

Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus

Susan Gilchrist¹

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This paper is the third of a series on Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church³

Summary

This investigation uses the results of a new neurophysiological and psychological study to examine the traditional teaching and doctrines on gender and sexual variation in the Christian Church. This is described in the introduction; where it is shown that a contradiction occurs. The influences of gender and sexual variation on the life and teaching of Jesus is the subject of this paper. New insights are obtained by using the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study to remove the veil of the theological presumptions on gender and sexuality, which have dominated both Church and society for the last two thousand years. An extended examination of the teaching of Jesus is conducted and it is shown that this conforms to the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study. A moral duality is shown to exist which requires that the same criteria in relation to sexual and cross-gender behaviour must be applied to all people: there is no automatic prohibition of any sexual act. All sexual and cross-gender behaviour must be judged by purity of purpose and intention and there is no condonation of abusive sex. Instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for all sexual abuse it is demonstrated that the correct issue for the Christian Church should be one of combatting all forms of abusive sex.

It is further demonstrated that the traditional teaching of the Christian Church arose because of its urgent need to combat sexual abuse and gender coercion in gender unequal and discriminatory societies. Instead of recognising the duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour, all forms of this have come to be seen as lustful, immoral and disordered acts. This is where the contradiction occurs. Instead of combatting this scapegoating, some sections of the Christian Church are colluding with it. Because of this they have given legitimacy and support to the secular scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people in their own countries and societies. In some cases extreme legal penalties are being imposed. However other sections of the Christian Church do not. It is shown how the presence or the absence of this scapegoating has led to the schisms in the present day Christian Church. It is demonstrated that today's failure of Christian teaching on gender and sexually variant behaviour comes from its failure to restore the original teaching of Jesus to the Church.

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

² With updates to July 2016 This paper is available online at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>

³ This paper is available separately at: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>. It forms part of a compendium which is listed under: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/217P-FoundationsSexGender.pdf>

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This paper is the third of a series on Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church⁶.

Introduction to the Series

A major aim of this investigation is to conduct a neurophysiological and psychological analysis which investigates how the development of personality and self-identity takes place in early life. A further purpose of this investigation is to establish how the results of this scientific study relate to the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. A major constraint in previous studies has arisen because of the relative inability to link the internal, contagious, feed-forward and physiologically driven forces which dominate development in early life to the controlling, feed-back and externally moderated processes of cognitive development which later occur. Because of its early origins gender dysphoria is able to provide the link that is required⁷. This enables this new approach which is able to match the early physiological and identity driven leaning processes to the cognitively and reward driven ones that are present in later life.

It is observed that personality and self-identity forms in a series of stages. A rapid transformation which involves a major advancement in neural capabilities occurs at a particular point between the ages of between one and a half to three years. Before this transformation period it is demonstrated that learning and development is dominated by the physiological, internally driven and contagious feed-forward development processes which are described in the pioneering work by Gallese, Dawkins, Girard and others. This analysis takes an impartial approach⁸. After transformation the controlling, feed-back and externally moderated processes of cognitive development come into play⁹. Far from being a peaceful

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⁷ Gender dysphoria is a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there's a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity.

⁸ In certain respects the work of Girard and Dawkins are poles apart. Dawkins uses the results of his research to become an apostle for atheism. Girard justifies in sociological terms the human need for religious belief. For that reason Girard's work has become popular amongst some schools of theologians. The author has not found any instance where Dawkins has cited Girard's work, despite much of that work predating his own. Gallese analyses and makes use of Girard's research, but he does not generally refer to Dawkins' work. Sadly this is an area where religious and atheistic dogmas have intruded upon the independence of scientific research. This analysis is very careful to avoid making any conclusions about the correctness or otherwise of any realities presumed in religious or atheistic belief. Only the scientific aspects of this work are considered. This discipline is applied even when Church teaching, theology and history are examined.

⁹ Cognitive ability is the capacity to perform higher mental processes of reasoning, remembering, understanding, and problem solving. Cognitive brain functions require the ability to work with information in a meaningful way, to apply new information to that which has already been gained, perform preferential changes, use reasoned procedures to alter opinions, and to search for rewards.

experience the development of personality and identity is shown to be driven by intense but hidden struggles between these conflicting demands. The momentum this creates enables the highest peaks of achievement to be gained. It is further demonstrated that the physiological, neurological and psychological aspects of brain development act together to create a finely tuned system in which the maximum amount of individuality, possessiveness, intelligence and inquisitiveness, together with the minimum degree of energy expenditure is formed.

All of these aspects are examined and the results of this study are used to interrogate the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. It is demonstrated that there is a contradiction between the conclusions of the neurophysiological and psychological study and the approach which is decreed by the theology of the present day Church. The development of Christianity is investigated in the second part of this examination for the purpose of determining how and why this contradiction occurs. The results of this analysis show that the teaching of Jesus conforms to what is determined by the scientific study. This means that the source of this contradiction must come from changes in the theology of the Church. The theological, scientific and historical analyses conducted in this investigation all demonstrate that the present day teaching of the Church is incorrect: therefore the ideal sought for this investigation is to return to the teaching of Christ.

Science

At birth the parts of the brain responsible for thinking and recognition are very poorly developed. A rapid and pronounced increase in these abilities occurs broadly around the age of two years¹⁰. This transformation period is identified as the time when many distal parts of the brain interconnect and the brain can begin to work as a single unit. From that time onwards a cognitive continuum¹¹ can begin to take effect. Before this transformation, only general precursors which involve the tribal associations of babies with common purposes can be created. No personal concepts of self are formed. One precursor may link babies to a gender but it is not possible for them to identify what this means before the cognitive continuum becomes active. Only after that has happened is it possible for an awareness of the personal self to develop. Gender dysphoria is used to examine this transformation. An analogy sometimes used by the author compares an acorn to its cradle. The cradle represents the early global concepts, which identify the place of the individual in society, while the acorn represents the senses and awareness of the personal identity that later develops. The transformation from a single type of awareness into one which includes the other is delayed until the necessary neural co-ordination has developed¹². This means that a collective and tribal identity is created before any concepts which distinguish the personal self from the other can be formed.

Although the cradle supports the acorn, each component has different characteristics. In reality the acorn eventually leaves the cradle; but the acorn's characteristics depend on the type of nurture the cradle has brought. In this analogy the acorn and the cradle remain connected, however it is shown that instead of separating, these early elements may be

¹⁰ Generally from one and a half years onwards

¹¹ In the cognitive continuum theory, intuition and rational analysis are defined as two modes of cognition or recognition that can be placed at the ends of a continuum, where intuition refers to rapid, unconscious processing and low control, and analysis refers to slow, rational, conscious and controlled thinking. For the latter, sufficient neural co-ordination is required. This investigation demonstrates that the early processes of development, which include intuition and possessive imitation, are physiologically rather than cognitively driven.

¹² In humans this delay is particularly long. Expert opinion disagrees but it is argued that an extended period is needed to allow the peak human potential to be created. A counter argument against this is that, the more it is delayed, the more it can go wrong.

entirely confined to the subconscious mind¹³. It is argued in this analysis that the physiology of brain development is such that these cradle based elemental global or core concepts remain fixed for the rest of life. Cognitive development may suppress or override their demands. However their constancy is shown to create a stability of personality whereby two people can continue to recognise each other even if they have spent years apart.

It is demonstrated that previous attempts to develop a scientific understanding of the early development of personality and self-identity, together with 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.

Contradiction

Core elements of personality, including basic concepts of gender and sexual identity are shown to form before or during the neural transformation period. This is before the cognitive processes start to become effective, and these early elements are found to be concerned with identity alone. Characteristics which originate after this transformation period have behavioural features which cognitively link desire to reward. Different types of conflict are therefore encountered. It is shown that the failure to recognise the difference between these is the physiological reason which gives rise the contradiction that exists.

In the neurophysiological and psychological analysis it is established that the features which create the core gender and sexual identities of every person are physiologically rather than behaviourally or cognitively driven. This means that as wide a range of moral attitudes, beliefs and behaviour are to be found amongst gender and sexually variant people as those which exist in society at large. It is further demonstrated 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 should be highly regarded, while those who misuse these relationships ought to be very severely condemned for their acts.

That moral 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 it regards all of them as heinous acts. The current Church teaching that both sex and gender are solely determined by biology is also shown to be incorrect. Underlying this Christian doctrine is the presumption that all of these learning processes are at all times cognitively driven. Therefore the existence, and the influence, of the early physiologically driven learning processes are denied. This analysis addresses that omission. It also considers what the consequences of this have been for gender and sexually variant people, for the advancement of science, and for the Christian Church.

Theology

A major challenge to be faced is that of distinguishing the differences between the teaching of Jesus and that of the early Christian Church. That cannot be achieved by confining any examination to the teachings that the Church presents. Therefore five perspectives are employed. The first perspective examines the traditional Church teaching in the light of the understanding developed by this neurophysiological and psychological investigation. The second perspective works backwards within Church history and traditions in an attempt to

¹³ They may only come into conscious awareness when some conflict or trauma occurs.

determine what the earliest doctrines adopted by the Christian Church had been. The third 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. In the light of the first three perspectives, the fourth perspective seeks to ascertain the teaching of Jesus himself. The final perspective examines the relevance of these issues to present day life. The second and the third perspectives adopt reverse standpoints to examine the history and the theology of the Christian Church. By removing the armour of theological presumptions which have dominated Church teaching for the last two thousand years new insights can be gained; and this opens up unapplied interpretations of biblical texts.

The first and most obvious difference between the teaching of Jesus and that of the early Church comes from the contrasting attitudes that were taken. The Gospels show that the challenge of Jesus to the social, sexual and gender abuses of first century Jewish society was made without compromise and the strength of his attacks on the authorities led to his death on the Cross. However the Gospel message required people to work within these societies to change them rather than to destroy them. That gave the early Church a difficult choice. Early Christianity had to adapt to the demands of Roman society if it was to overcome the cultural differences between the Jewish and Roman cultures and continue to take the Gospel message to the world. This process of adaptation is clearly evident in the letters and epistles of Peter, Paul and John. It is the nature and the timing of these changes which has been the subject of much theological dispute. It is sometimes assumed that the challenging passages in these documents which refer to the imposition of gender divisions and the submission of women to men did not truly represent the Apostolic teaching, but were instead later additions which the Early Church made to the texts. That presumption is challenged both in this analysis and in the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church. Perhaps surprisingly both approaches agree on this issue and the main difference between them is one of purpose and intent.

It is necessary to find out who authorised these adaptations and how and why they were made. That could have happened on an ad-hoc basis or it could be the result of a pragmatic approach. There are good reasons, including those arising from the experience of the Jews at the time of Exile and the degree of continuity with Judaism that was sought by the early Church, for believing that a pragmatic approach was taken. That is discussed in this analysis. Peter and Paul would have been fully aware of the adaptations they were making in adopting this approach.

Nevertheless if Peter and Paul were to be true to the Gospel message they must have believed that the authority to do this came from the teaching of Jesus himself. The requirement of Jesus to work within society to change it would have been one source; however there is another in the passage in Matthew 19 where Jesus discusses the issues of marriage and the place of eunuchs in the Church. This radical teaching is spread throughout the Gospels but some of the most challenging elements to first century society are presented in Matthew 19:12. That was not only because of this society's serious mistrust and condemnation of eunuchs, but also because of the attacks on social order created by the gender disruptive behaviour of the Goddess cults and their self-castrated male priests. The statement which follows this discussion: "He who is able to receive this, let him receive it" is unique in the way that it qualifies the teaching which Jesus presents. This could have been a direct comment on the abhorrence of self-castration in Jewish society, or it could have meant that Jesus was aware of the difficulties that would later be likely to occur, or it could have been added later to deal with the changes that were required. Whatever way it is taken, it allowed the Church to move forward and gain acceptance in the Roman world.

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. There were several significant instances when this could have happened. One was the change in power structure that took place when Ambrose the Bishop of Milan required the emperor Theodosius to do penance for a massacre that took place. A second occurred after the Albigensian Crusade, when the military defeat of the Cathars affirmed the supreme secular authority of the Church. However, instead of returning to the radical teaching which Jesus had presented, the Church used these opportunities to enforce its own power and authority. Today this return has still not happened. If the initial compromises arose because of the needs of a powerless group in a powerful first century Roman Society, they no longer apply. Therefore it is now time to follow in full this commandment of Jesus, and restore the radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sex to the present day Church.

An extended analysis of the relationships between power and sex, including how these were used in the first century world is conducted. In first century societies it is demonstrated that it was the abuses of power which gave permission for the abuses of sex. It is shown that the adoption of the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation was driven by the cultural clashes and the urgent need to combat sexual abuse and gender based coercion in despotic and gender unequal societies. It has already been noted that the teaching of Jesus conforms to the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study. This outcome requires that the same criteria of use and abuse must apply equally to all heterosexual, cross-gender and same-sex acts. There is no toleration of any form of abusive or immoral sex. When the abuses of power are absent it is concluded that all people, transgender, 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 within roles that are true to themselves; must be fully accepted in their own right. All behaviour is governed by the purity of intention. There is no denigration of personal relationships and family life, and there is no automatic condemnation of any cross-gender or same-sex act.

That raises significant challenges: This is why these issues are discussed in considerable length in the accompanying papers. Great emphasis is placed by GAFCON¹⁴ and others on restoring the "Godly Authority" of bible texts. It is shown that these attempts do not recover the teaching of Jesus when they are based on what is today regarded as the traditional teaching of the Church: they return instead to the compromised Christianity which was presented by the thirteenth century Church. The same is true when literal interpretations are used. If a true recovery is to be done the correct context must be applied. This is not just a matter of identity and sex. It includes restoring the role, ministry and oversight which Jesus gave to women as well. Today's failures of Christian teaching still come from the refusal to restore the original teaching of Jesus. Instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for all sexual abuse it is demonstrated in this analysis that the correct issue for the Christian Church should be one of combatting all forms of abusive sex.

It is important to note that the scapegoating of minority groups in society is a social phenomenon. The denial of the existence of identity driven conflicts and characteristics by the traditional teaching of the Christian Church creates the presumption that all gender and sexually variant behaviour comes from reward driven lifestyle choices, it is described as disordered and it is considered to always be in pursuit of immoral or inappropriate sex. Some sections of the Christian Church have given, and still give legitimacy and support to the

¹⁴ The "Global Anglican Future Conference", a group, mainly of African churches, representing the conservative elements in the Anglican Communion.

secular scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people by countries and societies through their collusion with it, and in some countries extreme penalties are applied. However other sections do not; and it is shown how this has led to the schisms in the present day Christian Church. The allegation by the Christian Church that gender and sexually variant conditions are the results of reward driven lifestyle choices is refuted in this investigation, where the neurophysiological and psychological study shows that they are driven by identity instead. Accurately identifying the characteristics of the different conflict types is also very important because the correct methods of managing them are almost opposite to each other¹⁵. For centuries much harm has been done because of the medical misdiagnoses that have been made; and also because the wrong methods and approaches have been applied¹⁶.

Little change could take place for as long as these attitudes continued. However in the eyes of many, the social and cultural transformations in Western societies over the last fifty years have demolished the presumptions upon which the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexually variant behaviour has been based¹⁷. There are many people in the world today who are honestly, faithfully and assiduously following from different viewpoints what they believe to be the correct Christian teaching, who all are concerned about what is happening in the Christian Church. Evidence for that concern is seen in the establishment of the “Shared Conversations” process in the Church of England¹⁸ and in the “Synod on the Family”¹⁹ called by Pope Francis in 2014. However preconditions were set by the Church hierarchies²⁰. These preconditions demand that there must be no change to the traditional teaching of the Church and this also means that neither the real needs nor their urgency have been addressed. The “Shared Conversations” process in the Church of England only asks that “Good Disagreement” is achieved. The final report on the “Synod on the Family” issued in 2016 advocates pastoral concern, but restates the traditional teaching of the Church²¹. If any discussions are to succeed; this is a great hurdle that has still to be overcome.

¹⁵ In the same way that treatment for depression or addiction differs from other types of treatment.

¹⁶ For full descriptions see: Gilchrist, S. (2015): “*Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf> and Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/217P-FoundationsSexGender.pdf>

¹⁷ These prohibitions can still have considerable weight in societies where gender discrimination occurs or where gender differentiation in terms of required behaviour is legally or socially enforced.

¹⁸ Shared Conversations: See: Church of England (2015) Grace and Disagreement article: Grace and Disagreement Shared Conversations on Scripture, Mission and Human Sexuality: [Accessed 15/10/2015]: <https://churchofengland.org/media/2165248/grace2.pdf> . Also: Church of England (2015) Shared Conversations Website: [Online]. [Accessed 15/10/2015]: <http://www.sharedconversations.org/>

Gilchrist, S. (2014) *Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversyAndCrisis.pdf>

¹⁹ Vatican (2013): Synod on the Family: Preparatory Document: “*Pastoral Challenges To The Family In The Context Of Evangelization*” [Accessed 6/11/2015]: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20131105_iii-assemblea-sinodo-vescovi_en.html

²⁰ The Pilling Report did leave open the door to the possibility of a change, but urged great caution. Pilling Report. (2013): “*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 [Accessed 20 November 2014] http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling_report_gs_1929_web.pdf

²¹ Pope Francis. (2016): “*Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Lætitia Of The Holy Father Francis To Bishops, Priests And Deacons Consecrated Persons Christian Married Couples And All The Lay Faithful On Love In The Family*”: [Accessed: 18 April 2016] https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

This investigation is based on the principle that the presumptions made in the traditional teaching of the Church on homosexuality and gender and sexual variation can be scientifically tested. That is acknowledged in article 2357 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church where it declares that these scientific principles are not well understood²². Even in terms of its own traditions there is no justification for any embargo which prevents a reassessment of the traditional teaching of the Church. This analysis performs that scientific test. It shows that there is a contradiction between the results of the neurophysiological and scientific study and the traditional teaching of the Church. Theology and history may be used to understand how and why this contradiction has happened but they cannot remove the contradiction itself. The concluding discussions on the “Shared Conversations” process which took place during the Church of England General Synod in July 2016 focussed on the interpretation and traditional understanding of biblical texts. Nothing relating to scientific inputs or the historical contexts, such as those which are described in this account were considered²³. The long history of opposition to the possibility of change has been documented by the author elsewhere²⁴. This continued refusal is considered by the author to be destroying the credibility; not just of the Churches, but of all Christian belief.

In a concluding statement at the end of the July 2016 General Synod the Church of England issues the following statement: “..... what has been learned through the relationships developed will inform the way the church conducts whatever further formal discussions may be necessary in the future”²⁵. No further commitments were made. Despite all current evidence many Christian Churches continue to stick rigidly to the traditional doctrines. That rigidity is shown the Apostolic Exhortation on “The Synod and the Family” released by Pope Francis in 2016. In this the total refusal to consider homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family is restated and enforced. This denies the moral duality that is shown by the analysis: it discounts the nature of first century Jewish relationships and it ignores the social changes in societies which demonstrate that in some respects the relationships of Adelphopoiesis had more in common with the present day understanding of marriage than any first century understanding of marriage could present²⁶. These are serious concerns. The author continues to work within

²²Catechism 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 the 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.”

²³ Davies, Madeleine. (2016): Synod members thanked for staying on to talk about their differences”; *Church Times*. Web Posted: 12 Jul 2016 @ 06:28

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2016/15-july/news/uk/synod-members-thanked-for-staying-on-to-talk-about-their-differences> See also: Anglican Mainstream (2016): “32 Synod delegates publicly express “lack of confidence” in C of E Shared Conversations process” [accessed 20 July 2016]: <http://anglicanmainstream.org/32-evangelicals-publicly-express-lack-of-confidence-in-c-of-e-shared-conversations-process/>

²⁴ Gilchrist, S. (2014): “*Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversyAndCrisis.pdf>. Also Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*The Perceptions of Gender and Sexual Variation in Present Day Society and in the Modern Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/221P-InfluencesToday.pdf> .

²⁵ Church of England. (2016): “*Statement following conclusion of Shared Conversations Process*”: Church of England Website [Accessed 19 July 2016] <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2016/07/statement-following-conclusion-of-shared-conversations-process.aspx>

²⁶ Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*Reform and the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/008B-ReformChristianChurchArticle.pdf> . Also Section 10 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

the Church by seeking to change it; for there is much more to Christianity than just these matters of gender and sex. The issues for the Christian Churches today should not be those of defending their own traditions and institutions. As with the command of Jesus in Matthew 19:12: they should be those of restoring the radical teaching of Jesus through its return to the Gospel of Christ.

There are five papers in this series²⁷. Paper 1 provides an overall introduction. Paper 2 describes a new approach to identity and personality formation in early life. Paper 3 (this paper) considers the influences of gender and sexual variation on the life and teaching of Jesus. Paper 4 examines the influences of gender and sexual variation in the history and traditions of the Christian Church. Paper 5 investigates the perceptions of gender and sexual variation in present day society and in the modern Christian Church. Each paper may be read separately or in combined form in the compendium: *“Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church”*²⁸.

Additional information is available in other papers^{29 30}. These include *“Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church”*. This paper examines the theological issues from the Old Testament background. It includes a consideration of the approach to gender complementarity from a Judean perspective.

More detailed analyses of the neurophysiological and psychological investigations are given in the papers on: *“A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach”*, and: *“Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process”*. Access to all papers is via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm> and also, where provided, through the specific links. A full personal bibliography is available on: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/bibliography.htm>.

²⁷ Paper 1 is: Gilchrist, S. (2016): *“An Introduction to the Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/211P-IntroFoundationsSexGender.pdf>. Paper 2 is: Gilchrist, S. (2016): *“A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-InfluencesPersonality.pdf>. Paper 3 is: Gilchrist, S. (2016): *“Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>. Paper 4 is: Gilchrist, S. (2016): *“Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>. Paper 5 is: Gilchrist, S. (2016): *“The Perceptions of Gender and Sexual Variation in Present Day Society and in the Modern Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/221P-InfluencesToday.pdf>. Each paper may be read separately or combined in the compendium: Gilchrist, S (2016): *“Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/217P-FoundationsSexGender.pdf>

²⁸ Gilchrist, S. (2016) *Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/217P-FoundationsSexGender.pdf>

²⁹ For a general introduction see: 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

³⁰ Gilchrist, S. (2015): *“Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>. Gilchrist, S. (2013): *“A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/207P-ReassessmentPsychologyExtended.pdf>. Gilchrist, S. (2015): *“Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>

3:0 Introduction to the Third Paper

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 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 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 should be highly regarded, while those who misuse these relationships should be very severely condemned for their acts³¹.

That moral duality is contradicted by the traditional teaching of the Christian Church which condemns without exception every expression of gender and sexually variant behaviour as mortally sinful, and it regards same-sex intercourse as a heinous act. Therefore for the purpose of this analysis it is necessary to define sexual abuse in religious as well as social terms³². An extended theological analysis is conducted. This is in the form of a critique of the traditional teaching and doctrines of the Christian Church. It uses the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study to determine how and why this contradiction occurs.

Five perspectives are employed. The first perspective examines the traditional Church teaching in the light of the understanding developed by this neurophysiological and psychological investigation. The second perspective 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 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. In the light of the first three perspectives, the fourth perspective seeks to ascertain the teaching of Jesus himself. The final perspective examines the relevance of these issues to present day life. The second and the third perspectives adopt reverse standpoints to examine the history and the theology of the Christian Church.

A major focus of this investigation is that of identifying the differences between the teaching of Jesus, and the traditions of the Christian Church. This involves major challenges because it is necessary to find out what the teaching of Jesus really was, and not what the Church presents. The importance of the neurophysiological and psychological study in this application is that it provides an unchanging framework of human conduct within which this

³¹ Gilchrist, S. (2016): "A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-InfluencesPersonality.pdf> .

³² Much of the traditional present day Christian teaching on gender and sex relies on the work of Thomas Aquinas. Under Aquinas any sexual act engaged in for lust was a sinful act. That attitude might be mindful of the passage in Matthew 5:27-28 where Jesus condemns feelings of lust experienced by a man towards a woman. Here Jesus is recorded as saying: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart." However Aquinas also had to deal with a historical situation. The Catholic Church teaches that sexual intercourse has a purpose; and that outside marriage it is contrary to its purpose. Among what are considered grave sins are masturbation, fornication, pornography, homosexual practices, artificial contraception and procurement of abortion. Civil definitions of sexual abuse condemn all acts which cause either immediate or long term physical or psychological harm to either or both parties or individuals who engage in any sexual act. The work of Aquinas is discussed in detail in Section 4 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>. Also Section 9 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>.

examination can be conducted. By removing the armour of theological presumptions which have dominated Church teaching for the last two thousand years new insights can be gained; and this opens up previously unapplied interpretations of biblical texts.

The search for these moral dualities requires new viewpoints to be considered. What may be horrendous in one society can be acceptable in another and cultural clashes play an important role. The requirement to make valid comparisons means that the same techniques must be used in the examinations of all of the other relevant religions and cults. This includes their social interactions with first century society. Each is therefore subjected to the same form of critique, which uses the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study to examine how their moral codes and teaching have developed. The danger of this approach is that it could find dualities where none exist. That concern is understood, and the truth of this investigation depends on the quality of the evidence it presents.

The results of this analysis demonstrate that knowledge and acceptance of this moral duality is present in the teaching of Jesus. It is also shown how and why this awareness has been lost and subsequent centuries of criminalisation and condemnation have prevented any awareness of this moral duality being restored. That is no longer the case. In gender unequal societies of today these condemnations still have considerable force. However in the gender equal societies of today this moral duality can again be observed. It is shown in this investigation that the credibility of Christianity and the Christian Churches is being destroyed in these societies through their failure to adapt. This has a major impact and the consequences are considered. Despite these concerns and the objectivity that is pursued in this investigation, the author continues to work within the Church to change it, for there is much more to the Gospel of Christian Love than just these matters of gender and sex.

3:0:1 Additional Resources

Further accounts are given elsewhere³³. Previous papers describing this analysis were submitted to the Church of England in August 2014 prior to the start of the “Shared Conversations Process”³⁴. Details of the submitted papers are given in the footnote below³⁵.

³³ A companion document: Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church has several parts*”. The second of these gives an overview of the neurophysiological and psychological investigation. The third examines the influences of gender and sexual variation on the life and teaching of Jesus. That is the topic that is covered in this section. The fourth reviews church history and the development of the Christian traditions from the time of Jesus towards the present day. The fifth examines the issues facing the present day Church. Access to all of the research papers which report on this study is provided via the internet at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm .

³⁴ Shared Conversations: See: Church of England (2015) Grace and Disagreement article: Grace and Disagreement Shared Conversations on Scripture, Mission and Human Sexuality: [Accessed 15/10/2015]: <https://churchofengland.org/media/2165248/grace2.pdf> . Also: Church of England (2015) Shared Conversations Website: [Online]. [Accessed 15/10/2015]: <http://www.sharedconversations.org/>
See also: Gilchrist, S. (2014) *Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversyAndCrisis.pdf>

³⁵ Gilchrist, S. (2012): “*Personal submission to the Church of England House of Bishops Working Party on Human Sexuality*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/004B-SGSubmissionToHoBSexualityReview2012.pdf> . The submitted papers are: Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/207P-ReassessmentPsychologyExtended.pdf> . Also: Gilchrist, S. (2014): “*Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversyAndCrisis.pdf> . And: Gilchrist, S. (2014): “*Christianity and Crisis: An Overview of Gender and Sexual Difference in the Early and Modern Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/017B-ChristianityAndCrisisOverview.pdf>

3:0:2 Science and Theology

Religion and Science take complementary approaches. Science works on the basis of certainty and from the bottom up. Religion addresses the needs of society from the top down where the principles of faith are applied in the full awareness of doubt. The Church must defer to what science presents when science has shown that the principles upon which its theology is based are incorrect. However other issues intervene. Theology and religion have an enormous input into the development of the moral standards and ethics of society. In addition to the scientific and religious inputs there is the need to consider the social and political arguments which define and enforce the moral and cultural values which society adopts. This analysis focusses entirely on how and why these doctrines of the Christian Church have come to be formed and the discipline imposed on this examination demands that no judgement whatever is made on the truths or otherwise of religious beliefs.

What is important for the purpose of this document is to consider the changes which Christianity had to make to succeed in transforming itself from a movement which had been shaped by the religious, cultural and social background of a conquered and subject society into one which conformed to the dominant culture of the Roman Empire itself. This includes the relationships between power and sex, and it examines how and why Christianity was tamed when it sought acceptance by the dominant state.

3:0:3 Conflict Types

In the neurophysiological and psychological study, which given in more detail elsewhere in this document here, it is demonstrated that the elements which precede the formation of the core senses of gender and sexual identity are laid out before cognitive activities develop. There is a major transformation in neurological capabilities around the age of two years. The cognitive processes are limited or inactive before this time. A great deal of learning does take place during this period, but in the absence of the degree of neural co-ordination that required to synthesise the material, there is no search for reward. It is shown that early development is driven by physiologically innate drives for possession for its own sake and the rejection of what is wrong. This means that it is not the desire for a role which is the major driving force behind these early and identity driven conflicts. It follows from this that behaviour is not the primary focus. This is why as wide a range on moral attitudes, inclinations and responsibilities are found in these groups as that which occur within the population at large. It has also been shown that the driving forces behind the conflicts that arise from gender and sexual variation come from the need for people to be true to themselves³⁶. Because of these features a moral duality exists, where gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways which conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies can be highly regarded while those who misuse these relationships should be very severely condemned for their acts.

3:0:4 Cultural Transformations and Moral Duality

The doctrines adopted in the early and modern Christian Church are examined using this neurophysiological and psychological research study. In addition to using the results of this study to examine the development of the Christian Church, the same criteria are applied to the examinations of the other first century Greco/Roman religions and cults. Detailed analyses of these are given in Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian*

³⁶ This analysis also introduces the concept of allegiance. This develops because of the strength of the internal struggles. Identity defines the raw components which drive the conflict. Allegiance is what people are aware of and it evolves from trying to make sense of the disparities which these conflicts create.

*Church*³⁷. Assessing these traditions from this particular standpoint demands a full exploration of the good that arises as well as the evil that is done. However it should not be assumed that the Goddesses were invariably paragons of virtue. Their disruption and sexual provocation could be extreme³⁸ and cultural clashes between different societies played an important part in fostering the condemnations of the Christian Church³⁹.

Social attitudes have changed greatly over the centuries. The extent of these is described in the following sections and the description of the paradigm shifts given in section 3:1:8 of this document should be noted. Therefore it is necessary to obtain an accurate understanding of first century attitudes and relate these changes to the viewpoints of present day. It is demonstrated in this analysis that within the first century Middle Eastern cultures freedom of expression of particular forms of same-sex relationships existed. People would have experience of what these involved, and the knowledge of the moral duality identified in this analysis would have been available to Jesus and to those who lived at that time. That sense of moral duality is also shown to be present in the relevant first century Greco/Roman cults: however it is completely absent from the present day teaching of the Christian Church⁴⁰. Similar moral dualities are encountered across cultures and continents⁴¹, where people who seek to transcend the sex/gender boundaries by living in ways that are true to the ideals of both lives may be given a high and often priestly status. However those who instead adopt the path of transgression are very ruthlessly condemned for their acts.

In the case of Christianity the condemnation and criminalisation of gender and sexually variant behaviour over the last two millennia has prevented any evidence of a moral duality being found. Because of this suppression and its failure to take account of the identity driven conflicts predicted by the neurophysiological and psychological study it is demonstrated in this investigation that the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation cannot be correct.

Little change could take place for as long as these attitudes continued, however the social and cultural transformations in Western societies over the last fifty years have exposed the presumptions upon which the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexually variant behaviour has been based. Freedom of expression has again revealed the moral duality which is present in gender and sexually variant behaviour. Now people can find out for themselves what it involves. However, 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 the authority and credibility of Christianity and the Church is today being

³⁷ An analysis of these is given in: Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

³⁸ Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Sex and Thunderbolts; A Speculation*". In preparation

³⁹ Even within one cult there could be a variety of purposes. The three goddesses, Cybele, Bahuchara Mata, and Inanna/Ishtar who stood at the head of the three major goddess cults representing the dominant powers in Middle Eastern society are considered in this analysis. The representations of some goddesses, such as Astarte, could be sexually provocative in the extreme. For detailed discussions see sections 12 and 13 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>. Also Gilchrist, S. (2015): "*Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf> and section 3:1:7 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

⁴⁰ The existence of a duality within the Goddess Cults has long been known, and various reasons have been offered. Roller, for example, attributes this duality to the high propriety of the formal practices of the cults and the disruptive behaviour to the ecstatic behaviour within them. Bougeard implies that gender and sexually variant behaviour are intrinsically evil acts. For a full account see Sections 2:3:2 and 3 of: Gilchrist, S. 2013: "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>.

⁴¹ See sections 1:1:2 and 3:1:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

destroyed by a fervent reliance on disproved traditional demands. The reasons which are given for maintaining the traditional viewpoints are founded on the “Godly Authority” of bible texts, and this is why a critical analysis of the texts which are used is required.

3:1 Power and Domination

.3:1:1 Clashing Cultures

There are large chasms between the cultural perceptions of the first century Jewish, Greek, Roman societies and between those of the first century and the present day. As if to complicate matters more the differences between first century Greek and Roman cultures have also to be considered. The Greeks were comfortable with the expression of same-sex love between two males⁴², and this perhaps is as close as possible to what one can get to what is known as homosexuality at the present time. Attitudes to same-sex intercourse varied greatly across all first century societies and even within the Greek city states. In some it was barred, in others it was freely practiced. However, in order to maintain the power balances in gender and socially unequal societies it was largely expressed in relationships with pubescent or adolescent boys. This same-sex behaviour between the senior and junior partners is described as pederasty⁴³. Despite what may be thought about this today it has to be seen in ancient Greece as an accepted and regulated practice⁴⁴. Apart from the issues concerned with of anal penetration, first century Jewish culture seems to have had closer links to that of Greece than that of Rome. It is shown that Judaism accepted expressions of love between two adult males as equals, but absolutely abhorred pederasty and same-sex intercourse because of the humiliation and domination it encountered.

Domination in sexual matters was expected of a male Roman citizen. He was always expected to take the proactive role. Roman society was uncomfortable with what today would be regarded as homosexual intercourse between two male Roman citizens because it saw this as an act of submission and humiliation by the citizen who submitted to the penetrative act. A manly bearing was always required. If the penetrated partner was of lesser status, same-sex acts of penetration by heterosexual men were endorsed⁴⁵. However this was not approved of when the penetrated partner was a freeborn male Roman citizen of any age. Therefore pederasty in Rome became associated with abuse by the penetrator of slaves and people of lower status. This can be equated to same-sex rape. Symbols of penetration and the penis were widely and publically expressed in art, and the freedom with which this was done emphasised the sexual domination as a tool of oppression by the state⁴⁶. This blatant abuse of sex was violently condemned by the Christian Church. For

⁴² Social concerns were also important and effeminacy was decried.

⁴³ Pederasty is, and was, a (usually erotic) same-sex relationship between an adult male and a pubescent or adolescent boy. The legal status of pederasty was determined by whether or not the boy had reached the local age of consent, and if such contact was considered abusive to the boy. In Ancient Greece the act had to be initiated by the boy. In such cases it was not considered humiliating. It could be seen as a rite and part of the educational process whereby manhood was reached.

⁴⁴ See section 3:1:8 of this account. The cultural differences and care to avoid issues of humiliation and domination distinguish it from what would be regarded as paedophilia in the present day. For a more complete discussions of the cultural changes, see: Gilchrist, S. (2015): “Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>

⁴⁵ Subject to particular expectations of responsibility.

⁴⁶ Nevertheless the expression of same-sex relationships was sufficiently well known for the moral duality to be understood and the distinction was made on the basis of intention and maintaining the power balances in society, rather than condemnation of the act.

about the first three hundred years of its existence the Christian condemnations of same-sex intercourse was primarily focussed on the subjection and domination involved in this act⁴⁷.

3:1:2 Disruptions

The first century was a time of religious disruption in Greco/Roman society⁴⁸. Many of the traditional Greco/Roman religions had lost much of their credibility⁴⁹. There was a search for new meanings, together with resurgence in the popularity of the Goddess cults. In addition to this, religion had a much broader remit at this time. There was no separation of the sacred from the secular. Some cults and religions promoted political or sectional interests, not all of them good. The myths associated with many of the Goddess cults were concerned with the exercise of gender transforming disruptions related to power rather than sex⁵⁰. Gender discrimination was great, but the ravages of war and the duties of governing an empire meant that these distinctions were increasingly being challenged. The reference which Paul made the unknown God in Athens (Acts 17:16-34) gives some measure of the uncertainties of the time. This was a time of change, and the demand for greater power and protection by women and those of lower status⁵¹ meant that the male dominated patriarchal society was being strongly challenged by the Goddess cults. Christianity did not conform to the rules that were imposed on all accepted Greco/Roman religions, and waiting in the wings was this challenge of Christianity itself^{52 53 54}. Early evidence of that concern is found in the

⁴⁷ See section 8 of Gilchrist, S. (2011) "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

⁴⁸ See section 14:0 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): *Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

⁴⁹ Religion had become rather like a cafeteria style selection procedure. Emperor worship was demanded, together with the importation of many foreign cults.

⁵⁰ This examination of the cult of Cybele demonstrates that the political elements that were contained within it must not be ignored. Cybele was a Goddess associated with the power of wild nature and the myths that are connected with her are more about power and fertility. They are not particularly maternal in character. For a full account see: Gilchrist, S. (2015): "Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>. Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*" and Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm.

⁵¹ Gender complementarity enforced a division of role. Very severe gender discrimination often did take place but a wide range of attitudes to women is encountered across ancient Middle Eastern societies. This discrimination and separation of role however broke down to a large extent in Greece around 400 BC, and again in Rome around 205 BC. Men had been called away to battle and to run the empire. War had decimated the male population, and women became even more essential for maintaining key functions of society. Within the marriage relationships, as well as in the occupations that men and women fulfilled in society, a full compatibility of intellect between men and women was expected. By the time of the first century many women had become well educated and they were making significant contributions to society. Despite these changes the authority of men remained absolute. Women were still denied all power and authority over their own lives, they were denied any form of public role, and this was a time when those women who could see power challenged the repression they faced. For the full account see sections: 1:1:2 and 3:1:2 to 3:1:3 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>.

⁵² Christian propaganda identifies the Goddess cults as hotbeds of illicit sex but, as is shown in this analysis, the major driving forces were the exercise of power. It was the abuse of this that gave permission for the abuse of sex. This is in strong contrast to the views which Christian propaganda has created. See for example Frymer-Kensky, Tikva: 1993: "*In the Wake of the Goddesses, Women, Culture and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth*": Ballantine Books; 1992 The Free Press, a division of Macmillan, Inc

⁵³ Roman rulers were always concerned that they could only hold on to power if they kept the population happy. The Goddess cults were popular with slaves and others who felt disadvantaged by Roman society. The assertions of female power and gender disruption permeate the myths of all of these Goddess cults, whose popularity was too great to suppress. The threats and the gender disruption that the cults forced on the first century male dominated, patriarchal Greco/Roman society attacked the security and stability of that society itself. By creating formal structures which fitted in with, and which managed their demands, the male dominated Greco/Roman society had to try to tame them instead. The result of that is seen in the great praise for the sexual purity of those who conformed to these formal structures and decrees, and the great attacks on the behaviour,

correspondence between the Emperor Trajan and Pliny⁵⁵. However the full impact of this was delayed by the rate of growth of Christianity, since Christians did not reach a majority in Roman Empire until after the fall of the Empire in the West.

The major challenge and achievement which was met by Christianity was its success in transferring the distinctive views of the minority Jewish religion into the dominant culture of the Roman state. That meant confronting the self-centred moralities of the culture and sexual values which were characteristic of Roman male dominated society. This additionally meant challenging and usurping the power structures which are formed inside these powerful and dominant 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. This is the cultural transformation that Christianity was challenged to make, and the strength of its challenge to the structures of society is expressed in the Gospel itself.

3:1;3 Gender and Sex

There are a large number of ways in which gender variant and sexually variant people are fellow travellers in their interactions with society, however the differences must be noted. There is only limited interaction between gender identity and sexual orientation. Each goes their different ways and as wide a range of sexually variance may be found amongst gender variant people as that in the general population, and the reverse also applies. Gender variant behaviour directly challenges the power and social structures of gender discriminatory societies. Sexually variant behaviour instead attacks these through the relationships it creates and this is why these two conditions are considered independently in this account.

3:1:4 Gender Confrontations

Unlike the gender discrimination which pervaded earthly society, full gender equality was accorded to the pantheon of gods and Goddesses in the Greco/Roman cults. On earth the ability to penetrate gave men the dominant status. Women, by being penetrated, were allocated a submissive position. That could not be accepted as far as the Gods and

including the sexual behaviour of those who did not. An "Archgallus" who was not castrated, and who was usually of high standing in Roman society, was appointed by the state to manage the cult of Cybele on its behalf. Despite a close commonality of purpose early in its history, Christianity later sided with the Greco/Roman authorities in its condemnations of the cults. For a full account see section 3:1:3 Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Also sections 10 and 14 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*". Access at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm

⁵⁴ It is shown that a major influence on this was the different sexual moralities adopted by subject and dominant societies. Therefore a clear distinction must be made between the licentious activities of the male fraternities of high ranking people in Greco/Roman society who were set up to honour the cult, and those which were embraced by many other followers of the cult, who were often women, non-citizens and slaves. See section 14 of: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf> for more details.

⁵⁵ Christians were small in number and they remained a minority in the Western Empire until its collapse. However they came early to the attention of the authorities. Pliny the Younger, as governor of Nithynia in AD 111, was so exercised by the troubles with the Christians that he wrote to Trajan asking for guidance on how to deal with them. Trajan replied: 'The actions you have taken, my dear Pliny, in investigating the cases of those brought before you as Christians, are correct. It is impossible to lay down a general rule which can apply to particular cases. Do not go looking for Christians. If they are brought before you and the charge is proven, they must be punished, provided that if someone denies they are Christian and gives proof of it, by offering reverence to our gods, they shall be acquitted on the grounds of repentance even if they have previously incurred suspicion. Anonymous written accusations shall be disregarded as evidence. They set a bad example which is contrary to the spirit of our times.' The persecution of Christians was sporadic, but because they refused to worship the Emperor as a god they came under direct threat. See: Carrington, Philip. (2011): "*The Early Christian Church Volume 1*": Cambridge University Press page 429. ISBN 0521166411

Goddesses were concerned and this equality of status meant that about half of the Greek and Roman Goddesses, including Cybele, were virgins. Reproduction took place by miraculous means⁵⁶. A form of celibacy associated with their call of duty as representatives and as symbioses⁵⁷ of the Goddess was also expected of their self-castrated male priests⁵⁸. The cult of Cybele was the most relevant of these beliefs. 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^{59 60}, care, protection and responsible sex⁶¹. Instead of condemning them, positive aspects of the cult were included in the Mariology of The Christian Church. When it is understood that these self-castrated priests, together with their counterparts, were itinerant missionary priests who moved widely through the Roman Empire, who were known within first century Palestine, and who were engaged in fortune telling, shamanic, and healing activities, then both the closeness and the contest between the Cult and Christianity can hardly be missed⁶².

⁵⁶ Cybele and Anat were both virgin fertility Goddesses. The cult of Cybele was very strongly condemned by the early Church. Anat was a prominent figure in the Canaanite mythological texts, dating to c. 1400 BC, which were discovered at Ugarit in Syria. She was a maiden/warrior goddess, the sister or consort of the fertility and storm god Baal. She plays a major role in the Ugaritic myths, rescuing Baal from the underworld and defeating Mot, the god of death. For more detail see: Gilchrist, S. (2015): "Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church": Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>

⁵⁷ The self-castrated priests of the Goddess Cybele were regarded as more than representatives and were somehow assimilated into the Goddess herself.

⁵⁸ About half of the Greek and Roman Goddesses, including Cybele, were virgins. Their authority could not be sullied or reduced by any act of male penetration, and this was one of the arguments for the castration of the male priests. Celibate eunuch priests could be given an even higher reverence than that given to any voluntary celibates, because of the sacrifice of their actions, and the knowledge that they could not stray from that path. They could however be anally penetrated but they could not climax, therefore all male rewards were removed. The issue of temple prostitution is a complex topic. Some may have taken advantage of their situation entirely for the misuse of sex, but there were other reasons for eunuch priests to offer themselves to men for anal penetration. This could be a method of transmitting the blessings of the virgin Goddess to laymen who were seeking fertility in their own reproductive lives. Within the moral values of Greco/Roman society this would be a positive act. For a full account see section 3:1:9 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation". Also sections 10 and 12 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church". Access at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm.

⁵⁹ In ancient Roman religion, the Nixae, were the specific birth deities. Juno Lucina represented the goddess Juno in her birth goddess guise. Eileithyia fulfilled the same specific role in Greek mythology. Both represented specific aspects of the primary Goddesses. Eileithyia, the daughter of Hera was closely associated with Artemis. Artemis was also identified with Cybele in Greek Mythology. Diana was the Roman goddess of the hunt, the moon and childbirth. She was eventually equated with the Greek goddess Artemis. Artemis is also described in the bible as Diana of the Ephesians. For a Christian encounter, see Acts Chapter 19.

⁶⁰ Childbirth was very dangerous and a variety of secondary Goddesses were called upon. The primary Goddesses had many other functions. These were inclusive and motherhood and protection at birth was included in their roles. The differences between the different Goddess fertility cults may be related to the social cultures they appealed to rather than the doctrines they present. However this is a contentious topic and a more complete discussion is given in Sections 3:1:7 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation" and Section 11 of: Gilchrist, S. (2013): *Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*: Access at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm

⁶¹ Christian propaganda always sought to condemn the cults. Instead of being solely the repository for promiscuity, prostitution, depravity and immoral acts, as they are represented in the Christian tradition, the Goddess Cults, and their gender and sexually variant self-castrated priests had a much broader social role. Some of this would become incorporated into the cult of the Virgin Mary in the Christian Church. For a full account see Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation" and Sections 12-14 of: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church". Access at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm.

⁶² In the terms of their own social messages, both Christianity and the Goddess cults shared some key elements in common. This was because they both represented minority groups inside the dominant societies. Like the Goddess cults early Christianity did not simply challenge gender inequality through its actions and the importance and esteem which it gave to women. It also challenged the moral precepts and the perceptions upon which the

The interaction between the Jesus movement and the Goddess cults was taken much further than this when, in Matthew 19:12, Jesus declared that those people who have voluntarily made themselves eunuchs for the “Kingdom of heaven’s sake” can also be accepted into the same fold. The passage reads: “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”^{63 64 65}. The commanding form of expression which Jesus used in this statement implies that this is an active act⁶⁶. 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. This caused great difficulties for the early Church. It was not just Origen who took this statement of Jesus literally; there were thousands of others who did so too⁶⁷. Eunuchs who kept the Law were

Greco/Roman patriarchal society was based. For a full account see Gilchrist, S .2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> .

⁶³ The close conjunction of the statements on marriage and eunuchs in Matthew 19: 3-12 further suggests that these two statements should be considered together. Both of them are included in the same sentence; the directly equivalent form of words is also used, and the Jewish Midrashim tradition of interpretation imposes a very careful structuring that demands a close reading of any biblical text. In regard to marriage, the usual interpretation which is given to this passage states that Jesus considered that marriage should be treated as a “Second best” option, and therefore the same close textural relationships between these two statements additionally implies that the people “Who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven”, should be treated in the same way. Therefore this extreme action of self-castration too should be regarded as another “Second best” approach. However, that is only when behaviour conforms to the highest ideals of society. That must also be interpreted in accordance with the moralities of first century societies, and not those of the present day.

⁶⁴ It is important to note that is not suggested that Jesus was here advocating self-castration, although a literal interpretation was sometimes taken. However the welcome that it offers to the already self-castrated male priests of the Goddess Cults should also be noted: For a full account see Section 3:2 of Gilchrist, S .2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm .

⁶⁵ The part of the passage which says “He that is able to receive it let him receive it” is the second passage in the New Testament where Jesus allows compromises to his teaching. (The first is the passage on “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, as described above). The statement in Matthew was a radical statement. Its impact on the behaviour on the early Church means that there is little doubt about the authenticity of the text. Christianity had to adapt if it was going to be able to survive in Roman society and to continue to take the Gospel message to the world. That meant a re-interpretation of the radical teaching which Jesus presented on gender and sex. It is shown later in this account that this passage in Matthew gave an early authorisation for the compromises that were necessary for the survival of the Church. The context also demands that Christianity restores the radical teaching on gender and sex once it had gained a position of sufficient strength. That has had a profound effect on the development of the Church. See section 3:5:3 in this document and section 4:5:3 onwards in Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf> for an examination of the impact of this passage.

⁶⁶ The serious with which the Christian Church took this issue can also be seen by the prominence it is given through its listing as the first of the Canons (decrees) of the First Council of Nicaea in AD 325.

⁶⁷ Throughout Christian and European history there have been many who took and taught these statements literally. They include Valentinus (whose sect was declared heretical in the mid-second century), Julius Cassianus (declared heretical in the mid-second century), Basilides (also declared heretical in the early-second century), Leontios of Antiochia, (Bishop of Jerusalem, late-fourth century), Melito “the Eunuch” (ca. late-second century), Hilarion (mid-fourth century), Marcarius “the Egyptian (late 4th century) and Origen (also declared heretical in the early-third century). These people are among the most famous of thousands that chose ritual castration. This perception was not confined to the Gnostic or fringe movements, it became a major issue in the early church. The earliest report of the desire for castration among Christians comes from the second century writings of Justin. Self-castration was a widely practiced and it was an ancient expression of religious devotion throughout the Middle East. Several early Christian encratite and ascetic movements (centred mainly in Egypt) are known to have members who were eunuchs. The cloisters of Egypt and Syria were centres of self-castration, and Coptic monasteries continued to perform castration well into the Islamic period. Indeed, the criminalization of eunuchs in the church at the Council of Nicaea is testimony to the degree to which self-castration was practiced. For the full account see Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

given a high place in Jewish society (see Isaiah 56:4-5). Others were condemned for their disreputable sexual behaviour, and in this New Testament passage Jesus was expanding on Old Testament texts. It was considered that Deuteronomy 22:5 only prohibited acts of cross dressing for unapproved purposes or for deceit and no exclusively literal interpretation was ever applied⁶⁸.

In all of these activities distinction is made between good and bad on the basis of intention, rather than direct condemnation of the acts. Equivalent diversities existed in Greek and Roman society and the same dualities were also encountered. In Roman culture those people who castrated themselves for religious devotion often did so for the highest ideals and for the avoidance of the temptation of sex. Others were accused of sexual abuse. Many eunuchs who were castrated by others were given well deserved and severe defamatory reputations because of their licentiousness and misuse of sex⁶⁹. Due to their incapability some eunuchs could reach to positions of high power, but their existence outside the normal boundaries of society could never exempt them from these scurrilous reputations, and praise was almost never given for what they did. Their metamorphoses did not encourage their loyalty to the social and gender frameworks of the dominant society, and this also made them a threat.

Christianity exposed itself to the same condemnations by choosing a eunuch to spread the Gospel message. In the New Testament account of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts (Acts 8:26-40), the gender transgressive body of a eunuch has become the symbol of the Kingdom of God who has been charged with bringing its mission to the world. However the actions of the self-castrated male priests of the Goddess cults, who dressed as women, provided even greater threats to the gender-based foundations and institutions upon which the male dominated society was built⁷⁰. These itinerant priests travelled widely through the Roman Empire. They would have been known in to Jesus and Eusebius reports that they had a shrine in Bethlehem itself⁷¹.

In Matthew 19:12, Jesus declared that those people who have voluntarily made themselves eunuchs for the “Kingdom of heaven’s sake” can also be accepted into the same fold. By extending this welcome to all eunuchs, Jesus was doing more than just welcoming those who had castrated themselves for religious devotion. The same acceptance would also

⁶⁸ 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. (2015): “*Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church*”: Also Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm .

⁶⁹ 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. For a full account see also section 8 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*”: Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

⁷⁰ Self-castration by itself does not indicate any transgender desires, for the purpose may be the avoidance of the temptations of sex in religious devotion. However when self-castration is combined with the fact that the Goddess priests dressed as women, the opportunity for the expression of transgender feelings becomes available. For extended descriptions see: Gilchrist, S. (2015): “*Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church*”: and Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*”: Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

⁷¹ Kuefler, Mathew. (2001): “*Eusebius, in his Life of Constantine. See in “The Manly Eunuch Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity”*” University of Chicago Press ISBN: 9780226457390

apply to the self-castrated priests of the Goddess cults who chose to follow his message. There is no suggestion that the Ethiopian eunuch was a transgender person. However, many of the Goddess priests would have been transgender people. Others may not. This passage caused great difficulty in the early Church because, in Matthew 19:12 Jesus accepted everybody alike⁷². This was a welcome given by Jesus to all people who seek to live their lives in the light of the teaching of Jesus the New Covenant and in the love of Christ. In the same way as the Ethiopian eunuch it follows that all transgender people who use the breadth and range of their experiences to embrace and enrich the ideals of their own lives; and the lives of others may likewise minister to the Gospel message and they may also participate in this priestly act.

Without compromise Jesus had usurped the social and power structures upon which Jewish society was built. By stepping outside the boundaries of a gender unequal and dictatorial society, the disruptive behaviour of the Goddess cults attacked those power structures which were essential to maintain it. Attitudes to transgender issues were similarly dominated by the need to maintain the power structures in a male dominated society^{73 74 75}. These gender based challenges to the power structures of Greco/Roman society came both from Christianity and from the Goddess cults. This analysis makes use of the work of René Girard who shows how a scapegoat can exert enormous power in religious belief. The differences and commonalities in the behaviour of the two traditions and the similarity in their application of the scapegoat mechanism, as described by Girard, are considered in detail elsewhere⁷⁶. There were important differences but from all of these considerations the commonalities of purpose of the Gospel of Jesus and those of the positive elements of the Goddess cults can hardly be missed⁷⁷.

⁷² The implications of this are discussed in section 3:4:7 of this document.

⁷³ Christian examples of male to female transgender people are hard to come by because any movement in that direction would become suppressed by the doctrines of male supremacy and the gender discrimination which was practiced by the later Church. However there is much more evidence of transgender behaviour in the female to male direction. One of the most famous woman leaders was expressed in the popular story of 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 high degree of acceptance and popularity, and not necessarily in their absolute truth. The text of the acts can be accessed at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/thecla.html>. See also Section 3:2:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

⁷⁴ In the second and third centuries, gender discrimination continued to increase. In the fourth century it was considered that female mystics could only achieve salvation and redemption if they rejected every aspect of their femininity. Even if they did, redemption could only be gained in heaven and not on earth. Although male to female transgender behaviour would be considered abhorrent at this time, it was positively encouraged in the female to male direction. Thus for women gender reassignment for entry to heaven was an ideal, and also a requirement that had to be achieved. However in order to protect the authority of a male church hierarchy in a male dominated society, it could only come after death. For a full account see Gilchrist, S. 2013: "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> .

⁷⁵ This 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. 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 were told by the Church that they could only wait in penance for the sins of Eve until they entered heaven, when the day of gender reassignment or freedom from gender comes. For a full account see section 2:3:3 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> .

⁷⁶ Gilchrist, S. (2015) *Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>

⁷⁷ See Section 13 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*".

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf> . See also section 3:1:7: "Power and its

3:1:5 Gender Fairness

The Gospel that Jesus preached was the same for everyone. Nobody is excluded for being true to who they are and for the honesty with which they live their lives. The equality of all men and women in the sight of God, and gender fairness were also key elements in his approach⁷⁸. In Galatians 3:28 Paul states that there shall be “no male and female... for all are one in Christ Jesus”. The same message is expressed in saying 22 of the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas. In addition to this, saying 114 in the same Gospel 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." This viewpoint is strange to modern eyes, but it gives an introduction to first century thinking. That adopted a one sex model for gender, whereby the male and female reproductive organs were essentially the same as each other except that one set is turned inside out⁷⁹. The idea that a man can be turned into a woman by some malign act of a God or Goddess was not just an abstract thought. This viewpoint is representative of the attitudes to gender, and the one sex model, that first century people understood. Considerable care should be applied when using apocryphal texts, but there is a case for rating the integrity of this Gospel above some of the other apocryphal texts. Many scholars now ascribe it to a very early date⁸⁰. If these passages are correct, they provide a further association with the outlook of the Goddess cults⁸¹.

3:1:6 Attitudes to Women

From the beginning, many Jewish women, which included Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, had accompanied Jesus during his ministry, and supported him out of their private means (Luke 8:1-3). However the most striking thing about the role of women in the life and teaching of Jesus is that they were always present. The continual testimony to the place of women amongst the followers of Jesus and his own serious teaching and treatment of them was a break with tradition which has been described as being without any previous precedent in first century Judaism⁸². His interactions with them broke many of the taboos of purity and respectability which Judaism enforced.

Usurpation” of Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> .

⁷⁸ The term gender fairness is used in instead of gender equality because of some of the 21st century presumptions that the latter term implies.

⁷⁹ This perception is reflected in saying 22 of the Gospel of Thomas. see section 2:3:4 of Gilchrist, S .2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

⁸⁰ Recent scholarship now tends to ascribe an early date to the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas and this is supported by this analysis. (For a full account see section 2:3:4 of Gilchrist, S .2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>.) If that is the case the idea that women have to have a sex change before they can enter heaven may be ascribed to an early date. 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” (For texts see: <http://gnosis.org/naghamm/gosthom.html>). This is not quite as strange as it seems. The perceptions of sex and gender were very different from today: a “One Sex” model, where male and female were the extremes of one range, was prevalent and the fear of a man being turned into a woman because of some offence to the Gods or Goddesses occurred..

⁸¹ An extended analysis of this is given in Section 3:1:7 of Gilchrist, S .2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> .

⁸² Saggs, H. W. F. (1987/1965): “*Religion: Everyday Life in Babylonia and Assyria*”. Dorset Press. 1987, reprint of 1965 edition published by Batsford. p. 196.

Christianity also created greater challenges for Greco/Roman society⁸³. 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 carried out by the cults could only be taken so far. Even though women had achieved considerable power inside their own domains, the divinely decreed orders of difference meant that these fundamental gender divisions could not be broken, and this created a glass ceiling which could never be crossed. What was required to make the breakthrough was a religion that worshipped a single gender transcendent God, and one which is shown in this analysis to have a social perspective which was close to the Goddess cults. Because of its agenda for women, together with the moral values of a subject society, Christianity could bridge that void. The ministry of women was welcomed by Jesus. These were the promises for women that the Gospel message of Jesus had brought⁸⁴. The promises were destroyed by the gender discrimination of the later Church⁸⁵.

It was not good enough for Jesus simply to express his care and concern for women, the transgender people; the poor the outcast and the dispossessed. Jesus identified himself with all of these people and he gave women the full ownership of his message. The Christian ideals on gender and sexuality are spelt out by Paul in Galatians 3:26-28. "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". This equality of approach to all men and women would find acceptance in today's society. Like the self-castrated priests of the Goddess cults, this doctrine attacked the need for the preservation of status and structure inside a male dominated and a socially unequal world.

3:1:7 Sexual Moralities

With its challenges to the structure of Roman society, it is hardly surprising that Christianity was at first condemned by the authorities as a disreputable and disruptive sect. If Christianity was to make a continuing impact on the world it had to navigate a way through the cultural clashes between Greek, Roman and Jewish societies, and it also had to make the transfer from a religion that belonged to a subjugated society to that of a dominant one. As well as the challenges imposed by the gender discrimination and the inequity of the power structures of the dominant society there were those of the abuse of sex. Therefore constant themes in the Epistles and Letters of Peter and Paul were those of maintaining the high moral values of the new religion, and obtaining respectability for the Christian Church. That meant conforming to the social divisions of Roman society, and in part this meant transferring the gender divisions which were already present in first century Jewish culture, into the Roman state. In section 3:5:3 of this document it is indicated that the need for this was known to Jesus himself. That compromised the radical teaching and example of Jesus on gender and sex, and this has had major consequences for the Church⁸⁶

⁸³ See section 3:1:2 of this document.

⁸⁴ See: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church*": Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/007B-FromGndrTranscToGndrComp.pdf>

⁸⁵ See Section 18 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf> Also section 2:2:5 and 2:3:3 of Gilchrist, S .2013: "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

⁸⁶ See section 3:5 of this document

A key sexual challenge related to the practice of anal penetration⁸⁷. The conflicts and the cultural clashes are clearly seen in the opposing attitudes to the act. In the case of same-sex intercourse between two male Roman citizens, it was the penetrated party who was condemned, because his submission had desecrated the status of citizenship. In subject societies it was the penetrator who was condemned because of the humiliation it brought⁸⁸. Roman citizens were expected to exercise responsibility. That created major implications which required high principles of conduct in society, but in principle, in sexual matters they could do as much to non-citizens as they liked^{89 90}. It has been shown that anal penetration was used as a weapon for imposing humiliation and domination by master culture on a subject one, much as it was for the physical gratifications of sex⁹¹. In addition activities that were considered to be moral in one society could be horrific in another, and judgement on these has to be made on what each society expects⁹².

The contrast could hardly be more complete. The Roman use of the penis as a plaything of art and fun, including the depictions of same-sex intercourse on vases, pictures and other artefacts, could serve to remind non-citizens of the powers which a dictatorial and dominant culture exerts⁹³. Amongst the Goddess cults, acts of same-sex intercourse, which would be

⁸⁷ See sections 3:2 and 3:1:8 of this document for the full discussion. It is notable that the condemnations were associated with the social consequence that arose from the abuses of the act, rather than the actual act.

⁸⁸ In Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, Judaism penalised both parties in equal measure, but the prohibition was directed firstly at the penetrator in the relationship. (See for example the story of Sodom and Gomorrah). For a full discussion see Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/217P-FoundationsSexGender.pdf>

⁸⁹ The Lex Scantinia was a law that penalized a sex crime against a freeborn male minor. The law may also have been used to prosecute adult male citizens who willingly took a passive role in having sex with other men. However it only protected Roman citizens. The Law is poorly documented but its effect was to give any male Roman citizen immunity from prosecution, but only if he took the dominant role in the same-sex rape of anyone else.

⁹⁰ The real limit was that of responsibility. (The author would like to use the word practicality). The exercise of responsibility by Roman citizens was essential if the empire was to work. These were multi-faceted societies where different laws were applied to Roman citizens and free citizens of occupied countries. That is seen in the Acts of the Apostles where Paul used the privileges of his Roman citizenship to good effect. Slaves did have some legal rights, for slavery in ancient Rome played an important role in society and the economy. As well as manual labour, slaves performed many domestic services, and might be employed at highly skilled jobs and professions. Teachers, accountants, and physicians were often slaves. Greek slaves in particular might be highly educated. Over time, many slaves gained increasing legal protection, including the right to file complaints against their masters. Several emperors began to grant increasing rights to slaves as the empire grew. Claudius announced that if a slave was abandoned by his master he became free. Nero granted slaves the right to complain against their masters in a court. Under Antoninus Pius, a master who killed a slave without just cause could be tried for homicide (Dillon, Matthew and Garland, Lynda. (2005): "*Ancient Rome: From the Early Republic to the Assassination of Julius Caesar*". Routledge, 2005: Pg 297). It also became common throughout the mid to late 2nd century CE to allow slaves to complain of cruel or unfair treatment by their owners (McGinn, Thomas. (2003): "*Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome*". Oxford University Press, 2003 Pg. 309). Rome differed from Greek city-states in allowing freed slaves to become citizens. After gaining their liberty a male slave who had belonged to a Roman citizen enjoyed active political freedom, including the right to vote: (Millar, Fergus. (2002): "*The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic*": University of Michigan, 1998, 2002, pp. 23, 209). There were different categories of slaves. Unskilled slaves and those sentenced to slavery as punishment, worked on farms, in mines, and as domestics. Their living conditions were brutal, and their lives were short. It is difficult to identify the degree of sexual abuse which slaves suffered. Those who gave the most value to society are likely to be well protected, but for all their masters had complete control over their lives. Although a Roman Citizen did have the freedom to do what he liked with his slaves, it was the exercise of responsibility, rather than legal prohibitions which restricted his acts.

⁹¹ See section 3:12 of this document: Also: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

⁹² See Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

⁹³ In a dominant society one way in which same-sex intercourse can be separated from the social consequences of citizenship is to provide a religious framework within which it can occur. This may be an excuse for the abusive same-sex acts and degenerate behaviour which took place during the excessively lavish banquets organised by

seen by one society as exclusively acts of carnal prostitution, could be interpreted by the other as ways of bringing the fertility of the Goddess to men who sought it in their own lives⁹⁴. On the other hand the horror of same-sex rape inflicted on the Israelites (or God's messengers: it could be either) is the theme in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah⁹⁵. However this is expressed through condemnations of the lack of hospitality and other multitudinous abusive acts⁹⁶. These condemnations resound throughout the whole of Jewish history⁹⁷. As well as these cultural differences there was a great deal of decadence inside first century Greco/Roman society. Same-sex intercourse lends itself particularly to this type of misuse because there are no reproductive consequences of such acts. Prostitution, degeneracy and sexual exploitation were rife. The money made from temple sex was a major resource for the Goddess cults. The condemnation of sexual misconduct by Peter and Paul and by the early Christian Church was more than deserved, and in the intensity of these condemnations it is not surprising that the consideration of any type of moral duality disappeared.

The First Century Christian censures of these culturally determined abuses are absolutely understandable, and by today's standards most people, including the author, would consider that to be totally correct. If Christianity was going to integrate itself into Greco/Roman society it could not afford to directly attack these power structures. By endorsing the social structures of Greco/Roman society, and by ignoring the cultural differences, it was made easy for the Christian Church to treat Greco/Roman society and its cults exclusively as hotbeds for illicit and inappropriate sex.

3:1:8 Paradigm Shifts

A major barrier to correct interpretation occurs because of the paradigm shifts that have taken place in the attitudes to same-sex intercourse. It has already been noted that in first century societies, sexual moralities were not primarily determined on a gendered basis. Instead the distinction was made between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. Men were expected to engage in sexual relationships on the basis of responsibility: and that included involvement in same-sex and in heterosexual relationships at various times in their lives. This included same-sex intercourse in some societies. Therefore the terms homosexuality, heterosexuality and bisexuality would not have been understood in these first

the male fraternities, involving high ranking people in Greco/Roman society, which were set up to honour the cult of Cybele, and other Goddess cults. There is no record of any ordinary priests and others who did not conform to these supporting roles taking part in these events. See also footnote 52

⁹⁴ See Section 11 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>. Also sections 3:1:7 to 3:1:9 of Gilchrist, S .2013: "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

⁹⁵ Two similar stories, that of Lot (Genesis 19:1-11) and the unnamed Levite and his concubine (Judges 19), describe threatened same-sex rape. It is argued that these passages do not concern homosexuality but are about the abuse of hospitality through sexual violence. For a more detailed discussion of Old Testament attitudes see: Gilchrist, S. (2015): "Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf> .

⁹⁶ First Century Christianity had to contend with a Roman culture which saw same-sex intercourse as an expression of power and domination over subject people and societies. However when one looks further back in history, the less emphasis there seems to be on condemning the actual act. Today's society concentrates upon condemning this actual act. However early societies were more concerned with the purpose to which it was put. As with the story of Sodom and Gomorrah the major issue for the Jews is the lack of hospitality which the misuse of the act represents, rather than the act itself. This same pattern is repeated elsewhere. See for example: Gilchrist, S. (2015): "Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>

⁹⁷ The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were also taken to represent every evil, not just or primarily aspects of sex. See Gilchrist, S. (2015): "*Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/217P-FoundationsSexGender.pdf>

century cultures. There were also two reasons for the condemnation of same-sex intercourse. One came from the abuse of power in gender and socially unequal societies. The second was because of the irresponsible demands for physical exploitation and for the physical gratifications of the sexual act. Because of this freedom of expression it was not the act of same-sex intercourse that could be condemned. The only condemnations that could be applied were to this were in the context of the abuse of the act.

A further feature that must also be taken note of is how these condemnations were applied: and this is through their impact on society rather than condemnation of the sexual act. That is seen in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Here the actual act was the intended rape of the Israelite group, or God's messengers. However in the bible the condemnation of Sodom and Gomorrah is not directly applied to this action of same-sex rape: instead it is used to condemn of the abuse of hospitality and the other alleged multitudinous abuses in that society. There are other instances of this approach being taken. Both Jesus and Peter condemned Sodom and Gomorrah for their lack of hospitality and their social immoralities rather than the act of sex⁹⁸. When the passages in the bible which are interpreted as condemning sexual depravity in surrounding societies are compared with the records from these sources it is shown that the issues were ones of abuses of power rather than abuses of sex. In this investigation the attitudes to sexual misbehaviour in the surrounding societies are separately examined and the same or similar approaches are found⁹⁹. In Rome that shift has already been described, but it is also true in Canaanite religious belief. This is not a minor change and a paradigm shift is involved. Today's viewpoints tend to consider lust and sexual depravity to be a primary driving force of social immorality. However in these early societies, sexual depravity was considered to be just one of the outcomes which resulted from the abuses of power in that society This concentration on the condemnation of the social consequences does not correspond to today's attitudes in which all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour are condemned without exception as being immoral or abusive acts.

It is shown that these transformations in outlook occurred as the Church moved from being a minority and suppressed group in society to an organisation which became the dispenser of power and authority. Carnal abuse was of course still condemned, but the act of marriage became the defining boundary between use and abuse in all sexual behaviour for the Christian Church. Instead of its earlier stance which had focussed on condemning the abuses of sexual power and behaviour by dominant peoples inside gender and socially unequal societies; it now dismissed these power elements in the doctrines it created. The doctrines of the infallibility of the Church also stopped it from acknowledging its own abuses of power in society. By restricting this first century definition of purpose and intention, sexual and gender abuse became defined by this legal act.

With these denials the purpose of all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour could only be deemed to be in pursuit of the lust for sex. Any possibility of recognising love in relationships, as well as the moral duality that is present in the teaching of Jesus was lost. For these reasons is concluded that what today is regarded as the traditional Church teaching on homosexuality and gender and sexual variation does not conform to the Gospel

⁹⁸ For a discussion of these see alleged abuses see section 4:4:1 Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

⁹⁹ More detailed analyses of these changes are given in section 4:4:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf> and in Gilchrist, S. (2015): "Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>

message. It reflects the needs of the 13th Century Church: and it is at variance with the teaching of Christ. It is this paradigm shift which most affects the present day teaching of the Church.

For more discussion of this topic, see section 3:2:5 and 3:5:3 of this document and sections 4:4:1 and 4:5:2 of Gilchrist, S. (2016f): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*": Another detailed analysis of these changes are given in Gilchrist, S. (2015): "*Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church*"

3:2 Love and Sex

It has been shown that there are two main reasons for the condemnation of same-sex intercourse. One came from the abuse of power in gender and socially unequal societies. The second was because of the irresponsible demands for physical exploitation and for the physical gratifications of the sexual act. In socially and gender unequal societies, the acts of same-sex intercourse enforce the power differences between subject and dominant groups in ways which are not encountered by any other sexual acts. Its abuse for the exercise of power and sexual gratification in Roman society has already been discussed.

Because of this uniqueness a clear distinction should be made between same-sex relationships which involved anal penetration and those which do not. More usually today the prohibition in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 is taken as the prohibition of male same-sex intercourse. However the differences in cultural attitudes and many of the arguments presented in this document require a more specific approach. The interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, which declares that the prohibition is confined to male on male acts of anal penetration alone is more restricted than that which is usually encountered. Nevertheless this is in line with rabbinic interpretations. It is also well attested within first century Jewish sources that these prohibitions apply to same-sex anal penetration by men alone and not to any other sexual acts^{100 101}. There is no corresponding condemnation of same-sex behaviour between women. It has been shown that the abuse of power was the primary reason for the prohibitions of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, rather than an intrinsic horror of the act, the cultural clashes have similarly been noted, and this prohibition is discussed in more detail elsewhere¹⁰². Judaism applied the same penalties to both partners. However the dominant penetrator was named as the culprit for initiating the act¹⁰³. In Roman society it was only the penetrated submissive citizen who was condemned. That is the interpretation of Leviticus

¹⁰⁰ See section 3:6 of: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*": Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

¹⁰¹ There is little controversy within the rabbinic tradition about the meaning of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. These passages are translated in various ways but the basic meaning has always appeared to be quite clear: "And with a male you shall not lie the lyings of a woman, it is an abomination." A similar phrase, "The lying of a male", appears in Numbers 31:18 and this is understood to mean what women experience in intercourse, i.e. that of penile penetration. The lyings of a woman are plural because she may be penetrated vaginally or anally but a man, who does not have a vagina, is singly penetrable anally. This Midrashim interpretation makes it clear that the passages in Leviticus only prohibit the act of same sex anal intercourse. There is no condemnation of lesbian sex whatever since penile penetration is not possible. See Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> and Gilchrist, S. (2011): "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

¹⁰² Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

¹⁰³ See section 3:2:1 of this paper and Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

that Jesus, Paul and the other Apostles would have known, and it is this which is used in this account.

These cultural differences must be fully recognised in any discussion, but if there is to be true impartiality a distinction must be made between behaviour arising from the outpouring of love and that which driven by malevolent acts. The Roman abuse of same-sex intercourse as an expression of humiliation and domination has been described in the previous sections, but that must also be placed with the broader context of first century attitudes to gender and sex. A further distinction should be made between those which arise from the outpouring of love and those which exclusively pursue the pleasures of sex.

3:2:1 Greek and Roman Attitudes to Love and Sex

The ancient Greeks and Romans did not have the terms or employ concepts which correspond to the contemporary dichotomy of 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual'. Therefore there was no boundary to be inserted between strong heterosexual friendships on the one hand and on relationships which encouraged same-sex attraction on the other. Nevertheless the differences between these would be recognised in society; and indeed the latter was preferred for the depth and the intensity of the commitments it provided. A host of writers demonstrate that this understanding was common not just to Athens but through the whole of the Greek and Mediterranean world. The Greeks and Romans used different words for the different types of love. Unlike in English and other languages; where one word is used for all types, the differences between them could be recognised by society.

The distinction between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was made on the purity of intention and conformity to the social order; rather than prohibition of any act. Morality and love were not primarily decided in gendered terms¹⁰⁴. The Greeks positioned the boundaries which divided acceptable and unacceptable behaviour between activities which were carried out for the noble pursuit of love, and the actions that were engaged in for the carnal abuse of sex¹⁰⁵. The abuses of power and domination were regulated out of Greek society; however these features instead drove Roman attitudes to sex¹⁰⁶. The attitudes also demanded the exercise of full responsibility for all behaviour; but gross abuse and discrimination could still occur because the rules tended to be applied only to citizens of their own societies¹⁰⁷.. This means that today's attempts to use the present day descriptions of heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality fail because the presumptions behind them cannot be applied. Greek and Roman men were expected to have both same-sex and heterosexual relationships at various times in their lives and in intimate Jewish Rabbinic Partnerships¹⁰⁸, the Rabbis also went home to their wives.

The same assessments should be made of other sexual acts. When oral sex (fellatio and cunnilingus) is considered the distinction between penetrator and penetrated is made in two Latin words for these acts: "irrumare" (to penetrate orally) and "fellare" (to be penetrated orally). In ancient Rome, fellatio was considered profoundly taboo. Sexual acts were generally observed through the viewpoint of submission and control. It was considered to be

¹⁰⁴ That must also be defined in terms of the first century understanding and not just that of the present day. See section 3:6 of this document

¹⁰⁵ See Gilchrist, S. (2013) *An Unfinished Reformation*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> and Gilchrist, S. (2011) *Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ The freedom of expression that this permitted in Greek culture was described by Romans as "The Greek Vice".

¹⁰⁷ These have to be interpreted according to their cultures. This does not condone the horrendous sexual treatment by Rome of people of lesser status and subject societies

¹⁰⁸ See sections 3:3:2 to 3:3:3 of this paper

abhorrent for a male citizen to accept fellatio because that meant he was being humiliated by penetration whereas, orally penetrating a woman or another man of lower social status was not humiliating. The known recipients were supposed to have foul breath and were often made unwelcome as guests at a dinner table¹⁰⁹. Even by their own standards, sexual abuse was prominent in first century Roman society; but that abuse cannot be separated from the enforcement of power and domination in all sexual acts.

3:2:2 Judean Attitudes to Love and Sex

In Judaism a different situation applied. Gender discrimination and complementarity was practiced¹¹⁰, but as a society which, for most of its existence, had lived under the conquering yokes of others, the attitudes to sexual behaviour and sexual relationships expressed horrors at the abuses of power in sex. There is no ban on oral sex in the bible, and the prohibitions of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 were not considered to apply to this act¹¹¹. The medieval scholar, Maimonides¹¹², who was usually quite conservative in sexual matters, took quite a liberal approach. He wrote: "A man's wife is permitted to him. Therefore a man may do whatever he wishes with his wife. He may have intercourse with her at any time he wishes and kiss her on whatever limb of her body he wants. He may have natural or unnatural relations, as long as he does not bring forth his seed in vain"¹¹³.

Quite clearly, same-sex intercourse and masturbation could be considered to be acts of giving sperm in vain, since reproduction cannot occur¹¹⁴. However the Talmudic rabbis themselves made it clear that marriage was never meant to be just a child-producing

¹⁰⁹ See for example: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/priap/prp105.htm> : Smithers, Leonard C. (1890): "*Priapeia sive diversorum poetarum in Priapum lusus*" or "*Sportive Epigrams On Priapus by divers poets in English verse and prose translation*" Translated by Sir Richard Burton: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/priap/prpa.htm> .The Priapeia is a collection of short Latin poems in the shape of jocose epigrams affixed to the statues of the god Priapus. These were often rude carvings from a tree-trunk, human-shaped, with a huge phallus which could at need be used as a cudgel against robbers. They were placed in the gardens of wealthy Romans, for the twofold purpose of promoting fertility and for preventing depredations on the produce.

¹¹⁰ For a description see Gilchrist, S. (2015): "Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>

¹¹¹ See Section 5:0 "Anal Penetration" of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

¹¹² Concern may be expressed about using medieval sources to examine first century attitudes. However Maimonides (1135-1204) and others were analysing earlier texts. The approach in this document examines the issues using other contemporary sources as well as the bible, and this includes Jewish oral law. For those who are unfamiliar with these sources it may be useful to define a few terms. The Torah is the five biblical books of Moses. The Mitzvah lists the 613 commandments given in the Torah (plus seven additional rabbinic commandments) which a religious Jew is required to follow. The Torah and Mitzvah contain the entirety of Judaism's founding legal and ethical religious texts. The Talmud has two components which are the Mishnah and the Gemara. The Mishnah was the first written compendium of Judaism's oral law, it was compiled around 200 A.D. and it draws on sources which date from the time of the Exile onwards. The Gemara develops and expands on the Mishnah. Two versions of the Talmud are often referred to: the Jerusalem Talmud was put together around 350 A.D. and the Babylonian Talmud dates from around 500 A.D. The Babylonian Talmud is usually regarded as the definitive text. As with the Old Testament it contains a wide variety of documents, some contradictory, and also some unpalatable texts. Halakha is a term which is used to describe the whole corpus of Jewish oral and written law and traditions. In first century Judaism the oral law was at least as important as the written law. It is the interpretation of the oral law, given most particularly in the Mishnah, which Jesus and his disciples would have acted on and understood.

¹¹³ Mishnah Torah Issurei Biah 21:9. Access at: http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/960647/jewish/Issurei-Biah-Chapter-One.htm

¹¹⁴ The scripture most frequently pointed to in regards to masturbation is the story of Onan in Genesis 38:9-10. Some interpret this passage as saying that "spilling your seed" on the ground is always a sin. However, that is not what the passage is saying. God condemned Onan not for "spilling his seed" but because Onan refused to fulfil his duty to provide an heir for his brother. See section 4:5 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf> .

enterprise. In Judaism ejaculation was permitted where procreation was not in mind¹¹⁵. Contraception by the use of absorbents was also allowed in particular circumstances¹¹⁶. Sexual intercourse was also supported after a couple had passed the age where childbearing was possible for the purpose of maintaining conjugal relationships.

It is necessary to look in more detail at what was meant by un-natural relationships. Un-natural relationships were defined as any sexual activity where ejaculation of sperm does not occur in the traditional place¹¹⁷. These activities include oral sex, heterosexual anal sex, or activities which the rabbis called "threshing within and without" (meaning premature withdrawal). The Talmudic sources talk freely about such activity, permitting it under certain circumstances between husband and wife. Thus un-natural relationships are permissible when they are occasional and not exclusive and if the intent is for mutual pleasure. There was no absolute prohibition of any act.

In this context the condemnations of same-sex behaviour by Paul in Romans 1:26-27 should also be noted. Here Paul's denunciations are set in the context of sexual abuse. He draws on Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 for his condemnations and in the definitions he uses, the terms natural and un-natural relationships are employed. In section 4:5:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*", it is shown that the same rabbinic interpretation is applied¹¹⁸.

3:2:3 Heterosexual Love

The Song of Songs (Or the Song of Solomon) in the bible celebrates the expression of love between a man and a woman in the context of legitimate erotic sex. This story has been interpreted in many ways. One Christian interpretation celebrates as expression of the love between Christ and the Church. That reduces to the spiritual dimension, the reality of these physical acts¹¹⁹. One of the most notable features about the relationship is that it is a fully consensual and equal relationship between a man and a woman, who engage with equal passion in the physical acts. Despite this, women remained totally subject to the authority of men; and that manifested itself through gross gender inequality and the division of public

¹¹⁵ The Talmudic rabbis make it clear that marriage was never meant to be solely a child-producing enterprise. Rabbi Tam, in the medieval period, speaks of the permissibility of intercourse with a barren woman for purposes of pleasure. In his 14th-century commentary on the prayer book, David Abudraham states that the reason no blessing is invoked for offspring at a wedding is because even couples incapable of procreation should have the full seven blessings of the traditional marriage ceremony.

¹¹⁶ The Jewish oral law allowed women to use an absorbent as a contraceptive device in particular circumstances. These were in marital intercourse, if they were a minor, and as an expectant and a nursing mother. (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Niddah 45a). This contrasts with the present attitude of the Roman Catholic Church where only "natural" methods of contraception are allowed. Apart from anal penetration there is no prohibition in the bible of other methods of stimulation where ejaculation might occur. The encouragement to reproduce is well served by other commands both in the bible and by rabbinic instructions to "Settle the World" (BT Yevamot 62b). See Section 4:5 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ Rashi on Yevamoth 34b: http://www.come-and-hear.com/yebamoth/yebamoth_34.html

¹¹⁸ See section 4:5:1 in Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>. The relevant texts include Romans 1:26-27: "For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error". (NRSVA)

¹¹⁹ See Section 6:2 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

and private roles¹²⁰. However equality within the family is found elsewhere in the Bible. Jewishness is passed down through the mother. The Torah and Halacha demand that a husband must love his wife like himself, and honour her more than he does himself¹²¹. Thus love, continuity, property, and family unity were paramount and the authority given to men enforced on them an absolute obligation to their wives.

3:2:4 Same-Sex Love

The cultural traditions of Judaism allowed public expressions of intimacy between men. In Chapter 8 of the Song of Songs the lover wishes she were his brother, so that they could kiss in public and nobody would notice. Jesus complained that, although the woman who was seeking forgiveness had kissed him; none of the men had done so at the time when he entered the house (Luke 7:36-49). John laid his head on the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper and Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. There are about 30 separate instances in the Bible where the kissing of men by men is recorded in a positive way.

This does not by itself make distinguish between these expressions of intimacy as acts of convention or of love. The biblical and first century Judean attitudes to same-sex love have been examined by Jennings¹²², Greenberg¹²³ and others, and it is considered by the author elsewhere¹²⁴. Same-sex intercourse was taboo. Short of same-sex intercourse all other behaviour was permitted¹²⁵. However anything which reduced the status of male citizen, such as effeminacy was decried¹²⁶. The expressions of same-sex love were only constrained by the preservation of public respectability and the prohibition of this penetrative act.

3:2:5 Expression of Love

As with other first century Middle Eastern societies it is shown that the distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour were made between actions which were carried out for the noble pursuit of love, and those that were engaged in for the carnal abuse of sex. Unlike present day theology which demands the removal of all sexual content, it is demonstrated that these same sex loving relationships were welcomed for the quality and the depth of commitment they brought¹²⁷.

The identification of the beloved disciple in the Gospel of John makes it clear that relationship between Jesus and John was distinguished from that of the other disciples by the special nature of their love. In Judaism there was no tradition of the ascetic celibacy

¹²⁰ See for example “*The Torah's View of the Husband / Wife Relationship*”: at:

<http://www.theyeshivaworld.com/coffeeroom/topic/the-torahs-view-of-the-husband-wife-relationship>

¹²¹ Yevamot 62b: Access at http://halakhah.com/yebamoth/yebamoth_62.html

¹²² Jennings, Theodore. (2014): “*The (Alleged) Rejection of Same-sex Love*” Pp 207- 221. In “*The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality, and Gender*” Ed: Thatcher, Adrian. Oxford University Press, ISBN 0199664153, 9780199664153.

¹²³ 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.

¹²⁴ The topic is also covered in Gilchrist, S. 2011: “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf> .

¹²⁵ See Section 6:3 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”:

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

¹²⁶ See for example Paul's condemnation of “Soft Men” and Clement's use of Deuteronomy 22:5 in section 7:5:1 of this document.

¹²⁷ See Section 6:2 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”:

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

practiced by Greek and Roman society, which repudiated all passions of sex¹²⁸. The celibacy advocated by Jesus was for the purpose of removing the distractions from spreading the Gospel message which could be caused by other commitments and the obligations of family life¹²⁹. It is perhaps significant that for about the first three hundred years of its existence the focus of the Christian Church was concentrated on the condemnation of same-sex intercourse for reasons of abuse, and no other types of same-sex acts¹³⁰.

The changes in outlook towards the traditional understandings of the present day can be linked to the asceticism of the Desert Fathers in the third century¹³¹ and to the attitudes of Augustine and others which were expressed in the fourth century Church¹³². By this time the roles of women were written out of the history of the early Church¹³³. From a Gospel message which had given equality and a public ministry to women, the silencing of the public voice of women on earth was again made complete¹³⁴ and the ministry that had been given to women was denied¹³⁵. These changes have been built into the doctrines of the Church. Inside it all sex came to be regarded as an evil that was only made necessary by the Fall of Adam in the garden of Eden, and strict rules of celibacy were imposed on the religious and priests.

Corruption in the Church and attempts to impose this doctrine on society including sexual abuses by many in the priesthood, together, with their failure of to live up to this strict dogma, led to crisis and revolt just after the end of the first millennium¹³⁶. Thomas Aquinas

¹²⁸ For a description of different types of celibacy adopted by Greece, Rome and Judea, see Section 16 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

¹²⁹ For a description of the type of celibacy advocated by Jesus. See Section 16 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

¹³⁰ Gilchrist, S. 2011: "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

¹³¹ See Section 6 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

¹³² See section 8 of Gilchrist, S. (2011) "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

¹³³ Early Christianity provided an agenda for women in a society where they had not possessed any human rights. Instead of supporting any perceptions of a male superiority or the concept of an exclusively male priesthood, women occupied many prominent roles in the Gospels. They were also found in leadership roles in the early church. No limits appear to have been applied to these activities and early Christianity endorsed a level of gender fairness that would be acceptable in the present day.

¹³⁴ By the time of the fourth century women were told that they must wait in penance for the sins of Eve until they die and reach heaven, when freedom from gender comes. They could only redeem their lives on earth through childbirth, obedience or by renouncing all aspects of their femininity. Women were neither permitted to speak or teach. In place of the gender transcendence and equality that was first taught by Jesus, Peter and Paul, this was a return to the discriminatory practices of gender complementarity which originated from Judaism and Greco/Roman society, and the silencing of the public voice of women was again made complete. This also gave protection to the male dominated institutions of the Church. See sections: 2:2:5, 3:3:1 and 3:3:2 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): *An Unfinished Reformation*, which examines the writings of Tertullian and the changes in the Church. In some respects the situation was made worse for women because in Greco/Roman society the Gods and Goddesses were given equal status; while in Christianity the Virgin Mary submitted to Christ. See sections 2:1:5 and 3:3:2 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): *An Unfinished Reformation*.

¹³⁵ See for example the references to Tertullian in Section 2:3:3 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): *An Unfinished Reformation*.

¹³⁶ In 1051 the book by Peter Damian (1007-1072), "*Liber Gomorrhianus [Book of Gomorrha]*" was presented to Pope Leo IX. It is a treatise on the vices of the clergy, and was dedicated to the Pope. In it St. Peter Damian attacks same-sex practices, mutual masturbation, ejaculating between the thighs, anal copulation and solitary masturbation as subversive disruptions against moral order. The book caused considerable controversy and it aroused some enmity against its author. Even Pope Leo IX, who had at first praised the work, came to conclude that it was exaggerated. He softened Peter Damian's suggestions by excluding only the clergy who had offended repeatedly for a long period of time¹³⁶ and this did little for the reputation of the Church. See section 8:3

sought to liberalise Christian teaching on sex while at the same time restoring the authority of the Church. His reasoning endorsed sex within marriage. However it strongly condemned lust and all sex outside it. This is despite the fact that marriage was not made a sacrament of the Church which compulsorily had to be ratified by a priest until after the Council of Trent, which ran from 1545 to 1563¹³⁷. Carnal abuse was of course still condemned but the act of marriage became the defining boundary between use and abuse in all sexual behaviour for the Christian Church. That interpretation conflicts with the first century understanding where, as it has already been noted, sexual moralities were not primarily determined on a gendered basis: Instead, the distinction was made between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. By restricting this first century definition of purpose and intention, sexual and gender abuse became defined by this legal act. This is the foundation of the contradictions, and for the paradigm shift that has occurred.

3:3 Learning and Philosophy

3:3:1 Jewish Learning

In attitudes to learning and philosophy there were large differences in approach between the Jewish and Greco/Roman traditions. In classical Greek philosophy celibacy and asceticism was greatly valued as a way to promote the rationality of argument by avoiding the passions of sex. In place of the abstract discussion in Greek society, the Jews adopted a didactic approach to learning and study. The “Pairs”¹³⁸ or Zugot culture in Judaism also created a situation where close personal bonding could occur. Talmudic study in Judaism traditionally employed Chavruta partnerships, where pairs of scholars or students worked together to learn, discuss and to debate a shared text. The rabbis inside the academies repeatedly encouraged their students to adopt ever increasing degrees of intimacy, and no rules for first century Chavruta partnerships are found which establish any boundaries that approve of intense heterosexual friendships on the one hand, and disapprove of homosexual relationships on the other. Indeed these concepts would not have been understood. Judaism had dictated that there must be no anal penetration. However within these relationships all other types of sexual acts, together with their expressions of love and intimacy could be accepted. Thus anal penetration was the boundary that could not be crossed, and those people who offended against this could be harshly condemned for a “lack of respect”¹³⁹. No other physical sexual acts between two men are forbidden, either by Jewish law and its teachings or in the bible itself. The deeper the relationship the more valued the chavruta

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

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

¹³⁷ The Council of Trent demanded for the first time that the ceremonies of marriage had to be conducted by a priest. Marriage before that period was essentially a civil contract. Often it was only solemnised when significant property issues were involved, otherwise a simple announcement by the couple might be made. In Christian terms, it was not a sacrament which was instituted by Christ himself. See Sections 2:1:2 and 4:2 of Gilchrist, S .2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> .

¹³⁸ See section 3:3:2 of this document: Also Section 3:2:3 of Gilchrist, S .2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> .

¹³⁹ The word chavruta, like marriage, came to be used in the singular to describe two people in a relationship. The Talmud (Yevamot 62b) states that 12,000 pairs (sic) of students of Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph (ca.50–ca.135 AD) died of plague between Passover and Shavuot, “because they did not treat one another with respect”. The context of the passage indicates that each pair of students formed a chavruta. The text also implies that this plague was diphtheria, but this may be a disguise for sexual misbehaviour, and for the massacres that took place after the Jewish Revolt in 70 A.D. See section 3:2:3 of Gilchrist, S .2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

partnership became, and it is reported that the bonds between such same-sex partners could often be stronger than those in a heterosexual marriage¹⁴⁰.

3:3:2 Relationships in Rabbinic Partnerships

In Jewish history the Zugot¹⁴¹ period lasted from about 515 BC to around 70 AD. This was a time when Jewish religious leadership was in the hands of successive pairs of male teachers, and deep male pair bonding could occur. There are many instances of close rabbinic relationships in Jewish history to which the present day definitions of heterosexuality, bisexuality or homosexuality cannot be applied¹⁴². Perhaps the most notable of the later relationships is the medieval one between Resh Lakesh (Rashi) and Rabbi Yonathan. However these expressions of intense same-sex affection were also very familiar to the rabbis at the time of Jesus and in the early Christian era. Jesus is described as a rabbi in John 3:2. In a separate second century quotation, John is also described as a priest¹⁴³. A point of key interest is that of knowing how these traditions applied to Jesus himself, There was a major rabbinic centre of learning at Sepphoris; about four miles from Nazareth, and the way in which Jesus impressed the priests in the temple in Jerusalem at the age of 12 years suggest that he was well versed in such didactic techniques (Luke 2:41-52).

This study shows that the relationship between Jesus and John had many of the characteristics of a first century rabbinic partnership¹⁴⁴. The obvious question then to be asked is who any Chavruta partner of Jesus was? While the answer must be supposition, the most obvious candidate is that of the Apostle John. Throughout John's Gospel, he is given special status as the disciple who Jesus loved. Any thought or idea of this love being anything more than just an ascetic friendship is vehemently denied by the present day Christian Church)¹⁴⁵ ¹⁴⁶. However a re-examination of the key text (John 21:15-17) using the

¹⁴⁰ For a full account see section 2:5 of Gilchrist, S. 2013: "An Unfinished Reformation". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> .

¹⁴¹ The term Zugot simply refers to pairs.

¹⁴² 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". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf> .

¹⁴³ The idea that John was a rabbi or priest is supported by a second-century quote of Polycrates of Ephesus (c. 130-196) which is recorded by Eusebius in his Church History: "John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and, being a priest, wore the sacerdotal plate. He fell asleep at Ephesus". (Eusebius. (260/265 – 339/340): "Church History". Book V, Chapter 24:2)

¹⁴⁴ For more details of this from the Jewish perspective, 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

¹⁴⁵ In John 21:15-17 Jesus uses the word Agápē on the first two occasions when he asks Peter if he loves him, to which he receives an affirmative but uncommitted response. Peter uses the word Phileo when he replies both times. However on the third occasion Peter's response becomes enthusiastic when Jesus reframes his question by using the word Phileo instead. The present day Church interpretation defines the word Agápē as the spiritual self-sacrificing ascetic and non-sexual love through which Jesus calls Peter to love His Church. It is shown in the following footnotes that this was not the first century understanding.

¹⁴⁶ 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 Agápē 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 present day definition of Agápē represents. In English both of Phileo and Agápē 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 Agápē 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. See Section 6:2 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

results of this neurophysiological and psychological study, challenges that assumption. When this text is considered together with the historic changes in the interpretation of the word “Agape”, a rather different conclusion is found^{147 148 149}.

This result suggests that something stronger than friendship did exist¹⁵⁰. There are other indications which point to the nature of their relationship. Neither Jesus nor John married, which was unusual for the time. Another is the representation of John as the beardless disciple. Christian teaching reasons that the absence of a beard was because John was so young, however in Greek society the maximum age at which pederasty could be practiced was set by the age at which the junior partner in this sexual relationship was first able to grow a beard. There is no suggestion that Jesus and John ever practiced this: John is described as a virgin by Tertullian¹⁵¹, also in the Pistis Sophia¹⁵² and in other early texts.

¹⁴⁷ The interpretations of Agápē which are used in the present day describe it as the type of spiritual self-sacrificing ascetic and ascending love for people and for the Church. This specifically excludes the expression of any form of sexual passion. However the arguments for this 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 *ahabā*) 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. That is in marked contrast the current Christian definition of the word. Agápē therefore means more than friendship for it allows the expression of responsible sexual affection as well.

¹⁴⁸ In addition to the Jewish interpretation, 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” for their younger partners (Davidson, James. (2009); *The Greeks and Greek Love: A Bold New Exploration of the Ancient World*: Random House. ISBN-10: 0375505164. ISBN-13: 978-0375505164). Dover also writes that: “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”. Dover also rejects the Christian interpretation. (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).

¹⁴⁹ *Phileo* is the love of friendship family and home. However the opening up of the definition of the word Agápē to include a sexual content immediately gives possible new meanings to the word-play which was used by Jesus in John 21:15-17. This affirms that Jesus and John both loved Jesus, but that they did so in different ways. It also confirms that and in the relationship between Jesus and John there was a special intimacy, with some sort of sexual element involved. The structure of this passage also provides a deeper meaning, for it clearly positions the relationships between the two disciples by affirming the supremacy of Peter and the Church in Rome, while at the same time authenticating the use of the term “The disciple who Jesus loved” in John’s Gospel. It demonstrates the unique nature of this Gospel and it also shows why, and in what way, the Gospel of John should be regarded as complementary to the Synoptic texts. If John’s Gospel is indeed the product of such a relationship then, as shown later in this account, it is a unique and intimate account of the ministry of Jesus, which has a depth which reaches far beyond that which any other relationship could bring. So instead of reacting with a condemnation or a disapproval of the possibility of any form of same-sex intimacy, perhaps an offer of thanks for the understanding this brings is more appropriate response.

¹⁵⁰ The full reasons for these changes are discussed in Gilchrist, S. (2014): “*Christianity and Crisis: An Overview of Gender and Sexual Difference in the Early and Modern Christian Church*”: Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/017B-ChristianityAndCrisisOverview.pdf> ; Gilchrist, S. (2011) “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same Sex Relationships*”. Also: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>. And: Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

¹⁵¹ In the “Acts of John” it is said that John was called by Jesus as a young man and his virginity was repeatedly emphasised. This was probably written not later than 150 AD. (Lalleman, Pieter J. (1998): “*The Acts of John: A*

That is almost certainly correct¹⁵³. The Greek practice of pederasty was anathema to Jewish Society. The Jewish condemnations of pederasty were vitriolic¹⁵⁴. Their attacks on of same-sex intercourse could be extreme and for Christianity to gain the respectability it sought in Roman society, even the slightest suggestion of this had to be vigorously denied¹⁵⁵. The Christian Church regarded the beardlessness of John to be a symbol of his virginity, this is discussed more fully in section 3:15 of this document; however the allusion to pederasty would also be understood¹⁵⁶.

3:3:3 Christian Equivalents

The early Christians considered themselves to be Jews. They did not see themselves as a separate sect, and the early Christian Church continued to support the Jewish attitudes to gender and sex. An almost exact parallel to the relationships found in rabbinic partnerships occurs in the services of Adelphopoiesis or “Brother Making” which took place in the Christian Church. Anecdotal evidence for these is available from the fourth century, but liturgies from the later centuries do survive. There were a variety of relationships¹⁵⁷. The church liturgies contained many elements that were common to a marriage ceremony but they were not marriages¹⁵⁸. Unlike the contractual relationships of first century heterosexual marriages, they had to be seen as a relationship between two equals. Anal penetration was totally prohibited, but all other intimacies were allowed. Nevertheless it is noted in this analysis that the bonds could be as strong as those in a marriage. The paradox is that these relationships had more in common with present day attitudes to marriage than any first century heterosexual marriages could permit¹⁵⁹.

3:4 Teaching and Relationships

3:4:1 Cross-Cultural Challenges

One of the strengths of Christianity is that it has always sought to adapt to its surroundings to accommodate the cultural traditions that exist. In the first century that involved the creation of a path through the cultural clashes between Greek, Roman and Jewish societies. Thus an important area to consider is the attitude to cultural transformations that was taken by Jesus himself. A further key issue that must be addressed is to ask what the attitude to anal penetration should be if the power structures of gender unequal and despotic societies are rendered ineffective or if they disappear.

Two-stage Initiation Into Johannine Gnosticism: Peeters Publishers, 1998: ISBN 9042905735, 9789042905733. Tertullian (c.155 – c.240) was also probably among the first to commit to writing the identification of John as a virgin. See “*The history of John, the son of Zebedee The apostle and evangelist*”.

http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/apocryphal_acts_02_john_history.htm

¹⁵² Pistis Sophia. (200-255): Translated with Commentary by G. R. S. Mead. London: J. M. Watkins: Revised Second Edition. Access at: <http://gnosis.org/library/psoph.htm>

¹⁵³ See section 3:5:2 of this document for more details.

¹⁵⁴ For the condemnation of pederasty by Philo of Alexandria in his Special Laws Book III 37-39, 137-139, see: Yonge, C. D. (1993). “*The works of Philo: Complete and unabridged*”: Hendrickson Publishers (August 1, 1993): ISBN-10: 0943575931 ISBN-13: 978-0943575933

¹⁵⁵ See Section 8 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”:

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

¹⁵⁶ See section 3:5:2 of this document.

¹⁵⁷ Bray, Alan (2003) “*The Friend*” University of Chicago Press.

¹⁵⁸ For a full account see section 3:2:5 of Gilchrist, S. 2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at:

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ For a full discussion of this, and of its implications see Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*Reform and the Christian Church*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/008B-ReformChristianChurchArticle.pdf>

Both of these questions appear to be covered in the story of the Centurion and the slave which is given in Luke, Chapter 7:1-10 and Matthew, Chapter 8:5-13. Centurions had servants or slaves to satisfy their personal needs¹⁶⁰. To avoid compromising relationships in occupied countries these provided services of sexual satisfaction¹⁶¹. The Greek word "pais" was often used by first century non-Christian Greek writers to describe a junior partner in a pederastic relationship. The use of this word for the servant or slave in this bible passage strongly suggests that a physical relationship was expected, though not specifically by these two people themselves¹⁶². In these particular passages Jesus is reaching out across the

¹⁶⁰ That included sex. The ideal recruit into the Roman army was about 17 or 18 in age, and had to be unmarried. Most civilians in the Empire usually married between the ages of 15 and 20, so all young recruits into the legions would have not have had any serious relationship commitments at home. A "concupinus" was a young male slave who was sexually exploited by his unmarried master as a sexual partner. These relationships could easily translate into army life. (See section 3:7 of this document for the Roman attitude to slavery). Marriage was prohibited to anyone of the rank of Centurion and below. However many, if not most of the soldiers had common-law wives. These women were variously free-born Roman women, slave girls, or civilians who had been taken on campaign. Soldiers made wide use of female slaves and prisoners, who were used as sexual partners and companions. There were official military prostitutes. Little is known about these prostitutes, except that their quality of life must have been horrific. Most were probably captives taken from conquered and depopulated areas. Being added to a military brothel was, much like service in the mines for male captives - effectively a death-sentence. That could satisfy the appetites of ordinary soldiers. However there had to be differences between officers and other ranks. In occupied countries which were at peace, Centurions also exercised significant governing powers over freeborn members of those societies. Like any free and respectable Roman male of status, the Roman soldier was expected to show the same self-discipline in matters of sex. However Centurions were not allowed to marry. For them the demand for responsibility meant that opportunities for sexual exploitation were more limited than they were for any foot soldier, and here the "concupinus" or the "pais" could play an important role. Military officers on campaign might also 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 .

¹⁶¹ 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. Same-sex relationships among fellow soldiers in the Roman army violated the Roman decorum against intercourse with other freeborn males and it was punishable by clubbing to death. This was unlike Greece where same-sex relationships between soldiers were strongly encouraged, 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> . For more background information on the role of the military see: Phang, Sara Elise (2001): "*The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 B.C.–A.D. 235): 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.

¹⁶² Pederasty was practiced in Greek society. To understand why these cultural clashes are important, 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. It has been noted that because of the responsibility that was expected, a Centurion in occupied countries was discouraged or prevented from having unrestrained sexual relationships with the local population. Providing sexual satisfaction was an accepted duty of a Roman slave, and any first century Jew, Greek or Roman who heard the word pais in this context would know precisely what the Gospel writers meant. The role of the Centurion in peacetime was to provide civil governance and authority; and the civil duties of this centurion are fully expressed in the bible story. 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. Nevertheless it is important to note that the story as it is presented in the bible does not demand that this particular Centurion and his slave engaged in these acts. There were other words that could have been used if the condemnation of same-sex intercourse 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 fully considered. The word is frequently employed elsewhere in the New Testament, (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), but in all of these passages it is used in the Jewish context to describe a boy, youth, girl, maiden, servant, slave, attendant or minister. However, in this passage Jesus was crossing the cultural boundaries between Jewish and Greco/Roman societies. 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. Pais is a Greek word and when it is seen from the Greek perspective, a different meaning is applied.

cultural boundaries and the impact of the cultural clashes encountered in this passage must be carefully considered in terms of what is regarded as acceptable behaviour and how the word "pais" is defined^{163 164}.

In this story the importance of love and care is emphasized. Jesus would have known that acts of same-sex intercourse would be expected by society, and he neither makes reference to, nor does he demand the prohibition of any sexual act¹⁶⁵. This interpretation is challenged

¹⁶³ Pederasty was commonly practiced in Greco/Roman society but it was absolutely abhorred in Judaism. When this word "pais" is used in the Jewish context, or to describe the actions of any Jew, no allusions to the practice of pederasty could ever be allowed. That restriction did not apply to Greco/Roman society and these cultural differences are extremely important in determining the correct interpretation of the word. It has already been noted that in Greco/Roman society the word pais was applied to the junior partner in a pederastic relationship. Neill for example indicates that, the Greek term "pais" used for the servant almost always had this sexual connotation (Neil, James (2008): "*The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies*": McFarland, ISBN 0786452471, 9780786452477: Pages 216, 197, 180-181. See also: Sergent, Bernard. (1986): "*Homosexuality in Greek Myth*" Beacon Press, Boston, ISBN 10: 0807057002 / ISBN 13: 9780807057001). Dover additionally supports this viewpoint. In addition he indicates that the word pais is often linked to situations where the Greek noun erastes, 'lover', for the senior partner is used (Dover, K.J. (1978): "*Greek Homosexuality*": Harvard University Press, Cambridge, page 16, 85-86, 165. A copy of this may be downloaded at: https://tajakramberger.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/k-j-_dover_greek_homosexuality_updated_and_witbookfi-org.pdf). Mader additionally gives a thorough discussion on how the terms pais and entimos doulos are employed (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. This may be downloaded at: http://www.williamapercy.com/wiki/images/The_entimos_pais_of_matthew_studies_of_homosexuality_volume_1_2.pdf). The Gospel writers were writing in Greek for Greek and Roman societies. To apply the restrictions of Judaism to the use of the word pais without explanation in the societies would not be understood, and it is therefore argued that the Greek definition must be used.

¹⁶⁴ 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 where male domination by a Roman citizen was expected. Therefore in Roman society any pederast 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 moral 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.

¹⁶⁵ 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. As if to emphasise that point in verse 10 of Matthew's account, he says of the Centurion; "I have not found faith this great anywhere in Israel." Matthew and Luke were also writing for a society in which the Greco/Roman understanding would be expected. How these passages are interpreted goes to the heart of what was permissible in terms of same-sex relationships. If Matthew and Luke had wanted the more restricted Jewish interpretation of the word pais to be used they would have had to specify that restriction. They did not do so and their limitations are carefully defined within the story itself. Symbolism is also important. The story can also be read in two ways, either as an account of a particular incident or in symbolic terms where the Centurion stands as representation of the Greco/Roman culture values. It is the consequences of the abuses of power which are challenged in this story. In it the

by others in society¹⁶⁶ but is also entirely in line with the teaching of Jesus on the New Covenant, where the Jewish doctrines based on the letter of the law are now to be interpreted in the light of love and the intention of the acts. The Jewish Midrashim traditions likewise apply two meanings to any text. One of these is what it meant in the original context and the other is what it means at the relevant time.

3:4:2 Marriage and Same-sex Relationships

Almost all of the passages related to sex in the New Testament exalt faithfulness in marriage and condemn fornication and abusive sex. The Council of Jerusalem (or Apostolic Conference) held in Jerusalem around the year 50 AD decided that Gentile converts to Christianity were not required to keep most of the Law of Moses. However it affirmed the prohibitions on fornication and idolatry, eating blood, meat containing blood, and meat of animals not properly slain; (Acts; Chapter 15). The attitude of Jesus to heterosexual relationships¹⁶⁷ is also quite clear, and passages such as those in Genesis 1:27 Genesis 5:2 and Genesis 2:22-24 are used to argue that the separation of male from female is divinely ordained. In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus states: "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will

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 same-sex relationship existed, within which same-sex intercourse could (but not necessarily did) take place. A conclusion of the neurophysiological and psychological part of this analysis is that in loving and faithful relationships 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.

¹⁶⁶ Other biblical scholars dismiss any suggestions of a homosexual theme as deliberately distorted interpretations of the text. See: (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.robgagnon.net/articles/ReformedReviewArticleWhyTheDisagreement.pdf> . Marston argues that in line with the weight of other scriptural evidence, Jesus would not have condoned any homosexual relationship, (Marston, P. (1995): "*Dear Peter Tatchell*": *The Independent*, Tuesday 21 March); while others suggest that even if the relationship had been homosexual, his lack of condemnation does not necessarily equate to his approval of them. Another approach is cited in a blog where it is alleged that a much better way to understand the centurion's servant is that he was perhaps an adopted or secret son. There is some credence to this argument as Centurions were not permitted to marry. 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. Matthew and Luke would have had to impose more restrictions on their accounts if that is what was meant. A further explanation offered is that this was the Centurion's adopted son. See for example: <http://hipandthigh.blogspot.co.uk/2007/02/centurions-servant.html>). However again there are difficulties with the words that are used. It is worth noting that similar explanations of adoption are offered to explain away any possibility of condoning same-sex relationships in the Christian ceremonies of Adelphopoiesis, or "Brother Making" which were conducted during the first millennium and after by the Christian Church. Proving something by silence is always more difficult than when a direct statement is made. However other evidence may also be used. The separate analyses on the prohibitions of Leviticus, Paul's condemnations of same-sex activities, the declaration of Jesus on marriage and eunuchs in Matthew 19:12 and the use of the word Agápē in the first century Christian context, all lead to the same result. In all cases this shows 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 qualification to everybody, including to all gender and sexually variant people who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves, and who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ. 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.

¹⁶⁷ The word marriage is not used here because that had a different meaning in first century society from what is understood today. It was essentially a civil contract binding both parties. No priestly presence or religious affirmation was required until after the Council of Trent in. Betrothal was more significant in this context since it was from that time onwards that sexual fidelity was demanded.

leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." Mark repeats this in equivalent terms; (Mark 10:6-9). When he was challenged on divorce, Jesus replied in Matthew 19:8, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning". Matthew 5:31-32 states: "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (NRSV). Equivalent statements are made in Matthew 19:9, Mark 10:11-12, and Luke 16:18. For Jesus the ideal was to remain unmarried, on the grounds that the distractions of marriage and family life impede the ability to spread the Gospel message¹⁶⁸. This type of celibacy is different from the traditions of celibacy argued for in the later Christian Church. That sought to avoid the passions of sex¹⁶⁹. However, in Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus condemns feelings of lust experienced by a man towards a woman. Here Jesus is recorded as saying: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart." In John 8:1-11 a meeting is described between Jesus, doctors of the Law, Pharisees, and a woman who has been caught in adultery. The Mosaic Law, (Leviticus 20:10, and Deuteronomy 22:22) required that she must be executed by stoning. The passage in Deuteronomy is quite definite: "both the man...and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel." They asked Jesus what should be done with the woman. He recommended that the thrower of the first stone be required to be without sin. Since no individual is without sin, his suggestion is equivalent to pardoning the woman. The religious leaders depart, leaving Jesus and the woman in the midst of the crowd. Jesus then asks the woman if anyone has condemned her. When she answers that no one has condemned her, Jesus says that he, too, does not condemn her, and in this story he tells her to go and sin no more.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, Colossians 3:18-19 and Ephesians 5:22-33, models the Christian married life. That approach is also endorsed in 1 Peter 3:1-6 and Hebrews 13:4-7. These are strong statements and given the traditional teaching of the Christian Church, some sort of similar statement on gender and sexually variant behaviour might also be expected. Today the presumption is made that an absolute condemnation is applied¹⁷⁰. However a complete silence in the teaching of Jesus seems to reign and those who wish to condemn gender and sexually variant behaviour to be invariably sinful have to rely on the traditions of the Church, Paul's comments and the prohibitions of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 instead. That silence is challenged in this analysis. Up to two thousand years of this presumption have reinforced that condemnation and in this analysis it is shown that changes in word meaning, translation drift and re-interpretation have had the effect of limiting the relevance of certain texts.

3:4:3 Challenging the Silence

It may be surprising to some that the analysis presented in this document supports the traditional theological arguments which are given in the section above. However it also

¹⁶⁸ Traditions of celibacy in Judaism: See Section 16 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

¹⁶⁹ Traditions of celibacy in Greece and Rome: See Section 16 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

¹⁷⁰ It is of interest to hypothesise. According to the traditional understanding it could be presumed that Jesus would have asked those engaging in gender and sexually variant behaviour if anyone has condemned them. When they too answer that no one has condemned them, Jesus would then be presumed to say that he does not condemn them, and he tells them to go and sin no more. The actions of Jesus contradict this presumed expectation. There is no corresponding condemnation of same-sex acts.

supports the results of the neurophysiological and psychological analysis. This shows that a moral duality exists, whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways which conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies can be highly regarded, while those who misuse these relationships are to be very severely condemned for their acts. In this analysis it is demonstrated that this contradiction does not occur either because the theology or the neuroscience is wrong, but because of the ways in which the silence is interpreted. At present this silence is assumed to indicate the total abhorrence of all cross-gender behaviour and all types of same-sex acts of sex. That is entirely understandable because of the gross abuse of same-sex acts of sex within first century society: particularly in Roman society. However it is not the whole story.

The prohibitions of Leviticus have been discussed in section 3:2 of this document. It is shown that they relate to the abuses of power in relationships between people and between societies. It is these abuses power which give permission for the abuse of sex. Sexual abuse was rife, but the condemnations related to the social consequences, not to an intrinsic horror of the act. It is further shown that these prohibitions refer only to anal penetration and no other same-sex act of sex. Paul sets his condemnations in Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1Timothy 1:10, in the context of sexual abuse, and he refers his reader to Leviticus as the foundation for his arguments. Therefore Paul's own condemnations are bounded by these same conditions¹⁷¹. A more complete discussion is given in section 4:5:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*". Rather than being defined on a gendered basis, sexual morality was judged on disruptions to the social order and on the purpose of the acts. For this reason it is shown in section 3:2:1, that the present day labels of heterosexuality and homosexuality cannot be applied. These concerns about how Christianity and the Christian Church managed its relationships with the society around it are discussed in detail in a further article in this series¹⁷². However it is necessary to return to the teaching and example of Jesus himself.

Three main aspects of the teaching of Jesus have been considered. The first relates to the attitude of Jesus to eunuchs, both in Judaism and to the self-castrated Roman priests, as is described in Matthew 19:12. Most present day interpretations regard this passage as an exhortation to celibacy in pursuit of the Gospel message¹⁷³. However it is necessary to get back to the relationships between power and sex that a first century reader would have understood. Thus in section 3:1:4 of this document it is shown that all people who seek to follow the teaching of Jesus must be accepted in their own right: and this is without regard to

¹⁷¹ Section 4:5:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*". Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm> . Paul's main condemnations are contained in Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1Timothy 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. 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. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*" for a more complete account.

¹⁷² Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*" in Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*": Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

¹⁷² See Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*" in Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*": Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm> .

¹⁷³ See for example: <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/19-12.htm>

their gender identities, self-castration and other physical transformations that they make. In section 3:3:2 it is pointed out that, in the Gospel of John, the special nature of the love of John by Jesus, and the intimacies of their relationship are feely expressed. In addition it is demonstrated that the understanding of this has been distorted in Christian interpretation by the way in which translation drift and re-interpretation has enabled the definition of the word Agápē to be changed; from that which is used in the original Hebrew bible and the Greek Septuagint, where it describes a committed and faithful love that can find its fulfilment in sex, into the present day definition of a spiritual and non-sexual type of higher love, which denies all passions of sex¹⁷⁴. The same type of translation drift and re-interpretation¹⁷⁵ has enabled the original specific condemnation of anal penetration in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13¹⁷⁶ where, in the first century same-sex intercourse was the only prohibited act¹⁷⁷ into today's condemnations of all gender variant and same-sex relationships and acts.

In section 3:3:3 it is further demonstrated that the relationships between Jesus and John displayed many of the characteristics of a first century Jewish Rabbinic partnership, and that relationships similar to these partnerships were later solemnised in services of Adelphopoiesis inside the Christian Church. In these cases, same-sex love could be expressed between two men as equals, effeminacy was disparaged, but the only prohibition was anal penetrative sex¹⁷⁸. Other restrictions on this do not seem to have had a serious effect until the asceticism of the Desert Fathers and the censures applied to all sex by the fourth century Church. In section 3:4:1 it is further shown in the story of the Centurion and the slave that in loving and committed relationships where the dynamics of power are absent there should be no automatic prohibition of any same-sex act¹⁷⁹. That includes anal penetrative sex.

These are challenging views, but they support the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study. It is shown that the prohibition of same-sex intercourse arose from the abuses of power in and between gender unequal and discriminatory societies, and when that is absent these cease to have effect. Therefore from a theological as well as a social and psychological point of view it is demonstrated that a moral duality exists whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways which conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies can be highly regarded, while those who misuse these relationships can be very severely condemned for their acts.

3:4:4 Second Best Choice

There is a further challenge in these passages¹⁸⁰. The close conjunction of the statements on marriage and eunuchs in Matthew 19:10-12 suggests that these two statements should be considered together. Both of them are included in the same sentence; the directly

¹⁷⁴ See Section 6:2 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*":

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

¹⁷⁵ See section 3:2:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access via:

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

¹⁷⁶ which Jesus and Paul would have known.

¹⁷⁷ Translation drift and reinterpretation in bible passages has occurred from the outset. This applies to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the most obvious passage in the bible which, in present day understanding, appear to condemn all types of same-sex relationships. For example, in the Living Bible this is translated as "Homosexuality is absolutely forbidden, for it is an enormous sin". The King James Bible instead translates Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 as "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." The first century interpretation, which Jesus John and Paul would have known apply the condemnation exclusively to anal penetration in the context of sexual abuse, and to no other same-sex act of sex.

¹⁷⁸ See Section 6 of Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*":

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

¹⁷⁹ Section 3:4:1 of this document

¹⁸⁰ See also section 3:1:4 of this document.

equivalent form of words is also used, and the Jewish Midrashim tradition of interpretation imposes a very careful structuring that demands a close reading of any biblical text. In regard to marriage, the usual interpretation which is given to this passage states that Jesus considered that marriage should be treated as a “Second best” option. However when they are interpreted under the Midrashim traditions, the closely linked nature of the textural relationships between the two statements additionally implies that the people “Who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” should be treated in the same way¹⁸¹. Therefore this extreme action of self-castration should not be condemned outright, but be treated like another kind of “Second best” approach¹⁸². By the same token all gender and sexually variant people who seek to live lives that are true to themselves and to the Gospel message are fully accepted in the Love of Christ.

3:4:5 Jesus and the New Covenant

In Matthew 5:17 it is stated that Jesus Christ came to fulfil the Law of Moses and create a New Covenant between God and his people. The old covenant was written in stone, but the new covenant is written on our hearts, made possible only by faith in Christ, who shed His own blood to atone for the sins of the world, (Luke 22:20). In the teaching of Jesus the Jewish doctrines based on the letter of the law are now to be interpreted in the light of love and the intention of the acts. This essence of Christian doctrine is summed up by Paul in Galatians 3: 26-28 where he states: “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”. No qualification is imposed in this statement.

In this analysis the prohibitions of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, Deuteronomy 22:5 and the statements by Paul have been examined from the perspectives of the teaching of Jesus, the neurophysiological and psychological study, the doctrines of the New Covenant and the Jewish Midrashim traditions¹⁸³. It is shown that the reason for the prohibition of anal penetration arose because of the abuses of power between subject and dominant societies, and this gave permission for the abuse of sex. When these abuses of power are absent the prohibitions cease to have effect.

This is a wide ranging analysis which has looked at Church history and theology from different perspectives. All of these support the conclusions 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

¹⁸¹ Judaism has always forbidden all forms of castration. Among the nations of antiquity, the Jews alone imposed a religious prohibition on the emasculation of men and even animals. The Bible directly refers to the ban on castration by excluding castrated animals from serving as sacrifices on the altar (Lev. 22:24), also by banning a descendant of Aaron "who has his stones crushed" from the priestly service (Lev. 21:20), and a man "that is crushed or maimed in his privy parts" from entering into "the assembly of the Lord" (Deut. 23:2). In the Talmud (Shab. 110b–111a) and codes (e.g., Sh. Ar. EH 5:11–14), the biblical interdict is widely extended to cover any deliberate impairment of the male reproductive organs in domestic animals, beasts, birds, and man, including the castration of a person who is already impotent or genitally maimed (Encyclopaedia Judaica. 2008 , Gale Group. ISBN 13: 9780028659282. ISBN 10: 0028659287). However the need to accommodate people who had been castrated was important since the practice was widespread across the Middle East. The Bible and the Talmud carefully defines how such people were to be treated.

¹⁸² Close same-sex unions are also encountered in Jewish Rabbinic partnerships. In these it has been shown that all same-sex acts given in love were permitted except that of anal penetrative sex. The extension of this to self-castration was a very challenging statement for a Jewish society where the act of castration by others, let alone by oneself, was abhorred. For a full account see Section 3:2 of Gilchrist, S. 2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm .

¹⁸³ See sections 7:12 and 8:8 of Gilchrist, (S. 2015): *Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*.

are true to themselves; must be accepted in their own right. All sexual behaviour is governed by the purity of intention and there is no automatic condemnation of any same-sex act.

3:5 Adaptations

The following sections summarise some of the material contained in the fourth paper of the series: Gilchrist, S. (2016): *"Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church"*¹⁸⁴.

3:5:1 Social Challenges and Respect

Obtaining respect and integration within Greco/Roman society was always going to be a major challenge for a religion where its founder was put to death because he confronted the authority of the institutions of his own society. Without compromise Jesus usurped the power structures on which that society was built. From his own identification with the poor, women, the rejected and the outcast Jesus likewise turned the demands of 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. However the message Jesus gave in the Gospels was to work within society to transform it. That gave Peter, Paul and the early Church a difficult choice. This did not stop the early Church from attacking without compromise, the abuses and inequities within Roman society¹⁸⁵ but it meant that it had to work within the framework which that society set¹⁸⁶.

For the early Church the Parousia, or the second coming, with the end of the world, was expected to occur very soon after the death of Jesus. Therefore at first there was no need to conform to the social demands of society, and Paul's statement in Galatians 3:25 states in full the hopes and the beliefs which the teaching of Jesus had brought. However the first written records now available are those of Paul¹⁸⁷ and these were written some nineteen years after Jesus had died. By this time the practical needs of Christianity also had to be satisfied. In order to spread the Gospel message as quickly and effectively as possible, this meant minimising disruption to the framework of Roman society. It also meant obtaining that society's respect. It is often considered that the compromises that were made were those which were needed to meet the needs of Roman society. It is instead argued in this analysis that the Christian Church made use of the attitudes to gender complementarity that were already present inside Jewish society as the model to base the doctrines it sought to adopt.

This Jewish approach considered men and women to be different in essence, but equal in value¹⁸⁸. That distinction framed the gender differentiation and discrimination which occurred in Judaism¹⁸⁹. What the Christian ideal of gender complementarity meant is described by

¹⁸⁴ Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

¹⁸⁵ For Paul the power of the Gospel message to attack the abuses of the authorities was greater than that of any insurrection

¹⁸⁶ See for example Romans 13:1-7

¹⁸⁷ First and Second Thessalonians 5:2 AD

¹⁸⁸ Gilchrist, S. (2015): *"Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>. In a voluntary capacity this form of gender complementarity may work satisfactorily. Indeed it may be entirely appropriate for everyday use, but when it is compulsorily enforced, severe gender discrimination against women almost inevitably occurs.

¹⁸⁹ Gilchrist, S. (2015): *"Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>. Also Gilchrist, S. (2011): *"Issues on the*

Peter in 1 Peter 3:1-16. There was a parallel in Roman society. In Rome, the Gods and Goddesses had equal status, but on earth great gender discrimination took place. The issue for the Church was not to challenge the gender complementarity that already existed, but to find ways to express it in the true vision of the Gospel of Christian Love. It is seen from the letter to Philemon that the initial aim of the early Church was to seek to fulfil the true message of the Gospel inside it, (as Paul expressed it in Galatians 3:28), while conforming to the social requirements of society outside the Church.

This was not just Peter and Paul's initiative. By taking this approach, Peter and Paul were following the advice given by Jeremiah to the Israelites at the time of the exile: (Jeremiah 29:7). "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare". Jeremiah also had something to say about the compromises that were required: (Jeremiah 21:8-9): "This is what the Lord says: See; I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Whoever stays in the city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; they will escape with their lives". Jeremiah had asked the Israelites to choose between two evils. Peter and Paul adopted a pragmatic policy in their attempts to gain the respectability that was needed to spread the Gospel message to the world. This compromise of gender complementarity sacrificed the radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sexuality for the respectability of the Church.

Adopting these models of gender complementarity meant that the submission of women to men in public life was expected. This is explicitly set out in words which are attributed to Paul and Peter in the New Testament¹⁹⁰. Paul's condemnation of "Soft men" should likewise be noted¹⁹¹ and the use of Deuteronomy 22:5 by Clement of Alexandria reinforces the principle that in order for Christianity to gain respect in the patristic Roman Empire, a complete endorsement of masculinity in clothes, behaviour and manner by its male followers was required¹⁹². A further unexpected result of this analysis is that it acknowledges the Apostolic Authority which is given to the traditional teaching on gender complementarity adopted in the present day Catholic Church. The reasons for this are discussed in section 3:5:3 of this document and in sections 4:5:3 to 4:5:6 of Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*"¹⁹³. It is shown that the need to make these compromises was recognised from an early date.

If one priority was establishing this type of respectability in a male dominated society, a second was dealing with the abuses of sex. Sexual abuse, which included the abuse of same-sex intercourse for the enforcement of power and domination, were of great concern to Judaism and the Christian Church. All abuses were violently condemned, although in respect of same-sex intercourse, the early Church did make distinctions between the

Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ See section 3:5: "Understanding, Discipline and Doctrine": of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*": Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

¹⁹¹ See section 3:1:2: "First Century Greek and Roman Attitudes" of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*": Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

¹⁹² Around AD 195 Clement of Alexandria wrote: "What is the purpose in the Law's prohibition against a man wearing woman's clothing? Is it not that the Law would have us to be masculine and not to be effeminate in either person or actions - or in thought and word? Rather, it would have the man who devotes himself to the truth to be masculine both in acts of endurance and patience - in life, conduct, word, and discipline". Clement of Alexandria (ca 195): "The Paedagogus: The Instructor (Book III)". Translated by William Wilson: From Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2: Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe: Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885: Also available [27 November 2012] at: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02093.htm>

¹⁹³ Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

dominant and subservient partners¹⁹⁴. That was of particular importance when the sexual abuse of slaves and people of lesser status was an accepted practice in Roman society.

3:5:2 Moral Duality

The moral duality which has been shown to be present in the teaching of Jesus and in the neurophysiological and psychological study gave rise to further concerns. The consequence of accepting the existence this moral duality is that it turns the acts of same-sex intercourse into something that Jesus did not do, instead of something that he could not do. The slightest suggestion any act of same-sex intercourse took place between Jesus and John would also have defined their relationship as one between a subject and dominant sexual partner. Under Judean traditions both partners, (particularly the dominant partner) would be condemned, and with Roman expectations; the submissive partner alone would have been exclusively condemned for this act. The lifelong celibacy which was understood to be practiced, not just by Jesus but also by John, was bound to raise further suspicions¹⁹⁵, particularly since this was applied to them alone¹⁹⁶. The enforcement of celibacy on the priests and the condemnation of same-sex intercourse, whatever the purpose, became a dominant feature in the doctrines of the Church. As a consequence of these concerns; and because of the abuses of sex in socially unequal societies, any sense of the moral duality that is present in same-sex relationships came to be strongly denied.

The thesis presented in this analysis states that it is these abuses of power which give permission for the abuses of sex. Most notably in this context, same-sex acts of sex. That is why this analysis focusses most strongly on the relationships between power and sex. By siding with the Roman establishment in its search for respectability and by adopting for itself a corresponding structure, the Christian Church was no longer able to attack the power structures which led to that abuse, but it could still continue its aggressive attack on the

¹⁹⁴ See Section 8 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf> . Also section 3:1:9 of Gilchrist, S. 2013: "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

¹⁹⁵ The issue of affirming John's virginity is of considerable concern In Christian tradition, John the Apostle is consistently described in the early literature as John the Virgin ("Parthenos"). In the *Pistis Sophia* this point is made. (*Pistis Sophia*: Translated with Commentary by G. R. S. Mead. London: J. M. Watkins. Revised Second Edition: 192:1: <http://gnosis.org/library/psoph.htm>). Also in the "Acts of John" it is said that John was called by Jesus as a young man and his virginity was repeatedly emphasised. This document was probably written not later than 150 AD. (See: Lalleman, Pieter J. (1998): "*The Acts of John: A Two-stage Initiation Into Johannine Gnosticism*". Peeters Publishers, 1998: ISBN 9042905735, 9789042905733). Further to this, Tertullian (c.155 – c.240) was probably among the first to commit to writing the identification of John as a virgin. See "*The history of John, the son of Zebedee The apostle and evangelist*".

http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/apocryphal_acts_02_john_history.htm . Particular emphasis to John's virginity is still given today in the Orthodox Churches. For example see: www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/5_4.html
http://www.traditioninaction.org/SOD/j160sd_StJohnEvangelist_12-27.shtml
http://www.goarch.org/special/johntheapostle/index_html

¹⁹⁶ The apostles Peter and Philip were married and also had children. Clement also reported that Peter's wife was martyred before him, and that the apostle had encouraged her as she was led to her death. Eusebius further describes the relationship between Peter and his wife using these words, "Such as the marriage of these blessed ones, and such was their perfect affection" The early church leaders spoke out against those who preached against marriage, and there is an underlying presumption that all of the Apostles, except John were married. Clement of Alexandria further criticized those celibates in the church "Who say that they are "imitating the Lord" who never married, nor had any possessions in the world, and who boast that they understand the gospel better than anyone else." A similar criticism of this form of celibacy is given by Paul. In his attempts to deal with these serious contradictions Augustine was to assert that: "Those who marry only for procreation now - to perpetuate the human race - are not comparable to the holy fathers, who had children in a prophetic manner, for Christ's sake, for the race from which he was to be born"..... which seems to be no answer at all. See section 3:3:1 "Changes in the Church" of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

abuse itself¹⁹⁷. That has had major consequences for present day understanding since almost all evidence of these power struggles has disappeared from the present day theology of the Christian Church. In the traditional teaching of today's Church all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour, irrespective of their purposes, are considered immoral and pursued exclusively for lust and the gratifications of sex. In particular the practice of same-sex intercourse for any purpose is defined as a heinous and mortally sinful act.

3:5:3 He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.

The statement in Matthew 19:12¹⁹⁸ is the only place where Jesus, or the Gospel writer, qualified his teaching. This means that the teaching of Jesus can be taken in different ways. In Matthew 19:12 Jesus was discussing issues of marriage, celibacy and love¹⁹⁹. It is shown earlier in this account that this passage was particularly challenging to the early Church because it defined the attitudes of Jesus to gender and sex. Although eunuchs could be given high status in Jewish society there was a horror in Judaism about the act of castration itself. In all probability this is a consequence of the experience of the Jews at the time of the exile. If castration by others was regarded with horror, the act of self-castration by the priests of the Goddess cults would be considered a disgrace. There is no suggestion whatever that Jesus advocated self-castration²⁰⁰, but the difficulty in accepting the idea that he did not condemn it could be a reason behind the qualification that is made.

The Gospel writers had two principal aims. The first was to affirm and preserve the Gospel message. The second was to do this in a manner which people they were writing for could accept. These were mainly in the Jewish and the Greek and Roman worlds. This analysis has shown that the driving forces of power, subjection and domination between the different societies were responsible for much of what happened. However little of that appears in the New Testament itself, and references to potentially challenging teachings are described in actions rather than words. Even Paul's condemnations are based on sexual propriety and his comments on the struggles for power are encoded in the need to seek respectability for the Church²⁰¹.

In section 3:5:1 of this document has been shown that, in order to become accepted Christianity had to conform to the social divisions of Roman society. However that did not stop it setting an example of good practice and attacking the moral abuses which occurred. Nevertheless, in its pursuit of respectability Christianity also had to distance itself as quickly

¹⁹⁷ It would seem that the same problem exists in the present day Church.

¹⁹⁸ The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." 11 But he said to them, "Not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. 12 For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."

¹⁹⁹ Celibacy was advocated by Jesus on the grounds of a single minded devotion to the gospel message, but the discipline of celibacy can be applied equally to heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Jesus did not condemn either of these relationships outright but considered them to be second best choices. That includes same sex-relationships, where all acts inside them are the products of the outpouring of love. It is notable that what is being described here is a form of relationship which was acceptable, and was expected, inside first century Jewish Rabbinic partnerships. These relationships were recognised in the services of Adelpopoiesis, which were carried over into the Christian Church.

²⁰⁰ Despite this, many did take it literally. See section 3:1:4 of this account.

²⁰¹ For a detailed consideration of these power struggles it is necessary to look outside the bible and the early history of the Church. That is done in the fourth paper in this series Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*" Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

as possible from the continuing gender disruptive behaviour of the Goddess Cults²⁰². In its search for conformity this in part this meant transferring the gender divisions which were already present in first century Jewish culture, into the Roman state²⁰³. These demands compromised the radical teaching and example of Jesus on gender and sex, and this has had major consequences for the Church. This radical teaching is spread throughout the Gospels but some of the most challenging elements to first century society are presented in Matthew 19:12. The statement: “He who is able to receive this, let him receive it” could have been a direct comment on the abhorrence of self-castration in Jewish society, or it could have meant that Jesus was aware of the difficulties that would later be likely to occur, or it could have been added later to deal with the changes that were required. Whatever way it is taken, it allowed the Church to move forward and gain acceptance in the Roman world.

One of the strengths of Christianity is that it has always sought to adapt to its surroundings. This passage: “He who is able to receive this, let him receive it”, brings out that point. Had Christianity continued to act in full on the radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sex it might have been unlikely to survive the confrontations it created. By taking the pragmatic approach described by Jeremiah and in section 3:5:1 of this paper, Christianity has been able to bring the Gospel message to the world. That endorsement of conformity and its compromise could be why Christianity still exists in the present day.

3:5:4 Compromises

The part of the passage in Matthew 19 which says “He that is able to receive it let him receive it” is the second passage in the New Testament where Jesus allows compromises to his teaching²⁰⁴. The statement in Matthew was a radical statement. Its impact on the behaviour on the early Church means that there is little doubt about the authenticity of the text. Christianity had to adapt if it was going to be able to survive in Roman society and to continue to take the Gospel message to the world. That meant a re-interpretation of the radical teaching which Jesus presented on gender and sex. It is shown later in a later paper that this passage in Matthew gave an early authorisation for the compromises that were necessary for the survival of the Church. The context also demands that Christianity restores the radical teaching on gender and sex once it had gained a position of sufficient strength. That has had a profound effect on the development of the Church. See section 3:5:3 in this document and section 4:5:3 onwards in Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*” for an examination of the impact of this passage

3:6 Cultural Implications and the Present Day Church

The following sections summarise some of the material contained in the fifth paper of the series: Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*The Perceptions of Gender and Sexual Variation in Present Day Society and in the Modern Christian Church*”²⁰⁵.

²⁰² See section 12:0 “Cultural Differences and Morality” of Gilchrist, S. (2013): *Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

²⁰³ Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*” Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

²⁰⁴ The first is the passage on “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”.

²⁰⁵ Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/221P-InfluencesToday.pdf>

3:6:1 Social Changes

For nearly two thousand years the condemnation by the doctrines of the Church and the criminalisation by society have denied any legitimate expression of same-sex acts of sex. That has allowed the Church and society to condemn with impunity all forms of gender and sexual variant behaviour as mortally sinful and heinous acts. However, from the 1960's onwards, and with the de-criminalisation of homosexuality, many societies are no longer held captive to the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church. The removal of legal restrictions and de-criminalisation in many societies means that evidence for this moral duality can no longer be hidden. That moral duality is now available for everybody to see in the love expressed in same-sex marriage and civil partnerships. It has also 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. That moral duality would also be known in first century societies where the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was not made on a gendered basis, but on the purpose of the acts. It is shown to be present in the teaching of Jesus himself.

It is also 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. A major feature of gender complementarity comes from the way it separates the male from the female roles. Any form of gender and sexually variant behaviour which departs from the normal expectations of that society, for any purpose, challenges this distinction and may be a danger to the social order. The need to seek respectability and acceptance in Roman society was considered essential if Christianity was to continue to survive and bring its Gospel message to the world. However the compromises which this demanded sacrificed the radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sexuality for the respectability of the Church. That transformation 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. One only needs to look today at the behaviour of Daesh and Boko Haram to see how extreme this can become. 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 it has been enormous. Repentance is needed for these acts²⁰⁶.

These results of this analysis do not change the teaching and doctrines of the Christian Church when they are applied to sexual immorality or sexual abuse. They provide no excuses for sexual licence. By condemning all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour the traditional teaching of the Church has diverted its concerns away from the real issues of the practice by all men of illicit, abusive and promiscuous sex. That universal condemnation has enabled the Church to make all gender and sexually variant people the scapegoats for abusive sex.

²⁰⁶ This is not just a theological point of view. In all of today's interpretations little account is taken of contrast between the privileges of power exerted in dominant societies and the oppression of submission in conquered ones: both in terms of the cultural differences that are established, and in the use and abuse of sex. Evidence of the high degree of trauma and distress that these power conflicts create is present today: it is seen with the Taliban, Islamic State and Boko Haram. In history it extends from the Christian practice of slavery in the Americas to the Empires of the ancient world. No examination of Christian theology and its attitudes to all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour can be complete without taking full account of the relationships between power and sex. Sadly, and in part because of this absence, many in Christianity, Judaism and Islam have colluded with the discrimination that has occurred.

Changing the boundary between unacceptable and acceptable behaviour from the traditional condemnation of all gender and sexually variant behaviour to express the moral duality which has been identified in the teaching of Jesus and in the neurophysiological and psychological study exposes the true challenges that should be faced. The fundamental need is for the Church to tackle the major issues of promiscuity, prostitution, sexual slavery and abuse which are endemic in many areas of the world, irrespective of how these arise. Instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for sexual abuse, the real issue is one of combatting all forms of abusive sex. That is an issue which everyone should be able to agree on, churches in Africa, liberal and conservative churches in the West, Orthodox Churches and many gender and sexually variant people themselves.

There is much to be welcomed in the increasing pastoral concern being expressed for gender and sexually variant people, but that is not enough. In those societies which have outlawed gender discrimination the continued pursuit of these traditional doctrines will increasingly undermine the credibility and the moral authority of the Church. In societies which institutionalise the division in gender role, the continuing pursuit of these doctrines will result in its collusion with society to scapegoat all gender and sexually variant people as purveyors of abusive sex. That is at the heart of the present schism in the Anglican Communion where some provinces are trying to find ways to endorse same-sex marriages while other provinces are supporting long prison sentences for all people who engage in any form of same-sex act of sex. Death sentences or life imprisonment are being proposed in some countries²⁰⁷. In the United States, the legalisation of same-sex marriage by the Federal Government has resulted in a rash of mainly Southern states seeking to scapegoat transsexual people by legally enforcing them only to use toilets and bathroom facilities which correspond to the genitalia they were born with, irrespective of their gender identities and the transformations that they make. This is irrespective of their gender identities and the transformations that they make. That position was supported by Cardinal Robert Sarah, Archbishop emeritus of Conakry (Guinea) and Prefect of the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in the Catholic Church, during the address he gave to the, 12th Annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast held on Tuesday, May 17th, 2016 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Washington DC. The Cardinal's address can be seen on the link provided²⁰⁸. Not only did the Cardinal support the movement to impose the bathroom ban, he also declared that gender identity and sexual orientation are defined by the biology of sex. That not only contradicts the results of this investigation, it contradicts much of the current medical and psychological understanding, and it disregards the physiological fact that external appearance is only one of the many factors which are involved in determining an individual's biological sex²⁰⁹.

²⁰⁷ In Mauritania, Sudan and northern Nigeria, homosexuality is punishable by death. In Uganda, Tanzania, and Sierra Leone, offenders can receive life imprisonment for homosexual acts. In addition to criminalizing homosexuality, Nigeria has enacted legislation that would make it illegal for straight family members, allies and friends of the LGBT to be supportive. According to Nigerian law, a straight ally "who administers, witnesses, abets or aids" any form of gender non-conforming and homosexual activity could receive a 10-year jail sentence. South Africa has the most liberal attitudes toward gays and lesbians, with a constitution which guarantees gay and lesbian rights and legal same-sex marriage (Wikipedia).

²⁰⁸ Address given by Cardinal Robert Sarah, Archbishop emeritus of Conakry (Guinea) and Prefect of the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in the Catholic Church to the 12th Annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast Tuesday, May 17th, 2016 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Washington DC. [accessed 14 June 2016]: <https://catholicprayerbreakfast.com/2016-video/>

²⁰⁹ Biological sex markers See: Ainsworth, Claire. (2015): "Sex redefined" The idea of two sexes is simplistic. Biologists now think there is a wider spectrum than that": *Nature* 518, 288–291:19 February 2015 doi:10.1038/518288a <http://www.nature.com/news/sex-redefined-1.16943>. Also: Gooren, Louis. (2006): "The biology of human psychosexual differentiation". *Hormones and Behavior* 50 (2006) 589–601. [Accessed 21 June 2016] <http://www.eulabs.eu/Downloads/gooren06.pdf>

3:6:2 Resistance

There are many people in the world today who are honestly, faithfully and assiduously following from different viewpoints what they believe to be the correct Christian teaching, who all are concerned about what is happening in the Christian Church. Evidence for that concern is seen in the establishment of the “Shared Conversations” process in the Church of England²¹⁰ and in the “Synod on the Family”²¹¹ called by Pope Francis in 2014. However preconditions were set by the Church hierarchies²¹². These preconditions demand that there must be no change to the traditional teaching of the Church. That is the great hurdle which has still to be overcome if any discussions are to succeed. The long history of opposition to the possibility of change has been documented by the author elsewhere; and the continued refusal is considered to be destroying the credibility, not just of the Churches, but of all Christian belief²¹³.

From a pastoral point of view there are changes which can be strongly welcomed²¹⁴, but there is still the refusal to consider any changes in the doctrines of the Church. In Paragraph 251 of the “Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Synod on the Family”; the Synod Fathers observed that, “as for proposals to place unions between homosexual persons on the same level as marriage, there are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family”. The continued refusal to make any change in the traditional Church doctrines was again confirmed, although the statement that homosexuality is intrinsically disordered does not appear²¹⁵.

In the Anglican Communion, the Primates meeting in January 2016 in Canterbury censured The Episcopal Church of America for proceeding without authority on the issue of same-sex

²¹⁰ Shared Conversations: See: Church of England (2015) Grace and Disagreement article: Grace and Disagreement Shared Conversations on Scripture, Mission and Human Sexuality: [Accessed 15/10/2015]: <https://churchofengland.org/media/2165248/grace2.pdf> . Also: Church of England (2015) Shared Conversations Website: [Online]. [Accessed 15/10/2015]: <http://www.sharedconversations.org/>
Gilchrist, S. (2014) *Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversoryAndCrisis.pdf>

²¹¹ Vatican (2013): Synod on the Family: Preparatory Document: *Pastoral Challenges To The Family In The Context Of Evangelization*

²¹² The Pilling Report did leave open the door to the possibility of a change, but urged great caution

²¹³ Gilchrist, S. (2014) *Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversoryAndCrisis.pdf>

²¹⁴ In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Synod on the Family, Pope Francis urged the church to “reaffirm that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration”, while “every sign of unjust discrimination” is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression or violence. But the pope stopped short of pushing for a change in church doctrine. “De facto or same-sex unions, for example, may not simply be equated with marriage”. However the church’s traditional definition of same-sex relationships as “intrinsically disordered” is notably absent from the exhortation. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/08/pope-francis-urges-compassion-for-all-in-landmark-statement-on-family-values-catholic-church>

²¹⁵ Pope Francis. (2016): “*Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Lætitia Of The Holy Father Francis To Bishops, Priests And Deacons Consecrated Persons Christian Married Couples And All The Lay Faithful On Love In The Family*”: Paragraph 251: “In discussing the dignity and mission of the family, the Synod Fathers observed that, “as for proposals to place unions between homosexual persons on the same level as marriage, there are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family”. It is unacceptable “that local Churches should be subjected to pressure in this matter and that international bodies should make” financial aid to poor countries dependent on the introduction of laws to establish ‘marriage’ between persons of the same sex”. [Accessed: 18 April 2016] https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

marriage²¹⁶. However it managed to avoid a complete schism in the Communion. A period of grace of three years for further study was allowed, but there was little coming together of minds. This was followed by a meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Lusaka, Zambia between 8-19th of April 2016. After that meeting, the Primates Council of GAFCON (the “Global Anglican Future Conference”, representing the conservative elements in the Church) met in Kenya on the 22nd of April and issued a Communiqué²¹⁷. It contained the attached appendix referring to the recent meeting of the Consultative Council²¹⁸. From this appendix, it is clear that their condemnation of the other churches in the Anglican Communion is based entirely on the authority of scripture as they traditionally interpret it and upon the “Godly Order” expected within the Church. Some years previously the Church of England report of the House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality, or the Pilling Report²¹⁹, commissioned in January 2012, acknowledged that there could be the possibility of change in the traditional teaching of the Church on gender and sexual variation, but it urged that great caution be exercised before adopting it. The recent pronouncements by GAFCON and others deny even the possibility of such change. That resistance is not new. There is a long history of this denial, and that has been documented by the author elsewhere²²⁰

Despite all of the evidence that is available many Christian Churches, continue to stick rigidly to the traditional doctrines. That rigidity is shown the Apostolic Exhortation released by Pope Francis in 2016. According to the results of this investigation, the total refusal in the Apostolic Exhortation to consider homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family, denies the moral duality in same-sex relationships that is shown by this analysis. It discounts the nature of the first century Jewish relationships which have been revealed in this analysis. It ignores the social changes in societies which demonstrate that in some respects the relationships of Adelphopoiesis

²¹⁶ Communiqué from the Primates of the Anglican Communion: 15 Jan 2016: “Walking Together in the Service of God in the World” <http://www.primates2016.org/articles/2016/01/15/communique-primates/>

²¹⁷ GAFCON Nairobi Communiqué 2016: <http://gafcon.org/2016/04/22/nairobi-communique-2016/>

²¹⁸ Appendix to the GAFCON Nairobi Communiqué 2016 : *From Canterbury to Lusaka*

“Last January, we spent time together at the Primates Gathering contending for a restoration of godly order within the Anglican Communion. The sanctions passed at that meeting were not in themselves capable of restoring order, but they were a potential first step.

At that meeting, we acknowledged the reality of the “significant distance” between us and “expressed a desire to walk together” if possible. This distance was created when The Episcopal Church walked away from the Anglican Communion’s doctrine on sexuality and the plain teaching of Scripture.

Within hours of the meeting’s end the public responses from many bishops, clergy, and lay people of The Episcopal Church made it clear that they did not desire to share the same journey. The biblical call to repentance is a call to make a 180 degree turn. It grieves us that many in The Episcopal Church have again rejected this call. While we desire to walk together, until there is true repentance, the reality is that they are deliberately walking away from the Anglican Communion and the authority of Scripture at a distance that continues to increase.

The recent meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Lusaka, Zambia has again highlighted the inability of the current instruments to uphold godly order within the Communion. Delegates from the Episcopal Church, by their own admission, voted on matters that pertained to polity and doctrine, in defiance of the Primates. This action has damaged the standing of the Anglican Consultative Council as an instrument of unity, increased levels of distrust, and further torn the fabric of the Communion.

Nonetheless, we give thanks that these events have brought further clarity, and drawn GAFCON closer together in the mission of the Gospel. We are of one mind that the future of the Anglican Communion does not lie with manipulations, compromises, legal loopholes, or the presentation of half-truths; the future of our Communion lies in humble obedience to the truth of the Word of God written. What others have failed to do, GAFCON is doing: enabling global fellowship and godly order, united by biblical faithfulness. This unity has provided us with great energy to continue to work for the renewal of the Anglican Communion”.

²¹⁹ 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

²²⁰ Gilchrist, S. (2014): “*Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversyAndCrisis.pdf>

had more in common with the present day understanding of marriage than any first century understanding of marriage could present²²¹. This analysis supports much of the traditional teaching of the Church but instead of condemning all acts of same-sex and cross-gender behaviour as inherently sinful, it defines a new boundary which recognises the duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour, where judgement is made on the intention of the acts. The traditional Church teaching defines marriage as a: "Lifelong union between a man and a woman". The author would have no problem with this if corresponding same-sex unions were fully recognised with a different word. However that has not happened. In the eyes of society outside it, and in the view of the author this continuing intransigence has destroyed the moral authority of the Church. It is now society which will determine what the word marriage means: it will not be the Church.

The public attitudes to the same-sex behaviour which is openly experienced in many societies at the present time would also have been known to Jesus, John, Paul, and to all others in a first century society where these same-sex relationships were widely expressed. The present day changes in society have exposed the failures of the Church. Today it is the clashes between what is seen by society as the common sense values, and the fervent reliance by the Church on its traditional doctrines, which is destroying the credibility of Christianity in the eyes of the world. Change is urgently required, but despite the allegation in the GAFCON statement, it is not change which departs from the Gospel message, it is change which returns to the Gospel texts.

3:6:3 Overview

An extended theological analysis has been conducted which uses the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study to provide a critique of the traditional teaching and doctrines of the Christian Church. The changes in society are examined. From all of these standpoints it is demonstrated that a moral duality is encountered which demands the welcome of cross-gender activities and same-sex relationships which are the outpourings of love and faithfulness, while condemning those that are pursued for abusive and illicit sex. It is also established that identical criteria in relation to use and abuse should be applied to heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. There is no diminution of moral standards and no condonation of abusive sex.

The results of this investigation also show 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 in their own right. All sexual behaviour is governed by the purity of intention and there is no automatic condemnation of any same-sex act.

The early Christian Church described the moral duality which is identified in this analysis in terms of "The Way of Darkness" and "The Way of Light". The same early Church set out to be a beacon of light, shining out to the hostile and discriminatory society around it. However the Gospel message which demanded true equality and fairness for all people did not last. One might argue that this light was extinguished for sexually and gender variant people by the transformation of the Gospel message into doctrines which looked for respectability, authority and continuity inside the gender discriminatory and socially unequal societies that surrounded the Church. In a Christian Church which lives true to the vision of the New Covenant; all behaviour should be governed by purity of intention, and all people must be

²²¹ Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Reform and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/008B-ReformChristianChurchArticle.pdf> . Also Section 10 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): "*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

accepted in their own right. This analysis does not diminish in any form the rightful condemnation of the way of darkness. There is no condonation of abusive acts. Instead it identifies the way of light for all gender and sexually variant people who seek to live their lives in ways that are true to their own identities in the Love of Christ. That light will shine most strongly in places where there are discriminatory societies around it. Whatever the cost to the organisation may be, surely the mission of every Church today must be to rekindle this beacon of light.

3:6:4 Postscript

The hypothesis adopted in this investigation make use of the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study which shows that features which create the core identities of every person are physiologically rather than behaviourally or cognitively driven. This means that 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 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 should be highly regarded, while those who misuse these relationships would be very severely condemned for their acts. The results of this study are summarised in the second paper of this series: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life*": The frequency and universality of same-sex interactions in the first century should also mean that this duality would have been known to Jesus and incorporated in the teaching he gave. That is confirmed in the third paper of this series: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*"²²². However the centuries of condemnation and criminalisation have removed any awareness of this duality. In the gender equal societies of the present day the same duality has come again into view. This means that the contradictions that are encountered with the traditional Church teaching arose from the changes within the Church. These changes are examined in the fourth and fifth essays of the series: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*": and Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*The Perceptions of Gender and Sexual Variation in Present Day Society and in the Modern Christian Church*":²²³

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²²² This section is a version of that document.

²²³ Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*The Perceptions of Gender and Sexual Variation in Present Day Society and in the Modern Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/221P-InfluencesToday.pdf>
Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>
Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>
Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-InfluencesPersonality.pdf>

This Paper is available online at: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>

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