

The Impact of Neuroscience and Psychology on the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation as Defined by the Christian Church

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The scientific study on the development of personality and self-identity which is presented uses a novel approach to map the transition between the internally created neurophysiological processes propelling early development to the externally moderated cognitive processes in later life. A continuous process extending from infancy to adulthood can therefore be described. The development of atypical gender and sexual identities is used to examine how this occurs. It is demonstrated that the formations of these core features are driven by the search for identity, before cognition seeks behavioural rewards. A moral duality therefore exists whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities while conforming to the highest standards of their societies should be highly regarded. Those engaged in misuse may be severely condemned for their acts. That contradicts the traditional teaching of the Christian Church which condemns all such behaviour as reward driven disordered lifestyle choices that always pursue inappropriate sex.

All forms of sexual abuse are condemned. However advances in science since the 1960's have shown that the type of gender and sexually variant behaviour associated with homosexuality and transgender conditions is about the search for identity and not reward. That is a major change which is now accepted on a worldwide basis. This means that these conditions are medically misdiagnosed by the traditional Christian doctrines. The management methods for the two types of condition are almost opposite to one and other. Sections of Christianity have however failed to respond to the science. As a consequence great harm is often done when techniques like "Gay Cures" and "Reparative Therapy" are applied when the outdated and medically incorrect Christian doctrines and disapprovals continue to be used.

An extended theological and historical study is conducted. This uses the scientific results to determine how and why this contradiction exists. The cultures and moralities of the surrounding Greek and Roman cults and societies are examined in detail in the same way. It is demonstrated that the major concern in Judaism was about the abuses of power in these despotic societies, with their enforcement of humiliation and domination of subject people, since these gave permission for the gross abuses of sex. In the victimised, and gender unequal, Jewish society the condemnation of same-sex intercourse was complete. It is also demonstrated that a paradigm shift has occurred in Christianity, in which the first century condemnations of same-sex intercourse, which had been based on the abuses of power and hospitality has been turned into the unchangeable condemnation of the sexual act. The doctrine of papal infallibility protected a powerful Church against attacks for its own abuses, and this led to the Cathar Revolt. Aquinas avoided these issues of power in his own teaching by concentrating exclusively on the condemnation of lust and inappropriate sex. All references to the abuses of power have been written out of what today is regarded as the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on homosexuality and gender and sexually variant behaviour. Engaging in it for any purpose is invariably condemned as a disordered act of grave depravity which always desires inappropriate or immoral sex.

These abuses of power are not discussed in the New Testament condemnations, and that absence is addressed in this analysis. Peter and Paul demanded obedience to the Roman authorities. This meant that Christianity could not challenge the social structure of society, but it still vociferously condemned its gross abuses of sex. As the moral duality shown by the scientific study is inherent to gender and sexually variant behaviour, its influence must be present in all societies at all times. In societies where same-sex relationships were expressed, that duality would also have been evident to Jesus, Paul and the other disciples, and in this analysis it is shown that the teachings of Jesus and Paul do not conflict with the results of the scientific study. The same is true in the first century Jewish interpretations of the Old Testament texts. This means that the contradictions with science must derive from changes in the Church. It is therefore concluded that the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church on sexual and gender variance are built on the wrong foundation. They come from the need to gain respectability and to combat same-sex abuse in Roman society, and the paradigm shift which occurred in the later Church.. They do not come from Jesus himself. From the theological, social and scientific standpoints it is established that identical criteria in relation to use and abuse should be applied to all cross-gender identification and heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. In accord with the teaching of Jesus in the New Covenant, all behaviour should be guided by love, wellbeing and purity of intention. There is no automatic condemnation of any sexual act. Instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for all sexual abuse, the correct objectives for the Christian Church should be those of combatting all forms of abusive sex.

Further reading:

Gilchrist, S. (2017): "*Future Approaches to the Science and Theology of Gender and Sexual Variation in the Church of England and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/232P-FutureApproaches.pdf>

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

Gilchrist, S. (2017): "*A House Built on Sand? Attitudes to Gender and Sexual Variant Identities and Behaviour in Christianity and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/231P-HouseUponSand.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. (2016): "*Science and Belief. A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-PaperPersonality.pdf>

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

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¹ Available online at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/228P-SummaryNeurosciencePsychologyChurch.pdf>