

A House Built on Sand? Attitudes to Gender and Sexual Variant Identities and Behaviour in Christianity and the Christian Church

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Summary

This paper describes the theological elements of a research programme which involves two separate investigations. The first is a scientific and neurophysiologically based study into the development of personality and identity. A second independently conducted historical, scientific, social and theological investigation has also been carried out with the aim of discovering the reason for the contradiction between science and theology which is found to exist. Because of the adaptations that were needed to survive, and later to preserve its institutions, it is shown that the Christian Church developed a traditional doctrine which medically misdiagnoses gender and sexually variant conditions. Much harm has been done since the management techniques that are needed are almost opposite to each other. By treating these conditions as being derived from the search for reward rather than identity, the wrong methods of management are often applied.

An extended analysis of the attitudes to gender and sexuality in first century society is conducted which uses the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study to examine not just

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Christianity, but also the attitudes to these in Jewish, Roman, Greek, and other societies. Cultural clashes are analysed and it is demonstrated that the abuses of power by Roman society gave permission for abuses of sex. It is shown that the teaching of Jesus incorporates the same moral duality as that predicted by the neurophysiological and psychological study. The adaptations which Peter, Paul and the early Church had to make to survive and to take the Gospel message to the world are considered and it is shown that a paradigm shift has occurred. This has changed what was a condemnation based on the intention of a same-sex act of sex into the automatic and unvarying condemnations of the actual act. It also creates the contradictions between the scientific and experiential evidence, this research and the traditional teaching of the Christian Church.

It is therefore concluded that the source of the contradiction must come from changes in the theology of the Church. The correct restoration can only be made if the moral duality disclosed in this neurophysiological study and in the teaching of Jesus is used. This demands that the same criteria of use and abuse are applied to all aspects of gender and sex. As with Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28, this demands 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. There is no automatic condemnation of any same-sex act, and there is no toleration of abusive sex.

It is important to note that discrimination against gender and sexually variant people is a socially led phenomenon and it would be a mistake to identify its cause with religious belief. The transformation needed to gain acceptability in the Greco/Roman culture brought the Church to collude with these secular demands of society rather than to challenge them. Not only has this consent reinforced the secular prejudices of such discriminatory societies; it gave and it still gives religious legitimacy to them, it reinforces the severity of the penalties that are encountered and it contradicts the results which the neurophysiological and psychological analysis presents. Instead of recognising the moral duality which is inherent in gender and sexual behaviour, without exception all of these people have been made the scapegoats for abusive sex. 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.

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A House Built on Sand? Attitudes to Gender and Sexual Variant Identities and Behaviour in Christianity and the Christian Church

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The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders which Jesus told in Matthew 7: 24-27 is something which most people would regard as good advice. In this parable Jesus said: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."³ In all teaching and theology it is essential that the foundations are correct.

This is particularly true when the doctrines which the Christian Church has developed can be tested for correctness by scientific analysis, and that applies in no small measure the theology which the Christian Church has imposed on gender and sex. That theology is most explicitly expressed Catechism of the Catholic Church⁴. Paragraph 2357 states: "*Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, Tradition has always declared that "Homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They choose the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.*" By extension transgender experience may be included in this as well. This doctrine is often taken to condemn all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour. It defines this behaviour as a lifestyle choice which can be diverted through the predations of others, and which is invariably in pursuit of lust and inappropriate acts.

However that presumption is increasingly challenged by the great amount of knowledge and experiential evidence which has been amassed in recent years⁵. This is additionally supported through encounters with the lived experiences of gender and sexually variant people. Currently a great majority of professional institutions in the Western World regard gender and sexually variant

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

2 First issued 19 March 2017. This document is available online at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/231P-HouseUponSand.pdf>

3 New International Version of the Bible

4 Catechism of the Catholic Church: Paragraph 2357. The Second Edition English Translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with corrections promulgated by Pope John Paul II on 8 September 1997

5 For an account of the social, historical and theological studies, see the following papers: 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): "*Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church: Is it Not Time to Consider the Science?*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/226P-ConsiderScience.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*An Unfinished Reformation*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

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

identities and behaviour as being naturally expected variations of the human condition which are intrinsic to the personality created, that arise very early in development, and which cannot be changed by the individual concerned or by the actions of others in subsequent life. (Nevertheless it should be noted that considerable gender fluidity may exist as overlays on what has already been formed). This is the position taken for example by the British Royal College of Psychiatrists⁶, the British Psychological Society and parallel United Kingdom organisations⁷. Equivalent positions are taken by the American Psychiatric Association⁸ and the American Psychological Association⁹. Other international mental health organizations, including the World Health Organization have followed. Against this is set minority conservative organisations such as the American College of Paediatricians¹⁰ and the might of the Christian Church. One of the major difficulties in these disputes is that the genesis of gender and sexually variant conditions is not well understood. As a consequence the opposing sides in these arguments tend to be given equal impact, despite the great weight of scientific evidence that exists.

It is important to note that gender and sexual identities form independently of each other. Therefore as wide a range of sexual orientations and identities are found within the gender variant communities as those which exist in the population at large. Thus being transgender is no indication of sexual identity or orientation, and the reverse also applies¹¹. However the same types of formation processes are involved in both cases. In many respects gender and sexually variant people share similar issues in terms of their relationships with society and that is why they can be considered together in this account.

1:0: Science

It is of considerable importance to establish on a scientific basis the reasons for these contradictions between science and theology. That is undertaken in the neurophysiological and psychological investigation which is reported in this article¹². This is carried out in two ways. The first is a review of the current scientific evidence and the second is through a new research investigation into the development of personality and self-identity. A novel approach is used to map the transition between the internally created neurophysiological processes propelling early development to the externally moderated cognitive processes in later life. It means that for the first time a continuous process extending from infancy to adulthood can be described. A rapid increase in neural maturation and cognitive ability takes place around a median age of two years: and a crucial difference in the earlier and later forming characteristics and conflicts is found. Those which have their origins from before this transition period are identity driven. This means that learning and development comes from the rejection or inhibition of what is wrong: no behavioural goals are set, and there is no search for reward. In contrast to this, behaviour and reward become the focus for conflicts and characteristics that form after the transition period occurs. These can be characterised as reward driven. The crucial question to ask is whether gender and sexually variant identities are intrinsic elements of personality, or the outcomes of a lifestyle choice. In other terms, are they

6 Royal College of Psychiatrists' statement on sexual orientation http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/ps02_2014.pdf

7 British Psychological Society and other organisations: Conversion Therapy: Consensus Statement.

http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/conversion_therapy_final_version.pdf

8 APA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Statement: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/sexual-orientation.aspx>

9 APA Policy Statements on LGBT Concerns <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/policy/>

10 American College of Paediatricians <https://www.acped.org/> : 'Transgender' Conditioning Is 'Child Abuse':

<http://www.cnsnews.com/commentary/j-matt-barber/american-college-pediatricians-transgender-conditioning-child-abuse>

11 For an extended analysis of their formations see: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>

12 This article summarises an extended programme of neurophysiological and psychological research. For more detailed descriptions, (with references to sources) see: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "Science and Belief. A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-PaperPersonality.pdf> also Gilchrist, S. (2016): "A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-InfluencesPersonality.pdf>

Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf> and

Gilchrist, S. (2015): "Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf> (copy under revision available on the web). Also 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>

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identity or reward driven? Traditional approaches to psychology and psychiatry often tend to support the view that these are reward driven lifestyle choices, or that they arise from a later disruption of the cognitive development processes. These traditional theories rely on cognitive abilities and a continuity of reasoning to guide the processes of learning at all times of life. Their analyses are still used by the Christian Church to justify the traditional doctrines on gender and sexual variation which it continues to present.

Freud himself, and the early investigators, saw homosexuality as an inversion arising from identity driven conditions¹³. However that attitude was to change: the Church and supporters of these traditional theories have come to regard the motives for same-sex attraction and same-sex behaviour to be reward driven instead¹⁴. Today, as has been shown, from the scientific point of view the great majority of professional institutions and expert practitioners now challenge that traditional position, however to the present time they have had to rely on the experiential evidence that is available. The analysis which is undertaken by the author provides scientific confirmation for this experiential evidence. The weakness of the traditional theories is their assumption that cognitive processes are sufficiently active to guide learning and development at all times of life. Those presumptions are contradicted in this scientific analysis which demonstrates that these core elements of personality and identity have been formed, and are already fixed in place before neural capabilities have developed sufficiently to enable the cognitive abilities of reasoning, intuition and perception to come into effective use. That is before and up to the time when the cusp of the neural transition period occurs. This means that the behaviour of gender and sexually variant people is propelled by the internal neurophysiologically driven processes of mirror actions, possessive imitation and empathy alone. It is therefore identity driven. Behaviour is not the focus. The consequence which follows is that a moral duality must exist; in which 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. The existence of this moral duality directly contradicts the traditional teaching of the Christian Church and the results of this investigation have provided scientific confirmation of the conclusions which the experiential evidence presents.

2:0: Cultural Changes

People engage in gender and sexually variant behaviour for many reasons and there is no doubt that a great deal of same-sex and heterosexual abuses of sex have always existed. It was endemic

13 Early workers during the 19th Century first associated homosexuality with identity. Freud was ambivalent, describing it as an inversion. He did not consider it a crime: In 1935, Freud wrote to a mother who had asked him to treat her son's homosexuality, a letter that would later become famous: *"I gather from your letter that your son is a homosexual. I am most impressed by the fact that you do not mention this term yourself in your information about him. May I question you why you avoid it? Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function, produced by a certain arrest of sexual development. Many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals, several of the greatest men among them: (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, etc.). It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime –and a cruelty, too".* . <http://www.lettersofnote.com/2009/10/homosexuality-is-nothing-to-be-ashamed.html>

14 The first appearance of the word homosexual in a printed document is found in an 1869 German pamphlet by the Austrian-born novelist Karl-Maria Kertbeny, which was published anonymously. In 1879, Gustav Jäger used Kertbeny's description in his book, *Discovery of the Soul* (1880). However "homosexuality" as originally defined by Kertbeny simply meant a sexual drive directed toward persons of the same sex. This orientation was defined in identity terms In 1886, Richard von Krafft-Ebing used the terms and distinguished between homosexual and heterosexual in his book *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886). Krafft-Ebing's book was so popular among both layman and doctors that the terms "heterosexual" and "homosexual" became the most widely accepted terms for sexual orientation. Krafft-Ebing considered procreation the purpose of sexual desire and that any form of recreational sex was a perversion of the sexual drive. He presented four categories of what he called "cerebral neuroses" in *Psychopathia Sexualis*. The consequence of this was to expand the definition of homosexuality in popular perception from a term which originally was used to describe identity only, to one which included the desire for and the practice of sexual relationships between two people of the same sex. Contrary to Freud and Kertbeny, its identification as immoral reward driven sexual behaviour is prevalent in the present day. In many countries severe criminal penalties are applied. The transfer of definition from identity and orientation to the condemnation of relationships is clearly evident in the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church.

in first century Roman society¹⁵. However the traditional Christian doctrine condemns all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour, irrespective of purpose as a “*disordered lifestyle choice which can be diverted through the predations of others, and which is always in pursuit of lust and inappropriate acts*”. That universal condemnation directly contradicts the mass of the experiential scientific and medical evidence which shows that at least for some people, these gender and sexually variant conditions are about the search for love and identity. Their underlying identities cannot be altered by the actions of others. They are not lifestyle choices, nor are they acts engaged in whose sole or main purpose is for the gratifications of sex. For as long as the Christian Church was able to dominate the social structures and the moral values of society, these traditional doctrines which condemn all gender and sexually variant behaviour could not be challenged.

The changes in present day society mean that this control has now been broken. The de-criminalisation of homosexuality in the 1960s and the subsequent anti-discrimination legislation on a world-wide basis means that for the first time in at least 1000 years people are able to see the full range of experience in gender and sexually variant behaviour and assess, for themselves, the moral duality that exists. Therefore: despite its own acknowledgement that the origins of these conditions has not historically been well understood: despite the mass of experiential evidence that is now available: despite the results of this research analysis, and despite the everyday experience of many people, who can now see for themselves the genuineness and intensity of love and commitment that can be fulfilled in same-sex partnerships, it is the continued refusal of the Church of England, the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church in particular to consider even the possibility of any change in their traditional doctrines on gender and sexually variant behaviour, which is destroying the credibility of Christianity and the Church in the present day world.

The presumption that gender and sexually variant behaviour is a lifestyle choice which is always in pursuit of the sexual act medically misdiagnoses these conditions. These are identity driven characteristics and conflicts which are being treated in a reward driven manner and it is shown that attempts to use the techniques for reward driven conflicts on identity driven conflicts do not work¹⁶. The more these are applied, the more they reinforce the contagious and self-reinforcing demands of the internal physiologically driven forces; and the more often the attempts fail, the more this creates a runaway drive¹⁷. For identity driven conflicts the correct management methods must focus instead on calming their dynamics. With these different types of conflict, management techniques which are almost opposite to one another must be employed. The techniques are already in common use, and are also well known¹⁸. Much harm is done when the wrong methods are applied¹⁹. Therefore from both the medical and scientific perspectives the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on

15 See for example: Gilchrist, S. (2011): “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

16 See section 6 of Gilchrist, S. (2015/2017): “*Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>

17 See Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>

18 The first relates to issues of personality formation and the second to pursuit of reward. For identity driven conflicts the management techniques that are needed parallel those of depression etc. in instances where trauma occurs. With the later reward driven conflicts the management techniques that are needed deal directly with the disruption that takes place: in those cases the standard social learning and psychodynamic based techniques may be applied. For a more extended description of management techniques. See Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality*”. Access at: www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm.

19 All of the major medical organizations across the UK have very strongly condemned any attempt to try to ‘cure’ transgender people. In 2015 a “*Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK*” was issued by these health organisations. It said: “*We the undersigned UK organisations wish to state that the practice of conversion therapy has no place in the modern world. It is unethical and harmful and not supported by evidence....Sexual orientations and gender identities are not mental health disorders, although exclusion, stigma and prejudice may precipitate mental health issues for any person subjected to these abuses. Anyone accessing therapeutic help should be able to do so without fear of judgement or the threat of being pressured to change a fundamental aspect of who they are*” The signatories are: UK Council for Psychotherapy, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, British Psychoanalytic Council, British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, The British Psychological Society, College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists, The Association of LGBT Doctors and Dentists, The National Counselling Society, NHS Scotland, Pink Therapy, Royal College of General Practitioners, the Scottish Government and Stonewall. Available at: <https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Memorandum-of-understanding-on-conversion-therapy.pdf>

gender and sexual variation has been shown to be incorrect. It is imperative that these contradictions are addressed.

3:0: Continuity and Culture

The results of this investigation demonstrate that the existence of this moral duality is fundamental to identity driven gender and sexually variant behaviour. This means that it can be observed at any time and in every society where gender and sexually variant relationships are permitted. That was common practice during the first century. Greek philosophers considered love between two men to be the highest form of love and discussions on love in Greek society were always about how the love between two men could be expressed²⁰. Everybody in first century Greek, Roman and Jewish societies would have been aware of this moral duality, and that includes Jesus himself. A critique of the history, development and theology of the Christian Church, and of the surrounding Greek, Roman and Jewish societies has therefore been conducted, which uses the results of the neurophysiological study, in combination with the knowledge of the duality this the neurophysiological and psychological study has shown to exist. By removing the theological presumptions which have existed for most of the last two thousand years, new perspectives on first century Greek, Roman and Jewish societies are obtained, as well as new insights into bible texts. The aim of this theological and historical section of the investigation is to determine how and why these contradictions have occurred, so that ways to resolve them may be found..

Cultural differences must be taken into account, and clear distinctions must be made between the influences of love, power and sex. The discussions in Greek philosophy were always about same-sex acts. Thus, rather than making moral judgements on a gendered basis the separation was made between the approval of acts engaged in for the noble pursuit of love and the condemnation of those which sought the carnal abuse of sex²¹. In place of the ascetic practices of the Greek philosophers, Judaism adopted a didactic technique. This “Zugot” or “Pairs” approach was prevalent from the time of the exile until 70 AD. 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. 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^{22 23}. Indeed these concepts would not have been understood. The deeper the relationship the more valued the chavruta partnership became, and it is reported that the bonds between such same-sex partners could often be stronger than

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

21 A Greek analogy expressed this in terms of the integrity and control of a charioteer who was driving the ugly black horse of passion and the noble white horse of love. See: Gilchrist, S. (2011): “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

22 For example In the Avot de-Rabbi Hathan it is recommended that a Chavruta partner should be someone with whom one can “eat and drink, read and study, sleep, and share secrets of the Torah and personal secrets” together. (As reported in Maimonide’s commentary on the Mishnah: Avot 1:6 aseh lekha rav). See section 3:2:3 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*An Unfinished*

Reformation”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>. The special nature of the love expressed between Jesus and John in the Gospel of John would have been unremarkable for a Chavruta partnership of the time: Judaism is also littered with a history of close rabbinic partnerships in which today’s definition of heterosexuality and homosexuality cannot be applied. Full arguments are also presented in Gilchrist, S. (2011) “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same Sex Relationships*”.

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>. However Greenberg, Steven; (2004) “*Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition*” The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN 10: 0-299-19094-3 gives a very complete account. Liturgies for ceremonies of Adelphopoiesis or “Brother Making” can still be accessed. These services have existed in Christianity from a very early date. A detailed description of these is given in section 3:2:5 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*An Unfinished Reformation*”: In section 4:5:2 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> a comparison is made between these Christian relationships and those expected in the first century Jewish rabbinic partnerships. The close correspondence suggests that these represent relationships which have been carried over into the Christian Church.

23 The relationship had to be seen to be between equals to maintain the social statuses of both partners. They were not necessarily exclusive. Marriage was almost compulsory in Judaism and Rabbis would go home to their wives.

those in a heterosexual marriage²⁴. 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. This meant that 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”²⁵. No other physical sexual acts between two men are forbidden in the bible²⁶. This condemnation of same-sex intercourse is considered a very specific condemnation. An extended analysis of the relationships between power and sex, including how these were used in the first century world has therefore been conducted. In these first century societies it is demonstrated that it was the abuses of power which gave permission for the extreme abuses of sex. Thus any examination of this prohibition, its history, and its specific nature, must look at the relationships between power and sex.

4:0: Domination and Subjection

For much of the first millennium the ferocity of the conflicts over same-sex intercourse was a leading feature in the life of the Church. The chasm between the condemnation of the submissive partner in a conquering society and the condemnation of the active partner in a conquered one is reflected the extent of the cultural clashes which occurred. As Christianity spread from the Greek and Jewish world into Roman society, this was one of the major cultural battles it had to face. Roman society viewed acts of same-sex intercourse through the perspective of domination and subjection. This meant that same-sex rape by a male Roman citizen was permitted if the penetrated partner was of lesser status. Slaves had very little or protection and acts of same-sex intercourse by what today would be regarded as heterosexual men were common acts²⁷

Male Roman citizens were expected to practice responsibility: nevertheless that did not prevent this society from using its privileges of power and domination against those of lesser status to pursue licentious heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. For subject societies such as Judaism these actions of domination were horrific. However gender discrimination was also present in Judean society²⁸. This is shown to be why the penetrator and the penetrated partners are both condemned in Leviticus 20:13: although in Leviticus 18:22, only the penetrator is accused²⁹ ³⁰. It is additionally well attested within first century Jewish sources that this specific prohibition applied to same-sex anal penetration by men alone and not to any other sexual acts³¹ ³². It also had to happen in public

24 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>

25 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>

26 In Chapter 38 of Genesis Onan is struck dead for “spilling his seed on the ground” Although it is *coitus interruptus*, some take it to be the condemnation of masturbation as well. The rabbis condemned this as the ejection of semen in vain. However this may have had more to do with Onan’s refusal to obey God’s command to populate the world. Sexual intercourse was permitted “for the good of relationships” as well as procreation. See section 8 of this document for more details.

27 Always providing the Roman citizen was the penetrating partner. Unmarried young men in the higher levels of society could have male concubines to satisfy their needs. Roman Centurions were not allowed to marry and their servants could fulfil the equivalent role.

28 A Jew who allowed himself to be penetrated by another male Jew could also be disparaged, since equivalent issues of status would still be involved.. For a discussion 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>

29 See section 4:4:1 “Power and Sex in Same-Sex Acts” 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>

30 It is commonly assumed that these were condemnations of temple prostitution and sexual abuse in surrounding societies. However this does not stand up well when a historical assessment of these societies is undertaken using external sources from Ugarit and elsewhere. See Gilchrist, S. 2013: “*An Unfinished Reformation*”. Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> and 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>

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

32 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

for any conviction to be obtained³³. There is no corresponding condemnation of same-sex behaviour between women and in the halachic³⁴ literature it is consistently shown that the abuse of power was the reason given for the prohibition of same-sex intercourse, not an intrinsic horror of the act. The same is found when the teaching of Jesus is examined. Both Jesus and Peter condemned Sodom and Gomorrah for their lack of hospitality and their social immoralities rather than the act of sex³⁵. In the story of the Centurion and the slave it is the primacy of love which dominates any concern about a sexual act³⁶. Paul also sets his own condemnations in the context of sexual abuse³⁷. In Greco/Roman societies which endorsed same-sex relationships Paul would also have been aware of the moral duality which this neurophysiological and psychological analysis has shown must exist. However none of the cultural values and moralities can be properly addressed without reference to the whole of society. This investigation contains a comprehensive analysis of how the moral duality was expressed, not just in the Christian context, but also more generally in Greco/Roman society and the Goddess cults³⁸.

5:0 Power and Sex

Despite these concerns there is no reference to these issues of power or domination in the present day doctrines of the Christian Church. A paradigm shift has therefore occurred in Christian teaching. One of the reasons for this comes from the need for Christianity to gain acceptance in Roman society. The search for respectability, which is clearly evident in the Epistles and letters of Peter and Paul, meant that they could not directly attack the social and power structures which maintained that society. However that did not stop Christianity from vociferously condemning individual abuses of heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. Instead of presenting evidence for these power struggles in the Epistles and Letters, support for the authorities is promoted³⁹. As a consequence the condemnations of same-sex intercourse had to be focussed on the sexual act. The vitriolic nature of these condemnations and the extent of same-sex abuse meant that all awareness of the moral duality which is inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour later disappeared. This has enabled these first century condemnations, which had focussed on the abuses of sex, to be changed into a universal condemnation of the physical act.

This was not an instant change. The cultural clashes between Christianity and other sections of Roman society continued for much of the first millennium. By the time of the fourth century the Christian Church had managed to condemn all sexual activity and even thoughts of sex, as an evil necessity which arose as a consequence of the Fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden, and should

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>

33 The Jewish Oral Law states that capital punishment would only be applicable if two men were caught in the act of anal sex and if there were two witnesses to the act, if the two witnesses warned the men involved that they committed a capital offence, and the two men subsequently acknowledged the warning, but they still continued to engage in the prohibited act.. There is no account in Jewish history of capital punishment for this offence ever being applied.

34 Jewish religious literature ordinances and law not included in the bible itself.

35 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>

36 See section 3:4 of 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>

37 See section 4:5 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>

38 Gilchrist, S. 2013: "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

39 Initially this was not true. Despite his individual high standing, the support for the eunuch in Acts (8:26-40), who was charged with taking the Gospel message to the outside world, associated early Christianity with those populations and groups of people who the Roman authorities sought to dominate or suppress. See section 4:3 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>. For more details see section 3 of 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> and Section 3:2 of Gilchrist, S. 2013: "*An Unfinished Reformation*". Access at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

Gilchrist, S. (2017): "*The Man Who Built his House upon Sand?*"

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only to be used for procreative acts. Same-sex abuse was virulently condemned from the beginning. In Christianity however, Augustine may have been the first to condemn what today would be regarded as consensual homosexual intercourse on the grounds that it was: *"Making wrong use of the things which you allow"*⁴⁰. Nevertheless specific concerns about gender and sexual variation were less of an issue since these condemnations were applied to all forms of sex

These matters were considered in two Councils which immediately preceded the great Council of Nicaea in 325⁴¹. Another early condemnation of same sex acts is that by Saint Basil of Caesarea (330-379), who also wrote about the penalties to be applied to monks who interfered with young boys⁴². Sexual abuse was clearly condemned. The Canons of the Council of Ancyra only prohibited bestiality. The Canons of the Council of Elvira do not mention this issue. Some interpret this prohibition as condemning same-sex intercourse, but for the laity there is no other prohibition of loving same-sex acts. During the second half of the millennium, in contrast to the increasing sexual repression of the Christian Church, the Carolingian Kings⁴³ restated the doctrine which endorsed same-sex relationships given in love. Sexual abuse and same-sex intercourse were considered to be the only prohibited acts⁴⁴. Writing around 1160, Aelred⁴⁵, the Cistercian Abbot of Rievaulx, encouraged his monks to express their love for each other, not just generally, but individually and passionately. A flowering of same-sex romantic love also took place towards the end of the first millennium, and this was attacked in ever increasing condemnations of sex and sexuality by the hierarchy of the Christian Church. However these condemnations lost their credibility due to the massive degree of sexual abuse taking place within its clergy, the accumulation of power and privilege by its prelates, and the failure of the Church to adequately deal with these concerns⁴⁶. Matters came to a head with the Cathar revolt which began in 1243⁴⁷. After its suppression Thomas Aquinas sought to transform the teaching of the Catholic Church by liberalising sexuality within marriage, and by condemning all sexual behaviour outside it. That has led to what today is regarded as the traditional teaching on homosexual acts, and by implication other gender and sexually variant behaviour. Thus: as stated in Paragraph 2357 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church *"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*

40 See section 8:2 The First Millennium of: Gilchrist, S. (2011): *"Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"*:

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

41 From as early as the years 306 and 314, bishops in the Christian Church had enacted legislation in the Council of Elvira and the Council of Ancyra which imposed the rule of celibacy on all who served as religious or priests. These canons prohibited bestiality and by extension anal penetration, but for the laity they did not prohibit other loving same-sex acts. For the priesthood, celibacy was strongly enforced. Marriage or any sexual contact was prohibited for those who were already married. Canon 31 of the Council of Elvira declares "Bishops, presbyters, deacons, and others with a position in the ministry are to abstain completely from sexual intercourse with their wives and from the procreation of children. If anyone disobeys, he shall be removed from the clerical office". Ancyra was in present day Turkey and Elvira in Spain so it may be presumed that these policies were already widespread in the church. See sections 2, 8:2 and 8:11 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): *"Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

42 St. Basil of Caesarea, in St. Peter Damien, *"Liber Gomorrhianus"*, cols.174f: See footnote 46 and sections 2, 8:2 and 8:11 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): *"Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

43 Kings of the Holy Roman Empire

44 See sections 2, 8:2 and 8:11 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): *"Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"*:

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

45 Aelred cited the example of Jesus and John as guidance. He said; "Jesus himself, in everything like us, patient and compassionate with others in every matter, transfigured this sort of love through the expression of his own love. for he allowed only one - not all - to recline on his breast as a sign of his special love; and the closer they were, the more copiously did the secrets of their heavenly marriage impart the sweet smell of their spiritual chrism to their love". Aelred was also superior of all the Cistercians in England. He wrote several books on spirituality, among them *Speculum caritatis* ("The Mirror of Charity" and *De spiritali amicitia* ("On Spiritual Friendship"). Copies of these are available in translation. His public works encouraged virginity among the unmarried and chastity (not abstinence) in marriage and widowhood, and he warns against sexual activity outside marriage. In all his works he treats same-sex and opposite-sex attraction as equally possible, and equally dangerous to the oath to celibacy. Consistent with this outlook is the value he places on all such relationships when they are given and received in love. Section 7 of Gilchrist, S. (2011): *"Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

46 These abuses were catalogued in an 11th Century book by Peter Damian. Pierre J. Payer (ed.): (1982): *"Book of Gomorrah: An eleventh century treatise against clerical homosexual practise"*, Waterloo, Ont. Wilfrid Laurier University Press. One wonders what relevance this may have for the present day Church! See section 8:3 of: Gilchrist, S. (2011): *"Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>.

47 See section 8:4 "Heresy and Revolt" in Gilchrist, S. (2011): *"Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

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". Aquinas also makes clear the severity of these offences. He states: "The venereal act⁴⁸ is rendered unbecoming through being contrary to right reason, and because, in addition, it is contrary to the natural order of the venereal act as becoming to the human race: and this is called the unnatural vice. This may happen by copulation with an undue sex, male with male, or female with female, as the Apostle states (Romans 1:27): and this is called the vice of sodomy⁴⁹. His condemnation is also unequivocal: "Wherefore among sins against nature, the most grievous is the sin of bestiality, because use of the due species is not observed. After this comes the sin of sodomy, because use of the right sex is not observed."⁵⁰ An additional aim of Aquinas was to reinforce the authority of the Church. Instead of condemning the abuses of power in sexual relationships: which was present in all sections of the Church, Aquinas' condemnations concentrated entirely on lust and the sexual acts⁵¹.

During the first millennium a paradigm shift has therefore occurred. This has changed what was a condemnation based on the intention of an act into the automatic and unvarying condemnations of the actual act. It also creates the contradictions between the scientific and experiential evidence and the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. The attempts by conservative groups, such as GAFCON and others, who seek to maintain the traditional teaching of the Church, because of their belief that it truly represents the Gospel message, are instead pursuing Christian doctrines which arise from the needs of the 13th Century Church⁵². Reasons for this paradigm shift may be identified. The first is that any public expression of any form of gender and sexually variant behaviour, for any purpose has the potential for social disruption in societies where the gender roles are rigidly separated in social, religious and legal terms⁵³. The second relates to the injustices of power in the same societies and the sexual abuses which this allows. The freedom to engage in sexual intercourse without reproductive consequences is a third reason, and the promiscuity which took place was seen to lead to the trivialisation of the sexual act. It is extremely important to emphasise that there is no toleration whatever of any form of sexual abuse in this investigation, however the severe condemnation and criminalisation of homosexual behaviour for many centuries has resulted in the fundamental duality in gender and sexually variant behaviour being denied: instead of being driven through the search for love and identity it is seen as the pursuit of desire for a sexual reward. And what was the condemnation based on the intention of an act has been changed into the automatic and unvarying condemnations of the actual act.

6:0: Love and Marriage

The presumption that same-sex relationships attack the sanctity of marriage is inherent in the doctrines which Aquinas developed. There is no corresponding condemnation to that which Aquinas imposes in the Bible itself. The sanctity of marriage is very highly valued in the teaching of Jesus, and in the Jewish tradition, yet none of the statements in the bible automatically condemn the possibility of other relationships, and Jesus does not discuss that issue in his own teaching. It is nevertheless possible to deduce something of the approach that Jesus took to gender and sexually variant behaviour in his attitude to Roman society. This has been undertaken by the author⁵⁴. However in order to understand the type of relationship that could exist in Judaism at the time of

48 This is how Aquinas describes same-sex intercourse.

49 Aquinas, Thomas: (1225 - 1274): Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 154, a. 11. <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>

50 Aquinas, Thomas: (1225 - 1274): Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 154, a. 12 <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>

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

52 See: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church: Is it Not Time to Consider the Science?" <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/226P-ConsiderScience.pdf>

53 That may be observed in Paul's own condemnation of "Soft men" in 1 Corinthians 6:9: There are various interpretations: see for example: http://www.gaysandslaves.com/mal_discuss.html

54 See for example: 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> and Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

Jesus it is necessary to return to the first century understandings, where hospitality, power and status were the major concern. Instead of making moral judgements on a gendered basis, these distinctions were made by approving acts that were engaged in for the noble pursuit of love and condemning those which pursued the carnal abuse of sex. This also includes the characteristics of first century chavruta partnerships, where male rabbinic relationships of intense intimacy were encouraged and the only specifically prohibited sexual act was that of anal penetrative sex⁵⁵.

7:0: Intercourse Prohibitions

A notable feature which comes from this study is how strongly the early Jewish and Christian condemnations of same-sex intercourse concentrated on the abuses of power rather than the abhorrence of sex. A disturbing discussion in Judaism which is reported in the Talmud makes it clear that the sole reason for the condemnation of same-sex intercourse was because of the humiliation and domination enforced by the act. In addition it concludes that when there was no awareness of humiliation or domination there was no condemnation of the act⁵⁶. This discussion is horrific to modern attitudes but it is well written up in the Jewish halakhic literature. The age of nine years and one day is the age at which a boy was considered to have begun puberty. Below that age a boy was considered to be "Not a male". Therefore the prohibitions of Leviticus 20:13 and 18:22 did not apply. This legalism is in stark contrast to the teaching of Jesus in the New Covenant, where the Jewish law is no longer to be interpreted through the prohibitions and permissions it enforces, instead all of the same laws are to be interpreted using the guidance of love, and the purity of intention of the acts. While all forms of sexual abuse are clearly and rightly condemned in the bible, the specific condemnation of same-sex intercourse at the time of Jesus was not concerned with these sexual moralities. Its focus was entirely on the abuses of power in gender unequal and despotic societies. Therefore, when these are absent it follows that all moral judgements applied to same-sex intercourse should be the same as those applied to any other same-sex or heterosexual act of sex.

That conclusion is far from the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. Paul, as an educated Jew who was charged with enforcing religious orthodoxies by the Jewish authorities would also have been well versed in Jewish Law. It is these first century interpretations of Jewish Law, and the duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour, which Jesus, Paul and the other disciples would have understood. This investigation additionally emphasizes the danger of making judgements which impose the cultural values of any twenty first century society upon a different first century one. There is much frank discussion about the moralities of sexual intercourse, masturbation, ejaculation⁵⁷ and other sexual activities in the Talmud and other halachic literature. However the first century condemnations which relate specifically to same-sex intercourse concentrate uniquely on its use as an instrument of power and domination instead of the moralities of sex. It is also of note that being male or female is decided in terms of functional capabilities, rather than the biology of sex. This illustrates the importance of setting the interpretation of Leviticus 20:13 and 18:22 in the correct

55 For a description of how intense these could be, see the account of the relationship between Rashi and Rabbi Jonathan which is given in 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 freedom with which that love could be expressed may be present in the Gospel of John itself.

56 See section 4:4:1 Power and Sex in Same-Sex Acts 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> See also http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_54.html : http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_55a.html . The Babylonian Talmud was compiled around the year 500. However Raba and Rabbi Samuel who are cited in this lived around 270 – 330. Both he and Samuel were the two foremost Jewish teachers of the early third century CE.

57 Masturbation is not directly condemned in the Bible, however in the Jewish Law it is condemned as the ejection of semen in vain. The story in Chapter 38 of Genesis about Onan spilling his seed on the ground had more to do with his refusal to obey God's command to populate the world, rather than the waste of semen. Therefore various interpretations exist. Ejaculation was permitted for two purposes, one was for reproduction; the other was for the good of relationships: in heterosexual relationships for example when a woman was beyond child-bearing age. Premature withdrawal and the use of absorbents as contraceptives were permitted in certain circumstances: provided they did not become habitual and they did not frustrate the command of God to populate the world. These considerations do not seem to figure significantly in the Jewish condemnations of same-sex intercourse: probably because the prohibition of this act meant that ejaculation for that purpose did not occur. Has that been possible, the maintenance of good relationships might just possibly be used to justify it. See section 4:4:1 Power and Sex in Same-Sex Acts 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>

context, instead of how its frequent use in an indiscriminating way today to condemn homosexuality and all homosexual acts.

8:0: Absence

A major constraint on present day teaching is the absence of any direct reference to these power struggles in the Bible texts, or in the traditions of the later Church. The reasons for this are given in extended analyses which are given in separate papers⁵⁸. The search for respectability, which is clearly evident in the Epistles and Letters of Peter and Paul, meant that the early Christian Church could not directly attack the social and power structures which maintained that society. However that did not stop Christianity from vociferously condemning individual abuses of heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. As a consequence the condemnations of same-sex intercourse had to be focussed on the sexual act. The vitriolic nature of these condemnations and the extent of same-sex abuse meant that all awareness of the moral duality which is inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour later disappeared. Instead of presenting evidence for these power struggles, in the Epistles and Letters of Peter and Paul, support for the authorities is promoted⁵⁹.

During the development of doctrines which restored the authority of the thirteenth century Church it was not in the interests of Aquinas to identify the abuses of power as a cause of the previous sexual scandals which had taken place within it⁶⁰. Because of these considerations, there is no direct evidence of the impact of these power struggles, either in the current teaching of the Church or in the Bible texts. This absence has enabled the paradigm shift in which the condemnation based on the intention of an act has become the condemnation of the act.

9:0: Current Issues

This has major implications for Christianity in the present day. The neurophysiological and psychological analysis which is undertaken as part of this investigation demonstrates that there is a fundamental clash between the scientific results and the traditional teaching on gender and sexual variation adopted by the Christian Church. From each of the scientific, theological and historical points of view it is demonstrated that the traditional teaching and doctrines of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation are built on a false foundation. They do not correspond with the teaching of Jesus: they come instead from the need to gain respectability in Roman society and to enforce the authority of the Church in later ones. They also arose because of the cultural clashes and the urgent need to combat sexual abuse and gender based coercion in despotic and gender unequal societies. For its survival and to enable it to take the Gospel message to the world, Christianity adopted a form of gender complementarity which was amenable to Roman culture; within which the Christian Gospel could be expressed⁶¹. The failures of this would lead to major misuses in the later Church, in which strong gender discrimination occurred⁶².

For centuries men and women have been forced into separate roles which are strictly defined. Challenges to these stereotypes disrupt the social order that is formed. Therefore gender and sexually variant behaviour provide an increased attack on the social order that is created. It is often presumed that gender and sexual discrimination arises directly from the theology of the Church.

58 See Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> 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>

59 That was not initially the case in the Gospel Church. For a discussion on the transformation See section 3:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

60 For discussion on the impact of the Reformation, including disagreements between Luther and Aquinas See section: 2:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

61 This required expressing to the Gospel message in full while conforming to the demands of society outside it. That ideal is expressed by Paul in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". Moderation and adaptation was needed to ensure the survival of the Church

62 See section 2:2:5 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): *An Unfinished Reformation*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

However because of this, gender discrimination and the discrimination against gender and sexually variant people are socially imposed conditions. Therefore it would be wrong to identify their causes with religious belief. The transformations which early Christianity needed to make 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 continues to give religious legitimacy to them. In many African countries extreme penalties against homosexual behaviour are being advocated or applied. There is no doubt that there was a great deal of sexual abuse in first century society, where the blatant abuses of power gave permission for extreme abuses of same-sex acts. However to condemn all gender and sexually variant behaviour for the abuses of some, is akin to saying today that all members of a minority community are terrorists because some engage in terrorist acts. In the United States at the present time, senior members of the Catholic Church have been using its traditional teaching to collude with the conservative Christian right when they condemn all transgender people as invariably being in pursuit of illicit or depraved sex⁶³. Harm has also been done, and is still being done, by the medical misdiagnoses that these doctrines create⁶⁴. 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. The aspiration by the Church of England and the Catholic Church to atone for past injustices is fully accepted. However repentance and a change of tone is not enough. If there is no move to reconsider the Christian doctrine which has led to or supported this discrimination, the same misuses will continue to occur.

10:0: Outcome

In the theological and historical part of this investigation an extended examination of the teaching of Jesus has been conducted and it is shown that it conforms to the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study⁶⁵. The outcome of this requires that the same principles of use and abuse must be applied 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 derogation of personal relationships, of marriage and of family life, and there is no automatic condemnation of any cross-gender or same-sex act.

11:0: Implementation

This is not an analysis which demands or supports any relaxation of moral values in the attitudes to gender and sex. Instead it demands that the boundary between use and abuse be changed from one that condemns all gender and sexually variant behaviour irrespective of purpose, to one that applies identical criteria of use and abuse to all heterosexual, cross-gender and same-sex acts. There is no toleration of any form of abusive or immoral sex. When the whole of a group is universally condemned, then all members of that group are likely to bond together in a common defence. If Christianity can find a way to recognise the duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour, then the gender and sexually variant groups must also do the same. As well as the challenges which apply to the Christian Church, there are equivalent challenges which apply to the gender and sexually variant communities. If true reconciliation is to be obtained both sides need to change. The changes required within the gender and sexually variant communities may have as great an impact as those required for the Christian church.

63 Gilchrist, S. (2017): "No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

64 See Footnote 19

65 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>

In the Christian Church at the present time these issues are not being properly faced. When the traditional theological teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation can be tested using scientific principles, one might expect science to play a major role in any examination that is required. That has not happened. The deficiencies in the scientific principles which are used by the Catholic Church are described in a paper by this author on “*No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice*”.⁶⁶ In the 2013 “Pilling Report”⁶⁷ prepared for the Church of England an inadequate account of the science is presented. As far as the author can ascertain, there was no consideration of science at all during the whole of the “Shared Conversations” process⁶⁸. Nor is there any consideration of science in the 2017 Bishop’s Reflection Group on Sexuality^{69 70}. It seems that all of these consultations have been wrapped up in the bubbles of their own theologies, without any consideration being given either to science or to what is happening in society at large. Like the man who built his house on sand, the whole foundation could be destroyed. This refusal to engage is creating great damage not just in sexual and gender matters but to Christianity itself.

12:0: Stand-Off

Sadly this is not a new phenomenon and at present a stand-off occurs⁷¹. The moral duality, which is demonstrated in this analysis to be inherent to gender and sexually variant behaviour, has been recognised by many secular societies. This acceptance of this and its full incorporation into these societies has been confirmed by gender equality legislation, which includes the legal recognition of equal or same-sex marriage, in many countries of the world⁷². Against this is set the continuing opposition of the Christian Churches who determinedly maintain that marriage can only be between a man and a woman for life⁷³. That this attitude is not just a matter of semantics was demonstrated in 2016 by Pope Francis where, in Paragraph 251 of “*Amoris Laetitia*”⁷⁴ he stated: “*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”.* The General Synod of the Church of England rejected the report of its “Bishop’s Reflection Group on Sexuality” at its meeting on the 15th February 2017⁷⁵, largely it appears because of the absolute refusal to consider any change in the traditional teaching of the Church⁷⁶.

66 Gilchrist, S. (2017): “*No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice*”. <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

67 Pilling Report: (2013): “*Report of the House of Bishops’ Working Party on human sexuality*”, GS 1929, Nov 2013
https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling_report_gs_1929_web.pdf

68 Shared Conversations: See: Church of England (2015) 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/>

69 Church of England (2017): “*Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations. A Report from the House of Bishops*”: General Synod Document 2055 <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3863472/gs-2055-marriage-and-same-sex-relationships-after-the-shared-conversations-report-from-the-house-of-bishops.pdf>: See also: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/229P-GS2055.pdf>

70 Gilchrist, S. (2017): “*What Next? Some thoughts following the rejection by the General Synod of the Church of England, of report issued by the “Bishop’s Reflection Group on Sexuality”*”. <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/229P-WhatNext.pdf>

71 The author has documented this history of resistance in a separate paper. 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>

72 The loss of moral authority means that is secular society who now defines the meaning of the word marriage. It is not the Church. For a discussion on the religious dimension of marriage see:

Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*Reform and the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/008B-ReformChristianChurchArticle.pdf>

73 See Paragraph 1601 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church “The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.”

74 Pope Francis. (2016): “*“Amoris Laetitia”*”. *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation 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*”. 19 March 2016
https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

75 Church of England (2017): “*Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations. A Report from the House of Bishops*”: General Synod Document 2055 <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3863472/gs-2055-marriage-and-same-sex-relationships-after-the-shared-conversations-report-from-the-house-of-bishops.pdf>

What is and should be welcomed is the commitment to pastoral care, and the affirmation that gender and sexually variant people should be welcomed into the Church. The Church of England is proposing a new teaching document to deal with this issue. Pope Francis has created a new era of welcome in the Catholic Church⁷⁷. However to give a welcome while keeping the doctrine only puts a sticking plaster on the wound: the impurity and condemnation is seen to remain. Unless there is a full and unconditional welcome of gender and sexual variant people into a Church which celebrates their true identities and gives complete recognition of the special contributions they are able to make, the secular scapegoating by society will continue: and that will also appear to be in collusion with the Church.

The document, “Amoris Laetitia” presented the final conclusions of the “Synod on the Family” which took place in 2015. However from the very beginning of the Synod, Pope Francis and the Vatican made it clear that there could be no possibility of change to the traditional teaching of the Church. The report of the Church of England Bishop’s Reflection group on Sexuality was an outcome of a “Shared Conversations” process. That started in 2014 and it was intended to be a deep listening process involving all sides, so that greater understanding could be obtained. These took place in the hope that at least a “Good Disagreement” could be reached. Contrary to the listening that should have happened, the Bishops, in their later deliberations, decided that all future discussions on gender and sexual variation must take place without alteration to the traditional teaching of the Church. In a letter which was sent after the rejection of the report by the Bishop’s Reflection Group in the Church of England General Synod, the Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York indicated that, notwithstanding this rejection, discussions should still continue according to the traditional doctrine on gender and sexual variation as “The Church of England has received it”⁷⁸. Despite all of these discussions and the evidence that is now available both the Catholic Church and the Church of England remain resolutely determined to hold on to what today is regarded as this traditional teaching of the Church.

13:0: Moving Forward

By its own admission the doctrines that the Christian Church imposes are the results of tradition and the history of interpretation of scripture by the Church. They do not come from Jesus himself. It is demonstrated that what today is regarded as the traditional teaching of the Church on homosexuality and gender and sexual variation correspond more closely to the needs of the 13th century Church⁷⁹. Therefore they should also be regarded as disciplines rather than doctrines of the Church. Disciplines can be changed according to circumstance, and from the scientific, social, historical and theological viewpoints it is demonstrated that this change must occur.

The Christian Church regards gender and sexual variation and same-sex attraction as identity driven. However it medically misdiagnoses these conditions through the presumption that gender and sexually variant behaviour is a lifestyle choice; which are acts of grave depravity and always in pursuit of inappropriate sex. As identity driven conditions it is demonstrated in this investigation that the full range of moral attitudes and behaviour must be found in gender and sexually variant behaviour as that which exists in the population at large. As a consequence the fundamental moral

[relationships-after-the-shared-conversations-report-from-the-house-of-bishops.pdf](#): See also: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/229P-GS2055.pdf>

76. A commentary by this author on the report and its rejection is separately available: Gilchrist, S. (2017): “*What Next? Some thoughts following the rejection by the General Synod of the Church of England, of the report issued by the “Bishop’s Reflection Group on Sexuality”*” <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/229P-WhatNext.pdf>

77 See for example: Hale, C.J. (2015): “The Pope Francis Statement That Changed the Church on LGBT Issues”: Time: 28 Jul, 2015 <http://time.com/3975630/pope-francis-lgbt-issues/>

78 Church of England, 2017: “*Letter from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York following General Synod*”. <https://staging.churchofengland.org/media/3878263/abc-and-aby-joint-letter.pdf>. See also: <https://churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/02/letter-from-the-archbishops-of-canterbury-and-york-following-general-synod.aspx>

79 Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church: Is it Not Time to Consider the Science?*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/226P-ConsiderScience.pdf>

Gilchrist, S. (2017): “*The Man Who Built his House upon Sand?*”

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duality which is inherent to gender and sexual variation is denied. This misdiagnosis also means that these identity driven characteristics and conflicts are being treated in a reward driven manner. In the neurophysiological and psychological analysis it is shown that attempts to use the techniques for reward driven conflicts on identity driven conflicts do not work; and management techniques which are almost opposite to one another must be employed. Much harm is done when the wrong methods are used⁸⁰. It is imperative that the correct medical and scientific approaches are employed.

It is demonstrated that there is a fundamental contradiction between the results of the scientific analysis and the traditional teaching of the Church. An extended examination of the history, development and theology of the Christian Church, and of the surrounding Greek, Roman and Jewish societies has therefore been conducted. All forms of sexual abuse are condemned in many places in the Bible, However and examination of first century and other sources show that the specific prohibition of same-sex intercourse in Leviticus was entirely concerned with the issues of power, domination and humiliation in despotic gender and socially unequal societies. It is these abuses of power which gave permission for the extreme abuses of sex. In addition it is demonstrated that a paradigm shift later occurred, in which the condemnation of same-sex intercourse changed from abuse based on its intention to the abuse of the actual act. It is concluded that, when these abuses are absent, the moral judgements applied to same-sex intercourse should be the same as those applied to any other same-sex or heterosexual act of sex. There is no toleration of any form of abusive or immoral sex. The results of this analysis additionally confirm that the boundary between use and abuse be changed from one that condemns all gender and sexually variant behaviour irrespective of purpose, to one that applies identical principles of use and abuse to all heterosexual, cross-gender and same-sex acts.

Current Christian attitudes consider the condemnations of same-sex behaviour to be about the prohibitions of sexual acts. When just the wording is considered they are totally correct. However the failure to take account of the reasons behind them has led to conclusions that are incorrect⁸¹. As members of the first century world in which same-sex love and behaviour was encountered, Jesus, John, Paul and the other disciples would have been aware of the moral duality in gender and sexually variant behaviour which this scientific analysis has shown to exist. They would also have been aware of the understanding that moral behaviour was not primarily determined on a gendered basis: instead the distinction was made between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. They would further be aware of the "Pairs" culture in Judaism, the didactic approaches to study, and the intimacies that were permitted in the rabbinic and chavruta partnerships of the time. In addition they would be aware of how these and personal behaviour was regulated to ensure that the hierarchy, power and status of people inside these strongly gender and socially unequal societies (including Judaism) were maintained. They would also be aware of how the abuses of power in these intensely divided societies could give permission for extreme abuses of sex. The teaching of Jesus is examined against each of these criteria. It is demonstrated that it conforms to the results of this neurophysiological and psychological study. It also conforms to the aspects of gender equality that are expected in the present day. The contradictions between these and the present day teaching of the Church demonstrate the need to interpret the bible in the context of the duality that exists.

80 See Footnote 19

81 That has been carried out, and it is reported in a series of documents: 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: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf> have a focus on the pre-Christian area. Gilchrist, S. (2011): "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf> has an emphasis on the first millennium and the early Church. Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf> deals with the developing Church. Gilchrist, S. (2016): "Foundations of Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church": [Introduction and Index]: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/217P-FoundationsSexGender.pdf> indexes more recent papers

From each of the scientific, theological and historical points of view it is demonstrated that the traditional teaching and doctrines of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation are built on a false foundation. They do not correspond with the teaching of Jesus. They come instead from the need to gain respectability in Roman society; and to maintain the authority of the Church in later ones. They also arose because of the cultural clashes and the urgent need to combat sexual abuse and gender based coercion in despotic and gender unequal societies. This conclusion therefore demands that the moral duality which is inherent to gender and sexually variant behaviour should be restored to the teaching and doctrines of the Christian Church. There is no derogation of personal relationships, of marriage and of family life and there is no automatic condemnation of any cross-gender or same-sex act. All behaviour is governed by the purity of intention. 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 welcomed and accepted as members of the Church and the Christian community, in their own right.

The results of the scientific analysis also demonstrate that this moral duality is fundamental to identity driven characteristics and conflicts. The refusal to recognise this moral duality has two significant consequences. The first is that the absolute condemnation of all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour made it easier for the Christian Church to combat the gross abuses of sex in society. Criminalising it destroyed all evidence of its existence; and it is not surprising that all awareness of the duality inherent to gender and sexually variant behaviour disappeared. The second consequence of this is that all gender and sexually variant behaviour, irrespective of their moral attitudes of the people involved, are presumed to be in pursuit of illicit, inappropriate or abusive sex. Major injustices are still being created. Unless there is a full and unconditional welcome of gender and sexual variant people into a Church which celebrates their true identities and gives complete recognition of the special contributions they are able to make, the secular scapegoating by society will continue. These issues of scapegoating and criminalisation continue to cause great harm in many societies; and they must be urgently addressed.

Cultural differences have a major impact. Today these are leading towards major schisms in Christianity and the Christian Church. In secular societies where gender equality is a reality, the observed gender discrimination, and the condemnation of gender and sexual variant behaviour by the Christian Churches is condemned. In societies where gender differentiation exists the traditional teaching of the Church on gender and sexual variant behaviour still has considerable force. In those societies the Church can be seen as an ally that reinforces and confirms the legitimacy of the status quo. Any change to the traditional teaching of the Church attacks the social and secular attitudes which the Church teaching had previously created. In many societies severe legal penalties are being applied against anyone who engages in same-sex behaviour. Christ would have died for any one person, just as he would for all. To condemn all gender and sexually variant behaviour for the abuses of some is akin to saying today that all members of a minority community are terrorists because some engage in terrorist acts. Instead of making all gender and sexually variant people the scapegoats for sexual abuse, the correct role for the Christian Church should be that of combatting all forms of abusive sex.

A radical analysis is presented in this document which seeks to take an independent approach by examining the development of Christianity as much as possible from the standpoints and cultures of the surrounding societies and as little as possible from the traditions and doctrines of the Church. It is not necessary for the reader to agree with the results of this research. However it is essential to note that there is a fundamental contradiction between the conclusions of the scientific analysis and the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church. By decreeing that there can be no possibility of change to these traditional doctrines even before discussion begins, the Church is failing to consider the foundations on which these doctrines are based. There are many challenges to be faced but, as in Matthew 7:24-27, a house that is built on sand will fall if its foundations are incorrect.

This investigation documents the harm that the Christian Church has done to gender and sexually variant people through its pursuit of a doctrine which, from a scientific point of view, has been shown to be incorrect. The historical and theological analysis which is undertaken in this investigation demonstrates how and why this contradiction occurred: It cannot resolve the contradiction, but it can point to actions which should be taken to enable the contradiction to be resolved. These thoughts are offered in the hope that they will provide a way forward for Christianity and the Church.

14:0: Commentary

Homosexuality and other forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour may be condemned for a number of reasons. In gender and socially unequal societies it can attack the male and female stereotypes which these societies compel. It also upsets the power structures in unequal societies when male domination and the masculine stereotypes are strongly enforced. The abuses of power in socially and gender unequal societies also gives permission for extreme abuses of sex. Reproductive consequences are absent when same-sex intercourse takes place. Same-sex abuse is, and has been, endemic in many societies, where actions, including same-sex intercourse are engaged in by what today would be considered heterosexual men. These are not for the love of a partner, but for the gratifications of sex. The duality in gender and sexually variant behaviour requires that 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. However all awareness of the duality disappears when it is swamped by the need to combat this sexual abuse. As a consequence all forms of same-sex behaviour, irrespective of their moral values or purpose, become classed as abusive sex. The criminalisation and suppression of these activities makes the concealment of the duality complete.

The cultural clashes, subjection and domination and the assertion of power and authority in first century Roman society gave a number of reasons why gender and sexually variant behaviour was condemned by the early Church. Roman society viewed sex and gender through the prism of power and domination. Same-sex acts in pursuit of fertility or for sexual gratification by what today would be regarded as heterosexual men were endorsed, provided the power structures demanded by society were observed. In same-sex intercourse it was always the penetrated; or submissive partner who was condemned. Actions which involved the subjection or domination of one male by another of equal status were loathed because of the total enforcement of masculinity, power and status that was required. Effeminacy and weakness in behaviour was derided for the similar reasons, since male supremacy and status was destroyed⁸². Phallic symbols and statues were flaunted by those in power in Roman society. The unrestricted use this power gave permission for extreme abuses of sex.

Counteracting this were the gender disrupting behaviour and the declarations of power which were exercised by the Goddess cults. Their gender disrupting behaviour was condemned by the early Church. However these contemporary and early condemnations by Philo, Julius Firmicus Maternus, Augustine and others focussed as much on their disgust at the public attacks on decorum and respectability; including sexual flaunting, social disintegration, disregard of public order and the trivialisation of sex, as they were about condemning immorality and same-sex acts⁸³. Christianity was not alone in these condemnations: many in Roman society also condemned them. The Goddess Cybele was singled out for special attention by Christianity as the source for all that was sexually evil and corrupt in Roman society. However the Goddess cults also attacked these power structures through their gender disruptive activities⁸⁴. A parallel study which is carried out as part of

82 See Paul's condemnation of "Soft men" in 1 Corinthians 6:9:

83 See section 10:0 "Cults and Traditions" in Gilchrist, S: (2013): "*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tqdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

84 Roman citizens were expected to act responsibly but attitudes to same-sex intercourse were governed almost entirely by power and domination. It is notable that almost half of the Roman Goddesses, including Cybele, were classified as perpetual virgins, since it would

this investigation shows how the equivalent moral duality was expressed within the Goddess cults, their popularity, their relationships with the underprivileged and the roles which these cults occupied in the power struggles which took place⁸⁵. Christianity rightly and vehemently condemned the abuse of same-sex intercourse in Roman society. It was also absolutely right for Christianity to attack the sexual abuses fostered by the Goddess cults. However Peter and Paul in the Epistles and Letters urged Christians to support the Roman authorities. Too close an association with the Goddess cults would have damaged the respectability of the Church. In the Gospel Church, that concern did not arise and parallels in their ministries are found⁸⁶.

In a society where power and domination was enforced through same-sex intercourse a set of doctrines which demanded the celibacy of Jesus and the virginity of John also became essential for the life of the Church⁸⁷. Same-sex intercourse in rabbinic partnerships, and total celibacy in the Christian priesthood, was strongly enforced to avoid any association with abuses of power in sexual acts. Issues of sexual misuse were constant themes during the first century and throughout the first millennium⁸⁸. They played an important part in fermenting the Cathar revolt⁸⁹. The attack on the sexual abuses of the Cathars was ferocious, but that does not stand well against the high degree of sexual abuse that was also taking place within the Christian Church. Thus it is not surprising that any awareness of the moral duality in gender and sexually variant behaviour gets swamped by these tides of abusive acts.

have been impossible for them to have suffered the indignity of being penetrated by any male God (or man). Reproduction by Goddesses took place by miraculous means. An ordinary male Roman citizen could have his male concubinus to satisfy his needs, slaves had some, but very limited protection, and same-sex rape, in which the penetrating partner did not incur any penalty, occurred. However status was all-important. In the military, homosexual behaviour was punishable by clubbing both partners to death, and such behaviour between two civilian male Roman citizens was condemned. It was the status of citizenship that was attacked, not the evils of sex. Rome was not afraid to flaunt this domination. Ornaments of erect penises could appear at the banquet tables, and phallic statues were erected as warning signs against anyone who thought to mount any challenge or attack. The exercise of this power enabled extreme abuses of sex, including same-sex intercourse and other acts. For the underprivileged this domination was counteracted by the assertions of power and also by the gender disrupting behaviour of the Goddess cults. First century society recognised a one-sex model in which male and female were essentially identical, but one had the sexual organs turned inside-out. In addition to this, being male or female was essentially determined by functional capacity, rather than the biology of sex. Fertility was also important, as well as the ability to gain an erection during sex. The Goddess cults challenged male domination and sexual provocation by threatening to turn any male who misused them into a woman instead. The frequency and ease with which the Gods and Goddesses could engage in gender transformations would augment that unease. However, instead of a literal transformation it may also represent the threat of male capability being lost. Here the Goddess cults could play another role. Having sexual intercourse with one of the self-castrated male priests of the Goddess cults was, for any concerned male, the equivalent to having received the blessing of the Goddess herself. Since the priest's own equipment for sexual arousal and penetration had been removed this also identified the priest as a channel for dispensing the blessings of the Goddess. It could be regarded as socially acceptable behaviour since it did not attack the status of the penetrator in the act. It is notable that in Roman society this form of "celibacy" could be more highly regarded than that of voluntary celibates, because of the magnitude of the sacrifice that was made and the irreversibility of the priest's act. However this act of self-castration was also condemned since it attacked the status of all males. For many years a male Roman citizen was prohibited from performing this act. For Christianity this was classed as prostitution. The Goddess cults became so rich on the proceeds of these activities that they came to depend on them and there is little doubt the gross abuses described in the Bible, and in Roman society, did occur. The consequences of this are seen in Acts 19 where the economic viability of the temple associated with the Goddess Artemis was seen to be threatened by the teaching of Paul. The Goddess cults were so popular that, instead of suppressing them Rome had to try to tame them instead. The banquets, which were notorious for their sexual depravities, were associated more with the higher echelons of Roman society who set up organisations purporting to support the cults, rather than the ordinary followers of the cults, many of whom were non-Roman and the underprivileged in society. From the first century Roman viewpoint the purpose of the activities could be seen to be legitimate in the context of seeking fertility. However there were great cultural clashes between the two societies. All forms of sexual abuse, including same-sex abuse are rightly and strongly condemned in the bible. However in sections 4, 5 and 7 of this document it is shown that at the time of Jesus the specific first century Jewish condemnation of same-sex intercourse in Leviticus 20:13 and 18:33 focussed on the lack of hospitality, power, humiliation and domination, instead of the sexual act. Judaism and Early Christianity regarded all of these activities with horror. In the Christianity of the present day their only purpose can be seen to be the pursuit of the depravities of sex. Full descriptions are given in Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf> and Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

85 See part 3 "Relationships and the Early Church" of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

86 See section 3:1:6: "Christianity and the Goddess Cults" in Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

87 The virginity of John is repeatedly emphasised in the writings of the Early Church Fathers. It is still celebrated today in the Orthodox Churches. See Gilchrist, S. (2016f): "Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

88 How abuse is defined is depends on the context in which it is addressed. For the author the definition requires the creation of actual harm: in the Christian context it may be defined as what the Church calls a sinful act.

89 The only accounts of their abuses that are available are those of their enemies, i.e. the Christian Church

This study demonstrates that the crucial feature which must be resolved is identified by the scientific analysis. This demonstrates that there is a fundamental contradiction between the conclusions of science and the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. The theological, historical and social analyses, at most, can only show how and why this conflict occurs, and chart ways of escape. A radical approach is taken in this investigation. It is not necessary to agree with this historical, theological and social study, however it is essential to find ways to resolve the contradiction between science and theology that occurs. This demands that there must be some changes to the traditional teaching of the Church. However the change that is needed is not one which departs from the Gospel message. It is one that returns to the Gospel texts.

This is not an investigation which demands or supports any relaxation of moral values in the attitudes to gender and sex. Instead it requires that the boundary between use and abuse be changed from one that condemns all gender and sexually variant behaviour irrespective of purpose, to one that applies identical principles of use and abuse to all heterosexual, cross-gender and same-sex acts. For any group of people who have been universally condemned there is the natural (and often real) need to bond together in a common defence. When that happens, both the Church and gender and sexually variant people themselves are affirming the boundary that presently exists. Umbrella activities, such as the Pride marches, have done a great deal in raising the profile of gender and sexually variant people. However asserting that unity; together with the media's attention to the more salacious elements within it, may reinforce the prejudices which hinder attempts to gain acceptance within the Church. If that is to be challenged a clear Christian witness must be seen to be expressed within the gender and sexually variant communities as well. Groups such as "One Body One Faith"⁹⁰ are working strongly to ensure that this witness is provided. Both sides need to change, and both sides need to accept that change is needed.

Change is much more difficult when the capacity to listen is limited. The Church of England has created a large number of reports on these topics, in which there has been little or no representation of gender or sexually variant interests amongst the members of the working parties who have created them⁹¹. The "Shared Conversations" process was intended to provide such listening. However the 2017 report of the "Bishops Reflection Group on Sexuality", which was intended to chart the way forward after the Shared Conversations, not only did not have anyone who identified with gender and sexually variant conditions on its working party, it did not consider science in any way, and it restated the condition that all future discussions on gender and sexually variant matters must take place within the traditional teaching of the Church. The demand within the gender and sexually variant communities is that "*There must be no talk about us, without us*". That has still not been fulfilled.

15:0: Bibliography

Full references to sources are given in the detailed papers referred to in the text. A complete personal bibliography is available on: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/bibliography.htm>

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90 One Body One Faith website <http://www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk/>

91 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>