

Summary of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church

Susan Gilchrist

SuG0628a

28 June 2016¹

Summary

This analysis uses the principles of science to test the validity of the present day teaching of the Christian Church. A new approach to the formation of self-identity is developed. This demonstrates that a moral duality must exist, whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways that conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies are to be highly regarded, while those who misuse these relationships should be severely condemned for their acts. This conclusion denies the validity of the traditional teaching of the Christian Church: which condemns without exception every sexual and gender variant act. The scientific and historical analyses both demonstrate that the present day teaching of the Church is incorrect and an aim of this investigation is to return to the teaching of Christ.

The principal focus 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. Gender dysphoria is used as a case study to test and to validate the process. A major transition occurs between the ages of two and three years. Conflicts and characteristics which originate from before this time have their focus on identity alone. However those which arise during later development are concerned with behaviour and reward. It is shown that the development of gender and sexual identities are identity 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 acts. This result contradicts the traditional teaching of the Christian Church which presumes that all gender and sexually variant behaviour comes from reward driven lifestyle choices, is considered to be disordered, instead of the gift of life it chooses the sexual act, and it is considered to always be in pursuit of immoral or inappropriate sex

A critique of the history and theology of the Christian Church and the surrounding first century societies is conducted to determine how and why this contradiction occurs. It is shown that the teaching of Jesus incorporates the same moral duality as that predicted by the neurophysiological and psychological study. Therefore the source of the contradiction that arises must come from changes in the theology of the Church. The Gospels show that Jesus had attacked the social, sexual and gender abuses of first century Jewish society without compromise. However the need to take the Gospel message to the world required the survival of Christianity and the Church. The mission of Jesus was to take the Gospel message to the world; and the adaptations this needed are clearly evident in the letters and epistles of Peter, Paul and John². That could have happened on an ad-hoc basis or it could have been the result of a pragmatic approach. There are good reasons for believing that a pragmatic approach was taken. That is explored in the investigation. However if

¹ Initial issue date. This document is available on line at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/223P-SexGenderSummary.pdf>

² Christians were expected to set examples of purity and respectability in Roman society, through the conduct of their lives

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 for this, however there is another source in Matthew 19:12 where Jesus discusses the issues of marriage and the place of eunuchs in the Church. The statement which immediately 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. The relationships between power and sex are investigated in this analysis, and it is shown how abuses of power were used to give permission for the abuses of sex. It is also shown that the condemnation of sexual abuse was based on the condemnations of the consequences for people, rather than concern with the sexual act. Roman society saw sex through the viewpoint of domination and control. Therefore some of the most challenging elements to first century society are presented in Matthew 19 because of its serious mistrust and condemnation of eunuchs; and also because of the attacks on social order created by the gender disruptive behaviour of the Goddess cults with their self-castrated male priests. The compromise contained in this statement in Matthew 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. Today that has still not happened: instead of returning to the radical teaching which Jesus had presented: the Church used these opportunities enforce its own power and authority. If those initial compromises are present because they were needed by a powerless group inside 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.

This is not a neutral analysis because it uses the results of the neurophysiological study to conduct a critique of the Christian Church. The danger of this approach is that it can create its own agenda. Therefore its success or failure depends upon whether it brings a greater or lesser understanding to the development of the Christian tradition and to the teaching of Jesus himself. Unlike other attempts at analysis, there is little need for the interpolations, insertions, adaptations and changes to the original New Testament texts that are alleged to have been anonymously made by later writers in the early Church. It can be assumed that the writers of the Gospel of John remained true to John's message. It is also shown that this applies in the Letters and Epistles of Peter Paul and John, when their authorship is in doubt.

In addition an unexpected result of this investigation comes from the extent to which it continues to support the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. It is shown that this teaching on marriage and family life remains intact. It agrees that marriage between a man and a woman is sanctified in the bible, but it shows that other valid loving relationships should not automatically be denied. This analysis also supports the views held by GAFCON (the "Global Anglican Future Conference", representing the conservative elements in the Church) and others that the traditional Church teaching on gender complementarity, gender and sexuality and on the silencing of the public ministry of women has Apostolic Authority. However, contrary to the GAFCON viewpoint, this analysis argues that these doctrines represent the compromises that were endorsed by Peter and Paul. They were policies that were needed to meet the requirements of Roman Society, and they were essential to ensure the survival of the Church.

Great emphasis is placed by GAFCON and others on restoring the "Godly Authority" of bible texts. What is defined as "Godly Authority" depends on the context which is applied. If that context is based on what is today regarded as the traditional teaching of the Church, these attempts to restore it do not return to the teaching of Jesus. They return instead to the compromised Christianity which

was presented by the 13th Century Church. The correct return can only be made if the moral duality disclosed in the neurophysiological study and in the teaching of Jesus is restored. It is shown how the reasons for the prohibition of same-sex intercourse have changed from the condemnation of the social and personal consequences which its abuses created, to the condemnation of the act. There is no condonation whatever of any abusive sex. Instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for all sexual abuse it is demonstrated in this analysis that the correct outlook for the Christian Church should be one of combatting all forms and all types of abusive sex³.

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 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 each conflict type creates is also very important because the correct methods of managing them are almost opposite to each other⁴. For centuries much harm has been done because the wrong methods and approaches have been applied⁵.

It was not good enough for Jesus simply to express his care and concern for women, gender and sexually variant 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 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 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.

If these results are challenging it must be in part because of the centuries of prejudice that has existed. Instead of condemning all acts of same-sex and cross-gender behaviour as inherently sinful, this analysis indicates that a return is required to the boundary which recognises the moral duality which is inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour; where identical criteria in relation

³ Gender and sexual variation are examined together in this document. However that is only because they are common travellers in relation to society, and also because the driving forces behind them have the same dynamics. There is only limited interaction between gender identity and sexual orientation and as wide a range of sexually variance may be found amongst gender variant people as that in the general population. 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. For the author the issues of concern are those of gender and not sexual orientation and acts. The differences between them are also very important. This is why these two conditions must also be considered separately in more detailed accounts

⁴ In the same way that treatment for depression or addiction differs from other types of treatment.

⁵ 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>

to use and abuse are applied to heterosexual and to same-sex acts of sex, and where the only judgements that should be made are those of love, responsibility and the intention of the acts.

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

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

This is a summary of an extended analysis. Key papers are given below. The papers can be accessed by copying or clicking on the links provided.

Paper 1: 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: 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: 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: 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: 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. (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. (2015): “*Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*”:
<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>

Gilchrist, S. (2014): Articles Offered to The Church of England in 2014 for use in its Process of Shared Discussions on LGBTI Matters: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/020B-OfferedPapersIntroduction.pdf>

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

Access to all papers is also available via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

A full personal bibliography is given on: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/bibliography.htm> .

© Susan Gilchrist 2016: All Rights Reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce this work for personal and educational use only. Commercial copying, hiring and lending is prohibited. Other reproduction and onward transmission in any form without written permission is prohibited.

This Paper is available online at: Gilchrist, S. (2016):” *Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/223P-SexGenderSummary.pdf>

Notes for this paper are posted on: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/notes223P>

Contact: sgen4144@gmail.com