

A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach.

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Abstract

The aim of this investigation is to compare the traditional doctrines and teaching of the Christian Church on sexual and gender variation with the results of present day neurophysiological and psychological research. It shows that these conditions are identity driven and it contradicts the current Christian doctrines which exclusively attribute the driving forces behind all gender and sexually variant behaviour to the pursuit of lust, illicit and immoral sex. It rejects the Church assertions that the gender and sexually variant conditions are intrinsically disordered by demonstrating that these are within the wide-ranging latitude of a process of personality development which is tuned to ensure the attainment of the maximum potential and individuality of every person and it affirms that within the gender and sexually variant communities as extended a range of moral attitudes and expectations must be found as those that occur in all parts of society. There is a clear contradiction between the two views and a second part of this investigation examines how and why this discord occurred.

Current research work in infant neurophysiology and neuropsychology, has identified the importance of key features such as those of mirror neurons, the active phases of brain plasticity, synaptic pruning and of cortical development, and it has revealed the importance of the imitative processes in controlling the functioning of the brain. It is demonstrated in this analysis that the creation of the personal self-identity, including the sexual and the gender components are part of a contagious and self-reinforcing process of possessive imitation. However this imitation reflects the resonance of the mirror neurons. It is driven by the need for competitive advantage and not to pursue any goal. This analysis also shows that the conflicts associated with gender identity are a symptom of the failure to build a coherent sense of self identity, rather than the cause, and it demonstrates how the variations in the processes can lead to situations where both gender and sexually variant identities are formed.

For nearly 2000 years the Christian Church has maintained its traditional teaching in homosexuality and gender and sexual variance. This analysis has shown that this is built on a false foundation, and that the teaching of Jesus leads to the transcendence of gender and sexual divisions which provides an approach to gender equality that would be acceptable in the present day. Despite the great advances in research and information which have occurred in the last sixty years, in society, in religion and in much of psychiatry the necessary breakthrough into everyday understanding still has not been made. Such a transformation is now urgently required for the wellbeing of Christianity itself.

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Document first issued: 12 November 2013. Last Update: 20 December 2013.

1:0 Preface.

This is one of three companion papers which make use of recent developments in neurophysiological and psychological research to put together a new understanding of gender and sexually variant behaviour in the Christian Church. These documents may be read either as standalone papers or together. The first paper is: Gilchrist, S. (2013), "A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian teaching on Homosexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach" The second paper is: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church". The third paper is: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Reform and the Christian Church".

A summary is also given in Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Christianity and Crisis: An Overview of Gender and Sexual Differences in the Early and Modern Christian Church".

See the footer on each page for access to these documents.

2:0 The Christian Context.

The present position of the majority of Christian Churches on homosexuality and by implication on all the gender and sexually variant conditions is clearly stated in the 1997 Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church¹. The labels which this catechism imposes appear to be completely clear. They decree that not only is homosexuality intrinsically disordered, but also they demand conformity to the doctrines of natural

¹Catechism of the Catholic Church: Paragraph 2357. The Second Edition English Translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with corrections promulgated by Pope John Paul II on 8 September 1997. "Homosexuality refers to the relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, Tradition has always declared that "Homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They choose the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved."

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First Issued: 12 November 2013. Last update: 20 December 2013.

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law² and that the doctrines of sexual complementarity are adopted³. The statement however confirms that the genesis of homosexuality is not well understood, and that this doctrine has largely been developed from the traditions of the Church.

The doctrines and conclusions which are expressed in this statement are challenged by this investigation. This study investigates the physiological and the psychological background. However there are two parts to this analysis. The first of these involves the neurophysiological and psychological studies which examine the characteristics and processes that are involved in personality development with particular reference to gender and sexual variation. This makes use of gender dysphoria as a case study to validate the results⁴. A further study uses the results of the neurophysiological and psychological studies to examine the development of the attitudes to sex and gender variation which are found within the Christian Church, thus the psychological studies and the church doctrines are both tested by this approach.

The second part of this investigation makes use of the social and theological results from the case study to determine what the original Gospel doctrines were, why these were changed by the early Church and in what ways the present day perceptions are still influenced by the traditional teachings the Church. This neurophysiological and psychological investigation has disproved the current day Christian doctrines which exclusively attribute the driving forces that lie behind all forms of gender and sexually

²Natural law, (or the law of nature), is a system of law which is supposedly determined by nature, therefore it is universal and it is naturally understood. In the Twelfth Century, Gratian equated natural law with divine law. However a century later, Thomas Aquinas brought natural law back to its independent state by asserting that natural law was to be considered as the rational creature's participation in the eternal law. Therefore natural law was not only to be used to pass judgment on the moral worth of the various laws, but also to determine what the law said in the first place. However Aquinas also argued that because human reason could not fully comprehend the eternal principles on which natural law was based, it had to be supplemented by revealed Divine law, and this was interpreted by the theology of the Church. So, instead of absolute independence, these doctrines meant that natural law, as understood in the Roman Catholic tradition, provides a set of laws which is moderated by the theology of the Church. See: Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships". See footer for access.

³Current day doctrines on Gender Complementarity are perhaps best summed up in articles 2332-2335 of the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church. "2332 Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. 2333 Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out. 2334 In creating men 'male and female,' God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity. 2335 Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The union of man and woman in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity". While few would argue about the delights of a gender complementarity which simply delights in the differences between the sexes, many more would argue against a doctrine of gender complementarity that compels it. It is shown in this analysis that this doctrine was used to enforce the practices of gender discrimination against women and also the submission of women to men for centuries in society. It is also shown that this doctrine arose because of the need for the early Church to gain respectability in male dominated Greco/Roman society, and that it is contrary to the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel itself.

⁴See: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access.

variant behaviour to the pursuits of lust, illicit and immoral sex, and this demands a radical reassessment of the teachings of the Church.

3:0 Neurophysiology and Psychology.

Current and recent research work in neurophysiology and neuropsychology, much of which has been pioneered by Gallese and others⁵, has identified the importance of major features such as those of empathy and the resonance of mirror neurons⁶, the active phases of brain plasticity⁷, synaptic pruning⁸ and of cortical development, and it has revealed the importance of imitative processes in controlling the functioning of the brain. It is demonstrated in this analysis that the creation of the personal self-identity, which includes the sexual and the gender components of it, form part of a contagious and self-reinforcing process of possessive imitation⁹. It is also shown that after a particular direction has been established; the underlying foundations of these components can never be changed in later life. In gender dysphoria for example the core gender identity (as defined by the initial understanding of being the person one is) is known to have become firmly and irrevocably locked in place, if not from birth, at the latest by three years of age.

⁵ See for example Gallese, V., & Sinigaglia, C. (2011). How the body in action shapes the self. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 18 (7–8):117–143 also Gallese V. (2013) Bodily self, affect, consciousness and the cortex. *Neuropsychoanalysis*, 15 (1), 42-45.

⁶ See for example: Gallese, Vittorio. (2003): “The Roots of Empathy: The Shared Manifold Hypothesis and the Neural Basis of Intersubjectivity” *Psychopathology* 2003;36:171–180: Accessed 22 November 2013 at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.143.2396&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

⁷ Brain plasticity is the ability of the brain to shape itself. Learning takes place through a process where those pathways in the brain that are most used are strengthened and those which are not die back. For humans the importance of timing in early brain development is emphasized in the delayed development of the pre-frontal cortex, which is regarded as the part of the brain responsible for cognitive thought. The emergence of its functional capabilities is not uniform across the domains of the cortex and different abilities emerge at different times. These changes are associated with peak degrees of brain plasticity in the relevant areas of the brain. This ability, together with the subsequent process of synaptic pruning provides efficient ways for the brain to achieve optimal development. The presumption that the learning capabilities in early life are similar to or equivalent to those in later life cannot be made, and any explanation must take the development of brain physiology into account when considering how identity is formed.

⁸ It is only after a baby reaches an age between two and three years that the processing power of the pre-frontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for organised thought reaches its peak value which is between about eight and ten times that of the newborn infant. The peak value of the synapses, which are the connections between the neurons, is then as high as one and a half times to twice that of the adult value, thus it then it dies back. This die back is referred to as synaptic pruning. This reduces the number of synapses using a process which reinforces those pathways that are relevant and discards those that are not. From about the age of three years, synaptic pruning and the effects of brain plasticity have begun to lock the core foundations of self-identity in place. It might therefore be argued that the baby’s brain has become tuned to the environment it has created.

⁹ This analysis forms part of a new approach. Previous attempts to explain the origins of homosexuality and transsexuality using psychodynamic and social learning theories have not met with success. That is because no sufficient causal inputs can be found. Therefore the presently accepted theories argue that the creation of these conditions is due to the effect of hormones on the foetus which first causes sexual differentiation to develop in the foetal brain. However some form of psychological process is needed to transform physiological attributes into identity and thought. This paper concentrates on the latter process. It makes use of recent work on neurophysiology and neuropsychology and it is shown that brain plasticity after birth can play a major role. See Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach”. See footer for access. *Gilchrist, S. (2013). “A Reassessment of the Traditional Teaching”*. Draft: Printed: 23/12/2013 4
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These self reinforcing imitative processes provide confirmation of independent work by Dawkins and others, who define the Meme as a key component in their theories¹⁰. However many of the concepts that are put forward in the research work of Dawkins et al. had already been foreshadowed by René Girard^{11 12 13} who considers that the equivalent processes of Mimetic¹⁴ possessive imitation provide the principal driving forces for the development of human personality, which includes the creation of a personal self-identity. Girard has extensively modelled these processes. Unlike the Freudian psychodynamics, which requires the existence of some basic “Theory of Mind”¹⁵ in order to be able to function, the driving forces that are identified by Girard are active immediately from birth, and they are also innate. Freud, Piaget and many others have observed that a major change in the cognitive abilities of infants rapidly takes place around the age of two years. However the psychodynamic and the social learning theories developed by these investigators cannot work without the existence of some form of active cognitive continuum. This requires the possession of some elements of reasoning to link cause to effect¹⁶. It is shown in this investigation that this reasoning, and the continuum, is absent or ineffective during these early stages and that up to the age of around two years it is the resonance of mirror neurons and the self-reinforcing imitative processes which exert the dominant role. That implies that a significant change in the learning processes takes place near this time.

4:0 Identity Formation

4:1 Overview

This analysis characterises the first two years of life as ones which are dominated by the feedforward process of unrestrained integration and acquisition. By their nature these initial processes of contagion and the self reinforcing possessive imitation fulfil their main purpose by creating vast amounts of un-coordinated and often conflicting information. The resonance of mirror neurons also provides a framework whereby

¹⁰ Dawkins, R. (1976). “The Selfish Gene.” Chapter 11, Oxford University Press (new edition with additional material, 1989). Heylightens, F and Chielens, K (2009) Cultural Evolution and Memetics. Article prepared for the Encyclopedia of Complexity and System Science ed. B. Meyers (Springer) Dawkins also described the resulting behaviour as Memetic behaviour

¹¹ Girard, R., (1961) “Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965. [Originally published in French, 1961; translated by Yvonne Freccero.]

¹² Girard, R., (1972). “Violence and the Sacred”. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977. [Originally published in French, 1972; trans. by Patrick Gregory.]

¹³ Girard, R., (1978). “Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World”. Research undertaken in collaboration with Jean-Michel Oughourlian and Guy Lefort. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987. (Originally pub. in French, 1978; trans. by Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer.)

¹⁴ Dawkins does not cite Girard’s work. Dawkins’ meme and the mimetic process described by Girard have been independently defined.

¹⁵ Theory of mind is the ability to attribute mental states, beliefs, intents, desires, pretending, knowledge, etc. to oneself and others and to understand that others have beliefs, desires, and intentions that are different from one’s own. For an account see, Doherty, Martin J. (2009) “Theory of mind: how children understand others’ thoughts and feelings.” Taylor & Francis ISBN 1841695718, 9781841695716

¹⁶ This requires some form of understanding of the relationship between cause and effect. Some basic elements of a “Theory of Mind” must be present for it to work. Gilchrist, S. (2013). “A Reassessment of the Traditional Teaching”. *Draft: Printed: 23/12/2013* 5
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empathy is created. However chaos can be the only result if no effective control ever comes to be imposed.

The step changes in the behaviour between the ages of two and three years suggest that this marks the transition period when the ideas of separation of the self from the other can begin to have an effect, and that is also the time when the first elements of control, analysis and cognitive thought can start to be meaningfully applied.

It is shown in this analysis that from three years onwards, the feedback processes which make use of cognition, judgement and analysis then take over the dominant role, and this identifies the period when the separation of the self from the other becomes increasingly defined. The power and control which must be exercised by the feedback forces of cognition, judgement and analysis have to be more than sufficient to countermand the still present contagion and the self reinforcing imitative drive.

Therefore there are three developmental stages to note. The first identifies the step change in infant behaviour about the age of two years. The second stage becomes evident at the latest by three years when it is shown that some basic core elements of self identity have been irrevocably locked in place. The third stage occurs from the age of four years when children first become sufficiently self aware to examine their own minds, and then they can first sense the correctness of what has taken place¹⁷.

An enormous amount of research and analysis which examines in minute detail the development of infant behaviour and capabilities and which correlates this with the ages when these developments occur has been carried out by many investigators over many years. A detailed comparison with the graduated development of infant behaviour and their capabilities has also been undertaken in this investigation, and it is shown how this fits in with the three overall developmental stages which are put forward above, but that is described elsewhere¹⁸

A more detailed examination follows:

4:2 Developmental Mechanisms

This analysis has identified development mechanisms which remain applicable from birth into maturity and which give fresh insights into the development of a personal identity. It matches the cognitive development of babies with the growing capacity of brain physiology and research has indicated that a major increase in the capabilities of both of these features takes place from approximately the age of two years^{19 20}. It

¹⁷These ages are approximate and considerable variation may occur.

¹⁸See: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief" and: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access.

¹⁹The nature of the learning process synchronises with the parts of the prefrontal cortex which are most active at the time and it has been shown that the ability to process directed thought does not appear before the flowering of cognitive ability around the age of two years. This means that the learning processes which depend on the later developing cognitive abilities cannot be absorbed.

²⁰It has been argued that the delayed development of the pre-frontal cortex is an evolutionary feature which maximises the potential for learning that can be achieved. A baby's capacity to learn is enormous during these early years. This can far outstrip adult capacity; however it is focussed on the

is argued that the quorum sensing activities²¹ which enable the sense of individual personality to begin to develop do not take place before this transition stage. This transition period is shown to match the time at which the transformation from the feedforward processes of compulsive acquisition begins to be moderated and controlled by the feedback processes which require more analytical and organised thought. The coherence of the selfhood which is created from then onwards depends on the effectiveness of how these processes are carried out. All newly born babies possess a still very primitive cerebral cortex²² and the delay in its maturation has a profound effect on the nature of the learning capabilities and on the developmental attainments which are involved²³. It is only after a baby reaches an age of between two and three years that the processing power of the pre-frontal cortex, the part of the brain which is responsible for organised thought reaches its peak value, as it is measured by the synaptic density²⁴, which is between about eight and ten times that of the newborn infant.

This peak value is also higher than at any other time in life. At this time it becomes as high as one and a half times to twice that in the adult and from the age of three years it gradually dies back. By the age of three years at the latest, this synaptic pruning and the decreasing brain plasticity have begun to lock the core foundations of the self-identity into place. However all of these changes are encountered without any conscious awareness of the processes. That can only be gained after children

areas where it is most needed. In this analysis it is argued that any earlier development of cognitive awareness would act to limit the potential for this expansion, and this is why it only becomes more important later in life, when a greater need for organisation occurs. See: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief" and: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access.

²¹In this analysis it is argued that the development of self identity begins with the creation of individual and independent strands of thought. Initially these strands are not linked together but as the cortical development progresses, increasing linkage occurs. Both Dawkins and Girard consider this to be a contagious process. An analogy to quorum sensing can be that of the behaviour of people in a crowd. Initially there is disorder, but once it is sensed that some people are moving in a particular direction, others follow. The consequence is a self generating movement when a decision is made on a path to be taken without a majority being reached. See: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access.

²²Although neural imaging techniques show that parts of a baby's brain are very active from birth, the global integration, including the establishment of linkages between the right and left hemispheres is relatively quiescent before this stage. Energy requirements provide a further argument for differential development. In an adult brain these demand about 20% of an adult's total intake, but in an infant it is closer to 50%. Different areas develop as they are required and the need for energy economy is a strong argument for the differential development that takes place.

²³This gradual development of pre-frontal cortex poses something of a paradox. The reasons for this are still hotly debated but, as with cognitive development, it is argued that there may be developmental grounds for the delay. The newborn infant has to acquire a vast range of skills that seem mundane to adults. For example, learning to use vision and feedback to successfully reach for and grasp an object takes several months of failed attempts and near misses. Therefore at the early stage of life priority has to be given to the acquisition of such skills, attitudes and thoughts, and the requirement to analyse them would be a diversion from that task. It is well known that babies have an enormous capacity to learn from the first days and stimulation through the attention of others and interaction with their peers plays a fundamental part in encouraging the process. The short attention span of babies ensures that they quickly move on to other things. The development of a cognitive learning capability may actually inhibit this process of acquisition through the action of any of the critical features of analysis which belongs to cognitive thought. However the capacity to learn in the other areas that are most active is much greater than that which is left behind in later life.

²⁴ See later in this account.

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become first able to make their own active judgements on the accuracy of what has happened to them. Their ability to do this only becomes available after an effective Theory of Mind²⁵ has become established, and that does not occur before four years of age. It is also worth noting that many transsexuals report that this is the age at which their first awareness of unease with their gender identity is encountered²⁶. The main advantage of using the experiences of gender dysphoria to validate and assess these ideas arise; not simply because the characteristics of the conflicts which this produces may be more easily observed, but also because the evidence of its impact is present from earliest infancy to the end of adult life.

The peak which occurs at between two and three years is not the only peak in brain plasticity. In the different regions, brain plasticity peaks at different times, and outside these periods a relative stability occurs. Another peak in plasticity takes place from the onset of puberty, and recent research demonstrates that this is a further period when sexual physical dimorphism in the brain structure takes place²⁷. This is also a second point when some transgender people are first aware of the incongruence in

²⁵The creation of a Theory of Mind is a developing process which begins in infancy and continues throughout life. Recently some researchers have started to divide it into two components. Cognitive Theory of Mind refers to the ability to make inferences about beliefs, thoughts, desires, motivations and intentions of others. Empathetic/affective Theory of Mind refers to the ability to infer the feelings/emotions of others. It does not of itself require analytical thought. Baron-Cohen identified the infant's understanding of attention in others, a social skill found by 7 to 9 months of age, as a "critical precursor" to the development of theory of mind (see: Baron-Cohen, S. (1991). Precursors to a theory of mind: Understanding attention in others. In A. Whiten (Ed.), *Natural theories of mind: Evolution, development and simulation of everyday mindreading* (pp. 233-251). Oxford: Basil Blackwell). The understanding of other people's intentions is a second precursor and this is found in children between the ages of two and three years. This "intentional stance" has been defined by Dennett (Dennett, D. C. (1987). Reprint of *Intentional systems in cognitive ethology: The Panglossian paradigm defended*. *The Brain and Behavioral Sciences*, 6, 343-390) as an understanding that the actions of others are goal-directed and arise from particular beliefs or desires. However it is not until the age of four years that children obtain the ability to understand the implications of false belief. Many research investigations into false belief tasks have been undertaken and all agree that it is not obtained until that age for a summary see Doherty, Martin J. (2009) "Theory of mind: how children understand others' thoughts and feelings." Taylor & Francis ISBN 1841695718, 9781841695716. This is the key stage from which infants start to turn their awareness of ideas and intentions into their own conscious interpretation of thought.

²⁶ A wide variation can occur. For some, more usually transvestites, the onset of puberty can be the first time that this awareness occurs.

²⁷Sex differences are of high scientific and societal interest because of their prominence in behaviour of humans and nonhuman species. This work is highly significant because it studies a very large population of 949 youths (8–22 y, 428 males and 521 females) using the diffusion-based structural connectome of the brain, identifying novel sex differences. The results establish that male brains are optimized for intrahemispheric and female brains for interhemispheric communication. The developmental trajectories of males and females separate at a young age, demonstrating wide differences during adolescence and adulthood. The observations suggest that male brains are structured to facilitate connectivity between perception and coordinated action, whereas female brains are designed to facilitate communication between analytical and intuitive processing modes.

Ingahlalikara, Madhura. Smitha, Alex. Parkera, Drew. Satterthwaite, Theodore D. Elliott, Mark A. Ruparel, Kosha, Hakonarson, Hakon. Gur, Raquel E. Gur, Ruben C. and Verma, Ragini. (2013). "Sex differences in the structural connectome of the human brain". Edited by Charles Gross, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, and approved November 1, 2013 (received for review September 9, 2013) This article is a PNAS Direct Submission

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/11/27/1316909110.abstract>

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their gender identity. The impact of these developmental mechanisms on each stage of the process is discussed below:

4:3 First Period: Contagion, Acquisition and Imitation

In Girard's early studies and in all of the recent neurophysiological and psychological investigations by Dawkins, Gallese and others, identity formation is understood to be a contagious process, and that the initial development period involves the creation of many initially unlinked strands of thought. These then inter-relate and they compete and coalesce to create a unified whole. However their self reinforcing drive; and the restricted capability of any external inputs to influence these processes mean that once any development begins to follow a particular direction, it can be very difficult to stop, and this may account for the high degree of individuality that is created.

Imitation for competitive advantage provides the driving force and Girard has shown that tribal alliances are created almost from birth. The rate of coalescence is subject to some debate. Some elements of it are found in early life and it may be argued that this develops more gradually as the physiology of the brain develops. However the results from the quorum sensing research suggests that this happens much more suddenly, and that a step-wise change occurs²⁸. It is argued that these concepts or the strands of thought will remain relatively unlinked until their numbers and brain physiology develops sufficiently to enable some trend to be found. Others then join, and the subsequent recruitment to this trend enables more global concepts to be rapidly created. When this is combined with the delays in the development of the pre-frontal cortex, it is argued that the maximum personal potential can be gained. However it should also be noted that all of these global concepts are equally the products of a contagious process. They do not represent any majority view and a penalty of these mechanisms, which may be considered to maximise the potential for the increase of intellectual capability, individuality and for identity formation, is that errors and conflicts will also occur²⁹.

²⁸Quorum sensing is widely encountered in groups of co-operating organisms, and it is argued that the same processes can be applied to the brain as well. See: Malsburg, Christoph von der (2010) "Dynamic Coordination in the Brain: From Neurons to Mind" MIT Press, 2010. ISBN 9780262014717 0262014718, and Jacob, Eshel Ben; Becker, Israela; Shapira, Yoash and Levine, Herbert. (2004) "Bacterial linguistic communication and social intelligence". *Trend in Microbiology* Vol.12 No.8 August 2004.

²⁹The pre-frontal cortex develops more slowly in humans than it does in other animals. It can be an advantage for the part of the frontal cortex dealing with the higher emotions to be inactive during the early period. It means that information gathered is fragmentary in nature but it forms a greater base on which future development can take place. The potential influence of this on personality development is discussed in an early paper by Allen Schore. However there are advantages and disadvantages to late development. It has been shown that the prolonged developmental plasticity in the associative frontal cortex in human allows an unprecedented opportunity for acquisition of the highest level of cognitive abilities. However it is also indicated that this delay makes it is susceptible to the formation of abnormal circuitry which is manifested in late-expressed neuropsychiatric disorders. This brain development extends into and through puberty and considerable attention is now being paid to the neuroscience of the adolescent brain.(See: Schore, A.N.(2001), "Effects Of A Secure Attachment Relationship On Right Brain Development, Affect Regulation, And Infant Mental Health". Department Of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences University Of California At Los Angeles School Of Medicine. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, Vol. 22(1-2), 7-66. Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health. Petanjeka, Zdravko; Judaša, Miloš; Šimića, Goran; Rašina, Mladen Roko; Uylingsd, Harry B. M.; Rakicb, Pasko; Kostovića, Ivica. (2011). "Extraordinary neoteny of synaptic spines in the human *Gilchrist, S. (2013). "A Reassessment of the Traditional Teaching"*. Draft: Printed: 23/12/2013 9 First Issued: 12 November 2013. Last update: 20 December 2013.

The core gender identity, in the sense of an awareness of “Being who one is”, is one of the first global concepts to be formed and it provides a model which can be used to examine this transition between intuitive and cognitive thought. It has been noted that the acquisition of this concept occurs mainly between the ages of two and three years. However the foundations may be present from a much earlier date and it is often considered that pre-natal influences are involved^{30 31}.

It has already been indicated that early brain development is very time dependent and the widely differing rates of maturation which are found in the brain, including the prefrontal cortex, play a major role in the development of learning abilities during the first years. All babies enter the world with a still very primitive cerebral cortex and the timing of its development has a profound influence on the developmental processes involved³². A newborn baby’s brain has over 100 billion neurons, or brain cells. This number remains approximately constant throughout life however each neuron forms small branches which are called dendrites. These allow the neurons to communicate across the synapses, which are the connections between neurons. About 80 percent of the dendrites form after birth, with a large percentage created during the first three

prefrontal cortex”. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, August 9, 2011 vol. 108 no. 32 13281-13286. Blakemore SJ (2012). “Development of the social brain in adolescence”: Journal R Soc Med. Volume:105. Issue:3. Sebastian C, Burnett S, Blakemore SJ. (2008) “Development of the self-concept during adolescence”. Trends Cogn Sci. Volume:12. Issue:11.). All these issues are fully discussed in Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief” and: Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach”. See footer for access.

³⁰ The argument between the relationship between nature and nurture are discussed in the documents: Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief”, and Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach”. See footer for access. The differentiation of behaviour between boys and girls is present from birth. Therefore the pre-natal influences can establish a trajectory. However it is shown that these immediate post-birth behavioural differences are not expressed in gender terms, but in the form a tribal association of children with like minds. These are driven by the contagious and self reinforcing imitative processes which have the potential to influence the direction of the development processes that follow. The specifically directed learning capabilities in children before the age of two years further limit the external influences that are provided, or to provide checks on what is correct. Only later, once the awareness of self begins to be created will these be translated into gender terms. However the contagion of early development and the maximisation of individuality may equally set development off in a similar direction. Therefore it is concluded that while pre-natal influences can act to promote the development of gender dysphoria, their action is indirect, and their presence is not essential for the condition to occur. Autopsies on transsexuals have attempted to show differences in the brain structures of transsexual and non-transsexual people. It is suggested that these should not primarily be attributed to pre-natal influences, but to the consequences of brain development, brain plasticity and the synaptic pruning which takes place during the first three years after birth.

³¹ An argument against social learning theories is that no sufficient causal reasons for the development of gender and sexually variant conditions can often be found. Therefore the tendency has more recently been to identify the origins of these with genetic and/or pre natal influences. However with these self reinforcing processes the dynamics take over. The magnitude of any possible trigger may be minimal, or something may not be externally formed, and Girard has argued that any knowledge of a causal influence is often lost. In this analysis it is argued that the inherent variation associated with the development of individuality may be more than sufficient to trigger development to begin in a particular direction, and once that development has begun it can be difficult to stop.

³²For a more in-depth account see: Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief”, and Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach”. See footer for access.

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years of life. As the neurons mature more and more of the synapses are created. At birth, the number of synapses per neuron is 2,500, but by the age of two or three, it's about 15,000. This is the period when the synaptic density in the pre-frontal cortex peaks at a number which is as high as one and a half times to twice that of the adult value and as the child progresses this dies back. The patterns of synaptic production and pruning also correspond remarkably well to children's overall brain activity. It has been shown for example that those associated with visual and auditory processing reach their peak at around six to eight months; however those which are associated with the orchestration of thoughts do not achieve their peak value until around two to three years. It is the gradual and differentiated maturation of this complex part of the brain that explains much of the emotional and cognitive development patterns in the first few years of life.

Neural imaging techniques have provided new insights into brain development and the times when different areas of the brain spring into action can be easily identified from this work. Development of the cerebral cortex begins in the primary motor and sensory areas – these are the regions that receive the first input from the eyes, ears, nose, skin, and mouth. This then moves to the "higher-order," or association regions which control the more complex integration of perception, thoughts, memories, and feelings. The long time span arising from the delayed development of the pre-frontal cortex means that key features that make up an individual sense of personality have had time to develop, but without any overall co-ordination a personal sense of self identity cannot be created³³. It is argued that the step change in cognitive ability that comes near the age of two years, that the impact of quorum sensing mechanisms mark the time when this first occurs, and that the future sense of self identity must build on the foundations that have already been laid.

4:4 Second Stage: Transition and Change

In this analysis it is considered that the conflicts which are associated with gender identity must be seen as the symptom of the failure to build a coherent sense of self identity, rather than the cause. This also means that for everyone the development of their own gender identity proceeds in the same way. Transsexuals develop a gender allegiance which is contrary 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

³³Without any mental means of consciously separating the self from the other the distinction between interpersonal and intrapersonal concepts cannot be made. This period is one of integration to society where only components of what can later be used to separate the self from the other are formed. A corollary of this is that the same principles that are outlined in this analysis can also be used to study the formation of tribal identities among groups of people, and extended use of these principles for the analysis of such conflicts has been made. See for example: Kaptein, Roel, Morrow, Duncan. (1993). "On the Way of Freedom". Dublin: Columba Press. ISBN-10: 1856070778 ISBN-13: 978-1856070775
Zurawski, Nils. (2002) "Girard among the Paramilitaries of Ulster: Identity, History, and Violence" Anthropoetics - The Journal of Generative Anthropology Volume VIII, number 1 (Spring/Summer 2002) ISSN 1083-7264. McClelland, R (2005) "Victims of the Conflict in and About Northern Ireland- Truth and Justice", Ed: Gilchrist, I., Proceedings of a conference on "Healing Through Remembering: Dealing with the Past". Conference Date 12th March 2005. Accessed 2 may 2012 at <http://www.crestcons.org/society/Co50727a%20Conference%20Proceedings%2012%20Mar%2005.pdf>. Morrow, Duncan. (2005). "Violence and the Sacred in Northern Ireland", University of Ulster at Jordanstown: Accessed 2 May 2012 at http://www.uibk.ac.at/theol/cover/contagion/contagion2/contagion02_morrow.pdf.
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may be argued that the gender allegiance which is felt by transsexuals should be even stronger because it has had to be fought for all along the way^{34 35}. There is also a roughness in this process. It is argued that individual concepts are not lost within this coalescence but these remain hidden inside the matrix underneath^{36 37} and that this underlying graininess disturbs the coherence of selfhood that is being formed³⁸.

³⁴ Around 1966 developmental psychologists began to identify significant changes in how children between the ages of 2 and 7 years think about gender. From around 3 years of age, children seek out masculine or feminine toys and activities, and from this age they develop strong stereotypes about gender and masculine or feminine behaviour and occupations. This is believed to be because having highly structured notions of what boys and girls like and do helps them to make sense of the world around them. (See Banerjee "Gender Identity and the Development of Gender Roles" in a book edited by Ding and Littleton, "Children's Personal and Social Development", published by Blackwell in 2005). Maccoby (2002) "Gender and Group Process: A Developmental Perspective" http://facweb.northseattle.edu/avoorhies/Gender/Readings/Development/Gender%20and%20group%20process_A%20developmental%20perspective.pdf also describes gender differentiation processes in group activities and group play of children from about three years of age). These arguments are based on the presumption that social learning theories determine the direction of development. These and other studies show how strongly these differences are reinforced.

³⁵ The bipolar division into male and female is a strong element in society and those who advocate social learning theories may argue that simply bringing child up in a gender transcendent or neutral environment would result in the loss of this bipolarity. However it is shown in Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief" and: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". (See footer for access) that these self reinforcing processes and the consequences of the very specific learning capabilities in infancy lead children to identify themselves in terms of male and female tribes. This is led by behavioural differences between boys and girls which are present from birth, and this is where genetic influences may play a role. With the development of cognitive processing this tribal identity is turned into the core gender identity which becomes locked in place at the latest by three years, and from this time children very strongly reinforce the gender differences between them. Gender bipolarity therefore is not simply a matter of social learning and these precepts of polarity become embedded in society as well. The developing attitudes within society have led to an increasing fluidity in the social attitudes to gender and sexual variation, and that is reflected in the attitudes of gender and sexually variant people as well. Many more gender and sexually variant people are now refusing to identify themselves according to these binaries, and that should be welcomed by all.

³⁶ This analysis makes a distinction between identity and allegiance. Instead of building a gender identity which is either male or female, people create an identity which a composite of the early concepts that were developing. There is a different end point for every individual who resolves their conflict with the gender that they are assigned to, and this can account for the great variety of experience that is encountered. The rejection of the assigned gender identity drives the dynamics of the conflict, and it is the medium through which the discord is expressed. It is the need to make sense of this graininess which means that individuals and society create their own exclusive gender allegiance. For both sectors, this allegiance is exclusively male or female and it is one to which total loyalty is required. There is bipolarity in this process and the change from gender identity to gender allegiance can be compared to the finger which pulls the switch. Gender identity presses the switch but gender allegiance is determined by the way the switch becomes set. See: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access.

³⁷ It is important to note that the way in which people increasingly identify themselves may not be in accordance with these binaries. The conflict for transsexuals pits the desire to satisfy ones deepest sense of self identity against relationships with others that one wants to keep. The changes in society enable people to more easily reject the exclusive allegiances that are enforced.

³⁸ This can also be used to explain the differences and the wide range of experiences which are encountered, even if just one specific condition is examined. For example the relationship between transvestism and transsexuality can be explained by this analysis, as well as providing explanations for both conditions. For a consideration of how this applies to all transgendered people see: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief", and Gilchrist, S. (2013) and "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access.

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Around 1966 developmental psychologists began to identify significant changes in how children between the ages of 2 and 7 years think about gender. From around 3 years of age, children seek out masculine or feminine toys and activities, and from this age they develop strong stereotypes about gender and masculine or feminine behaviour and occupations. The psychologists believed this to be because having highly structured notions of what boys and girls like and also do helps them to make sense of the world around them³⁹. These arguments are based on the presumption that social learning theories determine the direction of development. These and other studies show how strongly these differences are reinforced.

4:5 Third Period: Organisation, Analysis and Continuity

It is argued that a consequence of synaptic pruning is to fix and secure the capability that has been created. Even though the period from about two years is marked by a dramatic increase in the activity of the prefrontal cortex, this may also result in the reduction of the synaptic density from the earlier peak values since the ability to self organise through the creation of the more global concepts means that the redundant neural pathways are no longer required. This leads to a counter intuitive prediction that the advances in the development of self identity are also marked by a reduction in the synaptic density, rather than its growth. The requirement to reduce the brain's energy consumption must also be relevant, and it appears that the need for synaptic pruning is a consequence of both processes. From the age of three years onwards the peak value of the critical period during which brain plasticity is most able to make major physical alterations to the pre-frontal cortex has already passed, and all of the present and past theories show that the concept of core gender identity which has been created by these processes has become fixed, and it is unchangeable at the latest by this age of three years. This irreversibility has already been found with the development of the auditory and the visual cortex, where all of the principal abilities which are needed for hearing and seeing have already been determined by an age of somewhere between 6 and 8 months. After this critical period the ability to make any new advances becomes much more restricted, and in the case of the cognitive development process which are associated with the pre-frontal cortex it is argued that a similar outcome may also be observed. This is borne out by the transgender experience, where it is found that all later attempts to fight, to change or to suppress the core sense of identity do not succeed, and it is the attrition that is caused by the constancy and the insistence of its demands which leads to collapse. For those people are diagnosed as transsexual it is usually accepted that the need to undergo gender reassignment becomes inevitable, so the psychiatric help and support which is now given ensures that these people can make the transition to the gender identity which they are convinced they have always belonged to as smoothly as possible.

³⁹ See Banerjee "Gender Identity and the Development of Gender Roles" in a book edited by Ding and Littleton, "Children's Personal and Social Development", published by Blackwell in 2005).

Maccoby (2002) "Gender and Group Process: A Developmental Perspective"

http://facweb.northseattle.edu/avoorhies/Gender/Readings/Development/Gender%20and%20group%20process_A%20developmental%20perspective.pdf, also describes gender differentiation processes in group activities and group play of children from about three years of age.

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It also follows from these arguments that it is not just the core gender identity that becomes fixed in place by this stage, but other core elements of the personality and identity and as well. The timing of these processes is critical. If the initial acquisition phase is too strong or if it lasts too long, the ability to develop a coherent self identity becomes damaged or destroyed. If the later analysis period dominates too early or if it becomes too great⁴⁰, people increasingly become the products of their surrounding environment and the ability to create the richness and uniqueness of every person's identity decreases.

The traditional approaches to sexual and gender variation always tries to determine a cause for these conditions. However in an approach which is attuned to maximise the individuality and potential of each person, the natural variations in the processes may alone account for the situations where gender and sexually variant identities are formed. Indeed it can be argued that within a normal distribution pattern this type of situation should be expected to occur. It has also been shown that the very specific learning capabilities which are developed during early infancy limit the scope of the inputs that can be absorbed. This is examined in detail elsewhere⁴¹. It is shown that, while genetic influences may establish a preferred direction, and although external causes may sometimes be found, these are not essential. Even though the internal variation may set development of in a particular direction, it is the dynamics of the self reinforcing drive which take over the development process. Any awareness of the cause may be lost, or it may not have any obvious relevance to the direction that development takes⁴².

Even though it has been shown in this analysis that the development of self identity is driven at first by a contagious and self reinforcing process, it is also argued that if the maximum potential of every person is to be obtained, a secure self identity is also required, and this demands a stable base. The restrictions which are created by the synaptic pruning process can create that base, and the delayed development of the pre-frontal cortex also ensures that it becomes as comprehensive and as secure as is possible. The power and control which must be exercised by the feedback forces of cognition, judgement and analysis have to be more than sufficient to countermand the still present contagion and the self reinforcing imitative drive. The overpowering constancy and firmness which is also required for their success demands that when any two people encounter each other, even when there is a gap of many years, each may recognise in the other that it is still the same person who they had previously met, and that the same personality is encountered. It can further be argued that the development process for transsexuals follows the normal pattern, but the problem which they encounter is that they have developed a fixed, secure and unchangeable gender identity which society does not expect.

4:6 Breadth and Scope

⁴⁰ Acquisition here refers to the gathering of information through the unchecked, feedforward and self reinforcing forces of possessive imitation. Analysis refers to the later feedback and more analytic processes of cognitive thought.

⁴¹ Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief" and: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access

⁴² Girard

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This investigation has demonstrated that these are processes which are tuned to maximise the degrees of potential and individuality which can be developed in each person and it indicates how the variations in the processes can lead to the situations where both the gender and sexually variant identities are formed. The results from the analysis also confirm that these conditions are identity driven, which means that as extensive a range of moral attitudes and behaviour must be encountered in the gender and sexually variant communities as are found in society at large. However the analysis goes further than this, because it demonstrates how this understanding of gender dysphoria and of its dynamics can be applied in other circumstances. It is shown that similar dynamics are encountered in conditions which involve personality disorders, such as those associated with depression, addiction etc. It is also capable of giving a greater insight into further areas such as the autistic spectrum disorders. Even though this analysis focuses on gender and sexual variation its results have a much broader scope.

It is also of note that the analysis predicts that all of the key features that go to define the individuality of each person are formed before an effective cognitive sense of self identity is created, and this has significant consequences for various other aspects of development as well as for the nature versus nurture debate⁴³.

5:0 Conflict Types

A consequence of the analysis is that it is necessary to make distinctions between identity and goal driven conflicts. The threshold between these two types of conflict begins to become evident between two and three years of age. The identity driven conflicts are those which have roots which have already developed before that time. These may be characterised by the obsessive and compulsive pursuit of a particular goal, but after that goal has been accomplished, the overwhelming intensity of the preceding drive to achieve it frequently contrasts powerfully with the modesty of the outcomes that are expressed. These may also have little to do with the goal which is sought⁴⁴. Therefore it is not the perceived goal which is the real objective. It is the coherence of selfhood that is sought.

This does not mean that the perceived goal is not important. The goal is extremely important for achieving that goal resolves the conflict at source. The true objective is the one that enables people to become true to themselves, and these identity driven conflicts are characterised by the rejection of the enforced attribute or identity.

In goal driven conflicts the strength of the desires and the obsession with the results often possess a matching intensity. The same fundamental issues of self identity are not encountered. The roots of these goal driven types of conflicts are likely to have

⁴³This is discussed more fully in Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief" and: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access

⁴⁴In the case of transsexuality it is often found that the overwhelming drive is to seek gender reassignment, with an obsession on the achievement of genital and other surgery to as complete the process as far as it is possible to do so. Once that has been achieved the focus on gender often disappears and such people often merge invisibly into society, living very ordinary lives.

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formed after the threshold has been passed, and they may also be characterised by the search for a reward.

In Freudian psychodynamics these differences are characterised by deviation and perversion. Freud saw a deviation to be a condition where the atypical development occurs from the outset, but in a perversion the normal course of development has been interrupted. This investigation can make a corresponding distinction, however it is argued that the difference between the two types of conflict is instead defined by the sudden change in the cognitive ability which takes place between the ages of two and three years. The change is also marked by the presence or the absence of an effective cognitive continuum. The correct identification of the type of conflict is also very important since almost the opposite management methods are required.

In an identity driven type of conflict a threshold may be crossed where all evidence of the desire for the perceived goal may disappear, but that can only succeed if a state of mind is created which can be sufficiently motivated to be able to overwhelm the conflicts of self-identity. Creating an inclusive transcendence which reaches across the discord may lead to the apparent disappearance of the goal, and these states of mind can sometimes be produced by euphoria of religious belief. This may hide the conflict from the conscious mind but does not remove the causes of the conflict itself. This elation has enabled some religious groups to claim that a “Cure” can be found, however that is rarely permanent, and after it disappears continued attempts to fight or to suppress these underlying demands lead to a self-reinforcing outcome, which continually increases the intensity of the conflict itself. A cycle is thus created where each repeated failure makes the next failure worse; and the scapegoat mechanism which is described by Girard, does not work⁴⁵. If this cycle is permitted to progress it can often result in a mental breakdown or in complete collapse. A strong bipolarity is encountered. The best management methods seek inversion, absolute acceptance and the full acknowledgement of the richness which these experiences could bring. Some of these methods are described in a paper: Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality”. (See footer for access)⁴⁶. Two of the key requirements for effective management are first, those of understanding the primary nature of the conflict and second, concentrating on finding correct ways to manage the dynamics rather than looking for a cause. The

⁴⁵Although the imitative processes described by Girard are innate and present from birth, the scapegoat mechanism which is described by Girard can only work if there is some element of a theory of mind already present. That capability is absent in these early stages although it becomes very relevant later on. In later life the scapegoat becomes the presence of the unwanted genitalia and the search for genital correction surgery often becomes an obsession, whereas the most important need is to ensure that a smooth and complete transition is made. Although a scapegoat is sought it still drives people in one direction and no reconciliation occurs. This is why it is argued that the continued failure of the scapegoat mechanism together with the deep seated roots of the conflict leads to the runaway drive. See Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach”. Also Gilchrist, S. (2013). “Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief”. See footer for access.

⁴⁶Girard’s own explanation of homosexuality spectacularly fails to satisfy this analysis (Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World (1978; English translation, 1987); Book III, Chapter 3, “Mimesis and Sexuality” (Pages 337 – 338)). It also illustrates why some caution is needed when using Girard’s work. This is because, like others he considered it a goal driven activity with a sexual pursuit. Gilchrist, S. (2013). “A Reassessment of the Traditional Teaching”. Draft: Printed: 23/12/2013 16
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self-reinforcing nature of the compulsive drive means that the awareness, or indeed the relevance of any cause may be lost⁴⁷.

Sadly that recognition often does not happen. Attempts to provide well intentioned support, or to treat gender and sexual variation without recognising the deep seated nature of the demands, or with the conviction that this is a goal driven conflict, or perhaps most often and most seriously, by using the presumptions that are enforced by the doctrines of the Church can have a very damaging counterproductive effect.

6:0 Gender and Sex

The gender variant conditions have been given more attention in this analysis firstly because of experience and second because the markers which define the conflicts can be more easily identified. However the results can be applied equally to both conditions. The analysis considers the development of the gender and sexual variant conditions to be different outcomes of the common processes which are involved in identity creation and in the terms of the nature of their formation that is quite correct. Nevertheless it is very important to define the differences since these are often not understood - even and perhaps indeed most notably, among sexually variant people themselves.

The conclusion that the core foundations which define the individuality of any person are fixed before a cognitive sense of self identity is fully created is important. This is because gender and sexuality are found to go their different ways. That division is best indicated by considering the transgender experiences. Many transsexuals marry in their imposed gender role for all of the right reasons and the love that they possess. However as age increases the drive gets stronger, and if no way is found to manage these dynamics the outcome is frequently a total, sudden and catastrophic collapse. This can create devastating results; and where gender and sexuality are in conflict, it is usually the sexuality which is suppressed. There is the destruction of the relationships and commitments through the failures to cope, even when love stays as strong as ever. There is also the blame of letting oneself down, the hurt to other people which has been caused by this experience and the guilt for the inability to conform to the edicts of others and to one's own expectations.

As extended a range of sexualities are found within the transgender communities as there are in society at large, and this independence also has broader consequences. The principles of Freudian psychodynamics demand that some form of continuum should also exist across these sex/gender boundaries, because the continuity which is associated with the possession of a Theory of Mind is required for these to work.

⁴⁷ Because of the unrestrained self-reinforcing nature of these dynamics, chaos theory might be considered to apply. Like the apocryphal story of the butterfly which flaps its wings in Patagonia and causes a hurricane in Britain, the interaction between cause and effect is likewise lost. Causes might include the natural variations in development which arise from a process which is tuned to create the maximum individuality in each person. An alternative may be genetic influences which create a tribal identity, or some other factor affecting the development process. Conscious awareness or external evidence may not exist. The relationships between nature and nurture and the sources of any cause are more fully discussed elsewhere in this account.

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When it is known that this continuum does not exist, attention can be focussed more directly on the areas where disturbance occurs.

6:1 Dynamics and Violence

There are a number of ways of examining the dynamics of these conditions. During the first two years of life the intense forces of contagion and possessive imitation enable the maximum accumulation of the specific capabilities that are appropriate for this early stage of development. From the age of about two years it has been seen that the thought processes begin to move from disorganised response towards analysis and cognitive thought and the ideas about the separation of the self from the other begin to be formed. For the later control processes to succeed the strength of their controlling forces must be more than sufficient to counteract the extremity of the earlier contagious drives. Girard has emphasised the great magnitude of such inner conflicts. Nevertheless he also notes that a conscious awareness of them often does not exist. This investigation suggests that one reason why these may be more easily hidden from the conscious mind arises because they are concerned with the rejection of identity instead of the pursuit of a goal. Some evidence for that comes from the way in which some religious groups use euphoria to claim that a "Cure" can be found. When there is no discord of self identity to drive these conflicts they will not take place.

Nevertheless it is the harsh violence of these battles which becomes evident when conflict is encountered. That can be observed across all gender and sexually variant people who endeavour to deny or suppress the identity they possess. This includes transvestites, transsexuals, gay, lesbian and bisexual people, where the modesty of the outcome that success delivers, which is measured in terms of people being able to be themselves, is far less than the earlier suffering caused by the unachieved drives. The attempted suicide rates are very high. Gays and lesbians are between two and six times more likely to attempt suicide than are all heterosexuals⁴⁸. For transsexuals the equivalent figure is 8 to 10 times higher⁴⁹. This is the magnitude of

⁴⁸Attempted suicide among homosexuals: Lesbians are two times more likely to attempt suicide than straight women. Attempts by gay and lesbian youth account for up to 30% of all completed suicides. Gay teens are 3 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. Gay youth are 4 times more likely to make a suicide attempt requiring medical attention. Gay men are six times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. <http://www.fiercegoodbye.com/?S=2>

⁴⁹Attempted suicide among transsexuals: 41 percent of transgender people in the United States have attempted to commit suicide, according to a new survey. About 19 percent of transgender people report being refused medical care because of their gender-nonconforming status, and 2 percent have been violently assaulted in a doctor's office. These statistics come from the findings from a survey of more than 7,000 transgender people conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, released in the October 2010. Journal of Homosexuality. Other surveys and research papers provided similarly high statistics. A figure of 32% is cited by Clements-Nolle, Kristen. Marx, Rani, Katz, Mitchell (2006): "Attempted Suicide Among Transgender Persons". Journal of Homosexuality Volume 51, Issue 3, 2006. Figures of 35% are reported in the UK. See: Reed, Bernard. Rhodes, Stephenne, Schofield, Pieta, Wylie, Kevan. (2009) "Gender Variance in the UK: Prevalence, Growth and Geographic Distribution." GIRES

<http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/Medpro-Assets/GenderVarianceUK-report.pdf> . This compares with about 5% for the general population. See: <http://www.samaritans.org/support-us/why-support-samaritans/facts-and-figures-about-suicide>

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the conundrum that is found. For those people who do not have to face this situation, the trauma and the tension that these conflicts create can be difficult to understand.

6:2 Compulsion and Control

Although it employs gender dysphoria as its model, the focus of this analysis is on how identity is created, and these results can be applied across the whole spectrum of circumstances where identity formation takes place. These conflicts show bipolar characteristics because they can manifest themselves with extreme intensity on the one hand, and yet they may seem to disappear on the other. It has been shown that the attempts to fight these conflicts do not succeed and the techniques akin to those used for alcoholism and depression should be employed.

However the differences are also very important. Alcoholism for example gives rise to a compulsion of *mortido* which leads people towards oblivion and death, whereas the compulsions associated with gender dysphoria and sexual orientation are those of libido which lead towards peace and fulfilment of life⁵⁰. The compulsions of libido are much more difficult to manage because the rewards for continuing to live in the original role must be seen to outweigh those that transition can bring. This creates a much higher demand. The degree of compensation which is required in the search for hope of fulfilment within the original role is ever increasing and it finally becomes unsustainable. Collapse usually occurs from the attrition and exhaustion caused by a continual struggle and the failure of the attempts to meet these demands.

6:3 Uniqueness or Disorder

It will have become evident from this account that many of the characteristics of the conflicts which are faced by transgender, and by gender and sexually variant people, have much in common with those that are associated with the personality disorders. However that is an undeserved assumption for what goes to create the disorder on the one hand, also goes to create the uniqueness and individuality of every person on the other; and it is demonstrated that the processes of identity development are tuned to ensure that the maximum potential of every person is obtained.

The hidden roles of compulsion are important in this regard, for those which lead to a desired or an expected outcome would never be recognised as compulsions unless that outcome is denied. The distinctions between the compulsions of libido and of *mortido* is also important in this respect because the border between them marks the difference between the descending into disorder or in the rising to individuality and ultimately to the fulfilment of life. Nevertheless the development of any personal self identity and personality is a multi faceted activity, and the contagious processes of early development, together with the delayed development of the pre-frontal cortex permits many variations to take place. From a statistical point of view alone it would therefore be expected that a proportion of people who have these gender or sexually variant identities would be created without the requirement for any external cause, even though in at least some of the people, causes which arise from external inputs may also be found.

⁵⁰Libido and *mortido* are here defined in the Jungian sense of "Life Force" and "Death Force" rather than by the specific psychosexual definitions which Freud applied.

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6:4 Management and Change

The results of this examination make it clear that complete support should be given to those who have decided that full gender reassignment including genital surgery is correct. Making the body conform as completely as possible to the gender allegiance which is possessed resolves these conflicts at source. Nevertheless there is a strong mismatch between the overwhelming drives of the conflict and the outcome that is found. Simply changing in the frame of reference in which life is lived may be all that is required. However for some the conflict has become so strong that reassignment is not enough - perfection is sought and satisfaction is never completely achieved.

The conflict for transsexuals pits the compulsions to satisfy one's deepest senses of self identity against the relationships with other people which one desperately wants to keep⁵¹. For many people this is not a journey which is willingly taken. Therefore the recurring themes in this analysis are about the capacity to embrace change and how to manage it in an orderly way. The aim of this is to maintain the ability to follow the correct course by calming the dynamics of the conflict instead of destroying that possibility though the consequences of collapse from the runaway drive. Not only are transsexuals required to find effective ways to manage their own inner conflicts, the understanding of other people is demanded if that approach is to succeed. For those transsexuals who look for gender reassignment the situation can become intolerable when the prejudice or the ignorance of others denies them that route.

That lack of awareness can readily be understood. For most people the congruence between their body shape and their gender allegiance is so powerful that it may be difficult to understand why any type of conflict could exist, let alone the extremity with which it can be expressed. The bipolar nature of these conflicts also means that it is possible for transsexuals to hide themselves from the awareness of their situation by attempting to compensate for it through their determination to find fulfilment of life in other areas, before the attrition of the unseen forces leads them to a collapse. After that has occurred their often obsessive demands to seek gender reassignment may be attributed by other people to the desire for that goal, instead of a rejection of what has been enforced.

People engage in same-sex activities for many reasons and the distinctions between the expression of relationships which are given in love from those that are indulged in solely for the gratifications of sex are not only often missed, they are totally denied by the theology of the Church. For centuries the Church has made homosexuality the scapegoat for lust and for illicit, immoral and inappropriate sex. In many parts of the world this prejudice is increasing rather than diminishing. This can be seen in the anti-homosexual legislation that has recently passed in Russia, and in many African states. Homosexuality is taboo in many African countries and it is illegal in 37. On the 20th December 2013 Uganda passed legislation which imposed life sentences on those who engaged in the offence of "Aggravated homosexuality" and it extended the existing penalty of life imprisonment for same-sex intercourse to all other same-

⁵¹It is important to note that while this section of the account deals specifically with transsexual experience, it also can explain all transgender and gender and sexually variant experiences more generally.

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sex behaviour, including the mere touching of another person with the intent to have homosexual relations.⁵² There is nothing whatever in this analysis which condones the misuse of sexual behaviour for lust and for illicit, immoral and inappropriate sex, however there is a great deal within it which condemns the Christian church for the adoption of a doctrine which identifies all forms of gender and sexual behaviour as being in pursuit of these types of acts.

In Section 8 of this account and elsewhere⁵³ it is indicated that these doctrines have been developed because of the need for the Christian Church to obtain respectability within Greco/Roman society. It is also demonstrated that these are contrary to the teaching of Jesus and that they do not represent the views which were held by the Gospel Church. Therefore a major task which must now be undertaken is the one of removing the veil of sexual assumptions that have dominated, not only the theology of the Christian Church but also much twentieth century psychology and psychiatry. That demands complete recognition of the duality in these sexual and gender variant conditions and the application of the correct management and care criteria which are needed for the different types of conflict that are found.

These criteria have already been outlined in this account; it is shown that attempting to fight the identity driven conflicts does not succeed, and that the best management methods require inversion, absolute acceptance and the full acknowledgement of the richness which all these experiences could bring⁵⁴. This aims to create an inclusive sense of identity which creates a firm base, and which transcends the discord that is found, so that decisions for the future can calmly be made. However compulsions of libido are much more difficult to manage; for the rewards of continuing to live in the original role must be seen to outweigh those which transition can bring. This dictates that to calm the dynamics it is essential to truly believe in any truce⁵⁵ that is kept, and to be prepared to make any changes which this requires. Transcendence only allows people to follow the correct path, and this may lead towards gender reassignment or it may not. Attempting to enforce any opposing future direction

⁵²Guardian Newspaper article 20 December 2013: Ugandan MPs rush through draconian laws against homosexuality. "Same-sex couples face life behind bars for touching amid jail threat for not reporting gay people to authorities. Gay rights activists have reacted angrily to the Ugandan parliament's abrupt decision to pass anti-homosexuality laws that would condemn same-sex couples to life in jail for mere touching, urging president Yoweri Museveni to veto them. The bill, rushed through by MPs on Friday, also bans the promotion of homosexuality and makes it a crime punishable by prison not to report gay people to the authorities or to conduct a marriage ceremony for same-sex couples. The law was first introduced in 2009, when it advocated the death penalty, but after a worldwide outcry, that was removed from the final version. "This is victory for Uganda," David Bahati, the MP who proposed the bill, was quoted as saying in media reports. "I am glad the parliament has voted against evil. Because we are a God-fearing nation, we value life in a holistic way. It is because of those values that members of parliament passed this bill regardless of what the outside world thinks." Bishop Christopher Senyonjo, who was excommunicated from the Church of Uganda for his opposition to homophobia, said: "I condemn it (the bill) in very strong terms because it shows there's a lot of misinformation, misunderstanding, I could say ignorance about homosexuality. I still hope that with education people will understand. It takes time, but I believe things will change." See: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/20/uganda-mps-laws-homosexuality>

⁵³Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Reform and the Christian Church" gives an overview of the more extended analysis that is separately described in Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation".

⁵⁴ Some of these methods are described in the paper: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality". (See footer for access).

⁵⁵ Truce is used here rather than balance

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destroys this balance, and the requirement for change increases with age, as commitments alter and the ideals for the future give way to the realities of the past. This means that maintaining the freedom to change remains essential for its continued success, and this requires that the commitment to keep to any particular course must always be made each day at a time.

Although this account concentrates on homosexuality and on transsexuality, a great deal of variation is found. It is shown that these same principles apply to all forms of identity driven gender and sexual variant behaviour, and this includes transvestites and people who are bisexual as well. The bipolar nature of the conflicts means that people may be able to move from one category to another, although the deep seated roots of the discord still remain. It has been shown that the transformation of the deep seated sense of the gender or sexual identity into a polarised male or female gender or sexual allegiance is driven by the need to make sense of the underlying conflicts which are encountered, and this approach attempts to make sure that as far as is possible the consequences of that polarisation are removed. There is therefore a different end point for every individual and the aim of calming the dynamics is to ensure that the correct end point is reached. This also depends on any truce which can balance the compulsions to satisfy one's deepest sense of self identity against the relationships with others that one desperately wants to keep, either leads to, or can be found. Gaining the freedom to express one's true sense of sexual orientation is physically much easier than the equivalent is for transgendered people. The format of the "Life test"⁵⁶ that is imposed by certain Gender Identity Clinics may also move some transsexuals more towards gender reassignment by changing any equilibrium between the relationships which selfhood demands and the relationships with others that are sought. This also means that transsexuals and Gender Identity Clinics could be among two of the worst groups for ensuring that the gender binaries are strongly enforced. To keep the willingness, together with the ability to change if ever it becomes needed is probably the best way of ensuring it is never required.

7:0 Current Limitations

Despite the great advances in research which have been made during the last sixty years, in social opinion and indeed in much of psychiatry, the breakthrough into the everyday practices of psychology and psychiatry has still not been made. Many of the practitioners in the psychiatric disciplines, authors of books and other people still continue to employ psychodynamic approaches, social learning theories, cognitive behavioural methods and the various other techniques which are derived ultimately from the presumptions about early childhood development which Freud and Piaget first made during the progress of their work. There is a compelling need for change but change has been impeded for two principal reasons. One of these comes from the limitations of the psychodynamic and social learning theories which have been used. Freud considered that the first two years were a period of seething, disordered and conflicting emotions where limited constructive development occurred. Social

⁵⁶ The "Life Test" demands that transsexuals live completely in the role they wish to transition to for an extended period of usually one or two years before gender reassignment surgery is considered. *Gilchrist, S. (2013). "A Reassessment of the Traditional Teaching". Draft: Printed: 23/12/2013 22 First Issued: 12 November 2013. Last update: 20 December 2013.*
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learning theories harbour the same result⁵⁷. That is perhaps not surprising because, without an active cognitive continuum, social learning theories and Freud's theory of psychosexual dynamics will not work⁵⁸ and the consequent understanding that little development happens during these first two years of life diminishes its importance⁵⁹. That then leads to the presumption that the only type of dynamics to be considered are those which lead to the goal driven conflicts, and these are considered to apply to the whole of life. Many books and articles on childhood learning for example are still published where this philosophy is applied despite the differences in the learning processes that are involved⁶⁰. That perception is further reinforced by the doctrines

⁵⁷ Less emphasis is placed on social learning theories in this account since they do not provide the compelling force that is needed, they do not fully explain how individuality is created and they rely too much on the relationship between cause and effect.

⁵⁸ Freud understood that he needed a strong driving force to propel his psychodynamic ideas and he identified this with the motives for sex. However Freud was also aware of its limitations. In his attitude to what he considered to be personality deviation, (of which homosexuality is one), he argued for a process of inversion instead. Had Freud been able to develop his analysis further he might have come closer to Girard's views. However that capability was removed by the unavailability of any better argument at the time, the perceptions of his colleagues, of society, and also the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church

⁵⁹ An analogy used by the author to describe the development of self-identity compares the acorn with the cup which supports it. The cup provides the cradle which enables the acorn to grow. There is no element of self within the cradle and during early development the distinction between intra-personal and inter-personal relationships cannot be made. This enables the imitative processes that are involved in early development to cross all personal borders, so that the same dynamics can be seen not only in the formation of personal identity, but also in circumstances where tribal identities held by groups of people are being formed. The cradle is crucially important for the foundation which it provides. An advantage of Girard's work is that it provides mechanisms which not only model both of these conditions in infancy, but it also identifies the later methods through which these conflicts can be managed throughout adult life. The work of Gallesse and others further demonstrate that both resonance and empathy are present from the outset. However, instead of each baby behaving as an individual, it is the resonance with the other and the empathy of the whole group that is found. The evidence suggests that it is during the step change which is shown to take place at about two years of age when the functional distinction between the self and the other starts to take effect. A significant part of the work which forms the background to this analysis has come through the application of these principles to tribal conflict situations, but that is beyond the scope of this article and further information can be found in Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief" and: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access. Nevertheless it is worth noting that the strength and intensity of tribal conflicts, the difficulties in resolving them, and the management methods that have to be used in handling them need to be informed by the results of this approach. Social learning and Freudian psychodynamics fail because they do not fully recognise the importance of the cradle and the function it fulfils. The self-listening criteria which have been developed in Freudian psychology might enable people hear some thoughts from the cradle, but it is argued in this analysis that the presumption that these must be sexually driven, or that they are the result of repression is incorrect.

⁶⁰ The overpowering drive to acquire identity through the pursuit of possessive imitation in infancy has been well demonstrated by Girard, Dawkins and others but, without the monitoring by the higher level functions of the prefrontal cortex being available in the early years, there is limited control on the direction that this development may take. This is good for individuality but it gives potential for errors to occur. During their first year babies respond very well to direct stimulation, however observational learning seems to have little effect. Neural pathways cannot be mapped to a centre which has not yet been formed and without access to these higher functions the nature of learning is also specific. Very effective learning takes place in these other areas, but it also means that those expectations of rearing which adults seek to communicate to babies will have little impact on their lives before these functions are developed. See: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief" and: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". See footer for access.

of the Christian Church which decree that all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour are lifestyle choices which are in pursuit of lust, illicit or inappropriate sex.

The Freudian view that little happens during these early years has since been blown apart by a very great deal of later research, but the importance of the need to bring the results of current research into everyday practice has still not been completely understood. This failure is still encountered in current research studies, and this has dominated the traditional understanding of the moral values which are found inside the first century Greek and Roman societies. It has also condemned all of the Greek and Roman religions and cults to be perceived as hotbeds of lewd and improper sex.

7:1 Needs and Demands

Far from diminishing its importance, this analysis demonstrates that these first two years of life are absolutely crucial the development of self-identity. There is also an urgent need to recognise the research work which identifies effective mechanisms that can explain the transition from those self reinforcing imitative processes which dominate the personal development in infancy to those more complex management processes which control thought, identity and ideas throughout adult life. Some work on this has been carried out by Garrels⁶¹ and Gallese⁶². This examines the linking of the Girardian dynamics into those imitative processes in infancy which have been revealed by the neurological research. Apart from this work and the investigations of Girard, few other investigations in these areas have been undertaken. This analysis addresses both these issues, and a more complete account is provided elsewhere⁶³. Two case studies have been employed. One is that of gender dysphoria. The other study applies the results of this analysis to an examination of the history and the development of attitudes to sex and gender within the Christian Church.

The conclusions that are reached by these studies demand a full re-evaluation, not only of early Christian and Church history, but also the history of the Greek, Roman and Jewish traditions which provide the framework for the early developments within the Church. When that is done it becomes clear that the presumptions of the Church doctrines which decree that all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour are lifestyle choices which are also in pursuit of lust and illicit or inappropriate sex, must be replaced by the conclusions of this analysis which state that the sexual and gender variant conditions are identity driven, and that as extensive a range of moral attitudes, goals, desires and perceptions must be found amongst these groups as there are in society at large.

The cultural clashes which came from the differences in attitudes to sexual practice between a dominant Greco/Roman and a subject Jewish society are also examined, It is demonstrated that the Christian condemnations of all sexual and gender variant

⁶¹Garrels, S.R. (2006) "Imitation, Mirror Neurons, and Mimetic Desire: Convergence Between The Mimetic Theory of Rene Girard and Empirical Research on Imitation Contagion": *Journal of Violence, mimesis and Culture* Vol 12-13, 2006 pp 47-86 ISSN 1075-720.

⁶² Gallese, Vittorio. (2009). " The Two Sides of Mimesis Girard's Mimetic Theory, Embodied Simulation and Social Identification" *Journal of Consciousness studies*, 16, No 4, 2009 Gallese

⁶³ Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach". Also: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Self Identity, Gender, Sexuality and Religious Belief". See footer for access.

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behaviour were driven by the demand of the Church to obtain respectability in Greco/Roman society and this also required it to distance itself as far as possible from the Goddess cults. Although rampant sexual misbehaviour was correctly and strongly condemned, the main driving forces were for missionary advantage and status. What is now seen to be the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church on homosexuality and on sexual and gender variance are built on the false foundations of the demand to obtain respectability in Greco/Roman society; they do not represent the gender transcendence and the gender equality in the teachings of Jesus. Thus it is essential to return to the original message of Jesus and the Gospel Church.

8:0 Church Doctrines

8:1 Equality and Influence

The Christian condemnations of sexual malpractice in the surrounding first century societies were uncompromising and extreme. Nothing in this investigation condones sexual misuse, however major cultural clashes were found⁶⁴. Examining first century societies using methods that take these cultural clashes fully into account gives very different perspectives on the roles which were played by many of the institutions and perhaps most notably the behaviour of the Goddess cults⁶⁵. Like the Goddess cults, early Christianity did not simply challenge gender inequality through the importance and the esteem that it gave to women. It also challenged the moral precepts and the perceptions upon which that patriarchal society was based⁶⁶ ⁶⁷. However, unlike the reasons and objectives of the Christian condemnations of the Goddess cults, which exclusively concentrated upon lust and improper sex, the principal concerns were about the political and the social pressures which both Christianity and the Goddess cults presented to the gendered security of the male dominated Greco/Roman society. If Christianity was to maximise its impact on this society it had to find some

⁶⁴There were major cultural clashes between the Judean and the Greco/Roman cultures which were characteristic of the different attitudes to sexual practice in a dominant society and those in a subjugated one. Within the dominant Greco/Roman societies sexual morality was determined through responsibility and authority. This meant that any Greek or Roman male citizen could engage with an unattached woman or with a man of lesser status without penalty for the purposes of sexual gratification, and this included the penetrative acts. Same-sex rape was also used as a weapon to humiliate a beaten enemy. Maintaining the social status had an absolute priority and in any same-sex relationships between two male citizens who were of equal status only the penetrated or the submissive partner was condemned. In a victimised and subjugated society the reverse situation is encountered. The horror of same-sex rape being inflicted upon the Israelites is evident in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and this resonates through all of the Jewish tradition.

⁶⁵Contrary to the Christian condemnations, Cybele's myths and doctrines embraced both sex and spirituality, they gave earlier cautions against lust and the other sins of excess, and they also demonstrated that sex and gender were less important to the soul than love. Those included nurture, care, protection and responsible sex.

⁶⁶It is shown that a major driving force behind the gender disruptive behaviour of the Goddess cults was defined by the pursuit of power for female protection, concerns and rights. The Christian Church instead makes the presumption that this disruptive behaviour was entirely in pursuit of illicit sex.

⁶⁷ By the first century women had become an increasingly powerful influence on society and at this time the social status of women had developed to a point where the breakthrough was needed, however the existence of gender defined Gods and Goddesses in a polytheistic society created divinely ordained boundaries that could not be crossed. See: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church". See the footer for access

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ways of integrating itself into it, and that meant neutralising all these concerns. This analysis shows how and why Christianity later came to implement the same gender complementarity as that which belonged to the surrounding Greco/Roman society, having at first rejected it, and it demonstrates how the original teaching of Jesus had established an attitude to gender equality and to sexual and gender variance which would be acceptable in the present day⁶⁸.

This early Christian teaching had demanded a revolution in social attitudes, but the message of Jesus which is presented in the Gospels also required the Church to work within society in order to change it, rather than to destroy it. This presented the Church with a difficult choice; and it attempted to compromise the original Gospel doctrines of gender transcendence in order to gain the respectability which would enable it to convey the remainder of the Gospel message into the wider world⁶⁹. By this adjustment and endorsement of the social structures of Greco/Roman society, and with its adoption of the dogmas of gender complementarity that were practiced by the surrounding Greek, Roman and Jewish societies, it is shown that the ability of the Christian Church to bring the Gospel messages to all people in the matters of gender equality and sexual and gender variance was destroyed⁷⁰.

That transformation leads to the simple and direct conclusion which states that what today are considered to be the traditional doctrine of the Christian Church on sexual and gender variance are built on a false foundation. They were driven by the need to gain respectability in Greco/Roman society and they do not come from the teaching of Jesus himself. However an even greater reversal was required, because in order to obtain respectability in this society, Christianity quickly had to separate itself from the still continuing social and gender disrupting behaviour of the Goddess cults. This meant that instead of just adopting the social structures and gender complementarity which were a cornerstone of the gender unequal Greco/Roman society, Christianity

⁶⁸ This paper is one of three companion papers. The document: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Reform and the Christian Church" gives an overview of a more extended analysis that is separately described in Gilchrist, S. (2013). "An Unfinished Reformation". The issues of gender complementarity are examined in the paper: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church". Other papers are also available; please see the footer for access to these documents

⁶⁹ For the description of how this took place see the companion papers Gilchrist, S. (2013). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church", and in the companion paper: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Reform and the Christian Church". See the footer for access.

⁷⁰ It would appear that the initial aim of the Church was to accept that gender complementarity had to be endorsed for relationships with outside society, but within the Church and the Christian Community, complete gender transcendence was still to be maintained. A parallel to this is found in the letter to Philemon, where the author deals with the issue of the runaway slave who is about to go back to his master after they have both been converted to Christianity. The letter asks for the slave to be accepted by his master on Christian terms. However, instead of asking for the emancipation and the release of the slave, the author supports the social conventions on slavery in society. The slave remains a slave, who is subject to his master, but now within the Christian community the slave and master are to be treated completely as equals and brothers, and this is because all are one in Christ. Equivalent master and servant relationships are found between men and women within a gender complementary society. However the problem with the attitude to gender complementarity adopted by Peter and Paul is that it demanded the submission of women to men, not just in relation to outside society, but also within the Church. By this action the concept that the Church could be a true island of gender transcendence and equality within a gender unequal society was lost.

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had to be seen to take a proactive role in its enforcement of them, and it is shown that this pursuit of respectability has led to the imposition of a strong heterosexual, gender defined and exclusive orthodoxy in which all types of expression of gender or sexually variant behaviour is automatically considered to be a mortal sin and an immoral act. This has also led to the great severity of the Christian condemnations of all gender and sexually variant behaviour as being second only to bestiality in the heinousness of these acts.

8:2 Social Changes

A major challenge and achievement which was met by Christianity was its success in transferring the distinctive views of the minority Jewish religion into a dominant culture. That meant confronting the self-centred moralities of the culture and sexual values which were characteristic of Greco/Roman male dominated society. This additionally meant challenging and usurping the power structures which are formed inside these powerful and dominant societies by placing the concern for the victims and the suppressed first on the religious and the social agendas of those cultures, and by embracing an all-encompassing morality which is founded on compassion, nurturing and love. These moral characteristics were more typical of the first century female expectations, and women were themselves a subject group.

The first century was a time of upheaval for Greco/Roman society. Many traditional religions had lost much of their credibility. There was a proliferation of new religious beliefs, the Goddess cults were undergoing a major resurgence and because of their disruptive activities the male domination of society was also being put to the test⁷¹. However a roadblock was encountered because the gender determined nature of Goddess cults in a polytheistic society always created a glass ceiling which could not be crossed⁷². Because of its gender transcendent God the Christian Church became able to break down this barrier; and the social transformation which Christianity had demanded could then be made. However without this Jewish, and Christian, gender transcendent God, that cultural transformation could never have occurred, and it is shown that the existence of the initial period of complete gender equality which was expressed in the teachings of Jesus was essential for the breakthrough to be made.

Instead of simply seeking gender neutrality the Christian Gospel had at first provided major roles for women, A doctrine of full gender equality was expressed within early Christianity, which would obtain acceptance in present day society, thus it is also not

⁷¹Frymer-Kensky, Tivka. (1993) "In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth" Ballantine Books; (First Edition February 10, 1993) ISBN-10: 0449907465 ISBN-13: 978-0449907467. See also Barker, Margaret. (2001) "The Temple Roots Of The Liturgy" This is developed from a paper read in Dublin in November 2000 subsequently published in Sourozh. A Journal of Orthodox Life and Thought. Available online at: <http://www.margaretbarker.com/Papers/TempleRootsofChristianLiturgy.pdf>

See also Barker, Margaret. (2003). "Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy": T&T Clark; ISBN-10: 0567089428 ISBN-13: 978-0567089427

⁷²Even if full gender equality could be achieved in a polytheistic society, the rewards it brings could only be expressed in terms of the sex-gender ideologies of that society and males and females would continue to be separated into their religiously determined and socially segregated roles. See: Frymer-Kensky, Tivka. (1993) "In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth" Ballantine Books; (First Edition February 10, 1993) ISBN-10: 0449907465 ISBN-13: 978-0449907467.

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surprising that women figured prominently in the early church. However even though these important functions at first were given to women, the social constraints that were imposed through gender complementarity meant that the public spokespeople for this new religion could only be men. Through their pursuit of a male agenda and from its pursuit of authority and respectability, the doctrines of the early Church have been disconnected from the traditions and doctrines that were embraced by the later Church⁷³. Therefore the theological justifications that in the present day are used to validate the presumptions for a male leadership, together with its male prerogatives, and its arguments for an exclusively male priesthood are also founded on these later traditions. They do not come from the teaching of Jesus and the Gospel Church.

8:3 Christianity and the Goddess Cults

The most noteworthy contribution which this neurophysiological and psychological investigation has made to understanding the development of these Church traditions is because it has broken through this sexual barrier. It has forced upon this analysis the recognition that gender and sexually variant conditions are identity driven, which means that as large a variety of moral attitudes and behaviour must be encountered within the gender and sexually variant communities as are found in society at large.

These in turn require the full re-evaluation of the Goddess cults. A duality is shown to exist whereby those people who attempt to live to the highest moral standards which their society expects can live according to the way of light. Those who do the reverse will follow the way of darkness instead. These equivalent dualities are encountered across cultures and continents, where people who seek to transcend the sex/gender boundaries by living in ways that are true to the ideals of both lives may be given a high and often priestly status⁷⁴. However those who adopt the path of transgression are very ruthlessly condemned for their acts. Nevertheless there were fundamental cultural clashes between the Jewish and the Greco/Roman cultures. One of these differences related to the practice of anal penetration which was used as a weapon for humiliation and domination as much as for the physical gratifications of sex⁷⁵. The Christian condemnation of these culturally determined abuses is understandable⁷⁶ and by today's standards most people, including the author, would consider this to be totally correct. However activities that were considered to be moral in one society could be horrific in another, and because of these divisions it was made easy for the Christian Church to ignore the cultural divides and the duality of the cult behaviour in order to condemn the Goddess cults and also Greco/Roman society exclusively as hotbeds for illicit and inappropriate sex⁷⁷.

⁷³ See Section 3:1 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): "An Unfinished Reformation".

⁷⁴ See Gilchrist S. (2013): Part 3 of "An Unfinished Reformation" where it is shown that this also applied to the early Church

⁷⁵ This was the original definition of the term Sodomy. The word is not used here since it has come to mean many other things

⁷⁶ It was same-sex rape and not consensual same-sex relationships which was condemned as Sodomy by the Christian Church. See: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church". See footer for access

⁷⁷ Of particular interest is the cult of Cybele, or the "Great Mother" in Greco/Roman society. A duality in the cult practices is clearly evident where on the one hand the cult is given a very high status and yet on the other hand it is severely condemned for the social disruption and the sexual excesses
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This however is only one side of the argument. The cult of Cybele was serviced by female priestesses, who mostly remained in the temples and by the roving itinerant self castrated male priests. These Gallae priests represented a total inversion of the power structures of the established cult. Voluntary self-castration represented the utmost rejection of male supremacy and it attacked the social framework upon which any patriarchal and dominant society was based. As eunuchs these Gallae were forbidden Roman citizenship and they were denied any rights of inheritance. Their living also depended on the pious generosity of others. In the Roman documents the close associations of the Gallae with prostitutes and other sex workers are widely reported⁷⁸. One contemporary writer states that that Gallae and the sex workers spent a considerable amount of time together “As outcasts often do”. However the institutional structures of an established society have a great deal more difficulty in dealing with people who remove themselves from the normal rules of respectability and status, but who nevertheless still continue to live up to the highest moral values which are expected of their cults. Not only do their actions of self sacrifice create an even greater esteem with the cult’s own followers, by confronting the authority of the institutions of society they also usurp the power structures on which that society is built. This also makes the Gallae priests uniquely equipped to bring the moral values and the teachings of the cult to those who have been oppressed by the state. That outcome can most particularly occur when it exploits the scapegoat mechanism as it is described by Girard; and this is discussed elsewhere in this investigation, as is the discussion of the attitude of Jesus himself to gender and sexual variance, and to the Gallae priests⁷⁹.

From his own identification with the poor, the rejected and the outcast Jesus likewise turned this searching for authority completely on its head. His rejection of all worldly power led to his sacrifice and death as a scapegoat on the Cross, and the emphasis in Christianity has always been on the power and the significance of this redemptive act. Many recent theological studies have used the research of René Girard to model these dynamics⁸⁰ and Girard clearly demonstrates the great power and reconciling

which were perceived in many of its activities. Roller for example attributes this duality to the high propriety of the formal practices of the cults and the disruptive behaviour to the ecstatic elements that are found within them. (Roller, Lynn. (1996): “Reflections of the Mother of the Gods in Attic Tragedy” (pp. 305-322 in Eugene N. Lane (ed.), *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren*. Brill ISBN 9004101969 978-9004101968). The assumption that the disruptive behaviour is always associated with lust and improper sex is implicitly made in the current research. However it is shown in this investigation that two boundaries must be found. One comes through the disruption that is created through the advancement of female interests and the other through the pursuit of illicit sex. None of the current studies attempt to separate this power led disruption from the practice of illicit sex and none of them take full account of how the changing role of women in society may have affected the behaviour and the doctrines of the cult. The political boundary is the one that is relevant for discussing the behaviour of the cults. A full analysis is given in Gilchrist, S. (2013). “From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church”. See footer for access.

⁷⁸ For early Christian attacks see: Clement of Alexandria, *Protreptikos*, 2.14. also Firmicus, *The Error of Pagan Religions*, 4.2; Martial, *Epigrams*, 3.81 (vol 1; ed. and trans. D.R. Bailey; *Martial Epigrams*; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993)

⁷⁹ Gilchrist, S. (2013). “From Gender Transcendence to Gender Complementarity: the Development of Attitudes to Gender and Sexuality in the Early and the Modern Church”. See footer for access.

⁸⁰ Apart from Girard’s own work, James Alison is perhaps the most notable exponent. His books include, *Broken Hearts and New Creations: Intimations of a Great Reversal, Undergoing God*: Gilchrist, S. (2013). “A Reassessment of the Traditional Teaching”. *Draft: Printed: 23/12/2013 29*
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influences which the scapegoat can exert. It has been shown that the demand for gender equality and for the protection of women meant that the male dominated patriarchal society was challenged by both Christianity and by the Goddess cults. Cybele's myths and doctrines embraced both sex and spirituality, they gave earlier cautions against lust and the other sins of excess, and they also demonstrated that sex and gender were less important to the soul than love. Contrary to Christian condemnations, these included nurture, birthing, care, protection and responsible sex⁸¹. When it is also seen that these Gallae priests, together with their counterparts,

Dispatches from the Scene of a Break-In, On Being Liked, Faith Beyond Resentment: Fragments Catholic and Gay, The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes, Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination (2nd edition), Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination : Living in the End Times: The Last Things Re-imagined, Knowing Jesus. See: <http://www.jamesalison.co.uk/eng/books.html> for details.

⁸¹Cybele was just on among a number of Goddesses who had a similar role. Juno in Rome was the Goddess of marriage, pregnancy and childbirth. She was also the Queen of the Gods and part of the Capitoline triad that also included Minerva and Jupiter. Juno was an embodiment of the traditional female roles of wife and mother. One of her titles was Lucino (or light) since she helped to bring children into the light of the world. She was also Goddess of conception, who was called upon during labour and a Goddess who helped settle disagreements between spouses. Another Goddess in Roman mythology was Diana, who was the goddess of the woodlands, of wild animals, and of hunting. Diana also acted as a fertility goddess, who helped women conceive and to give birth to children. With growing contact between Greece and Rome Diana became increasingly identified with the Greek goddess Artemis and she also came to be identified with Juno Lucina herself. However the Romans viewed Diana as a many-sided goddess who was also associated with forests and hunting. Artists usually portrayed her as a virgin hunter, often with a bow and quiver, accompanied by maidens, hunting dogs, or deer. Although Diana held an honoured place among women, she was also identified with Hecate, the Greek goddess of darkness and witchcraft, and she served as goddess of the kingdom of the dead. Diana's nature was as varied as the range of her associations. As goddess of forests and hunting, she was considered to be pure and virginal. Yet she could also be arrogant and vengeful. As goddess of the moon, she had a changeable, unpredictable nature. As goddess of the world of the dead, she was unforgiving and bloodthirsty. She was also regarded as protector of the lower classes, particularly of slaves. In Roman culture Cybele was identified as the Great Mother of the Gods. In ancient Middle Eastern religion (and later in Greece, Rome, and Western Asia), this mother goddess was regarded as the great symbol of the earth's fertility. As the creative force in nature she was worshipped under many names, including Astarte (Syria), Cybele (first in Phrygia, only later in Greece and Rome), Demeter (Greece), Ishtar (Babylon), and Isis (Egypt). The later forms of her cult involved the worship of a male deity (her son or lover, e.g., Adonis, Osiris), whose death and resurrection symbolized the regenerative power of the earth. In the 5th century B.C. the cult of Cybele spread to Greece and later to Rome. She was primarily a nature goddess, responsible for maintaining and reproducing the wild things of the earth. Her annual spring festival celebrated the death and resurrection of her beloved Attis, a vegetation god. However instead of resurrection in human form, the resurrection of Attis was in the form of a pine tree, symbolising the renewal of the Earth. This did not preclude Cybele from being called on to aid human childbirth and conception, many of the earlier images show her seated in a chair and giving birth. However the image most usually seen does not make childbirth evident. The Emperor Julian II wrote: "Who is then the Mother of the Gods? She is the source of the intellectual and creative gods, who in their turn guide the visible gods: she is both the mother and the spouse of mighty Zeus; She came into being next to and together with the great Creator; She is in control of every form of life, and the Cause of all generation; She easily brings to perfection all things that are made. Without pain, she brings to birth ... She is the Motherless Maiden, enthroned at the very side of Zeus, and in very truth is the Mother of All the Gods ..." (from an Oration to Cybele composed at Pessinus, AD 363). The myths associated with all these goddesses have a great deal in common, and this suggests that they have all to be treated as a single group. Involvement in childbirth is common to all of them. There would also be other reasons to call on Cybele during childbirth. The Kuretes and Dactyls were three, five, or nine rustic Daimones (Spirits) appointed by the Mother of the Gods to guard the infant god Zeus in a cave on Mount Ida in Crete. In order to keep him safely hidden from his cannibalistic father, the Titan Kronos (Cronus), they

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were itinerant missionary priests who moved widely through the Roman Empire, who were known in Palestine, who were also engaged in fortune telling, shamanic, and in healing activities, then the contest between the cult and Christianity can hardly be missed⁸².

8:4 Current Demands

The recent news that Pope Francis has called an extraordinary synod of the Roman Catholic Church in October 2014 to discuss the subject of the family is a welcome development. A questionnaire to the Bishops asks them to provide local views on the issues of premarital cohabitation, birth control and gay marriage and it is hoped that significant changes can be made, however it is also made clear that the synod will not be expected to change or to reverse the traditional teachings of the Church.

drowned out his cries with a frenzied dance involving clashing spears and shields. These Kouretes were gods of the wild mountainside however they were also the inventors of the arts of metalworking, shepherding, hunting and beekeeping. They were in addition considered to be the first armed warriors. The five Daktyloi ("fingers") were usually regarded as identical to the Kouretes. These also had an equal number of sisters named Hekaterides, who together appeared to have represented all ten fingers of the human hand. The male and female Daktyloi were also joined in marriage, which might be imagined as a harmonious "finger to finger" folding of the hands. From this union many others were born who represented gods and goddesses of trades or professions in ancient society. Appealing to Cybele during birth was not only a supplication for the successful delivery of the baby; it was also a portent for the protection of the child and success in future life. However none of these Goddesses and their cults seems to exist just to support maternal and fertility interests. All of them use gender and sex to disrupt and challenge the social order imposed by a male society and in the case of Cybele in particular, (but also with all of the other goddesses), the disreputability caused by that disruption, and the condemnations of sexual impropriety by the Gallae, may be used to argue that Cybele could not have had a role in human childbirth. However the great purity attributed to the Goddess Cybele herself suggests otherwise. The presence in the temple of only female and castrated male priests and priestesses who are following these ideals give a safe place for women to inhabit, but the cult of Cybele was never fully integrated into Roman Society and the protection she offered could have been more attractive to those who were not Roman Citizens, than to the citizens themselves. The existence of a self-castrated priesthood for all of these Goddess cults was not well accepted by Roman society, not just because of sexual abuse but because of the political and social challenges it made. However it was common to all of the cults, as was the practice of these priests offering themselves to men (as argued in this analysis) in order to channel the fertility of the Goddess to the lay population. That became a very profitable activity as is evident in Acts 19:24, it was horrific to Christianity and Judaism but when this is judged by the moral codes of Greco/Roman society, in principle that activity would not have been an immoral act.

⁸²The seventy-two disciples (known in the Eastern Christian tradition as the Seventy Apostles) were early followers of Jesus who are mentioned in the Gospel of Luke 10:1–24. According to Luke, Jesus appointed them and sent them out in pairs ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. Like the disciples the Gallae engaged on similar missionary journeys and they also relied on the hospitality of their supporters. If the initial degree of common interest between Christianity and the cult of Cybele, the Great Mother is striking, their later condemnations of each other are no less extreme. Time and again, the Christian apologists cited the Gallae as representative of all they abhorred in pagan culture. Of all the behaviour of the Gallae, none horrified them more than the radical manner in which they transgressed the boundaries of gender. See Roscoe, Will. (2010) "Priests of the Goddess". (The full article with notes can be found in *History of Religions* 35(3) (1996): 295-330. A summary is available online at: <http://www.willsworld.org/priests.html>).

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Nevertheless this investigation has made it clear that the traditional attitudes of the Church to gender and sexuality must be regarded as disciplines; not as the doctrines of the Church. Even though an apostolic imprint is present, these do not come from the teachings of Jesus and the witness of Gospel Church⁸³. This means that it is the responsibility of Christianity and of the Christian Church through every generation to work out anew what all these relationships should be. Those relationships will also change with time, and in present day society, where complete gender equality is now determined by the belief in universal human rights, and not through the compulsory complementarity of the first century Greco/Roman and Jewish views which maximise the perceived usefulness of men and women in society; a totally different approach is urgently required.

This demands radical change, but when the Christian Church is destroying itself in the eyes of society, these are changes which must urgently be made. This is also the change in viewpoint which should enable the Christian Churches of the present day to establish without any diminution of the moral values or the precepts of Christian teaching, and without any degree of departure from truth of the Gospel message, an approach to gender and to sexuality, to gender equality and to gender and sexual variance, which is entirely appropriate for present day world.

9:0 Personal Comments

It should have become clear to the reader that this investigation has at least in part been motivated through the experiences of the author's own journey. The judgment on what to publish and on what to keep private has been difficult, but the decision to make this material available was made on the basis of the benefit to others that this work might bring. There are a number of documents which provide an insight into the personal journey. One of these is Gilchrist, S. (2011). "LGB&T People: Labels and Faith". This account was prepared following a joint presentation that was given by Susan Gilchrist and Christina Beardsley at the Spectrum Annual Conference in the Fairfield Halls Croydon on the 8th February 2011.

It must also be obvious this has not been an easy journey and the author has used poetry to monitor its passage. One poetry anthology is given in: Gilchrist, S. 2011. "Encounters in Search of the Self: Poems and Commentary". Another abbreviated version: Gilchrist, S. 2011. "Verses in Search of the Self" is available online, and a

⁸³ Gender complementarity in Christianity was inherited from both the Judean and the Greco/Roman traditions, and it is necessary to consider the sources that are used. Certain statements, such as that made by Paul in Galatians 3:28 announce a doctrine of a complete transcendence of gender. This statement draws its authority from the Gospel itself. However there are many other statements within the Pauline Epistles which are concerned with how Christian men and women should behave in a first century society. Paul provides a whole compendium of these: 1 Corinthians 7:1-17, 32, 35, 39; 1 Corinthians 11:3-17; 1 Corinthians 14:33-37; Philippians 4:3; Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:21-31; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 1 Timothy 5:1-16. Also 1 Peter 3:1-6 is at least as important as these others. Unlike the statement in Galatians 3:28 all of these statements draw their authority from the requirement for the respectability of the Christian Church. They do not rely on the teaching of Jesus for that, and it is argued that these must be regarded instead as contemporary rules of conduct that were determined by the needs of the Church in relation to Greco/Roman society. This is why they should only be considered as disciplines, not as doctrines of the Church.

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further version is due for publication as a chapter in a book. A further set of poems: Gilchrist, S. 2003. "Selfhood's Tower" explores some of the principles which the author has explored which are concerned about the creation of self-identity. The significance of these poems partly lies in their earlier exploration of the thoughts and ideas on which the current articles are based. Please see the footer for access to these documents.

Susan Gilchrist, now retired, has taught in higher education for over forty years. She has also been involved in the work of reconciliation in tribal conflict situations for approximately the same length of time. In 1976 she was responsible for setting up an organisation which co-ordinated this work throughout mainland Britain. She has been involved in research into the driving forces behind tribal conflict, identity formation and the interactions that are encountered. She has undertaken similar research on gender dysphoria and she is currently preparing this work for publication. Susan writes poetry and she has documented her journey through an anthology of poems. Through her counselling involvement she aims to help others who may learn from her experiences. She has served on Government and NHS Advisory panels. Susan is actively involved in Church of England activities and in ecumenical work. She is currently a committee member of the Sibyls, which is a Christian Spirituality group for transgendered people, their friends, families and supporters. Together with members of the clergy and with others she was involved in the organisation of a conference in Birmingham in 2010 on "Sexuality and Human Flourishing", the proceedings of which can be accessed on the LGB&T Anglican Coalition Website at www.lgbtac.org.uk. She created and continues to manage the LGB&T Anglican Coalition website. She also serves on the executive committee of the LGB&T Anglican Coalition and she is a past co-chair of the Coalition.

10:0 Documents

References are given in the footnotes.

For information on access and the current status of other documents check the website: <http://www.gndr.org.uk/transgender/index.htm>

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