

HUMAN SEXUALITY

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Human sexuality generates an array of conscious and subconscious feelings, energy, fantasies, personal behaviors, relational interactions, and social customs of such subtlety and complexity that it boggles the mind. But conservative Christians remain steadfast in their determination to acknowledge only the most simplistic elements of that reality. They extol the sanctity of marriage even while their own record on marriage is no better than the sexually explicit population they love to vilify. They proclaim the importance of family even as they punish and wound their own. They claim to thrust the Lord's provision, but fight just as viciously as the unbeliever for every asset in a divorce proceeding. To what extreme will that zeal to "win" be carried? . . . tyranny? . . . a new "Inquisition?"

But the "Gay Community," arrayed at the opposite extreme of a wholly polarized social conflict, functions no differently than the Christian Fundamentalists. They exert an overwhelmingly oppressive peer pressure on everyone even remotely associated with their community to embrace the simplistic, knee-jerk explanation for gay behavior, ". . . we were created this way." They successfully pressure the media into not reporting "gay crimes," especially "gay sex crimes," in a protracted and carefully orchestrated campaign to portray gays as sweet, innocent people whose only problem in the world is the oppressive society around them. They make absolutely no effort to establish appropriate boundaries to behavior within their own community in fear the slightest admission of wrong doing will mortally wound their collective image.

In spite of all the emotion, strutting, and manipulation there is only one certain outcome . . . failure. The bellicose, exaggerated position of the fundamentalists does not have a chance of success. The whining, manipulative strategy of the gay community is likewise doomed to failure. Such polarization and exaggeration only produces further escalation of emotion that can only end in tragedy. Does that mean there is no solution to this serious social conflict? Certainly not. The way ahead is differentiation. Some atypical behavior deserves support. Some atypical behavior is unacceptable. The threads of social meaning and adaption interact in complex and unquantifiable ways that shape the social process, even while spreading the responsibility for the consequences of that process

over a very large portion of the population. A culture intent on preserving itself over the long term must be driven by prescriptive behavior. But if that prescriptive behavior is derived from a false absolute, it will fail and the culture will fail. Christian transformation is not the acceptance a small collection of one-line admonitions, nor can it be made to happen by individual resolve. Those who think so do not know their religion, and do not know their Lord.

A functional and nuanced strategy can be derived from a differentiated understanding of the problem. To that end, this paper sets forth a series of “threads” . . . that is, threads of meaning, attitude, behavior, custom, theology, et. al., that shape and/or impact human sexuality. In any given individual circumstance a thread may not have a direct causal role, nor any direct connection to another thread. Nevertheless, all of the threads shape and direct the fundamental attitudes and social customs that generate unexpected consequences. Gay behavior must be considered in that larger context. So must heterosexual behavior and all other sexual behaviors. The culture, as a whole, must first take responsibility for the cultural ethos, and then the dysfunction of cultural attitude and custom. The acceptable parameters of individual behavior thereafter fall into place.

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The Way Ahead

Male Sexuality

The male of the human species produces sperm that must combine with an egg from a female of the human species in order for a new human to be created. That new human develops in the female uterus for nine months before it is capable of existing as a physically separate entity in the world. Much has been written about the woman’s feelings and experiences of having a new life within her during that nine month period.

But the male role in that event has been minimized. In truth, the sperm that comes from the male is a separate entity that has a life of its own, albeit, for a very brief period. It is possible to look at those sperm through a microscope and watch them wiggle around in the accompanying body fluid. They look like little tadpoles, and indeed, they can swim. To play their part in the creation of a new human being, they must swim through the fluid injected into the female vagina during sexual intercourse, into the uterus and then find and enter a female egg. Once they have entered an egg their separate identity ends and a new being emerges.

Their ability to exist on their own for a brief period of time means they are different than other living tissue in the male body. They have a life of their own. They have within them an energy . . . or better said . . . a spirit of life . . . that seeks to combine with the spirit of life in the female in order to be transcended by a greater expression of life. The life force in the sperm literally and spiritually drives the sperm toward its destiny. Properly understood, the process is wonderful . . . physically and spiritually. But it can also be a force that causes all sorts of problems.

The sperm, and the life force, begins to develop in a young man during the run up to puberty. The hormonal changes that initiate the creation of sperm also create body hair and muscle mass. In short, it creates those attributes normally considered “male.” But before hormonal changes manifest in a conspicuous way, the life force resident in the sperm sets in motion a deeper dynamic. That life force drives the sperm toward its destiny, the young man will feel a drive . . . a need to initiate something . . . but the mind is way behind the body chemistry and will have no clue, on its own, what is happening or what should be done. Nevertheless, the developing urge to initiate something begins the process of separation from others. Whereas the young boy was emotionally and spiritually fused with his mother, and perhaps his father and/or siblings, he will begin to understand himself as an individual, as a “real” person . . . separate and different than other persons. He will begin to establish “boundaries” that clarify that separation . . . that define how he is different . . . that establish limits to the authority of those around him. The construction of identity is vitally, vitally important process, and yet so very fragile. If God speaks to the boy’s soul during that formative period, that word will be fused to the boy forever. If those fragile boundaries are violated by others, the boy’s identity will be destroyed forever. He can only recover from that destruction through the experience of a complete rebirth.

Most cultures in history have understood the importance of that formative period in young men to some degree, and devised ways to channel that initiative into socially acceptable directions, and to guarantee the appropriation of cultural values. Those socially acceptable behaviors and values have sometimes been satisfactory, but just as often misguided, and sometimes even disastrous.

Regardless of the initial direction or directions that life force is channeled, it will continue to grow in its power to shape and direct the young man’s behavior. What can be done about it? Most men eventually discover that energy can be released in some form of sexual activity. The young man ejaculates and the sperm is gone, and the life force is gone. Perhaps on its way to create new life. Perhaps into another body that has blocked the possibility of new life. Perhaps into a body that does not have the power of new life. Perhaps into a latex container, a towel, or down the shower drain.

Which ever way the life force goes, the release is temporary. It rebuilds in the man’s

body, so too the sperm reservoir, and the cycle repeats itself. The more frequent the release the more quickly the life force and sperm reservoir rebuild. The man's body soon learns to anticipate release and if release does not happen as expected the energy within increases dramatically, and the drive toward release intensifies. The stages of the energy cycle within the man are: 1) rest after release, 2) anticipation of a rhythmical release, 3) intensified fantasies of release and/or opportunities for release following delays in the rhythm, 4) acting out of behaviors driven by the fantasies, which, in turn, are intensified by the increased energy within, and 5) finally, release.

That apparently simple dynamic can often be difficult for the man to manage. The most basic problem is the longer female cycle. Females usually experience a period of heightened interest within a thirty day cycle, give or take a few days, whereas the male cycle is usually a continuous cycle of two to four days. Many cultures, both ancient and modern, resolve the problem by endorsing polygamy. Those who embrace monogamy assume that a satisfactory rhythm will be worked out in the marriage relationship. Though it was a workable expectation for many years, the growing independence of women in the modern period has made that assumption less viable.

Greater problems develop for a single male where there may be brief periods of intense sexual activity followed by extended periods without sex. The period of heightened fantasy that inevitably develops during the period without sex will often degenerate into a fascination with pornography. But pornography only exacerbates the fantasies, and that, in turn, impairs the man's ability to connect with a real person. That development is especially onerous in marriage, and in any other intimate male-female relationship, because the second strongest need in the man is confidence in his ability to sexual satisfy the woman in his life. This potentially powerful anxiety is evident in two common behaviors. Male fascination with pornography that depicts two women having sex, and oral sex. Men who experience heightened anxiety about their ability to sexually satisfy the woman in their life, watch female pornography to learn what women like and what they find satisfying. Men seek oral sex with the woman in their life believing they will be more able to satisfy her. They want oral sex from her because it removes the anxiety about male performance. Men whose inability to connect with a woman is pronounced, or who have an extreme anxiety about their performance, will often look for oral sex with another man. The prevalence of oral sex in the American gay community is a result of performance anxiety. Performance anxiety is also the emotion that drives some men to yearn for sex with young girls, preferably virgins. The young girls are inexperienced and incapable of judging the quality of the sexual experience, and therefore incapable of wounding the male psyche.

The 'on again . . . off again' cycle of a man who does not have a satisfactory relationship with another can easily degenerate into abusive or self-destructive behavior. The sexual fantasies that arise during the build up of energy and sperm reservoir act as a magnet for suppressed anger. The increasing sexual energy amplifies the anger until the man releases both in a violent sexual experience such as rape. The cycle, once experienced, will likely become repetitive because the underlying sexual energy and sperm reservoir will rebuild and anticipate release.

A man without a satisfactory relationship can easily succumb to self-destructive behavior. The self-destructive pattern is set in motion when the man resorts to anonymous sex such as prostitutes, sex clubs, and steam baths. Such behavior is self-destructive because it renders the man incapable of meaningful relationship and exposes

him to disease and abuse. Research spawned by the Aids epidemic revealed that a significant number of young gay men had anonymous sex with hundreds of different men over the course of just a one year period.

A man can resort to masturbation to satisfy his own sex drive. That practice is not unhealthy in and of itself. In a young man it may be indicative of an inability to develop satisfactory relationships. More often than not it is nothing more than a 'less than ideal' way of dealing with his own sexual cycle. It is certainly better than anonymous sex, and it is certainly better than adultery and/or divorce.

It is obvious that dysfunctional, self-destructive, and abusive sexual practices impair a culture's ability to prosper and maintain health and order, therefore, it is in the best interests of the culture for men to incorporate their sexual needs into a healthy long term relationship. Nevertheless, cultures often establish laws and customs that cause and/or amplify the very behavior judged to be undesirable.

Natural Law

Natural law is often cited by opponents of atypical sexual behavior as justification for their position. The logic is, "God created men as men and women as women . . . God does not make mistakes . . . therefore men are designed to have sex with women and women are designed to have sex with men . . . that's way it should be."

Such references to natural law are fraught with ignorance. The organ in the male body that gets excited during sexual activity and goes into the spasms that cause ejaculation is the prostate gland . . . not the penis. The prostate is situated next to the rectum and can be brought to the point of orgasm by either stimulating the nerves in the penis, or by direct stimulation through the rectum. Therefore, natural law could be used to justify heterosexual or homosexual behavior with equal effect.

Medical research in the United Kingdom revealed that men who masturbated had a much lower incidence of prostate cancer than men who satisfied their sexual need through relationship. It could therefore be concluded natural law dictated men masturbate.

Wives often respond to their husband's desire for physical sex by saying they prefer intimacy and communication, and subsequently turn to other women friends for fulfillment of those needs. Lesbian women take that only one step further and find a way to satisfy physical needs in addition to the intimacy and communication. Like men, natural law can be used by women to justify either option.

The implications of natural law go further. The energy that emerges and increases with the build up of the sperm reservoir is present in, but not limited to, that sperm reservoir. A man that has developed a degree of discipline, and experienced some success in integrating his sexual needs into a relationship, will feel empowered by that same energy. Since it is 'life giving,' it enlivens the man and his body. Leaders are often men who embody such energy . . . and they are charming, eloquent and charismatic. Those same men struggle with their highly charged sexuality and often succumb to the temptation of extra-marital affairs. Nevertheless, men without that 'charisma' are rarely effective leaders.

The same energy infuses the muscles. In that state the man could sustain a blow to leg, buttocks, back or shoulder, et. al., and the pain from that blow could be quickly turned into a pleasurable sensation. That dynamic can certainly degenerate into sadomasochistic behavior, but it can also sustain a man in battle, and in athletic contests. The medical research that led to the development of morphine originated in the battlefield hospitals during periods of war. Doctors observed that a man with a serious wound would complain of pain, and sometimes scream in pain. However, a man with a wound certain to cause death, such as a leg and hip blown off, a arm and whole shoulder blown off, or a gapping hole in his chest, would laugh and joke with the nurses and doctors and appear to experience no pain at all. Subsequent research revealed that the body is capable, in extreme conditions, of producing painkillers many times stronger than morphine.

The natural condition of the human body is therefore adaptability and survival. The body is an instrument. The source and purpose of the life force that drives that body cannot be derived from, nor understood by, study of the physical body. The body is not designed to establish the direction or purpose in life, but to serve and sustain a life directed from a higher level. That higher level has sometimes been referred to as the soul or the spirit, but the word is less important than the reality.

Though gays may use this logic to justify their behavior, in doing so they give up the claim that, 'they were created gay.' For that claim only derived from the same misguided reliance on natural law as their opponents.

On the Rejection of Femininity

A visit to the house of a friend for a routine errand was the source of an important insight. The family belonged to a conservative church for many years and were completely loyal to the Pastor and leadership when the Church decided to break with the diocese to which they belonged over the issue of ordination of gay priests. The woman of the family was also attending a graduate school of psychology. At the time of the visit a small group of women could be seen from the entry, gathered around the dining room table with books and papers spread around. The woman came to the door with the item that was the purpose of the visit, and then promptly and somewhat defensively said, "They're students from graduate school . . . feminists . . . you don't have any problem with that do you?"

Indeed, it did seem somewhat odd. She and her husband had been very outspoken in their support of their Pastor on the issue of gay ordination. And why did she feel compelled to initiated the subject?

A subsequent conversation with a woman spiritual director was very insightful. She pointed out that feminists were women intent on establishing their equality with men, and in doing so appropriated behavior traditionally considered masculine. Whereas the typical perception of a gay pastor was that of an effeminate man. In the case under discussion, the woman was comfortable with women who had appropriated male behavior, and outspoken in her disdain for men who appropriated female behavior. The operative emotion was, in truth, the rejection of femininity.

That insight is verified through observation of the American social process. The quest for equality of women has been directed primarily at demonstrating women's acumen

in business management, competitive sports, and other areas which had traditionally been dominated by men. That move toward a 'male' persona developed a parallel disdain for the prior feminine persona.

There appeared to be two social processes that caused the rejection of femininity. The more obvious was the quest for the equality of women that became a dominant social movement in the late 1970's and early 1980's. It had been preceded by a protracted public relations campaign proclaiming the dire consequences of population growth that publicly belittled the traditional woman's role of mother and wife. Is it any wonder that woman rejected femininity after being subjected to years of public mockery? But there was a second causal force at work that was more subtle and disguised with ideology. The mockery directed at women and families served corporate interests. Under the guise of ideological equality, corporations were able to dramatically reduce the real income of men and transfer that reduction to the employment of women. The ruse was disguised by a change in government accounting. Whereas household income had previously been identified with the income of the 'bread winner,' usually the man; it became 'household income,' which included the earnings of husband, wife, and any children living at home. Consequently it appeared there was a gradually, but steady increase in household income when, in fact, there had been a dramatic decrease in real income for the individual.

Women certainly proved their capability in business management. Even while the public attention was directed primarily at the small group of women that were most successful, the average woman, who was also a wife and mother, was totally stressed out. And understandably so. She had to work full time for the family to earn as much, or perhaps a little more, than her husband had previously made while she stayed at home. In truth, that sinister social dynamic resulted in the largest transfer of wealth from a middle class to an upper class in the history of the world. Of course it strained the marriage relationship to the breaking point. It also resulted in extensive damage to the children, who were effectively left without father or mother. Nevertheless, the play on ideology deflected the anger from the actual cause onto the spouse. Men vented the anger they felt from the intense pressure onto their wife. Women longed for more assertive, more dominant, and more successful husbands. Men bailed out of marriage. Women directed their wrath at passivity . . . at femininity . . . at 'Fems'.

The Importance of Male Identity

The story of the relationship between Jonathan and David in the Old Testament Bible provided the best starting point for understanding the importance of male identity. Jonathan was the son of Saul, the first anointed king of Israel,¹ and therefore could expect to succeed his father as king. David was the youngest son in a large family and therefore was given the least desirable chore². . . watching the sheep. In such a position there certainly were no expectations David would have a remarkable future. That was to change. Saul fell out of favor with God. Unbeknownst to either Saul or Jonathan, God directed Samuel, the prophet and judge of Israel at the time, to anoint David as Saul's

¹ 1 Samuel 9:26 ff.

² 1 Samuel 16:1 ff.

successor.³ Samuel complained to God that Saul would kill him the moment he learned of Samuel's action. God then proposed a deception, "*Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'*"⁴ As a result of the deception, no one, not even David, was told why, or for what calling he was anointed. His father, Jesse, continued to assign him menial chores,⁵ and his older brothers continued to bully him.⁶

The long days and nights spent alone with the sheep had actually been an important period of character formation for David. Sheep were an easy kill for a number of predators, hence, tending the sheep at night was life threatening. David learned to deal with the attendant fear with courage and trust, and by developing a remarkable skill with a sling that he used to kill attacking predators. He also spent many of the long hours alone singing psalms and playing a musical instrument. The combination of the diametrically opposed experiences of character development made David a very remarkable person. He was at once acutely sensitive to beauty and order, and fearlessly courageous in battle.

After Samuel had anointed Saul, he interacted with him on a regular basis. He advised Saul of God's wishes, participated with Saul in ritual sacrifices, and confronted Saul with God's displeasure. There was no such interaction with David. After the anointing David was left to his own devices. He knew he was anointed . . . but for what? . . . how would it come to pass? . . . and what was he to do about it? He was unexpectedly invited to the court of Saul to sing and play the harp for the despondent king. In another spontaneous development, David killed the Philistine giant, Goliath. But those and subsequent successes aroused the jealousy of Saul and made the King determined to kill David. Hardly the kind of development that would reassure a young man of the reality of his anointing.

In that state of budding self-doubt, Jonathan saw into David's soul and saw the truth of his destiny.

“. . . Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. . . And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.”⁷

The robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt was every item that had marked Jonathan as the future successor to his father, Saul. Jonathan saw that David was to succeed his father and he made a conspicuous, physical gesture of confirmation of that vision by giving David those things that had marked himself as Saul's successor. In so doing Jonathan immediately put his own life at risk, for if Saul learned of his action, Jonathan would have been executed for treason.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 1 Samuel 16:2.

⁵ 1 Samuel 17:17.

⁶ 1 Samuel 17:28-30.

⁷ 1 Samuel 18:1-4.

The statement, “. . . Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself,” was repeated in Chapter 20, verse 17: “And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.” The repetition had a very important variation, “. . . Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath . . .” That meant David’s oath, and it referred to the covenant made between Jonathan and David, when Jonathan first saw and acknowledged that David would succeed his father as king. What was the covenant? We were not told until verse 42 of Chapter 20: *‘The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’*”

Jonathan had sworn an oath of loyalty to David not uncommon in the Ancient World. First it was a divinely inspired recognition that David was the chosen king of Israel. Second, he bound his soul to David’s soul and said in effect, ‘I will be bound to your kingship forever, in success and failure, in life and death, and I will not question your actions or directions.’ Such an oath of loyalty was necessary in that world because all battles were hand to hand, face to face combat, and were brutal in the extreme. The individual had to fight the enemy in front of him ferociously, but had no way of protecting his back side. He had to trust completely in his comrades and he had to trust his king as if he was bonded to the king’s soul. It only took one man to break ranks and run for the whole army to get slaughtered. The individual had to react instantly, instinctively, to the king’s leadership, for their success in battle was determined by their ability to act as one. The oath was a pledge to be an extension of the king’s soul, his will, his vision. To make such an oath, the individual had to have believed completely in the divine election of the king. Jonathan did, and subsequently demonstrated that commitment to David by intervening on his behalf with his father, Saul, at the risk of his own life. But it was not a one way pledge. In the case of Jonathan and David, it was a covenant. That meant David incurred an obligation. What was the obligation? From ancient times to the present, succession in a kingdom came from descendants of the king. It was expected succession would be from within the house of Saul, as later succession was from within the house of David. Even in the modern world, succession in the United Kingdom was from within the house of Windsor. One of the first actions of every new king or queen was the destruction of any rival claims to the throne. Such a custom was needed to prevent insurrection and civil war. Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain executed Mary Queen of the Scots, because Mary had a stronger claim to the throne than Elizabeth. David could be expected to secure succession for the house of David by executing the descendants of Saul. And so it was accomplished.⁸ Nevertheless, David did honor his covenant with Jonathan and spared the descendants of Jonathan.

Upon hearing of Jonathan’s death at the battle of Gilboa,⁹ David sang a beautiful lament for Jonathan called *“The Lament of the Bow.”*¹⁰

“How the mighty have fallen in battle!

Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;

⁸ 2 Samuel 2:8 thru 4:12 & 2 Samuel 21:1-22.

⁹ 1 Samuel 31:1-6.

¹⁰ 2 Samuel 1:17-27.

you were very dear to me.

*Your love for me was wonderful,
more wonderful than that of women.”*

Divine inspiration opened David’s soul to Jonathan and he saw his divine election as king. Jonathan confirmed what he saw by giving David the symbols of the right of succession, pledged his soul to David, and risked his life for him by interceding with Saul. David recalled Jonathan’s action and sang, “*Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women,*” because there is nothing more sacred to a man than his God given identity, and no act more important, nor more worthy of love, than the recognition of that identity by another. Jonathan’s action confirmed David’s identity at a critical point in David’s life, and gave him the confidence to move ahead boldly to his destiny.

Indeed, identity is vitally important to every male. Whereas wives say intimacy and communication is more important to them than physical sex, recognition of identity is more important to a man than physical sex. Thus David said, “*Your love was . . . more wonderful than that of a woman.*” If a man’s wife does not recognize and/or support her husband’s identity, it is very likely his primary allegiance will transfer to the person or environment that does. That new focus of allegiance could be career, a change of life style and/or an adulterous relationship with another woman or man.

It does not follow that male identity can be easily discerned. The deeper and more God given the identity, the more likely the male will push that identity to the fringes of consciousness, perhaps beyond. Such was the case with David. His identity was so remarkable, and so important, he could not allow himself to think about it. To do so would force him into a state of anxiety and confusion, and the attendant withdrawal would truncate the very process necessary for him to realize that destiny. There had to be divinely inspired recognition from another. There was . . . Jonathan.

There was, in Holy Scripture, another case history with addresses sacred identity. It occurred during the wedding feast at Canaan.

“On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, ‘They have no more wine.’ **‘Dear woman, why do you involve me?’** **Jesus replied. ‘My time has not yet come.’** His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, **‘Fill the jars with water’**; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, **‘Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.’** They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, ‘Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.’ This, the first of his miraculous

signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.”¹¹

Jesus’ mother Mary, knew his identity and supported that identity appropriately. She did not try to establish herself as an authority figure, nor did she compete with her son. She publicly gave witness to her son’s identity and authority and then exited the scene. That allowed Jesus to move into his destiny.

The quality of an intimate relationship with a man depends on discernment and acceptance of his identity, such as that demonstrated by Mary. But any attempt to discover that identity through direct questioning will be met with resistance, and eventually anger. Why? Direct questions imply intent to render judgement. The male cannot submit his identity to such judgement. It is too sacred to him. The only strategy guaranteed to succeed is divine revelation. In other words, one must inquire of the Lord. Acceptance of that revelation will lead to a close relationship and, in the case of a wife, intimate marriage. If a wife wants the option of accepting or rejecting that identity, the inquiry must occur before marriage.

Male identity is a big problem in marriage because women tend to be much more flexible in their identity, and therefore much more adaptable than men. That can cause them to falsely assume men should be like them. They may propose, insist or demand their husband change careers . . . personality . . . vision. That strategy will not work. Even if the husband has a false identity, or one built on sand, the wife will not be able to force a change without disastrous consequences.

Loss of identity is a very serious psychological problem for a man, and no man can function constructively without an identity. That does not mean every identity is sacred. It is said in gay circles that a boy who has had gay sex before twelve years old will be gay forever. That notion reflects the importance of that formative period. A boy must develop a sense of identity and he must erect boundaries to protect that fragile process. An aggressive action that penetrates those boundaries and/or demolishes that emerging identity, will cause negative repercussions for many years . . . perhaps for a life time. The wounding is especially grievous if the boy is forcibly seduced by an older male.

For those reasons a boy must not be left alone during that period. He must be protected by one who understands the process, and encourages the boy to establish boundaries. In short, the boy needs a loving father. Mothers are wonderful and absolutely essential, but women do not have the same issues with identity as men, and rarely understand their son’s need during that period. Even a loving father will be insufficient if he believes his only obligation is pressure his son to succeed at competitive sports. The Lord spoke to that formative period when he said:

“Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently, and immediately it fell. And the

¹¹ John 2:1-10.

ruin of that house was great."¹²

The fate of a poorly constructed identity can be made vividly clear by recalling the number of previously successful people who committed suicide as a result of the American stock market crash of 1929.

On the Need for Love

A human interest article was published in the San Francisco Chronicle (circa 1978) before the Aids Epidemic began. The subject of the article was the gay male prostitutes that hung out at a particular intersection on Polk Street, waiting to be picked up by another man. That article should be required reading for those who profess to be Christians.

The author basically asked every male prostitute he interviewed why he persisted in coming to that intersection and going off in a stranger's car to an experience that was often emotionally abusive, frequently physically abusive, and sometimes ended in murder. Virtually everyone of them gave the same answer, "I cannot give up hope that some day a man will come that truly loves me."

All of those men knew their need for love, and that need was so strong they regularly risked their life in the hope there would one day be a fulfillment of that need. What was the root of such a powerful need? Jesus said:

*"How blest are those who know their need of God; the kingdom of heaven is theirs."*¹³

Those male prostitutes were men from whom any pretense of stature or importance in the eyes of other humans had been stripped from them, and they were left with only the deep truth of their need. And because they knew the depth and power of that need, they were on the threshold of revelation. If Christ had come down that street, they would have been the first to recognize him. And they would have bonded to him immediately.

That human interest article explained better than any sermon ever given, why Jesus kept the company of prostitutes and tax collectors. They were people cast off by human society, and that forced them to ponder the truth of their existence. When Christ came amongst them they realized instantly he was the one for whom they longed . . . blessed are those who know their hunger for God.

It would be fortunate indeed for the world, if the rest of us could be stripped of our pretenses and that hunger exposed. It is the deepest drive within us. In our ignorance we strive to fill that need in our relations with other humans, yet we want to be set apart from those other humans in a way and in a manner that earns their adulation. We long to be wealthy, brilliant, beautiful, and heroic. The quest never ends. It only generates the compulsion to be more wealthy, more brilliant, more beautiful, and more heroic.

¹² Luke 6:47-49.

¹³ Matthew 5:3, New English Bible.

It will be a “water shed” event in Christendom when the gauze is taken from the eyes of those male prostitutes, for they will then be called into the Christian ministry of teaching the deep truth of that need, and the delusional cultural ideals we have appropriated to hide it.

Dysfunctional Social Customs

The Apostle Paul addressed dysfunctional social customs in his letter to the Romans:¹⁴

“For we see divine retribution revealed from heaven and falling upon all the godless wickedness of men. In their wickedness they are stifling the truth. For all that may be known of God by men lies plain before their eyes; indeed God himself has disclosed it to them. His invisible attributes, that is to say his everlasting power and deity, have been visible, ever since the world began, to the eye of reason, in the things he has made. There is therefore no possible defense for their conduct; knowing God, they have refused to honor him as God, or to render him thanks. Hence all their thinking has ended in futility, and their misguided minds are plunged in darkness. They boast of their wisdom, but they have made fools of themselves, exchanging the splendor of immortal God for an image shaped like mortal man, even for images like birds, beasts, and creeping things.

For this reason God has given them up to the vileness of their own desires, and the consequent degradation of their bodies, because they have bartered away the true God for a false one, and have offered reverence and worship to created things instead of to the Creator, who is blessed for ever; amen.

In consequence, I say, God has given them up to shameful passions. Their women have exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and their men in turn, giving up natural relations with women, burn with lust for one another; males behave indecently with males, and are paid in their own persons the fitting wage of such perversion.

Thus, because they have not seen fit to acknowledge God, he has given them up to their own depraved reason. This leads them to break all rules of conduct. They are filled with every kind of injustice, mischief, rapacity, malevolence; whisperers and scandal-mongers, hateful to God, insolent, arrogant, and boastful; they invent new kinds of mischief, they show no loyalty to parents, no conscience, no fidelity to their plighted word; they are without natural affection and without pity. They know well enough the just decree of God, that those who behave like this deserve to die, and yet they do it; not only so, they actually applaud such practices.

You therefore have no defense - you who sit in judgement, whoever you may be - for in judging your fellow-man you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, are equally guilty. It is admitted that God’s judgement is

¹⁴ It is important to read all of this rather extended quotation from Paul in order to really understand his intent.

rightly passed upon all who commit such crimes as these; and do you imagine - you who pass judgement on the guilty while committing the same crimes yourself - do you imagine that you, any more than they, will escape the judgement of God? Or do you think lightly of his wealth of kindness, to tolerance, and of patience, without recognizing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to a change of heart? In the rigid obstinacy of your heart you are laying up for yourself a store of retribution for the day of retribution . . ."¹⁵

The first sentence introduced the principal theme of Paul's important letter to the Romans. That theme was a carefully reasoned refutation of the divine claims of other cultures and religions, and the parallel development of the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ. That first sentence ended with, ". . . *all the godless wickedness of men.*" Paul therefore intended the reader to understand he was addressing the conduct of humans in the broadest possible sense. He confirmed that intent with the last sentence in the first paragraph, "*They . . . exchange(ing) the splendor of immortal God for an image shaped like man, even for images like birds, beasts, and creeping things.*" The Roman culture, after the coup led by Julius Cesar in 43 BC, adopted the belief that the emperor of Rome was a god, and must be acknowledged as such by others. Statues and images of emperors were prevalent throughout the empire. Rome was also polytheistic, in that they believed the earth was surrounded by many gods. It was the custom for a general to choose one of those gods as his patron and ride into battle with the banner of that god. If the general won the battle, he and other grateful citizens were expected to pay homage and offer a sacrifice to the god that had brought about the victory. The reference to, ". . . *birds, beasts and creeping things,*" was certainly a reference to Egypt. Nevertheless, Paul's reference could not be limited to Rome and Egypt, for its general language included any number of cultures past and present.

In the second paragraph Paul stated humans were, ". . . *given up to the vileness of their own desires . . .*" because of their worship of false gods, and that led to, ". . . *the consequent degradation of their bodies . . .*" The phrase segments were clearly general in scope. Various "*own desires*" led to the general degradation of the body. Both the *desires* and the *degradation* resulted from the worship of false gods.

In the third paragraph Paul specifically addressed and condemned atypical sexual behavior, but then in the fourth paragraph extended the scope of the objectionable conduct to, ". . . *every kind of injustice, mischief, rapacity, malevolence . . . scandal-mongers . . . insolent, arrogant, and boastful . . .*"

Paul then began the second chapter with an abrupt shift of focus to those who would judge the persons engaged in the very behavior he had just condemned, ". . . *You therefore have no defense - you who sit in judgement, whoever you may be - for in judging your fellow-man you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, are equally guilty.*"

Paul condemned those who judged persons for engaging in vile behavior, and stated they were, ". . . *equally guilty,*" because both the judges and the judged participated in a culture constructed on the worship of false gods. Paul followed the sweeping indictment of cultures organized around false gods with an indictment of the Jews. The

¹⁵ Romans 1:18 - 2:6, New English Bible.

Law could not save them¹⁶. . . circumcision could not save them¹⁷. . . neither could God's promises save them.¹⁸ All humans, including all Greeks and Jews were trapped by social customs that caused them to offend God. The only hope: ". . . *there is no condemnation for those who are united with Christ Jesus, because in Christ Jesus the life-giving law of the Spirit has set you free from the law of sin and death.*"¹⁹

The principal theme of Romans was the complete inability of humans to live in a manner pleasing to God without Christ. Morality, therefore, was derivative behavior. It could not be willed into existence, but could only derive from the indwelling Spirit of Christ.²⁰ Paul himself was a perfect case study for Romans. Before Paul was knocked off his horse by the resurrected Jesus²¹ while on his way to Damascus he was known as Saul, a Pharisee and an upholder of Jewish law. In that capacity he participated in the murder of Steven, a Christian disciple, and was on his way to Damascus to murder more Christians. As a Pharisee he had taken a public vow to uphold the Jewish law perfectly.²² That solemn religious vow only caused him to war against God's plan of salvation. Unfortunately, many Christians and Christian leaders of the modern period have modeled their behavior after that of Saul. And in judging and condemning the behavior of others who do not know Christ, they demonstrated considerable ignorance of Paul's teaching. In so doing they only proved they were still held captive by the very secular ideology, and the same secular false gods as those whom they judged. For that reason, they did not speak for Christianity, the Bible, or Christ.

Romans was a sweeping and general indictment of the cultures of Paul's milieu. It was incumbent on the Body of Christ to understand Paul's intent and build a detailed understanding of dysfunctional social processes in modern period, especially the dysfunctional social processes of the American culture. Those processes included, but were not limited to, the following:

- ◆ The penal system in the American culture was designed to punish those who broke the law, and intimidate the remaining population into compliance with that law. That social process burgeoned out of control in the modern period as the American culture sought to subdue what appeared to be an increasingly immoral and lawless society. Even as the economic cost of that initiative usurped public funds necessary for education and infrastructure, the results remained stagnant. Survey after survey showed that punishment rarely created

¹⁶ Romans 2:12ff.

¹⁷ Romans 2:25ff.

¹⁸ Romans 3:1ff.

¹⁹ Romans 8:1-2.

²⁰ Romans 8:9.

²¹ Acts 9:1ff.

²² Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1962, pages 265-267.

or re-created the bond to secular ideology necessary as a precondition to the appropriation of the desired behavior. The consequence of that misguided social process was the isolation of men for very long periods of time in an environment composed entirely of men. The obvious and inevitable result was homosexuality. The failure of the penal system to achieve its intended goal should have been anticipated by Christians at its inception. Their own Bible had made it clear humans were incapable of moral behavior, and incapable of pleasing God, without the indwelling love of Christ. And the Lord made clear his attitude toward prisoners, *“Whose hope is in the Lord his God, Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps truth forever, Who executes justice for the oppressed, Who gives food to the hungry, The Lord give freedom to the prisoners.”*²³ If Christians intended to persist in their disregard for the teaching of their own faith, they should have at least had enough intelligence to deal with the consequent homosexual life style constructively. That meant encouraging long-term stable relationships in that community. But the duplicity in Christianity encouraged a random, anonymous sexual subculture that has served as an incubator for addiction and disease. And the economic cost of that dysfunctional social process also escalated out of control.

- ◆ Consistent with the experience of men in the penal system, men consigned to environments devoid of women either developed a homosexual sexual life style, or a dysfunctional sexuality. The maritime service was an occupation which required men to spend most of their career at sea in the company of other men. The homosexual life style was also prevalent in that occupation. Indeed, the largest homosexual communities existed in the major sea ports of the world. In the case of the armed forces, especially the Navy, sex was a big problem. The military was typically aggressive in excluding homosexuals. Nevertheless, the same military tolerated, and often condoned, dysfunctional sexual behavior. In the case of the U. S. Navy, sailors spent nearly all their time in foreign ports looking for anonymous sex with local prostitutes. That strategy worked when the American dollar was worth a lot more than the native currency and the sailors were comparatively rich. But it was increasingly futile when the value of the American dollar declined. In either case it was a major source of sexually transmitted disease, and therefore a costly health problem. More to the point, it was difficult to understand how a culture considered the sexual exploits of the military acceptable, and homosexuality objectionable.
- ◆ It was obvious to the most casual student of history that men always acted out their sexuality, and it has always been incumbent on cultures to deal with that energy in the most constructive way possible. Most cultures had a vital interest in child birth and large families because they needed a constant supply of strong young men for military service, and for expansion of their economic production. But in the modern period secular humans began to fret about over-population. Respect and support for children and families diminished, with a consequent degradation in the support for marriage. If marriage was not for the purpose of having children that left only sex and a business contract. Neither were very compelling. If marriage was only about sex, why should it be limited

²³ Psalm 146:5-7.

to a male-female relationship? If marriage was a contract, why should it be different than any other contract? The degeneration of the institution of marriage in America cannot be blamed on homosexuality.

- ◆ Western Civilization, in both its secular and religious variations, was imbued with the Aristotelian world view. That world view spawned an obsession, mostly under the guise of science, for breaking down reality into its component parts and listing the attributes of those segments which were presumed to be separate and self-contained. No where was the poverty of that philosophy more evident than in the oft repeated attempts to identify the attributes of the human male and the human female. America was fond of saying men were thinkers - women feelers . . . men competitive - women cooperative . . . men aggressive - women submissive. Modern American cultural pretty much accepted women's rebellion against such simplistic and erroneous attributes, but persisted in applying the proposed attributes to men. Men who excelled at ritualized competition were rewarded lavishly with fame and fortune. The television and film-making industries tirelessly depicted heroic men who single handedly saved the world from invasion, intrigue and/or corruption. The dark side of that misguided social process periodically claimed public attention when young men who had been bullied and ridiculed, rebelled in fury and killed some fellow classmates. But scant attention was given the far larger number of young men who rebelled against the thoroughly misguided portrayal of maleness. Creative young men naturally gravitated toward other creative men. Young men who were gifted with sensitivity and empathy were often branded 'fems' and accepted that definition when no other support was available. It did not have to develop that way. One only need to know Giorgio, the Italian engineer. He came to Silicon Valley with his wife only to return to Italy because he couldn't stand the company of American engineers who shared no feelings and were incapable of intimate friendship. Or Armando, the priest from Chile who complained of the lack of words in English for expressing the nuance of his feeling. Or Eric, the Native American commercial fisherman in Alaska, who was big and looked ferocious, but was gifted with the most precise and penetrating intuition. Christians bemoan the consequence of misguided social policy, but do little to proclaim the constructive alternative.
- ◆ The principal component of American ideology was the sanctity of the individual. The elevation of the stature of the individual began in Europe during the Reformation, when Martin Luther re-established the right of the individual to have direct access to divine revelation through Holy Scripture. The parallel invention of the printing press allowed all Christians to study the Bible on their own. Those two events occurred in a cultural milieu dominated by the '*divine right of kings.*' In order to successfully establish the basis for a culture different from the Catholic Church and the kingdoms of Europe, the right of the individual had to exceed the right of a king. It did for the first time in the American culture. There were essential implications of the ascent of the individual which gradually became apparent. One was equality. Another was self-sufficiency. No individual could claim a right equal to that of a king if some individuals were more divine than others. No individual could claim a divine right if that individual was needy. Need forced a person into a dependent relationship with another. That ideal of self-sufficiency was essential in early America. People had to believe in, and live-out, a vision of self-sufficiency in order to take possession of the vast expanse of arable land

available in the new world. Whereas self-sufficiency was essential during that period, it was absurd after the Industrial Revolution. When men left the farm and accepted a job in the city, they entered into a dependant relationship. They did so out of necessity. There would likely have been a mutation in that ideal had it not provided an irresistible opportunity for deception. It was first used by industry to disguise labor exploitation and abuse, and then in the modern period it became a strong and persistent admonition directed at the poor as justification for dismissal of their needs. So powerful was that admonition, social workers dreaded a man applying for welfare because they knew his acknowledgment of need would destroy him.²⁴ How so? Businessmen, conservative politicians, and men in the street berated the man mercilessly until he was destroyed.

The cultural admonition of self-sufficiency was extended to include the family. That social expectation became a crushing burden in modern America. The Industrial Revolution forced families into increasingly higher density population clusters in metropolitan areas, and therefore into dependent relationships with an ever larger and more diverse group of people. Yet the reality of that urban life style was contradicted by an ever more strident insistence on self-sufficiency. Families who dared vocalize their need were belittled and judged dysfunctional. As the culture lost the existential power to create the bond between young people and cultural ideology, the blame was placed on the family unit. Good parents raised good children who in turn embraced the cultural ideology and appropriated its prescriptive behavior. Failure of the young people to embrace the cultural ideology and appropriate its prescriptive behavior was taken as certain judgement that the parents were incompetent and therefore responsible for the consequent social ills. Many parents were deeply troubled by the prospect of that social stigma. Nevertheless they could not overtly ask for help because that was also a grave ideological misstep. They could and did turn to the Churches. What they sought was not Christianity, but a strong institutional authority that would help them ensure the bond between the cultural ideology and their children, and ensure the appropriation, by their children, of the prescriptive behavior dictated by that culture. Compliant churches were rewarded with prestige and generous financial support.

Certainly some children accepted the secular ideals and behavior, and also the accompanying religious rationalization. A greater number saw clearly the hypocrisy of the accommodation and abandoned Christianity altogether. The net result was a sustained decline in Christianity, and an exacerbated negative pressure on marriage and family. The predictable human response to failed efforts in the service of secular ideology was always a more forceful reassertion of those efforts. Such was the case in America. Just as the secular culture was intent on blaming parents for the failure of the bond between ideology and child, the religious subculture which had committed to serve the secular needs of parents, blamed everyone else for their failure. It was a '*lawless generation*' . . . a '*satanic rebellion*' . . . anything but their own hypocrisy.

²⁴ Ruth Evans, social worker and supervisor, Santa Clara County Department of Social Services, circa 1934 to 1964, San Jose, California.

The problem? . . . the ideal was completely wrong. The deepest and most essential characteristic of the human species was the need for God, . . . “*How blest are those who know their need of God; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*”²⁵ That the need for God was most often attached to false gods and secular ideology did not mitigate either its existence or importance. Businessmen, conservative politicians, and men in the street ridiculed the needy because they themselves were beset by spiritual poverty. The ridicule of others diverted attention from their own need. The proclamation of a false ideal inevitably destroyed the once sacred bond between individual and cultural ideology from whence morality derived. Once that bond was destroyed, the prescriptive behavior and moral agenda embraced by that culture meant nothing to the individual. That bond could never be restored by secular mechanization. The only possible restoration was divine . . . a bond to Christ such as experienced by Paul on the road to Damascus. The only question that remained? How was it Christians did not grasp the deception behind the aggressive proclamation of self-sufficiency? How was it Christians did not understand the vital role for real Christianity?

The Christian Conversion Experience

The Greek words *meta-noeō*, used 34 times in the New Testament, and *meta-noia*, used 22 times, were used by both Jesus and John the Baptist to express the most basic and essential demand for a re-orientation of one’s life to God. The two words were most often translated as *repent*, such as occurred in Matthew 4:17: “*Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*” But there was a serious problem with that translation. The English word *repent* was used often in varied contexts and therefore carried a mild, diffuse meaning such as; ‘feel sorry for what you’ve done,’ or ‘change your mind.’ The actual meaning in the New Testament was a demand for a radical change of direction in one’s life, away from the world and toward God.²⁶ So radical it could not result from human will, but only from the action of the Holy Spirit.

It must be conceded the radical change of life demanded by Jesus was experienced by few Christians, and the translation of the Bible into the smooth, easy words of English further diminished that imperative. Though Americans became accustomed to an easy religion, the radical demands of Jesus stand as the paradigm for Christianity. The requisite abandonment of false gods, and the false absolutes of secular ideology, carried with it the complete cleansing of the record of life. Forgotten was sin, failure, frustration, loneliness. But also identity, wealth and accomplishment. Acknowledgment of the need for God was met with a lavish outpouring of love and infusion of the Holy Spirit. Baggage from the secular world such as an expectation or demand for equality and/or women’s rights was rejected. Such objectives were ideological goals derived from secular values and had no place in the kingdom of Heaven. Christ did not bestow equality, but did bestow individual significance. Christ did not promise to call people to

²⁵ Matthew 5:3, New English Bible. For those who have trouble accepting the translation in the New English Bible refer to: W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, MATTHEW, Doubleday & Company, Inc, Garden City, New York, NY, 1971, pages 45- 46.

²⁶ THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, Volume 4; Gerhard Kittel, Editor; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1967; pages 100-1003.

ministry according to an agenda based on American ideology. He did promise to call whom he pleased, and according to his own counsel. He often called the unexpected and the unwelcome. Saul was a murderer, and Christ transformed him into the Apostle Paul, who was second only to Christ in the importance of his contribution to Christianity. The Church was neither given advance notice of Christ's intentions regarding Paul, nor the option of rejecting his ministry. Peter and the others had to deal with Paul . . . like it or not. The Church never had, nor was it ever given, the authority to affirm or deny a call to ministry issued by the Lord.²⁷ Neither did the one called have the right to demand acknowledgment or acceptance from the Church. Christ empowered those whom he called. If the candidate was not adequately empowered, the candidate was not called by Christ no matter what the wishes of the candidate.

Issues in Marriage

The most common problem in American marriages was money. Women wanted financial security and stability. Men felt trapped and used. The marriage was more likely to succeed if the man was financially successful, and unlikely to succeed if he was not. The problem was greatly exacerbated in a fragmented America, where family units were expected to be self-sufficient in the same manner as individuals.

That most common of issues, however, affords an opportunity for deeper reflection. Money was not the real issue, or even financial security. The root of the issue could be traced to the deepest instincts of women formed long ago in the experience of childbirth. That act made the woman completely vulnerable, and either completely alone with that vulnerability or completely dependant on others. The experience was much more daunting than illness or threat to life because it was coupled with the sudden onset of a huge responsibility. No other experience known to humans combined extremes in vulnerability and responsibility. Though the woman was most vulnerable during the act of childbirth, vulnerability remained during the extended period of nursing and nurture. The responsibility placed on the mother during that period of vulnerability was not just responsibility for the new human being. It also carried social responsibility. Every culture had a vested interest in child birth and parenting. Nations depended on a steady supply of strong, intelligent children to preserve their ideals and advance their influence. Successful mothers were accorded considerable respect, but also subjected to social pressure that was often intense. The net result was a fundamental conflict in the behaviors necessary for success. The acts of birth and parenting required withdrawal from the culture into a separate reality of needs and feelings. A reality where the spoken word was mostly ineffective and right action depended on sensitivity and intuition. Yet without a strong connection to the culture from which the withdrawal occurred, the whole undertaking would fail . . . painfully. That meant a man was necessary, and the deep instinctual role of that man was maintenance of the bond between family and culture. That bond provided food, shelter, protection from enemies, and a channel for various community resources needed by the family. That bond was also meant to establish and maintain respect for the family in the community. The behavioral role of the man was dictated by the culture. In some it was a productive hunter, in some a courageous warrior, in some an attentive and disciplined farmer, in America it was money. Money and financial security in America was the yardstick that measured the strength of the bond between the man and the culture. The

See Institutional Authority in Christianity, at <http://www.renewal-1.com/theology.html>

ancient root of the classic American marital argument was confirmed by research carried out jointly by the University of Pennsylvania and the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia which revealed positive emotional and physiological responses from women exposed to male perspiration.²⁸ In other words, men who exerted themselves on behalf of their family were a source of peace and order.

That family structure was remarkably flexible and capable of effective adaption to many different cultural forms. But a destabilizing thread of development emerged with The Enlightenment. Creativity became a viable male identity. That was great for civilization, but exceedingly difficult for marriage. Imagine being married to Michelangelo.²⁹ He spent countless hours and days on scaffolding a couple of feet from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. When he finally came down he was sick and lame. To make matters worse, he couldn't stand up to his patron, Pope Julius II, and so could not be depended on to bring home a paycheck. Had he been married his wife and children would have felt abandoned. Of course he was homosexual. A man that had such incredible brilliance and initiative had to have had a commensurate sex drive. And any woman of that milieu would have been insane to marry him.

The problem with creativity was it required withdrawal and nurture not unlike that experienced by a woman in childbirth. Certainly creativity did not carry the long commitment to care for a new life, but the social pressure on creative men was greater than the social pressure on mothers. That was so because a creative man had to break ranks with other men and embark on an initiative that carried no guarantee of success. Peer pressure being what it was, other men rarely liked, and almost never supported, a fellow man who broke ranks believing he had a special gift or purpose. Those that did well during their life time had a patron that supported them. Those that did not have a patron, like Vincent van Gogh, suffered grievously. In any case, the creative man was almost completely incapable of fulfilling the woman's need for security and provision during the most intense period of creative effort.

The traditional model of marriage never adjusted to accommodate the likes of Michelangelo Buonarroti. The more creative the man, the less likely traditional marriage was a workable option. The more vibrant and expansive the culture, the greater the number of creative men and therefore the greater the homosexual population.

The new model for long term relationship which first emerged in that homosexual population, and later spread to heterosexual relationships, was based on two identities. Neither was vulnerable or dependent, and neither was trapped by the dependency of the other. That model appeared attractive on ideological grounds in that the two partners were stipulated equal. But that was a superficial assessment at best. The identity role, whether traditional or modern, was a means of bonding to the larger community in order to establish a channel whereby resources from the community could flow to the relationship/family, and partners and/or family members would have the respect of the community. That meant the community had considerable influence over the individual's identity, and accepted and rewarded a given identity according to its own terms. It was highly unlikely that acceptance and reward would maintain equality over time between the partners in a given relationship even if those partners were equal at

²⁸ As reported in the *SCIENCE DAILY*, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/2003/03/030317074228.htm>

²⁹ Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564).

the inception. That meant it was inevitable a point would be reached wherein the needs of the strong, more effective identity would take precedence over the weaker, or the relationship would end. Populist efforts to force consistent equality instead caused disastrous consequences. The American culture relied almost exclusively on money as a mechanism for demonstrating acceptance and reward of identity. That meant the people and/or institutions with the most money exercised the greatest influence over identity. The populist appeal for equality was an appeal primarily directed at those with the greatest influence. That made those moneyed people arbiters of equality, and that empowered them, not the individuals. In the American culture, a semblance of equality in the workplace was achieved by driving down the real wages of workers so that two workers made just slightly more than one worker had made previously. So the quest for equality in a two-identity relationship created a dependent relationship for both partners and made both partners vulnerable to the impersonal dictation of the moneyed class.

The damage did not end with those dependent, vulnerable relationships to the moneyed class. Women who were determined to achieve equality in the workplace judged their unequal status resulted primarily from the expectation their careers would be interrupted by pregnancy. They therefore demanded and were given the legal right to abortion. They were also given exclusive ownership of the baby until the baby was birthed or aborted. That exclusive ownership completely excluded the father, who was given no legal rights in the matter. But in a contradiction typical of the self-destructive social policies of a false ideology, the father was assigned financial responsibility for the new child if and when the mother decided it could live. Many men balked at the ethical contradiction and refused child support. So instead of social resources being directed into constructive programs, it is expended trying to force fathers to support children that were judged to be the sole legal property of the mother.

So the net result of the “new” model of marriage was more dependency, more vulnerability, less freedom, and destruction of the nurturing environment ensconced in traditional marriage.

A Christian Vision of Marriage

The principal vision of marriage in Christianity came from the Apostle Paul:

“Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything. Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form of words, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies, for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because it is his body - and we are its living parts. For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church. To sum up; you too, each

one of you, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife respect her husband."³⁰

Christian men were fond of using the words of Paul to demand submission from their wives. Wives were just as fond as men in using Paul to demand their husbands sacrifice for them, and make them glorious. Counselors bemoaned Paul's idealism and ascribed it to his bachelor longing. In truth, Paul only endorsed the long standing understanding of marriage. As noted in the thread '*Issues in Marriage*,' above, the wife was extremely vulnerable in childbirth and it was her husband's task to protect her and provide for her. The man fulfilled that obligation by establishing and maintaining, through his identity, a bond to the larger community that enabled the necessary provision and secured respect for his family. His identity was therefore sacred to himself, and had to be sacred to his wife in order for the family to succeed. Paul's most idealist statement, '*For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body*,' was actually a direct quote from Genesis 2:24. God had created Adam and then declared it was not good for man to be alone, and proceeded to create Eve. God then declared man's allegiance and commitment would transfer to his wife and the two would become one. Paul's treatment of marriage was conventional except in two important areas. The first area was the general context in which he introduced the theme of marriage. The first section of Paul's letter to the Ephesians set forth the broad vision of God's plan for salvation of the human race (Ephesians 1:3 thru 2:22), the goal of which was:

*"There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all."*³¹

That general vision ended with Paul's prayer:

*"This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every family, whether spiritual or natural, takes its name: Out of his infinite glory may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God."*³²

The prayer marked the transition from the vision of God's plan to the practical implementation of that vision. Success depended on the *hidden self growing strong*. That, in turn, required the *gift of power through the Spirit*.

He then reminded Christians they were uniquely gifted yet called to work together:

"And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that

³⁰ Ephesians 5:21-33, Jerusalem Bible.

³¹ Ephesians 4:4-6, Jerusalem Bible.

³² Ephesians 3:14-19, Jerusalem Bible.

the saints together make a unity in the work of service . . ." (4:11-13)

Then urged each to appropriate the holy behavior modeled by Christ:

"Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution so that you can put on the new self that has been created in God's way, in the goodness and holiness of the truth."(4:23-24)

"Try, then, to imitate God, as children of his that he loves, and follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up in our place as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God."(5:1)

It was only after he set forth the structure and function of Christian community that he introduced Christian marriage. Since the actual structure and goal of marriage remained as it had been established centuries before, Paul's principal contribution was to make it clear marriage was intended to occur in a completely supportive social context. Missing were the false admonitions of individual and family self-sufficiency characteristic of the American secular culture. Missing was the blame ladled onto parents by secular Americana for the failure of those false ideals. Instead the community of real Christians were to love one another as if they were one. The Lord intended for individuals to contribute according to their unique gifts and attributes without a comparative analysis of the contribution of others. That arrangement allowed for either or both father and mother to acknowledge and express their unique gifts even if that gift was creative.

After Paul had set marriage in the supportive community environment intended by the Lord, he added, *"This mystery has many implications . . ."* (5:32), but did not elaborate on that mystery or the implications. He could not do so because he did not marry, and therefore did not have the authority to speak beyond the traditional formula. Nevertheless, the entire teaching on community, marriage and family, including his reference to *'this mystery,'* was governed by his introductory prayer: *". . . may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong . . ."*(3:16).

The journey toward one body, as first stipulated in Genesis and affirmed by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, was an inner journey the fruit of which was the growing strength of the hidden self. Whereas all living creatures copulated in order to produce off-spring, humans alone were called from the beginning to become the likeness of God,³³ to be, *". . . filled with the utter fullness of God."*(3:19) For that reason the creation of humans was the most holy act of God. Since God was infinite, the journey was infinite. Since God was timeless, the journey could not be linear. It could be cyclical. It could be complex and variegated. It was not a journey to a far-off destination, but a journey into the depths . . . into the deep abiding presence of God. It's was journey that could only begin and only continue if there was resistance. God created humans male and female for there to be attraction and resistance. The superficial reacted to resistance with anger. The *power through his Spirit* enabled the overcoming of resistance by forcing a deeper experience of God that made the *hidden self grow strong*. The power of the Spirit that made the hidden self strong was once experienced only as power in the gonads, but was actually capable of empowering the whole body and spirit . . . making the male countenance radiant. That hidden self grew stronger the more that power was given away . . . in

³³ Genesis 1:27.

blessing . . . healing . . . protection. Commitment to new life drew the man into the holy of holies . . . into power . . . and into oneness.

The Way Ahead

It is incumbent on Christians to exhibit leadership in this important matter, for that is their call and their purpose in Christ Jesus. Christians that judge, however, are only pseudo Christians because, as Saint Paul so aptly set forth in his letter to the Romans, their first loyalty is to the secular order. They must come under the exclusive headship of the Lord Jesus or be cast from his Body. If they wish others to embrace the radical repentance demanded by John the Baptist and by Christ, they must model that radical repentance in their own lives. Only then will they have the power in the Spirit to love their God with all their heart and soul, and their neighbor as themselves. It is only through the power of unconditional love that people are bonded to Christ. The desire to please is the response of the loved to the one who loves. So strong is the human need for love, the human will yearn to please whomever or whatever appears to answer that need. Those who do not experience the love of Christ, or the love of Christians, will long to please others that respond to that need.

It is incumbent on the gay subculture to abandon the claim they were all 'created that way.' Even if such a thing was established by science it would mean nothing because all sorts of 'genetic defects' exist in humans and no one, not even the gay community is willing to say those genetic defects are desirable. Indeed, the whole promise of genetic research in the modern period is to do away with those defects. But the claim, 'we were made that way,' is even more ridiculous. Made what way? Is any sexual act between men or between women genetically driven no matter what form it takes? Is it genetically driven and therefore acceptable for a man to have an orgasm while beating another man? What is the genetic difference between a submissive gay man and a dominant gay male? How many different behaviors, and therefore how many different genes, come into play in gay sex and/or gay relationships? . . . one? . . . one thousand? The claim of a helpless and unstoppable genetic drive to gay sex is actually one component of a 'fake good.' public relations campaign that keeps gay crime out of the media spot light and portrays the Aids epidemic as victimization of sweet, innocent men who only want to have sex with enumerable, anonymous others. That strategy appeared smart and effective for a number of years, but the American Presidential election of 2004 revealed a dramatic escalation in that bitter social dispute. It must now be acknowledged as a failure by the gay culture. They did not change anyone's mind, they only created a simmering anger that finally burst into the open.

Christians are bound by their religion to accept and love gay men and women in their midst without any special fanfare or provision. Their sexual orientation should be unknown to most and immune from gossip by those who do know. Christians can certainly pray that gays experience a radical repentance, but must simultaneously accept that such events are very rare in Christendom. In setting down the admonition to forgive *seventy times seven*, Christ meant love was always required even if repentance never occurred. Christians must admit, with finality, that the Bible does not address homosexuality as a separate and especially odious sin. Condemnations of sexual behavior are generic and apply equality to heterosexual and homosexual behavior.

The gay culture must get real. Real as in transparency about gay crime, unacceptable sexual activities, and sexual addiction. They are, after all, human and humans sin and

fall short of the mark no matter who they are. To be taken seriously the gay community must erect its own boundaries for gay behavior, and establish mechanisms for identifying and neutralizing unacceptable actions and activities. It is important the gay subculture acknowledge their response to Aids has transformed that epidemic into a self-destructive social process. There are many conservative Christians who would like nothing more than to witness the self-destruction of the gay community. That is not the Lord's intent. Indeed, many self-destructive social processes are at work in the modern period, most especially the American culture. The ideological rationalization for America's self-destructive processes is much more deeply rooted than Aids. That should not be used as an excuse to justify the status quo, but should be allowed to generate change.

Christians must accept and support long term relationships in the gay community. That is far healthier and constructive than denial or rejection. Nevertheless, the holy institution of Christian marriage must be reserved for those committed to the creation of new life. It therefore must be a union between a man and a woman. Gays are excluded, but also excluded is marriage between a man and a woman who are not committed to the creation of new life. That means Christians must continue the fight against abortion. Christian marriage must also be denied in any circumstance where there is a separate marriage contract executed under secular law.

Gay and non-gay Christians need to work together to identify and change dysfunctional social processes. There are many such social processes and they are deeply rooted in the American psyche. Still, the importance of the task cannot be over estimated. America does not need any more awesome athletes, and has far too many of the Hollywood style "action heroes." What America desperately needs is people with the vision that can see delusion. There are many with that vision in the gay community . . . you are needed . . . embrace a noble purpose.