively and somewhat fabulous story is recorded in the second century Acts of Paul and Thecla, The importance of such stories lies in their acceptance and not necessarily their absolute truth. (As at the 25 February 2013 the text of the acts can be accessed at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/thecla.html>). During the second and third centuries gender discrimination continued to increase and it was considered that fourth century female mystics could only achieve salvation and redemption if they rejected every aspect of their femininity. Even then redemption could only be gained in heaven and not on earth. Therefore even if male to female transgender behaviour was considered abhorrent by the second third and fourth centuries it was positively encouraged in the female to male direction. The idea that women had to have an instant sex change when they die in order to enter heaven as men was commonly held in the Church. Had the surgical possibilities present day female to male gender reassignment been available to the second third and fourth Century Church one wonders what might have happened! Thus for women gender reassignment for entry to heaven was an ideal to be achieved but it could only come after death, in order to protect the authority of a male church hierarchy in a male dominated society. That attitude towards reassignment for entry to heaven was not held by all, and others concluded that because lust and sexuality was absent gender differentiation failed to matter at all after death. In the meantime on earth women could only redeem their lives through childbirth, obedience or by renouncing all aspects of their femininity. On earth they could only wait in penance for the sins of Eve until heaven, when the day of gender reassignment, or freedom from gender comes.

⁴⁵Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

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sgen4144@gmail.com

abuse of sex - and these same principles were applied to relationships with either sex⁴⁶.

The issue of immediate concern is how this was matched within the Jewish tradition. Plato argued for the total sublimation of all sexual acts, but the permitted degrees of expression varied across cultures and even between city states. Talmudic study in Judaism traditionally used Chavruta⁴⁷ partnerships, where pairs of students worked together to learn, discuss and debate a shared text. The rabbis in these academies repeatedly encouraged their students to adopt ever increasing degrees of intimacy. For example in the Avot de-Rabbi Hathan it is recommended that a partner should be someone with whom one can “eat and drink, read and study, sleep, and share secrets of the Torah and personal secrets”⁴⁸. No rules for Chavruta partnerships are encountered which establish any boundaries that approve of strong heterosexual friendships on the one hand, and disapprove of homosexual relationships on the other. The modern interpretations of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are usually taken to mean the prohibition of all forms of same-sex behaviour, but the rabbis of the first century were at pains to make it clear that this prohibition exclusively applied to anal penetrative sex⁴⁹. No other sexual acts are prohibited by the bible, and that includes oral sex. By considering the impact of the “Pairs” culture in Judaism and the cross-stimulation promoted by the didactic teaching and learning methods it is shown in this investigation how these relationships could be expressed within the rabbinic partnerships. The requirements demanded that any such relationship had to be given in love and seen as between two equals. Complete social and personal responsibility had also to be exercised, but within these boundaries, all of the expressions of intimacy which the bible did not prohibit could be engaged in, including heterosexual or homosexual acts. A more extended analysis of this topic is given elsewhere⁵⁰. In a separate study which investigates gender and sexual variation from the Jewish perspective Rabbi Stephen Greenberg identifies the same forms of partnership in the Jewish Tradition and he shows how this applied to the relationships between David and Jonathan; and also for many other instances of close rabbinic relationships within Jewish history⁵¹. Perhaps the most notable of these was that between Resh

⁴⁶ For a complete account see: Gilchrist, S. 2011. “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”

⁴⁷ Chavruta, which is also spelled chavrusa or havruta comes from the Aramaic word for “friendship” or “companionship”. It is a traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which pairs of students independently learn, discuss and debate a shared text. It is a primary learning method in yeshivas and kollels. The traditional phrase is to learn b'chavruta (i.e. in partnership). The word has come to refer to the two study partners as a single individual, though it is logical to describe them as a pair. In modern Orthodox parlance, a chavruta always refers to two students, but Reform Judaism has expanded the idea of chavruta to include study groups of up to five individuals.

⁴⁸ See Maimonide’s commentary on the Mishnah, Avot 1:6 aseh lekha rav

⁴⁹ 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).

⁵⁰ Gilchrist, S. (2011) “Issues on the Sanctity of Same Sex Relationships”.

⁵¹ Greenberg, Steven; (2004) “Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition” The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN 10: 0-299-19094-3

Lakesh (Rashi) and Rabbi Yonathan⁵². This was a relationship that possessed a very great intimacy but it was also one to which the present day classification of heterosexuality, bisexuality or homosexuality cannot be applied.

What this analysis reveals is that the relationship between Jesus and John appears to be very similar to that which might be expected within any first century (or later) rabbinic partnership; and when the Gospel of John is read from this perspective it no longer appears to be coy on the subject. In a companion paper it is shown how the same form of relationship was carried over into the Christian Church and also how these relationships were sanctified by liturgical acts⁵³. Manuscripts with liturgies for the ceremony of “Adelphopoiesis” (which literally translates as “brother-making”) which date from the 9th to the 15th Century exist within the archives of the Byzantine Church and anecdotal evidence dating from the fourth century is available.^{54 55} There is also evidence that this ceremony was practised in the Western Church.^{56 57} These were not institutions of same-sex marriage, since they had to be relationships between two equals and carnal knowledge was prohibited, but kinship relationships similar to marriage were applied⁵⁸.

9:0. Jesus and John

The reason to ask this question does not lie just in curiosity about the relationship itself, but on its impact on the Gospel message and how the Christian Church has used translation drift and re-interpretation to alter the meaning of the texts. It is known that some special form of love did clearly exist between Jesus and John, because that is what is described in the Gospel texts. The question asked is, “Is this love purely an expression of the ascetic love of friendship, or is it anything more?”⁵⁹ First century societies had no labels for heterosexuality and homosexuality. Instead they used different words for the different types of love. The Greeks possessed at least seven of these words and it is not from the present day obsession with the

⁵² For a full description of these relationships see Greenberg, Steven; (2004) “Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition” The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN 10: 0-299-19094-3. The topic is also covered in Gilchrist, S. 2011. “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”.

⁵³ Gilchrist, S. (2011). “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”. And: Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Reform and the Christian Church”. See footer for access.

⁵⁴ Viscuso, Patrick (1994) New Oxford Review. December 1994, Volume LXI, Number 10

⁵⁵ 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.

⁵⁶ Bray, Alan (2003) “The Friend” University of Chicago Press.

⁵⁷ 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

⁵⁸ This is ceremony is discussed in more detail later in the text.

⁵⁹ It is noted that the relationship between Jesus and John is described by using the word agápē in the Gospel of John.

sexual acts, it is by the use of particular words that the true nature of any relationship can be found.

It has already been seen how the Christian Church has changed the meaning of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 from one which was set in the context of same-sex rape and which prohibited only anal penetration, to one which condemned all homosexual and same-sex acts. Similar concerns in relation to the word “Agápē” are considered here. Agápē is a direct transliteration of the Jewish word *ahabà* and an examination of the use of the word in the original Hebrew bible and also the Greek Septuagint shows that the word *agápē* and its equivalent it is used to describe committed and faithful love which can also find its fulfilment in sex⁶⁰.

The Greek writers at the time of Plato and other ancient authors used forms of this word to denote love of a spouse or family, or affection for a particular activity, and employed it either to contrast with, or to give it a totally separate meaning from, *philia* (an affection that could denote either brotherhood or generally non-sexual affection) and *eros* (an affection of a sexual nature, usually between two unequal partners). Agápē and its relatives are also used by Xenophon to describe the affection of soldiers in the Theban “Army of Lovers”⁶¹ for their younger partners⁶². Dover further writes: “The abstract noun corresponding to ‘agapan’, was later appropriated by Christian writers for love from which sexuality is absent, but in [an illustration] a half-naked woman on a bed bears the name ‘Agápē’, and in the classical language there is no word for ‘love’ which precludes sexuality in cases where a sexual element in a relationship is socially acceptable”⁶³. In contrast to this view the current Christian

⁶⁰ Although present day interpretations describe *agápē* as the type of spiritual self-sacrificing ascetic and ascending love for people and for the Church that specifically excludes the expression of any form of sexual passion, that is not the definition which first century readers would have known. The arguments for the modern ascetic interpretation are not borne out in the Old Testament texts. The word *agápē* (which is a direct transliteration of the equivalent Jewish word *ahabà*) is used in passages such as Genesis 34:1-4, Judges 16:4:15, Jeremiah 2:20-25, Jeremiah 2:33, Hosea 4:18 and Hosea 9:1, to describe acts of non-marital sexual love. Passages such as Genesis 24:67, Judges 14:16, 1 Samuel 18:20-21, and 1 Kings 11:1-3 deal with married sexual love. Genesis 29, Deuteronomy 21:15, 1 Samuel 1:4-5, 2 Chronicles 11:21 use the word to describe acts of sexual attraction. The Song of Solomon uses it to describe the outpouring of love in a sexual context. The 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. In the original Hebrew bible and in the Greek Septuagint the word *agápē* and its equivalent it is used to describe committed and faithful love which can find its fulfilment in sex. This is in marked contrast the current Christian definition of the word. The full reasons for this change are discussed in Gilchrist, S. (2011) “Issues on the Sanctity of Same Sex Relationships”. *Agápē* therefore means more than friendship for it allows the expression of sexual affection as well.

⁶¹ In Plato’s *Symposium*, Phaedrus proposed the creation of an army of lovers, because men behave at their best when in love, and that no army could be better than one composed of lovers: “No man is such a craven that love cannot inspire him with a courage that makes him equal to the bravest born.” In about 378 BCE, this literary speculation entered historical fact, when Georgidas applied Phaedrus’ reasoning to the creation of the “Sacred Band of Thebes”, a company of 300 soldiers, comprising exclusively pairs of lovers. Although the primary example is the Sacred Band of Thebes, the Spartan tradition of military heroism has also been explained in light of strong emotional bonds resulting from homosexual relationships. Various ancient Greek sources record incidents of courage in battle and interpret them as motivated by homoerotic bonds.

⁶² Davidson, James. (2009); “The Greeks and Greek Love: A Bold New Exploration of the Ancient World”. Random House (May 26, 2009). ISBN-10: 0375505164. ISBN-13: 978-0375505164

⁶³ Dover, K.J. (1978: 1989): “Greek Homosexuality” Updated and with a new Postscript. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1978. ISBN 0-674-36261-6 ISBN 0-674-36270-5.

definition of agápē 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 document and this is another instance where alterations in interpretation and translation drift, have altered the meaning of the text

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 agápē 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 Peter if he loves him, and it is to this definition of love that Peter gives his enthusiastic consent⁶⁴. The standard Christian interpretations argue that both phileo and agápē have no sexual content, and that agápē is the higher spiritual form of love which Peter was not yet ready to accept. This view is presented in paragraph 3 of the encyclical letter "Deus Caritas Est" of Pope Benedict XVI, on Christian Love⁶⁵. However it can be criticized on two counts. It has already been shown that Agápē is used with a sexual content many times within the Greek Septuagint. The early Christians who could read the document in the vernacular would know exactly what agápē meant. Any thought of it being anything more than referring to an ascetic relationship is vehemently denied by the present day Christian Church, because of the doctrines on sexuality which the Church has embraced.

The difference in meaning between agápē and phileo clearly mattered to Peter and the standard Christian reading of this passage has to be forced by giving the same meaning to both words. Applying an alternative definition to the passage gives a clear but different interpretation. Peter twice rejects any idea of a sexual element to

⁶⁴ The present day Church interpretation defines the word agape as the spiritual self-sacrificing ascetic and non-sexual love through which Jesus calls Peter to love His Church. In this present day interpretation Jesus uses the word agape on the first two occasions when he asks Peter if he loves him, but Peter responds each time with the word phileo, meaning brotherly love or love of family or friendship instead. The current Roman Catholic Teaching as affirmed by Pope Benedict in his encyclical letter Deus Caritas Est (2005) argues that the difference in meaning between these two verbs for "love" signifies that when Jesus uses the word agape he is calling Peter to the higher form of love for the Church. However Peter is not yet ready to commit himself to the kind of self-sacrificing ascetic type of love for the Church that the current definition of agape represents. In English both of phileo and agape are translated in the same way as "love" and the real meaning of this passage is hidden in translation. Some scholars contend that the use of the two words, phileo and agape for "love" means nothing significant. However it is also known that John never uses double words or double-meaning words without some hidden significance, and Jesus indeed plays on the differences in meaning between the two words in this passage. First century readers of the Greek Septuagint would also read these as separate words and thus would understand the word play involved in this passage.

⁶⁵ In the encyclical letter "Deus Caritas Est", Pope Benedict XVI describes the use of the word agápē in relation to the "Song of Solomon" in these terms: "This word expresses the experience of a love which involves a real discovery of the other, moving beyond the selfish character that prevailed earlier. Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking in the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice". Pope Benedict defines agápē as a more spiritually directed "Ascending love" and eros as a more earthly directed "Descending Love". The definitions he uses might be seen to attribute to the word eros the sexual context of the word agápē. As Pope Benedict points out the Greek Old Testament uses the word eros only twice and it is never used in the New Testament - but the way the word agápē is used throughout the Septuagint clearly implies that the outcomes of many of the loving relationships which it describes are expected to be expressed through sexual acts.

his love before he very fully accepts the non-sexual version in the third question that Jesus put. This interpretation suggests that, while both Peter and John both loved Jesus, they did so in different ways and that Peter wanted the distinction to be made.

There is other evidence to support the closeness of the relationships between Jesus and John⁶⁶. One is the knowledge that both men were unmarried in a society where to be married was almost compulsory. The representation of John as the beardless disciple is often taken to indicate John's youth. However in Greek Society the upper age limit for which it remained 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 beard⁶⁷.

It is not suggested that Jesus and John were in any pederastic relationship for that would be completely against the Jewish tradition. Nevertheless the imagery which is used could be seen as a symbol within Greek society about what the nature of their relationship was. Thus any difference in age should not automatically be assumed. Earlier it has been shown that the relationship between Jesus and John appeared similar to that within a first century rabbinic relationship, therefore the idea that Jesus and John were in a chavruta partnership should be considered. It has also been indicated that the division between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was not principally made on a gendered basis, but upon distinguishing the noble pursuit of love from the carnal abuse of sex. However uncomfortable this may be to present day society, it is a relationship which in first century society could be accepted and understood.

The structure of this passage also 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" within 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

⁶⁶ 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. This identification with pederasty is extremely uncomfortable in today's understanding. However it must be considered in the context of first century society. See section 11 of this document for further discussion. 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.

⁶⁷ This identification with pederasty is extremely uncomfortable in today's understanding. However it must be considered in the context of first century society. See section 11 of this document for further discussion.

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. It is noted that the interpretations presented in this analysis further affirm the validity of other ancient texts⁶⁸.

10:0. Sodomy and Anal Penetration

A better known area where translation drift and re-interpretation has been used to change the meaning of words is encountered in the definition of Sodomy. When Jesus refers to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Matthew 10:1-15, Luke 10:1-12, Matthew 11:20-24 and in Luke 17:28-30 he states that the crimes of the Sodomites were those of cruelty and the lack of hospitality. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is also a description of enforcing humiliation on the Israelites through same-sex rape.

The present day interpretations instead identify Sodomy with homosexuality and they employ the term to condemn all forms of same-sex acts as being in pursuit of illicit, immoral and inappropriate sex. Not only does that interpretation deny the duality identified by the neurophysiological and psychological studies. It also denies the duality which was understood by Jesus himself. That commands that the issues of anal penetration must be examined in the light of this duality, and this makes it clear that the prohibition of anal same-sex intercourse was made to preserve the social order in societies where same-sex rape was considered an instrument of humiliation, where married women were regarded as the property of their husbands and where women were not regarded as equals in their own right. With the equality of the sexes in present day society these biblical reasons of the prohibition of anal penetration have now disappeared. Therefore in a society where men and women are treated equally and where the relations between the two people are given to each other in love and faithfulness, there should be no prohibition of anal penetrative sex.

Under the New Covenant all acts become incorporated into the Gospel of Christian Love. The new ways in which the Jewish law should be interpreted from then on are described in Mark 7:1-23⁶⁹. Therefore, if the Old Testament prohibitions of the Law in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 condemned all acts of anal penetration; then the coming of Jesus, in fulfilment of the Law, meant that judgements were no longer to be made in literal terms, by literally applying the words of the law, but through love and upon the intentions of the acts⁷⁰. Instead of waiting to for society to change, the doctrines

⁶⁸ See "An Apocryphal Challenge". Section 2:3:4 in Gilchrist, S. (2013):"An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

⁶⁹ The full text is quoted in section 3:5 Gilchrist, S. (2013):"An Unfinished Reformation". See footer for access.

⁷⁰The purpose of Jesus' life and work was to fulfil both the Law (the books of Moses) and the Prophets (other Old Testament books). He did not destroy the Old Testament and in Matthew 5:17-18 Jesus said: ""Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." (NRSV). However changes were so dramatic that some laws were "set aside" or declared

of the New Covenant promote pro-active acts. When the passages on eunuchs and the Centurion⁷¹ are considered in this light it can be seen that the teaching of Jesus remains entirely in line with the New Covenant. It is also in accordance with the first century attitudes to sexual behaviour which, Jesus and John would have known; which likewise demands complete responsibility in all sexual actions, and which fixes the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the terms of the difference between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. There is no automatic prohibition of anal penetrative sex. So, instead of contradicting the results of the neurophysiological and psychological analysis, as the traditional Church teachings on sexual and gender variance have done, the conclusions of this analysis affirm them instead. They also do more than that, for instead of being just passers-by in society, this requires people to change it, and this message should be part of the mission of the Church.

11:0. Implications

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

The Christian Gospel makes no especial pleading for gender transcendence or for gender equality, but this is implicit within the Gospel texts. Neither does it explicitly

"obsolete" In Hebrews. 7:18-19 it is declared that "There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment because it was weak and ineffectual (for the law made nothing perfect); there is, on the other hand, the introduction of a better hope, through which we approach God."(NRSV); and in Hebrews 8:13 it states that "In speaking of "a new covenant," he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear" (NRSV). In Galatians 3:23-25 Paul describes some of the liberation that Jesus brought "Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith" (NRSV). In Ephesians 2:14-15 Paul declares, " For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace (NRSV). However the most relevant passage comes from Jesus himself in Matthew 22:37-40. "He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

⁷¹The story of the Centurion and slave is presented in Luke, Chapter 7:1-10 and in Matthew, Chapter 8:5-13. For a more complete examination see section 11 of this account, also : Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation"

Gilchrist, S. (2014). "Christianity And Crisis Overview".

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sgen4144@gmail.com

discuss sexual and gender variation but that also is inherent in the texts. The acts of sexual domination that were approved by legal and cultural codes of Greco/Roman society are correctly and strongly condemned in the bible, yet the expectation of the same act of same sex anal penetration being carried out in circumstances when it is given and received in love, as it is described in the story of the Centurion and slave, gives rise to little or no concern.

To understand why, it is necessary to look at the original Greek word for slave used by the writers of both gospels. Both Matthew and Luke use the Greek word *pais* to describe the Centurion's relationship with his orderly or slave. *Pais* and *paidika* were used by non-Christian writers in New Testament times to refer to the younger partner in a same-sex pederastic relationship. A Centurion in the occupied countries was discouraged or was prevented from having sexual relationships with the local population⁷². Providing sexual satisfaction was an accepted duty of his slave, and any first century Jew, Greek or Roman who heard the word *pais* in this context would know precisely what the gospel writers meant⁷³. There were other words that could have been used if that is not what was intended. However in today's biblical Greek lexicons, *pais* just means "manservant, son, young man or maid". For these reasons the different Greek and Jewish uses of the word "pais" must be more extensively considered. The word is frequently employed elsewhere in the New Testament, but in all of these passages it is used in the Jewish context to describe a boy, youth, girl, maiden, servant, slave, attendant or minister⁷⁴. Same-sex intercourse could be regarded as acceptable in a dominant society but this became the horror of same-sex rape in a subject one. Pederasty was commonly practiced in Greco/Roman society but it was absolutely abhorred in Judaism. When this word "pais" is used in the Jewish context, or to describe the actions of any Jew, no allusions to the practice of pederasty could ever be allowed.

⁷² The Roman soldier, like any free and respectable Roman male of status, was expected to show self-discipline in matters of sex. The Emperor Augustus, who reigned from 27 BC-14 AD, prohibited soldiers from marrying, and this prohibition remained in force in the Imperial army for nearly two centuries. A military officer on campaign might be accompanied by a male concubinus. See for example: Caesar, Julius? (100-44 BC): "The Spanish War": Paragraph 33: http://juliuscaesar.altervista.org/en/spawar_book.html . Other forms of sexual gratification available to soldiers were prostitutes of any gender including, male slaves and attendants. Unlike Greece where same-sex relationships between soldiers could be strongly encouraged, sex among fellow soldiers violated the Roman decorum against intercourse with other freeborn males. See: Williams, C.A. (1995): "Greek Love at Rome": Classical Quarterly 45 (ii). Pp 517-539:

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

⁷³ Victory in war gave the freedom to rape but the need to provide good governance in peacetime demanded the conquered society's respect. The role of the Centurion in peacetime was to provide some of that governance and authority; and this civil role of this centurion is written into the bible story. Soldiers of the rank of Centurion and below were not permitted to marry into local society, nor could they afford to offend it by licentiousness of sex. The role of a male slave as a concubinus for a single man was an established one in Roman society, and this is the same role which the Centurion's slave might expect. For more background information on the expectations of the military see: Phang, Sara Elise (2001): "The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 BC. -235 AD): Law and Family in the Imperial Army" Brill ISBN: 90 0412155 2 also: Phang, Sara Elise: (2008): "Roman Military Service. Ideologies of Discipline in the Late Republic and Early Principate" Cambridge University Press: ISBN 9780521882699. It is perhaps worthy of note the story as it is presented in the bible does not demand that this particular Centurion and his slave engaged in these acts.

⁷⁴ Matthew 2:16; Matthew 12:18; Matthew 14:2; Matthew 17:18; Matthew 21:15; Luke 1:54; Luke 1:69; Luke 2:43; Luke 7:7; Luke 8:51; Luke 8:54; Luke 9:42; Luke 12:45; Luke 15:26; John 4:51; Acts 3:13; Acts 3:26; Acts 4:25; Acts 4:27; Acts 4:30; Acts 20:12

That restriction did not apply to Greco/Roman society. Here the practice of pederasty was endorsed and these cultural differences are extremely important in determining the correct interpretation of the word⁷⁵. In Greco/Roman society the word pais was applied to the junior partner in a pederastic relationship and Neill notes that, the Greek term "pais" used for the servant almost always had a sexual connotation⁷⁶. Dover supports this, and he indicates that the word is often linked to situations where the Greek noun erastês, 'lover', for the senior partner is used⁷⁷. Mader gives a thorough discussion on how the terms pais and entimos doulos are employed⁷⁸. Matthew and Luke were also writing in Greek for a mainly Gentile audience and they were already playing with the meanings of the Greek words entimos, doulos and pais to make their points. Luke uses several Greek words to describe the sick person. He says this pais was the centurion's entimos doulos. The word doulos is a generic term for slave, and was never used in ancient Greek to describe a son/boy. Thus, Luke's account rules out any possibility the sick person could be the centurion's son. However, Luke also takes care to indicate this was no ordinary slave. The word entimos means "honoured." This was an "honoured slave" (entimos doulos) who was also his master's "pais". In Matthew's account, when the Centurion is speaking of his other slaves, he uses the word doulos. But when he talks about the slave he is asking Jesus to heal, he uses only "pais". Again, the clear implication is that the sick man was no ordinary slave, and the question is one of interpretation and status. In these particular passages Jesus is reaching out across these cultural boundaries and as if to emphasise that point in verse 10 of Matthew's account, he says of the Centurion, "I have not found faith this great anywhere in Israel." Matthew and Luke were also writing for a society in which the Greco/Roman understanding would be expected.

⁷⁵ 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.

⁷⁶ (Neil, James (2008): "The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies": McFarland, ISBN 0786452471, 9780786452477: Pages 216, 197, 180-181. Also: Sergent, Bernard. (1986): "Homosexuality in Greek Myth" Beacon Press, Boston, ISBN 10: 0807057002 / ISBN 13: 9780807057001).

⁷⁷ (Dover, K.J. (1978): "Greek Homosexuality": Harvard University Press, Cambridge, page 16, 85-86, 165. A copy may be downloaded at: <https://tajakramberger.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/k-j-dover-greek-homosexuality-updated-and-witbookfi-org.pdf>).

⁷⁸ (Mader, Donald: (1998): "The Entimos Pais of Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10" in: "Homosexuality and Religion and Philosophy", Harland Publishing, Inc., New York, 1998 pp 223-235. A copy may be downloaded at: http://www.williamapercy.com/wiki/images/The_entimos_pais_of_matthew_studies_of_homosexuality_volume_1_2.pdf)

How these passages are interpreted goes to the heart of what was permissible in terms of same-sex relationships. If Matthew and Luke had wanted the more restricted Jewish interpretation of the word *pais* to be used they would have had to specify that restriction. They did not do so and their limitations are carefully defined within the story itself. The story can also be read in two ways, either as an account of this particular incident or also in symbolic terms, whereby the Centurion stands as representation of the Greco/Roman cultural values. The challenge which the neurophysiological and psychological analysis presents to the traditional teaching of the Christian Church is one of asking how the duality which it requires can be correctly represented. It is also shown in this analysis that a major driving force which lies behind the development of the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation arises from the abuses of power between subject and dominant societies and relationships. This is instead of a direct abhorrence of same-sex acts. It is the consequences of the abuses of power which are challenged in this story. In it the importance of love and care is emphasized. The dynamics of power are absent and it is significant to note that the Centurion is said to love the Jewish nation; not just the Jews. Matthew and Luke are at pains to point out that this slave is singled out as an honoured slave, who is loved by his master, and it would appear that a loving and committed same-sex relationship existed, within which acts of same-sex intercourse could occur.

A conclusion of the neurophysiological and psychological part of this analysis is that in such loving and faithful relationships and in circumstances where the influences of power are absent, there should be no automatic condemnation of any heterosexual or same-sex act of sex. Jesus does not condemn or criticise their relationship, nor is there any hint of condemnation by both Matthew and Luke. Such a condemnation would be needed if this is not correct. However other biblical scholars dismiss any suggestions of a homosexual theme as deliberately distorted interpretations of the text⁷⁹. Marston argues that in line with the weight of other scriptural evidence, Jesus would not have condoned any homosexual relationship⁸⁰, while others suggest that even if the relationship had been homosexual, his lack of condemnation does not necessarily equate to his approval of them. A further approach is cited within a blog where it is alleged that a much better way to understand the centurion's servant is that he was perhaps an adopted son⁸¹.

⁷⁹ See for example: Gagnon, Robert A. J. (2005) "Why the Disagreement over the Biblical Witness on Homosexual Practice?" A Response to David G. Myers and Letha Dawson Scanzoni, *What God Has Joined Together?* Reformed Review 59.1 (Autumn 2005): 19-130, 56. Available online at: <http://www.robagnon.net/articles/ReformedReviewArticleWhyTheDisagreement.pdf>

⁸⁰ Marston, P. (1995) Dear Peter Tatchell *The Independent*, Tuesday 21 March

⁸¹ There is some credence to this argument. Centurions were not permitted to marry. Therefore the Centurion's "pais" could be his son born to him by a female slave, which he could not acknowledge. However the difficulty with this argument is that the passage itself only deals with these Centurion and slave relationships in general terms. It does not claim that the Centurion himself was engaged in any form of same-sex behaviour. Matthew and Luke would have had to impose these restrictions on their accounts if that is what was meant. See: Centurion's Servant::Blog <http://hipandthigh.blogspot.co.uk/2007/02/centurions-servant.html>). It is worth noting that similar explanations are offered to explain away any possibility of condoning same-sex relationships in the Christian

Proving something by silence is always more difficult than when a direct statement is made. On its own, this passage suggests indifference; however other evidence may also be used. The attitude which Jesus took to eunuchs and to the Gallae priests indicates that is not any of these acts, nor is it the gender transformation which is condemned; it is the purposes to which some people might have put their acts. The separate analyses on the prohibitions contained in Leviticus, Paul's condemnations of same-sex activities⁸², the declaration of Jesus on marriage and on eunuchs in Matthew 19:12 and the definition and use of the word agápē within the first century Christian context, lead to the same result.

These all show that Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28 which states that: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus", applies without any qualification to everybody. Therefore all people, lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual who seek to live their lives within the full love of Christ, and who express their own identities in ways that are true to themselves must be accepted alike. There is no automatic condemnation of any same-sex act. All sexual behaviour is governed by the purity of intention and there is total condemnation of all forms of abusive sex.

12:0. Discipline or Doctrine?

The early Christian teaching had demanded a revolution in social attitudes, but the message of Jesus which is presented in the Gospels also required the Church to work within society in order to change it, rather than to destroy it. This presented the Church with a difficult choice and it attempted to compromise the original Gospel doctrines of gender transcendence in order to obtain the respectability which would enable it to convey the remainder of the Gospel message into the wider world⁸³. This

ceremonies of Adelphopoiēsis, or "Brother Making" which were conducted during the first millennium and after by the Christian Church.

⁸² 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 abuse. As it is shown in this analysis, in loving committed and faithful same-sex relationships, when issues of abuse of power and sex are absent 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 Gilchrist, S. (2013a) *An Unfinished Reformation* for a more complete account.

⁸³ For other descriptions of how this took place see the companion papers Gilchrist, S. (Pub.2014). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church" Or Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation", and in the companion paper: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Reform and the Christian Church". See the footer for access.

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sgen4144@gmail.com

investigation also makes it clear that the traditional attitudes of the Church to gender and sexuality must be regarded as disciplines and not as doctrines of the Church, for even though a strong apostolic imprint is present, these views do not come from the teachings of Jesus and the witness of Gospel Church.

The evidence that Peter and Paul thought in that way is present in the Epistles and in the letters themselves. Perhaps the most telling way to consider the arguments is to examine the authority which the Apostles invoke. In 1 Corinthians 14:34, Paul was urging Christian women to keep silent in Church because that would be a disgrace to society, and there is no direct reference to Christ. For Peter likewise (1 Peter 3:1-16) the need for women's submission was because the esteem of the Church had to be nurtured within society at large. Paul's comment in Ephesians 5:22-24 again refers to the absolute authority and control exercised by the "Pater familias" in Greco/Roman society. All of these statements reflect the urgent need for the Church to gain respect in that society, and to provide models for the Church. Unlike Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28, which endorses true gender equality and transcendence, none of them attempt to derive their authority from the teaching of Christ⁸⁴.

It would appear that the initial aim of the Church was to accept that social divisions had to be endorsed for relationships with outside society, but inside the Church and within the Christian Community, complete equality for all was still to be maintained. Comparable master and servant relationships are also to be found between men and women in a gender complementary society. While few people would probably reject a voluntary gender complementarity which delights in the differences between the sexes, the problem with the discipline of gender complementarity that was adopted from Greco/Roman society by Peter and Paul is that this demanded the submission of women to men, and they applied it not just in relation to outside society, but also within the Church. By these actions the concept that the Church could continue as a true beacon of gender transcendence and equality within a gender unequal society was lost. Today nobody (one hopes) would employ the letter to Philemon to justify slavery⁸⁵. Equally no one should use these arguments on gender complementarity to impose that requirement on laity or priests in 20th Century life.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Paul in Galatians 3:28 declares a doctrine of a complete transcendence of gender. This statement draws its authority from the Gospel itself. However there are many other statements within the Pauline Epistles which are concerned with how Christian men and women should behave in a first century society. Paul provides a whole compendium of these: 1 Corinthians 7:1-17, 32, 35, 39; 1 Corinthians 11:3-17; 1 Corinthians 14:33-37; Philippians 4:3; Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:21-31; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 1 Timothy 5:1-16. Also 1 Peter 3:1-6 is at least as important as these others. Unlike the statement in Galatians 3:28 all of these statements draw their authority from the requirement for the respectability of the Christian Church. They do not rely on the teaching of Jesus for that, and it is argued that these must be regarded instead as contemporary rules of conduct that were determined by the needs of the Church in relation to Greco/Roman society.

⁸⁵ It is interesting to note the parallels in social attitudes that are encountered in first century society and in the Christian context of slavery between master and slave in the New World. The film "Ten years a Slave" is a powerful witness to the injustices which occurred

⁸⁶ It would appear that the initial aim of the Church was to accept that gender complementarity had to be endorsed for relationships with outside society, but within the Church and the Christian Community, complete gender transcendence was still to be maintained. A parallel to this is found in the letter to Philemon, where the author deals with the issue of the runaway slave who is about to go back to his master after they have both been converted to Christianity. The letter asks for the slave to be accepted by his master on Christian terms. However,

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

This demands a radical change, but when the Christian Church is destroying itself in the eyes of society, these are changes which must urgently be made. This is also the change in viewpoint which should enable the Christian Churches of the present day to establish without any diminution of the moral values or the precepts of Christian teaching, and without any degree of departure from truth of the Gospel message, an approach to gender and to sexuality, to gender equality and to gender and sexual variance, which is entirely appropriate for present day world⁸⁷.

13:0. Partnerships and Marriage

It has been noted earlier in this account that for many centuries the Christian church had conducted services of “Brother making” or in Greek, Adelphopoiesis⁸⁸. Many of the religious symbols and the declarations used in the services mirrored those of marriage, and the full social and legal commitments of a marriage were embraced. Rather than proto-marriages, these relationships have been shown in this analysis to be an extension of the first century rabbinic partnerships which were carried over into the Christian Church. In the first century the idea that these relationships could have been considered an equivalent to marriage would have been violently objected to⁸⁹ and various later Christian authors have prescribed a variety of purposes for these relationships. Paradoxically in the gender equal societies of today these services of

instead of asking for the emancipation and the release of the slave, the author supports the social conventions on slavery in society. The slave remains a slave, who is subject to his master, but now within the Christian community the slave and master are to be treated completely as equals and brothers, and this is because all are one in Christ. Equivalent master and servant relationships are found between men and women within a gender complementary society. However the problem with the attitude to gender complementarity adopted by Peter and Paul is that it demanded the submission of women to men, not just in relation to outside society, but also within the Church. By this action the concept that the Church could be a true island of gender transcendence and equality within a gender unequal society was lost.

⁸⁷ and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it: Matthew 19:12

⁸⁸For a full account see: Gilchrist, S. (2013): “An Unfinished Reformation”. See footer for access.

⁸⁹ There is little reference to same-sex marriage within 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). Same-sex marriage was anathema to the first Century Jewish Teachers, but it is also notable that their real objection is to the writing of a marriage contract, for that action would have the consequence of diminishing the status of at least one of the partners to that of a woman.

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fraternisation are closer to the present day attitudes to marriage than the first century viewpoints. The major area of difference would seem to be that of anal penetration.

However in Western societies of the present, where all men and women are treated equally, and when loving, committed, responsible and faithful same-sex relationships can be entered into without any humiliation being involved, all of the arguments that are used in the bible for the prohibition of anal penetration within loving relationships disappear. Therefore in all same-sex relationships given which are given in love and commitment within a gender equal society, there should be no absolute prohibition of any act that involves anal penetrative sex⁹⁰. Nor should there be any condemnation of this activity by the Church. Paragraph 50 in the document on “Men and Women in Marriage”⁹¹ argues for the reverse of what it intends. There may indeed be a good case for calling one of these services “Marriage” and the other “Adelphopoiesis”. The negativity of the Church on these matters has given society the dominant role, and the case has been made that the one word “Marriage” for both should be used.

14:0. Consequences

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

People engage in same-sex intercourse for many reasons. One of these is because of the outpouring of love inside gay and lesbian relationships. The second reason is as sexual substitution for heterosexual sex. However same-sex intercourse also has had an advantage of avoiding reproductive consequences. Therefore there was much less of a bar to prevent promiscuous behaviour, either within gay and lesbian

⁹⁰ This is a challenging statement and the arguments of this viewpoint are presented in Gilchrist, S. (2011). “Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships”. See footer for access

⁹¹ “Men and Women in Marriage”. A document from the Faith and Order Commission published with the agreement of the House of Bishops of the Church of England and approved for study GS Misc 1046. Church House Publishing April 2013

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

Current social developments have included the disappearance of Church authority, the rejection of religious belief, the widespread introduction and use of contraception, the social acceptance of same-sex relationships, the enacting of anti-discrimination legislation, legalisation of same-sex relationships in the form of Civil Partnerships, and also, since June 2013, the legalisation of Equal (or same-sex) Marriage. These same changes have also meant that most people now have had personal and direct experiences of relating to homosexual couples and to other people who are gender variant or in other same-sex relationships. Such observers do not need to have any special knowledge to understand that the same values of love, care and commitment can be expressed within loving same-sex partnerships as there are in heterosexual marriages, and that view is supported by recent research⁹². It is also easy for them to distinguish between the behaviour of any two people who are involved in a strong heterosexual friendship and that of an equivalent couple who are involved in a loving homosexual relationship, even in the circumstances where there is a total absence of sex

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

⁹² For a complete account see: Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

condemnation of those in loving faithful and committed same-sex relationships which involve anal penetrative sex.

15:0. Conclusions

This assessment of gender and sexual difference in the early and modern Christian Church is examined using the results of a new neurophysiological and psychological research study which includes the development of personality and self-identity during infancy and early childhood. This demonstrates that the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexuality cannot be correct. Instead of the traditional teaching of the Church on sexual and on gender variance, which presumes that all forms of sexually and gender variant behaviour is intrinsically disordered and always in pursuit of lust, immorality and inappropriate sex a duality is shown to exist, and as wide a range of moral attitudes and behaviour will be found amongst such people as that which exists in society at large. It is also shown that conflicts that arise from the formation processes creating personality and self-identity up to around the age of two years are driven by intense and physiologically driven processes of imitation and rejection. Up to this period children have not developed the self-awareness and the mental abilities which allow them to convert these physiologically based functions of possession, imitation and rejection into cognitive abilities that can focus on goals and desire. The management methods which are needed for the different types of conflict are almost opposite to one another. It is demonstrated in this analysis that the sexual and gender variant conditions are identity driven, and are concerned with finding a place in society, therefore the attempts by the Church to impose its own doctrines on such gender and sexually variant people which presume that these emotions are always goal driven, and that they are a lifestyle choice, not only causes great harm and distress, they are also counterproductive in effect.

This investigation examines how these traditions have developed within the Christian Church. The study is carried out from four different standpoints, the development of the traditions within the Church, the neurophysiological and psychological studies, the traditions, cultures and social structures of the surrounding first century societies, and the teaching of Jesus himself. By removing the veil created by the theological presumptions on gender and sexuality, which have dominated both Church and society for the last two thousand years, and by looking for the dualities found in all societies, new insights can be gained, including a consideration of previously barred interpretations of key biblical texts. It is shown that the teaching of Jesus in relation to gender equality and on gender and sexual variance would find acceptance in the present day, and that as with St Paul in Galatians 3:28, all people are to be as one in the love of Christ. It is also established that all transgendered, transsexual lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways which fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves; must be accepted alike, and this does not demand any automatic or universal condemnation of people in loving and committed same-sex relationships

which involve anal penetrative sex. The social and political challenges that this made to a despotic, male dominated, patriarchal society were considerable, and it is further demonstrated in this analysis that the abandonment of these doctrines of true gender transcendence and equality, and their replacement with the doctrines that were more representative of those of a gender polarised Greco/Roman society came from the requirement to give respectability to the Church. These transformations then lead to the simple and direct conclusion which states that what today are considered to be the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church on gender equality, and on sexual and gender variant behaviour are built on a false foundation. They were driven by the need to obtain respectability in Greco/Roman society and they do not come from the teaching of Jesus himself. It is also shown that this pursuit of respectability has led to the enforcement of a strong heterosexual, gender defined and an exclusive orthodoxy within which every method of expression of gender and sexually variant behaviour is considered to be a mortal sin and a disordered act. This has additionally led to the extreme severity of the Christian condemnations of all gender and sexually variant behaviour as being second only to bestiality in the heinousness of these acts.

For as long as the Christian Church was able to dominate the social structures and the moral values of society these doctrines could not be challenged. The changes in present day society mean that this control has now been broken. Many people now have personal experience of those who are in loving same-sex relationships and it is also easy for them to distinguish between the behaviour of any two people who are involved in a strong heterosexual friendship and that of an equivalent couple who are involved in a loving homosexual relationship, even in the circumstances where there is a total absence of sex. It is these clashes between what is perceived today as the common sense values, and the fervent reliance on the traditional doctrines which continues to destroy the credibility of, and the believability in Christianity in the eyes of the world. The deprivation of any personal livelihood, whether it is that of clergy or lay people, in pursuit of doctrines which this investigation considers are wrong, and where many people in society believe them to be incorrect, brings Christianity and the Church into an even greater disrepute. It also leaves it vulnerable to any legal challenges which may ensue. These are issues which the Church must fully address.

For many years the Church of England has espoused the need to listen to the views of LGBTI people. It has produced a number of reports on sexuality^{93 94}, two of which have been intended to provide a framework for the debate. However the relatively limited depth of theology with the underlying assumptions within them make them appear as schema for protecting the traditional teaching of the Christian Church while providing for a greater inclusion of LGBTI people within it. That should not be acceptable to anybody, churchmen, churchwomen, laity and people of all gender identities and sexualities. Any suggestion which questions the traditional teaching on

⁹³ 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

⁹⁴ Report of the House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality (The Pilling Report) Published: 28/11/2013: Church House Publishing ISBN-13: 9780715144374 ISBN-10: 0715144375
http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling_report_gs_1929_web.pdf

sexual and gender variance is totally rejected by the Roman Catholic Church. The reluctance of the Church of England to embrace any prospect of change is described in a separate paper, which also considers the wide variety of views and the threats of schism within the Church⁹⁵. Much of the concern seems about the preservation of an institution. It was the refusal of Jesus to compromise his Gospel message for any state or institution that led to his death on the cross. Is it time for a new resurrection of the Christian Church?

⁹⁵ Gilchrist, S. (2014): "Controversy and Crisis: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church". See footer for access