



Science, History and the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church

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OVERVIEW

- This presentation describes 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
- It is shown that a contradiction exists between the results of the scientific study and the scientific presumptions that are made in the traditional teaching of the Church
- A key aim of this work is to discover the reason for the contradiction between science and theology which is found to exist.



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TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN CONDEMNATIONS

- First century Roman society viewed sexual behaviour through the prism of submission and domination:
- Any form of sexual behaviour for any purpose which challenged the masculinity and domination of any male Roman citizen was condemned.
- That included same-sex acts when two adult male citizens were involved
- This also challenges the social structures of any gender discriminatory society..
- That challenge is reflected in the traditional teaching of the Christian Church, which states *that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered"*.
- This teaching also declares that while it is not a sin to have these feelings, any expression of them for any purpose must always be regarded as acts of grave depravity



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SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVES

- This analysis takes a new approach to the development of personality and identity by comparing the neurophysiological approaches adopted by Dawkins, Gallese and others with the psychodynamic and social learning methods of traditional psychology and psychiatry, and mapping the transition that occur
- It is demonstrated that the physiological, neurological and psychological aspects of brain development act together to form a finely tuned system in which the maximum amount of individuality, possessiveness, intelligence and inquisitiveness, together with the minimum degree of energy expenditure is created.
- It is further shown that the extreme contagion of the internally generated self-reinforcing and fragmented physiological development processes provides the driving forces behind them. From a statistical point of view alone it can be expected that a proportion of people with gender or sexually variant identities will be created without being driven by any external cause



Science, History and the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church

TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

- This means that for everyone the development of their own gender identity and allegiance, atypical or not, proceeds in the same way.
- Transsexuals and transgender people develop a gender allegiance which is contrary or at variance to their biological sex, but this is at least as firmly held as those for whom their gender identity and allegiance follow a normal path.
- Indeed it may be argued that the gender allegiance and identity which is felt by transsexuals should be even stronger because it has had to be fought for all along the way.
- The major structural changes in the brain which take place from around the age of two years physically and permanently lock these in place, so that from this time constant core elements of personality and gender identity are created. However a great variety of individual experiences are encountered. That degree of variation should also be expected from the contagious processes which are involved.



Science, History and the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church

MORAL DUALITY

- It is also shown that these conditions are driven by the search for identity and not reward. Transgender people are not men who want to be women, or vice versa. They are men and women who want to live their lives in ways that are true to their own identities, and to live in society as themselves
- Since these conditions are identity driven as wide a range of moral attitudes and behaviour must be encountered within the gender and sexually variant communities, as in the population at large.
- Therefore that those gender and sexually variant people who live true to their own identities in ways that conform to the highest standards of their own societies should be highly regarded, while those who do the reverse may be severely condemned for their acts.
- That contradicts the traditional teaching of the Christian church which condemns every act



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SURVIVAL

- Christianity had to adapt if it was to survive in the Roman world.
- In the Epistles and Letters of Peter and Paul the demands for respect of the Roman Authorities are constantly emphasised.
- The need to combat the gross sexual abuses in Roman and other first century societies has meant that all evidence of this moral duality has been lost
- The subsequent criminalisation and universal condemnation of gender and sexually variant behaviour has prevented any possibility of awareness of that moral duality being restored
- In today's society people can again see for themselves the existence of that moral duality... The difference in viewpoint between those who can observe it, and those who hold to the traditional teaching is causing schisms in Christianity and the Church



Science, History and the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church

POWER GENDER AND SEX

- It is often the abuses of power in gender and socially unequal societies which endorse permission for the extreme abuses of sex.
- No examination can be complete without a consideration of the interactions between power and sex.
- From a detailed study of first century Jewish, Christian and Roman attitudes it is shown that the primary concerns of the Rabbis were about these abuses of power, and not the condemnations of sex.
- The prohibitions in Leviticus are shown to be about the abuse of power in male same-sex intercourse rather than focussing on the condemnation of same-sex acts



Science, History and the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church

SCAPEGOATING

- Any form of gender and sexually variant behaviour which departs from the normal expectations of a gender unequal society, for any purpose, challenges this distinction.
- The need to seek respectability and acceptance in Roman society was considered essential if Christianity was to continue to survive and bring its Gospel message to the world.
- However the compromises which this demanded swapped the most radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sexuality for the respectability of the Church.
- These transformations have brought the Church to collude with the secular demands of society rather than to challenge them. Not only has this collusion reinforced the secular prejudices of such discriminatory societies; it gave and it still gives religious legitimacy to them: one only needs to look today at the behaviour of Daesh and Boko Haram to see how extreme this can become.



Science, History and the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church

PERSECUTIONS

- The persecution and slaughter of gender and sexually variant people, not just in Christianity but in Islam, Judaism and all other religions, states and cultures which have drawn their teachings from it has been enormous
- 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 sex.
- 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.



Science, History and the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church

UNITED STATES

- In the United States, the legalisation of same-sex marriage by the Federal Government has resulted in a rash of mainly Southern states seeking to scapegoat transsexual people by legally enforcing them only to use toilets and bathroom facilities which correspond to the genitalia they were born with.
- This is irrespective of their gender identities and any surgical transformations they make.
- At the present time, senior members of the Catholic Church in the United States are using its traditional teaching to condemn transgender people, and are colluding with the conservative Christian right.
- These concerns are compounded by the recent political changes.
- For both social and theological reasons there is now an urgent need to reconsider the traditional teaching of the Church.



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GENDER UNEQUAL SOCIETIES

- Instead of combatting the scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people in secular society, these changes have led many sections of the Church to collude with it
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- Medical misdiagnoses are created by treating gender and sexually variant behaviour as the search for sexual or other rewards
- These features still have considerable force in societies where gender differentiation is legally or socially enforced.
- Transgender people are much less likely to be accepted in any society which enforces gender complementarity, sexual discrimination, or gender based social division.
- For transgender people to be accepted in society the primary marker for social identification must also be gender identity, and not biological sex.



Science, History and the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church

MEDICAL MISDIAGNOSES

- Because of the adaptations that were needed to survive, and later to preserve its institutions, it is also shown that the Christian Church developed a traditional doctrine which medically misdiagnoses gender and sexually variant conditions.
- By treating these conditions as being derived from the search for reward rather than identity, the wrong methods of management have been applied.
- Considerable harm has been done since the management techniques that are needed are almost opposite to each other.
- Applying the incorrect techniques creates, instead of relieves, any trauma and distress.



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RESTORATION

- It is shown that a paradigm shift in Christian teaching 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.
- A return to a doctrine is needed which removes the contradiction that the traditional teaching has imposed. When the teaching of Jesus is examined in this investigation it is found that the contradiction no longer exists.
- This means that the changes to the doctrine which this investigation demands do not depart from the Gospel message, they return to the teaching of Jesus himself.