

Scientific and Theological Perspectives on Gender and Sexual Variation, Including the Development of Self- Identity and Personality Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach:

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SuG0713a

12 July 2016¹

It is shown that previous attempts to develop a scientific understanding of the early development of personality and self-identity and the efforts to reconcile it with the theology of the Christian Church fail, or give inadequate answers, because the presumption is made that, in some measure, a cognitive continuum guides the processes of learning and development at all times of life. An extended neurophysiological and psychological analysis has been conducted. By challenging and refuting that assumption this investigation offers a radical new approach.

There are two elements to this study. The first is a neurophysiological and psychological investigation into the development of personality and self-identity in early life. The second uses the results of the neurophysiological and psychological analysis to conduct a critique of the teaching of the Christian Church. From the neurophysiological and psychological study it is shown that a moral 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 are to be highly regarded, while those who misuse these relationships should be severely condemned for their acts. This conclusion denies the validity of the traditional teaching of the Christian Church which condemns homosexuality, and by implication all gender and sexually variant behaviour, as disordered and invariably sinful lifestyle choices. Therefore a primary focus of this investigation is to find out how and why this contradiction occurs.

An extended analysis of the attitudes to gender and sexuality in first century society is conducted. This uses the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study to examine not just Christianity, but also the attitudes to these in Jewish, Roman, Greek, and other societies. It is demonstrated that the teaching of Jesus incorporates the same moral duality as that predicted by the neurophysiological and psychological study. Therefore it is concluded that the source of the contradiction must come from changes in the theology of the Church.

The adaptations which Peter, Paul and the early Church had to make to survive and to take the Gospel message to the world are considered. The approach assumed in standard theology is that the teaching of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, was exactly that which Jesus presented, and that the compromises which were eventually made were those of the later Church. However evidence for the adaptations that were required is already present in their Epistles and Letters because of their pursuit of respectability for Christians and the Church. The nature of this transformation has been the focus of many theological studies: however the major difficulty has been one of determining how it was managed, and how the justification for it could be made. By removing the theological presumptions which have dominated Christianity for the last two

¹ This document is available online at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/200P-ResearchSummary.pdf>

thousand years new insights become available in the understanding of biblical texts and in the New Testament accounts. That is now addressed in this analysis and it is shown that the statement by Jesus in Matthew 19:12 where he says. "He who is able to receive this, let him receive it" allowed Peter and Paul to move forward with the compromises that were required.

However this was not just a statement of compromise. It was also the command for the Christian Church to express in full the radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sex as soon as it had the power to do so. Instead of returning to the radical teaching which Jesus had presented: the Church used these opportunities enforce its own power and authority. Today; that has still not happened. It is now time to follow in full this commandment of Jesus by restoring the radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sex to the present day Church.

Great emphasis is also placed by GAFCON and others on restoring the "Godly Authority" of bible texts. (The "Global Anglican Future Conference", representing the conservative elements in the Church). However the correct understanding depends on the context in which these are placed. It is demonstrated in this analysis that the traditional teaching on marriage and family life remains intact; but it also establishes that other valid loving relationships should not automatically be denied. This study additionally supports the views held by GAFCON and others that the traditional Church teaching on gender complementarity, gender and sexuality and on the silencing of the public ministry of women has Apostolic Authority. However GAFCON assumes that these doctrines accurately represent the teaching of Jesus, while this analysis shows that they are the results of the compromises that were made to ensure the survival of the Church. These attempts at restoration do not return to the teaching of Jesus, they return instead to the compromised Christianity which was presented by the 13th Century Church.

The correct restoration can only be made if the moral duality disclosed in this neurophysiological study and in the teaching of Jesus is used. This demands that the same criteria of use and abuse are applied to all aspects of gender and sex. As with Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28, this requires that all transgender people, transsexual lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves; must be accepted alike. All sexual behaviour is governed by the purity of intention. There is no automatic condemnation of any same-sex act, and there is no toleration of abusive sex.

It is important to note that discrimination against gender and sexually variant people is a socially led phenomenon and it would be a mistake to identify its cause with religious belief. The transformation needed to gain acceptability in the Greco/Roman culture brought the Church to collude with these secular demands of society rather than to challenge them. Not only has this consent reinforced the secular prejudices of such discriminatory societies; it gave and it still gives religious legitimacy to them, it reinforces the severity of the penalties that are encountered and it contradicts the results which the neurophysiological and psychological analysis presents. Instead of recognising the moral duality which is inherent in gender and sexual behaviour all of these people, without exception, have been made the scapegoats for abusive sex. Great harm has been done by the medical misdiagnoses that have been and still are being made. The persecution and slaughter of gender and sexually variant people, not only in Christianity but in Islam, Judaism and all other religions, states and cultures which have drawn their teachings from this has been enormous, and repentance is needed for these acts.

Centuries of criminalisation and condemnation have prevented any awareness of the moral duality being observed. Little could happen for as long as that existed, however the changes in

Gilchrist, S. (2016): "Scientific and Theological Perspectives on Gender and Sexual Variation"

First Issued: 12 July 2016. Last update: 12 July 2016

Printed: 13/07/2016 12:51

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society mean that this is no longer the case. This moral duality is now available for everybody to see in the love expressed in same-sex marriage and civil partnerships. It has become easy for an unbiased observer to separate a same-sex relationship given in faithfulness, love and lifetime commitment from a strong heterosexual friendship, and to discriminate between loving and illicit same-sex behaviour, even in the absence of sex. Instead of exploring this new situation many Christians have taken refuge in the traditional doctrines of the Church. It is argued in this analysis that this fervent reliance on its disproved traditional doctrines is destroying not only the credibility of the Church; it is also destroying the credibility of Christianity itself.

The increased openness to the possibility of change which has been evident in the discussions during the Church of England General Synod is welcomed. Many denominations are now allowing same-sex marriages to be conducted in their Churches. There is a considerable momentum towards inclusion, but there is also increasing resistance in many parts of the world. The refusal to accept any possibility of change to its traditional doctrines is an immovable requirement of the Catholic Church. The result of this analysis means that the full acceptance the integrity of the Christian beliefs of gender and sexually variant people, their full involvement in the Christian Churches and their ability to express their lives in ways that are true to their own identities within the love of Christ becomes a matter of right. It is no longer a matter of the toleration of others or the imposition of the traditions of the Church.

This is a radical analysis which challenges many preconceptions. For this reason detailed accounts of it are given in the accompanying papers. A description of the neurophysiological and psychological investigation is also provided and an introduction to this is contained in Chapter 10 of the Sibyls book. One of the features of the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation is that it makes presumptions which can be tested by science, neurophysiology and psychology.. No doubt this analysis will be accepted by some and challenged by others. However no investigation into Christian attitudes to gender and sexually variant behaviour can ever be complete unless all of the scientific, social and theological arguments are heard.

For a summary of the analysis, copy into your browser or click on the link:
<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/223P-SexGenderSummary.pdf>

For the full analysis and details of the papers, copy into your browser or click on the link:
<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/217P-FoundationsSexGender.pdf>

Sibyls Book Chapter

Gilchrist, S. (2016): "Taking a Different Path": Chapter 10 in: *"This Is My Body: Hearing the Theology of Transgender Christians"*, Ed: Beardsley, T. and O'Brien, M: Darton Longman and Todd. May 2016 ISBN 978-0-232-53206-7 Notes for this chapter are available on: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/sourcesA/index.htm>

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First Issued: 12 July 2016. Last update: 12 July 2016 Printed: 13/07/2016 12:51
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