

*Foundations for Ministry  
with  
Individuals and Families  
affected by  
Homosexuality*

(an examination of Holy Scripture, Systematic Theology and Modern Psychotherapies)

written by

Pastor Tom Eckstein  
Concordia Lutheran Church  
Jamestown, North Dakota

## INTRODUCTION

Homosexuality<sup>1</sup> has been an ever increasing issue in our society since the sexual revolution of the 1960's. However, the issue of homosexuality has especially taken center stage in 2003 and 2004 with mainline Church bodies dividing over the issue of whether practicing homosexuals can serve as clergy or even be "members in good standing" of local congregations, on the one hand, and with American society dividing over the issues of the legalization of "Gay marriage" and "adoption rights for homosexual couples", on the other hand.

This issue of homosexuality has created a difficult challenge for Christian Pastors who agree with Holy Scripture that homosexuality is against God's will and yet who desire to minister to individuals and families who struggle with homosexuality.

The reason such ministry is a challenge is that the issue of homosexuality is so complex. First, there are many people in various Church bodies who consider themselves to be Christian and

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<sup>1</sup> The term "homosexuality" is defined in different ways by various people. Therefore, for the sake of consistency, the author of this paper (which will treat the foundations a pastor needs for appropriate ministry with individuals and families who struggle with "homosexuality") will define "homosexuality" as describing both the *desire* for sexual activity with members of the same sex as well as the actual *acting out and practice* of that desire with members of the same sex. Granted, there may be unique situations where a person who would consider himself to be heterosexual would still engage in homosexual *activity* even though he doesn't actually have the *desire* (e.g., when a man in a prison sexually abuses another man, not out of sexual desire, but as a way to humiliate the individual *or* when a heterosexual person is raped by a member of the same sex who is homosexual). However, such non-sexual reasons for homosexual activity rarely relate to the issue of homosexuality as it is experienced by the culture and Church today, and so will not really affect the way in which pastors will minister to most people who struggle with homosexuality.

yet not only confess that Holy Scripture does not condemn homosexuality, but may actually affirm it! In addition to such revisionist exegesis, we can also find Christians who have considered the issue of homosexuality within the confines of systematic theology and have also come to the conclusion that God does not condemn and may even affirm this desire and practice. Finally, there are many professionals in our society who represent various psychological schools of thought who insist that homosexuality is a “healthy” and “acceptable” expression of human sexuality.<sup>2</sup>

Pastors who wish to be faithful to the confession that Holy Scripture condemns homosexual desire and practice as sin will find disagreement, resistance and even condemnation not only from many who work in the social sciences but even from many within the Church who consider themselves to be faithful Christians. This reality may tempt many Pastors (who are already overwhelmed with many challenges and the need to educate themselves on various issues) who consider homosexuality to be a sin to retreat from a ministry to individuals and families who struggle with homosexuality.

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<sup>2</sup> We will deal with views of homosexuality within various psychological schools of thought later on in this paper. For now it will suffice to say that even though many professionals who serve in the area psychotherapy would consider homosexuality to be “abnormal” or “deviant”, by these terms they simply mean that homosexual desire and practice does not represent the majority experience of sexual desire and activity within our culture. Therefore, many who serve in psychotherapy can affirm that homosexuality is “healthy” and “acceptable” even though it is “deviant” and “abnormal”.

However, Pastors who wish to be faithful to their Office must trust in God and rely upon His Grace for the courage, strength and wisdom to meet this challenge. If Christians allow themselves to compromise God's Word in the area of homosexuality simply because we are experiencing pressure and persecution from people in our culture and even from those who consider themselves to be fellow Christians, we not only sin against God and abandon others who are in bondage to this sin, but we also open the door for compromise in many other areas of Faith and life.

For example, in I Corinthians 5:6 the Apostle Paul writes: **"Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?"**<sup>3</sup> The Apostle Paul says essentially the same thing in Galatians 5:9. In both contexts the meaning of this proverb is that if we tolerate (or even worse, *affirm*) a false teaching and its affect on the way we live we thereby open the door for more false teaching and sinful living to spread through the Church.

In view of the above, we must not fool ourselves into thinking that we are still being faithful if we are only taking a stand against certain sinful issues that many others in the Church and even secular society also agree are sinful or at least undesirable. We must recognize that it is those very issues condemned by God's Word and yet tolerated or affirmed by many in our culture and even by some in the Church that faithful

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<sup>3</sup> All English quotations from Holy Scripture will be taken from the "New International Version" translation by the International Bible Society, 1984 (Zondervan Publishing House).

Christians must confront with God's Truth with great zeal and love in spite of the consequences. This is not an easy challenge, but it must be done! As the Apostle Paul writes: **"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers"**<sup>4</sup> and **"Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction."**<sup>5</sup>

In view of the challenge faced by pastors who confess that God's Word condemns homosexual desire and practice, this paper will examine 3 foundations of knowledge that are necessary for pastors to know and to understand if they wish confront those who affirm homosexuality and minister to those who want help with unwanted homosexual desires and activity. These 3 foundations of knowledge are: 1) the exegesis of Holy Scripture, 2) systematic theology and 3) various psychological schools of thought.

This paper will begin with a brief exegesis of particular passages of Holy Scripture that relate to the issue of homosexuality so that pastors will have the ability to refute those who wrongly interpret Holy Scripture on this issue as well as give proper instruction to those who wish to know what God's Word truly teaches about homosexuality. Next, this paper will

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<sup>4</sup> I Timothy 4:16.

<sup>5</sup> II Timothy 4:2.

examine the issue of homosexuality within the confines of systematic theology and show how ministry to those who struggle with this sin is connected to the various doctrines of the Faith. Finally, this paper will briefly summarize and critique three popular models of psychotherapy (that of Sigmund Freud, B. F. Skinner and Carl Rogers) and how each models views the issue of homosexuality.

With regard to the third foundation of knowledge, this information about various modern psychotherapies is necessary if pastors wish to make responsible referrals to those who do professional counseling. Pastors who are faithful to Holy Scripture and care about the people they serve would not want to refer them to professionals who would affirm their homosexual desires and activity. In addition, on many occasions pastors may find certain aspects of various psychological schools of thought very helpful in their own pastoral counseling of individuals and families, but will need the ability to discern between those aspects of various modern psychotherapies that are in harmony with the Christian Faith and those that are not. At this point it must be said that there are some within the Christian faith who have concerns about the propriety of utilizing the aid of modern psychotherapies because all of them (to a greater or lesser degree) have presuppositions and various techniques that

are contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture.<sup>6</sup> However, the author of this paper holds to the view that if one uses discernment in the utilization of modern psychotherapies one can reject the views and techniques that are contrary to Holy Scripture while at the same time benefiting from those views and techniques that Scripture does not condemn and yet are helpful in ministry to those who struggle with homosexuality.<sup>7</sup>

Within Lutheran theology we acknowledge that God gives us many good gifts for our benefit that we can use in good conscience even though Scripture says nothing about such gifts. For example, Scripture gives us no information about the nature and production of electricity. Nevertheless, humans have greatly benefited from this gift of God. In addition, Scripture does not give us information about medical treatment for cancer. But many lives have been saved in recent years because God has given us people who have developed useful information in this area.

In view the above, it must be granted that some gifts of God have no additional baggage that would give Christians cause for concern. For instance, the invention of indoor plumbing does not usually lead us to consider issues of a metaphysical or moral nature. The same could be said about the discovery of insulin and its use in treating people who suffer from diabetes. Both

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<sup>6</sup> For example, see Johnson and Jones. Their book examines four views that are common among conservative Christians regarding the use of modern psychotherapies.

<sup>7</sup> For an excellent overview of the various psychological schools of thought along with a faithful Christian critique of each type of psychotherapy, see Butman and Jones.

Christians and non-Christians alike can agree that these things are good for humanity.

However, there are other gifts of God which do have baggage that give Christians some concern. One example would be acupuncture. This technique has been useful in helping people with various ailments and issues. In and of itself, the discovery that sticking needles into various points of the body can help with certain conditions is not a problem for Christians. The concern is that many who practice acupuncture do so within the matrix of Eastern religion and philosophy. Such practitioners of acupuncture may wish to influence their clients with these metaphysical assumptions that Christians would find unacceptable.

The same thing could be said about those who teach and practice yoga. Some find that the techniques of yoga relieve stress and help develop physical flexibility. If used only for this purpose, yoga would not be an issue for Christians. However, many who practice and teach yoga also use it in within the context of transcendental meditation (a practice based on religious views that Christians would find unacceptable).

This all leads to the question: *"Can Christians utilize certain gifts of God that also have baggage that is contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture?"* The reasonable answer would

appear to be **"Yes! But..."** Yes, Christians can use certain discoveries and techniques for their benefit and even see these things as gifts from God. But at the same time, Christians must use discernment and use the teaching of Holy Scripture to recognize the evil nature of some baggage that may come along with some of these gifts. We must reject the sinful baggage and yet still use these gifts of God for our benefit.

Therefore, pastors who wish to be faithful to Holy Scripture will recognize that God permits us to benefit from all the discoveries and knowledge that He has allowed humans to obtain over the centuries. At the same time, we will use His revealed Word to help us determine when and how certain views and techniques must be rejected. This is the approach Christians must use when striving to benefit from the gifts that God has given us via various modern psychotherapies.

## **FOUNDATION #1: HOLY SCRIPTURE**

When the author of this paper was attending Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO, during the late 1980's, he attended a class on Holy Baptism taught by Dr. Norman Nagel. Since this course was classified under systematic theology we students expected to begin our first day of class either by hearing a lecture on the doctrine of Baptism or by examining some systematic theology textbook that dealt with Baptism. However,

many of us students were surprised when Dr. Nagel began by saying: **"We dare not say anything about Baptism until we first let the Lord have His say!"** After that, he asked us to open our Greek New Testaments and we spent the next few weeks doing exegesis of various parts of Scripture that deal with Baptism. What is the point of this little story? Allow the author of this paper to paraphrase Dr. Nagel: **"We dare not say anything about homosexuality until we first let the Lord have His say!"**

In the past thirty years, but especially in the last decade, scholars from various Christian denominations<sup>8</sup> have *either* taught that Scripture is merely the subjective religious opinions of ancient people whose views have no authority over our sexual morality today or they have given new interpretations to the passages of Holy Scripture that traditionally have been understood as a condemnation of homosexuality.<sup>9</sup>

Among those scholars of the second group, each revisionist has his or her own unique views of how to explain the texts concerning homosexuality in a way that allows us to view homosexual desire and behavior in an acceptable light. However, in spite of their different ways of explaining these texts, they all agree that Holy Scripture does not condemn homosexual desire

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<sup>8</sup> For information about views of homosexuality within non-Christian religions see Crompton and Swidler.

<sup>9</sup> For a sample of various revisionist approaches to the teaching of Holy Scripture on homosexuality, see Boswell, Chilstrom, Comstock, Goss, Helminiak, McNeill, Miner and Scroggs.

or homosexual activity between two consenting adults.<sup>10</sup>

Do these new interpretations of passages that deal with homosexuality mean that numerous scholars over the centuries have been wrong? Or are there intelligent answers that can be given in defense of the traditional interpretation of passages that have been understood as a condemnation of homosexuality? Indeed, there are many scholars in recent years who have produced such a response and have demonstrated that Scripture does indeed condemn homosexual desire and activity as sin.<sup>11</sup>

A thorough treatment of the biblical texts that deal with homosexuality is beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, the essential passages will be examined and a concise exegesis will be given that will demonstrate how Scripture as a whole condemns homosexuality.

We will start "In the beginning" with the first two chapters of Genesis. Modern scholars debate the authorship of the first five books of the Old Testament. However, those who accept the witness of the Scriptures themselves combined with the testimony of Jewish and Christian tradition normally concede that the Torah was written by Moses around 1500 B.C.

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<sup>10</sup> For a helpful treatment of the various views about homosexuality among Christians, including the view that Scripture condemns homosexual desire and practice, see Holben.

<sup>11</sup> For example, see Gagnon, Grenz, Schmidt and James R. White.

At this point it needs to be said that many revisionist scholars view Genesis chapters 1-3 as "myth", that is, one of many ways that humans throughout history have attempted to understand the origin of the universe and life. However, this revisionist view of Genesis chapters 1-3 is based on the presupposition that Holy Scripture is not the inspired and inerrant revelation of God. On top of that, this revisionist view of Genesis chapters 1-3 does violence to the clear meaning of this text within its immediate context of the entire book of Genesis as well as in the wider context of the canon of Scripture (both Old and New Testaments) which clearly views the Creation and Fall in Genesis chapters 1-3 as historical events that actually took place.

When revisionist exegesis reduces the teaching of Genesis chapters 1-3 to nothing more than one of several metaphysical speculations of ancient people, then the basis for a united understanding of sexuality throughout Scripture is lost. In addition, the door is left open for an interpretation of origins in terms of Darwinian Evolution which can be used to argue that homosexuality is a legitimate expression of human sexuality.<sup>12</sup> However, when Genesis chapters 1 and 2 are read as an actual historical event one arrives at a completely different view of homosexuality.

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<sup>12</sup> For a treatment of how some view the relationship between Darwinian Evolution, Sociobiology and Homosexuality, see Pronk, 178-192. Also see Diamond and McAnulty, 45-164.

In Genesis chapters 1 and 2 we find the account of Creation. We are informed that God created the world and all life over the course of 6 days, with humans (1 male and 1 female) being created at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> day.<sup>13</sup>

The first mention of human sexuality in Scripture is when we are told that humans were made “male and female” and that they were to “be fruitful, and multiply” (that is, their sexual activity as male and female was to result in the procreation of children). In Genesis chapter 2 we are given a more focused view of the various details surrounding God’s creation of the first man and the first woman. God gives them to each other in marriage, and we are told that the two will become “one flesh”<sup>14</sup>, which is a reference to the sexual relationship between a man and woman in marriage. Simply put, Genesis chapters 1 and 2 teach that human sexuality is a good gift of God (note that the creation of human sexuality took place before the Fall into sin as described in Genesis chapter 3) and that it is to be practiced between 1 man and 1 woman within the context of the marriage relationship.

With the above understood, even if the Scriptures had nothing more to say about human sexuality, this information would be enough for us to determine that any expression of homosexual

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<sup>13</sup> See Genesis 1:26-31.

<sup>14</sup> See Genesis 2:24.

activity (male or female) is outside of God's will. In other words, Genesis chapters 1 and 2 are the interpretive matrix within which the teaching of the rest of Scripture regarding human sexuality is to be interpreted.<sup>15</sup>

The next set of texts for consideration are the sexual laws of Leviticus chapters 18 and 20.<sup>16</sup> The sexual laws found in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20 are best understood as being part of God's universal moral law that apply to ALL people of ALL times and places.<sup>17</sup> The reason for this is that the *civil and ceremonial laws*<sup>18</sup> found in Leviticus were given ONLY to the nation of Israel and not to the Gentile nations. However, in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20 we are informed that God is angry with the

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<sup>15</sup> For example, in Matthew chapter 19:1ff Jesus refers to Genesis chapters 1 and 2 as the foundation for His teaching on human sexuality, marriage and the issue of divorce.

<sup>16</sup> This paper will not treat Genesis 19:1-29 which deals with God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The reason for this is that the text deals with a group of men who try to force two male visitors to their city to have sex with them. Since this is obviously a violent act and a type of attempted rape, this section of Scripture itself, considered in isolation, does not tell us anything about God's view of homosexual relations between consenting adult males. However, the point can be made that in Genesis chapter 18 we are informed that God intends to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah even though the violent act mentioned in Genesis chapter 19 has not yet taken place. But this does not prove that the main issue behind God's anger was the normal and consensual homosexual relations between the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. Even though II Peter 2:6-8 and Jude 7 refer to this event, the Greek terms used in these New Testament texts do not clearly identify the exact nature of the homosexual activity that took place in Sodom and Gomorrah. The point is that many scholars who believe that the Scriptures condemn homosexuality will use Genesis chapter 19 as the matrix for the interpretation of other Scripture texts that deal with homosexuality. However, this method makes it possible for pro-gay scholars to point out that Genesis 19 merely condemns violent homosexual rape and not consensual sex between two adult males. In light of this, it is best to use Genesis chapters 1 & 2 as the matrix for interpretation and then focus on other texts that are not dealing merely with a particular kind of homosexual activity described as violent rape.

<sup>17</sup> See *Kleinig*, 373-442.

<sup>18</sup> The civil laws of Israel (which was a theocratic nation at that time, both Church and State) were an application of the universal moral law to their particular historical context. However, now that Christ has finished His work the purpose of Israel has been fulfilled and believers (both Jew and Gentile) are to submit to the civil laws of the nation in which they live (see Romans 13:1ff). As for the ceremonial laws, these were pictures or types of Christ. For example, the Passover was a picture of the reality we now receive in the Lord's Supper (see I Corinthians 5:6-11 and 11:17-32). Now that we have the Person, the pictures are no longer necessary (see Colossians 2:16-17 and Hebrews 9:11-10:18). See *Kleinig*, especially 24-30.

GENTILE nations for not obeying these sexual laws. In addition, the New Testament expects both Jews and Gentiles of that time to observe many of the sexual prohibitions found in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20.

There are two texts dealing with homosexuality in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20. The first is Leviticus 18:22, which reads: **"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable."**<sup>19</sup> The second text is Leviticus 20:13, which reads: **"If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads."**<sup>20</sup>

When these two texts are treated together we discover that God condemns any form of homosexual activity between men (both active and passive). Some argue that God is only forbidding homosexual activity within the context of pagan idolatry and occult rituals, as was the practice among some of the gentiles of the land. But this is wrong for two reasons. First, there is no mention of homosexual activity in the context of idol worship, but only the sexual practice itself. Second, this view would then lead to the conclusion that adultery (see Leviticus 18:20) is wrong only within the context of pagan idolatry, which is

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<sup>19</sup> The Hebrew is: וְאֶת־זָכָר לֹא תִשְׁכַּב מִשְׁכַּב־אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה הוּא:

<sup>20</sup> The Hebrew is: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־זָכָר מִשְׁכַּב־אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה עָשׂוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם מוֹת יוּמָתוּ דְמֵיהֶם בָּם:

ridiculous.<sup>21</sup> Finally, when one considers these Levitical texts in light of Genesis chapters 1 & 2, it becomes clear that God is condemning any kind of homosexual activity whatsoever.<sup>22</sup>

As was noted above, the New Testament Scriptures rely on the Old Testament Scriptures as the basis for their teaching on human sexuality. We begin with the four Gospels. Some are quick to point out that homosexuality is never mentioned in the Gospels and Jesus never condemns homosexuality as sin. But this can not be used to condone homosexuality for at least three reasons. First, the Jewish audience of Jesus' day already agreed with the Old Testament prohibitions against homosexuality.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, there was no need for Jesus to mention the issue. Second, Jesus is also silent on other issues such as incest, bestiality, and rape. Does this mean Jesus tolerated or condoned these practices? The answer is obvious. Finally, in Matthew 19:1ff Jesus quotes from Genesis chapters 1 & 2 as the matrix for His teaching on sexuality and marriage. As was argued above, God's teaching in Genesis limits sexual activity to 1 male and 1 female within the context of marriage. Therefore, Jesus would have been

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<sup>21</sup> Those who suggest that the prohibitions against homosexuality in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20 do not apply to us today (usually because they say that they were part of the ceremonial law of Israel which no longer applies to us) have a hard time explaining the other sexual sins also condemned in the immediate context. Unless they are willing to say that the laws against incest, bestiality and adultery no longer apply to us today (and therefore should be tolerated or even condoned), they are not being consistent.

<sup>22</sup> Some point out that there is no prohibition against female homosexuality in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20. However, one could argue that either this practice was not a big enough issue to warrant mention or the condemnation of male homosexuality assumes that female homosexuality would also be condemned (which would make sense, if considered in light of Genesis chapters 1 and 2). In addition, the Apostle Paul clearly condemns female homosexuality in Romans 1:26.

<sup>23</sup> See Cantarella, 194-210. Also see Gould, 24.

opposed to any form of homosexual activity (male or female).

The next text for consideration is Romans 1:25-27, written by the Apostle Paul, which reads: **"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator -- who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion."**

First of all, one must understand that Paul is not teaching that homosexuality is worse than any other sin, for Paul lists many other sins in Romans 1:28-32. Then why does Paul put so much emphasis on homosexuality? One explanation is that in Romans 1:18-24 Paul refers to humans who rejected God's natural revelation in creation<sup>24</sup> and thereby not only rejected God but also went on to twist His created order. In other words, homosexuality is one of the most obvious examples of how sinful humans rebel against God's will for His creation because homosexuality blatantly conflicts with the teaching of Genesis chapters 1 and 2 regarding human sexuality.

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<sup>24</sup> Later on in Romans 2:14-15 Paul makes the point that God's universal law is written on the hearts of all men, and therefore gentiles are also without excuse.

Two other texts written by the Apostle Paul that are worth consideration are I Corinthians 6:9-11 and I Timothy 1:8-11. The text from I Corinthians reads: **"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes (μαλακοὶ) nor homosexual offenders (ἀρσενοκοῖται) nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."**

First of all, it must be stressed that Paul is not teaching that people who are guilty of any of these sins can never be saved. Instead, Paul is speaking of those who refuse to agree with God that these things indeed are sins and who refuse to trust in Christ for salvation. However, those Corinthians who confessed their sins and trusted in Christ were completely forgiven and holy before God. But what of the Greek terms that suggest some type of homosexuality? The "New International Version" (hereafter, NIV) translation of I Corinthians 6:9-11 (quoted above) translates the Greek word μαλακοὶ as "male prostitutes". This is a good possibility, as this Greek term was sometimes used to refer to men who provided homosexual favors for money. It would make sense for Paul to point out the sin of

prostitution because he deals with the issue of prostitution later in 6:15-17.

However, the NIV translation of ἀρσενοκοῖται as “homosexual offenders” is questionable for two reasons. First, this translation suggests that Paul was condemning only a certain type of homosexual activity, namely, a man raping another man against his will. But in Romans 1:18ff we discovered that Paul viewed ALL homosexual activity (even consensual) as sin. Second, there is a more accurate way to translate ἀρσενοκοῖται□.

Before we consider this, it would be helpful to examine our second text from I Timothy 1:8-11, which reads: **“We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts ( ἀρσενοκοίταις ), for slave traders and liars and perjurers -- and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.”**

In this text Paul explains that one use God has for His law is to restrain various evil acts of sinful people. Paul uses the same Greek word found in I Corinthians 6:9-11, only in a different Greek case. However, this time the NIV (the

translation used for I Timothy 1:8-11 above) translates **ἀρσενοκοίταις** as “perverts”. Why the change in translation? There is no good reason. In fact, when one considers the etymology of **ἀρσενοκοίταις** it becomes more clear what Paul means. First of all, it needs to be mentioned that **ἀρσενοκοίτης** is not found any place in secular Greek literature.<sup>25</sup> Where did Paul get this word? The answer is found when one considers the Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

The LXX translation of Leviticus 18:22 reads: **καὶ μετὰ ἄρσενος οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην** γυναικός, βδέλυγμα γάρ ἐστίν . We find the same Greek terms **ἄρσενος** and **κοίτην** in Leviticus 20:13. This evidence suggests that Paul coined his own Greek word based on the LXX translation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13!

In other words, Paul is clearly teaching that he is not condemning only a certain kind of homosexual activity (for example, a “homosexual offender” who rapes an unwilling person). Instead, Paul uses the Leviticus texts (which are based on the teaching of human sexuality found in Genesis chapters 1 and 2) of the LXX to coin a Greek word that clearly refers to any kind of homosexual activity whatsoever (male or female; forced or consensual).

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<sup>25</sup> See a list of secular Greek words relating to homosexuality in *Dover* , 240-242.

With that understood, in I Corinthians 6:9-11 and I Timothy 1:8-11 it would be best to translate this Greek word with the modern English word "homosexual", understood as describing a person who willingly engages in same-sex activity for whatever the reason. This best conveys the teaching of Scripture that God forbids all forms of same-sex physical relations.<sup>26</sup>

There is a great deal more one could be said about these texts of Scripture that deal with the issue of homosexuality, and the author of this paper encourages the reader to examine various books on this issue that deal with the exegesis of these texts much more thoroughly (see footnote #11). Finally, if one believes that Scripture is God's inspired and inerrant Word and assumes that the various books of Scripture reveal the unified teaching of our Lord, then a careful examine of the texts concerning homosexuality will clearly lead one to conclude that God condemns both homosexual *activity* as well as *desire*<sup>27</sup> .

## **FOUNDATION #2: SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY**

Now that the teaching of Holy Scripture concerning homosexuality has been examined, the next foundation of knowledge

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<sup>26</sup> For an excellent treatment of Scripture's teaching concerning homosexuality, see *Lockwood* , 204-210.

<sup>27</sup> For example, in Matthew 5:28 Jesus makes it clear that *lustful desire* is equal to adultery before the Lord. In the same way, in Romans 1:21 & 24, the Apostle Paul makes it clear that homosexual *desire* is also a sin.

that pastors must consider in Ministry to those affected by homosexuality is systematic theology. However, with that said, one must understand that systematic theology is not simply a collection of various teachings found in Scripture that can be understood and appreciated in isolation from each other. Instead, the various doctrines of systematic theology are all part of the one Teaching of Scripture which is a like a body in that its individual parts are intended to work in connection with each other and therefore can not serve their purpose if those parts are disconnected from the whole.

In view of the above, the following doctrines found in Holy Scripture will be examined with the understanding that an individual doctrine can not be properly understood apart from its relationship to the other doctrines -- especially the doctrine of Justification<sup>28</sup>, which is the core doctrine from which all other doctrines flow and find their proper meaning.

## **THE DOCTRINE OF GOD**

When a Pastor seeks to minister to individuals and families

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<sup>28</sup> The doctrine of Justification is the teaching of Scripture that reveals both the nature of God and the salvation He gives to sinful humans. The doctrine of Justification teaches that God desires to save lost sinners from their own willful rebellion against Him because of His "grace", that is, His unconditional love which moves Him to save us sinners apart from any merit or worth in us. God's desire to save sinners because of His grace resulted in His decision to send His one and only Son (John 3:16) into human flesh so that He might perfectly obey the will of His Father in our place (see Romans 8:3-4 and Hebrews 4:14-16), suffer and die in our place of damnation (see II Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13-14, Colossians 1:21-22 and I Peter 2:22-25), and conquer death for us via His own physical resurrection after His death by crucifixion (see Romans 6:1-10 & 23, I Corinthians 15:12-26 & 45-58 and also I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Therefore, "Justification" means that God proclaims that sinners are forgiven and that He declares them to be righteous (innocent of any guilt associated with their sin) on the basis of His Son's work on our behalf. All other doctrines of Scripture are properly understood in connection with this doctrine of Justification.

affected by homosexuality there will be some people (especially if they are members of his congregation) who may already be well informed about the basic teaching of Christianity concerning the nature of God. However, the pastor should not simply assume this knowledge -- especially if God gives him the opportunity to minister to those who are not members of his congregation.

In fact, there are some individuals in our society affected by homosexuality who may be atheist, agnostic, adherents of various Eastern religions or New Age philosophies, or simply unaware of the nature of God as revealed in Holy Scripture. Therefore, before we talk with such individuals about repentance (confession of original sin in general and the evil of homosexuality in particular) and the forgiveness of sins we must first speak with them about the reality of God and the nature of our relationship with Him.<sup>29</sup> Once this is done, we will then be in a position to talk about sin and our need for a Savior. After

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<sup>29</sup> For example, in Acts 17:16-34, we see how the Apostle Paul attempts to witness to unbelievers in Athens who worship false gods and have no knowledge about the One, True God. Paul does not begin by telling them to repent of particular sins. Instead, he begins by instructing them about the reality of God as Creator and our accountability before Him as His "children" (see Acts 17:28). In Romans 1:18-20 Paul shows us that creation can be used as evidence to convince people that a Creator exists. In addition, in Romans 2:12-16 Paul explains how even those people who do not have the revealed Law of God in Holy Scripture still have a basic understanding of good and evil (that is, a "conscience") because God has written His Law upon the human heart (which explains why different people from various cultures can agree about basic issues of morality). The knowledge of God via Creation and that He has given all humans a basic concept of morality is what theologians often call the Natural knowledge of God. However, this Natural knowledge of God can only reveal the fact that God exists and that we have rebelled against Him. Therefore, once we convince people that a Creator exists and that He has made His basic will for our lives known to us, we are in a position to help them understand that we all have rebelled in some manner against the will of God written upon our hearts. In other words, we have disobeyed our Creator! At this point, by the work of the Holy Spirit in those whom we are striving to serve, we have the opportunity to witness to God's Special revelation in Holy Scripture which gives us specific information about the nature of God and his grace in connection with the salvation from the guilt of our sin through the work of His Son, Jesus the Christ. Paul is eventually able to share this Special revelation of God with the people in Athens, but He must first begin with the Natural knowledge of God.

we use Natural revelation (see footnote #29) to inform people about God who did not previously know the Truth about Him, we can then tell them about God's Special revelation, that is, the Holy Scriptures which God has given us so that we may know who He is and the nature of His relationship with us.

The goal is that we will eventually explain, by using Holy Scripture and the ancient Creeds (e.g., the Nicene Creed), that there is One God who exists eternally as three distinct Persons -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In our modern culture where so many believe in a "god" they have concocted out of their own imagination or whom they know only from Natural revelation, pastors must understand the importance of eventually teaching people about the Triune God.

Pastors must be sure that they carefully teach people about the Triune God not only that they may know the truth about God as He has revealed Himself to us, *but especially because the doctrine of Justification has no meaning apart from the reality of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.* With that said, we are now ready to consider the doctrine of Jesus the Christ.

## **THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS THE CHRIST**

After we consider the doctrine of the Trinity we are ready to examine the doctrine of Jesus the Christ. "Jesus" was the

name given to the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary.<sup>30</sup> "The Christ" is Jesus' title or office. The English word "Christ" comes from the Greek form of the word which is a translation of the Hebrew word that goes into English as "Messiah". Both "Christ" and "Messiah" mean "anointed one", and this title is used to refer to the Savior of sinful humans that God promised to send into the world.<sup>31</sup> Jesus the Christ existed as the Son of God from eternity. But when it pleased God, *the Son took on human flesh*. This is the teaching most Christians know as the doctrine of the Incarnation. When the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, at that moment the Son of God, true God from eternity, also became true man. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, was human in every way--except that He was without sin. The Son of God took on human flesh in this manner with the goal that He would offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sin of all people.<sup>32</sup>

The reason Pastors must stress this fact about the Son of God, especially for people who do not know the Truth about Jesus the Christ, is that the doctrine about the Person of Christ is connected to the doctrine of Justification! For example, if we stress the Incarnation but fail to connect this with Christ's sacrifice for sin, we can make the mistake of seeing Jesus as

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<sup>30</sup> See Matthew 1:18-25.

<sup>31</sup> For example, see Genesis 3:15, Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 49:10, I Chronicles 17:11-14, Psalm 16:9-11, Psalm 110:1-4, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 53:2-12, Micah 5:2-4, Malachi 3:1-4, Matthew 1:1-17 and Galatians 4:4-5.

<sup>32</sup> See Hebrews 2:14-18, 4:14-16 and 10:5-18. Also see Romans 3:21-28.

nothing more than a law giver who expects us to do His will.

*This type of Jesus has no hope to give to those who are enslaved by the sin of homosexuality!*

Another reason we need to carefully teach the doctrine of Jesus the Christ is that many people in our society do not believe that Jesus is true God from eternity. In fact, a very popular opinion is to view Jesus as merely one of many good humans in history whose teaching about God may be worth our consideration. Of course, when people have this view of Jesus they must not only ignore the references in Scripture that speak to His Divine nature as well as the fact that He presented His teaching about God as exclusive Truth rather than merely one subjective religious opinion among many. In addition, people who have this view of Jesus usually assume that this Jesus represents their particular views about morality. How often today don't we hear people say: "What would Jesus' do?" Those who say this often assume that Jesus would do what they think is right and proper.

For example, many who believe that homosexuality is a gift from God, if they refer to Jesus at all, they will usually say that Jesus never condemned homosexuality but He did say that we should love one another, which means, according to such people, that Jesus would not only want us to tolerate those who practice homosexuality. Even more, Jesus would want us to affirm those

who practice homosexuality.

Much more could be said concerning all the various false teachings about Jesus so prevalent in our society. Simply put, pastors need to teach people about the doctrine of Jesus the Christ and explain how this teaching fits within the context of God's plan of salvation as revealed in Holy Scripture. This faithful teaching about Jesus the Christ will not only rescue people from the many false ideas about Jesus which often lead to moral relativism. Even more, faithful teaching about Jesus the Christ will lay the foundation for a proper understanding of love as revealed most fully in the doctrine of Justification.<sup>33</sup>

### **THE DOCTRINE OF SIN**

Pastors also need to teach people, especially those who are not members of his congregation, about the nature of sin as revealed in Holy Scripture. In our modern culture where many embrace moral relativism, some think of the word "sin" as a useless term from the past used by hateful and judgmental people who don't understand the meaning of "love". Of course, these people who have such a view of sin are not usually consistent with their own moral relativism. If a person attempts to rob them or hurt them physically they will be quick to point out that such behavior is wrong. But if behavior is a matter of personal choice and personal opinion, who are they to say that it is

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<sup>33</sup> See John 3:13-21 and James 5:19-20. Also see I John 1:7-2:2 and 4:9-10.

wrong? The most they can say is that they refuse to tolerate such behavior, but they can't call such behavior "sin" without contradicting their own world view.

We need to help people understand that God has made it possible for us to know that there is right and wrong, good and evil, and that all sin is ultimately rebellion against God's will. Even though much of our sin is often against our fellow human beings, Scripture teaches that such sins are ultimately against God Himself.<sup>34</sup>

This fact, that all sin is against God, needs to be stressed because many condone various sexual practices condemned by Scripture because supposedly such sexual behavior does not cause harm to any person. In fact, some will argue that various types of sexual activity are a great way to show love and affirmation to other humans beings.

However, not only does sexual activity outside of marriage put one at risk of sexually transmitted disease (which does indeed harm people!). More importantly, even if our sexual activity does not harm others, we are breaking God's heart when we use His gift of sex in ways that He has forbidden. In other words, "sin" is not merely about breaking some impersonal rules. Ultimately, "sin" is an attitude and an act done by a person who

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<sup>34</sup> See Psalm 51:4.

is choosing to divorce himself or herself from the God who longs to love us for eternity.

With the above in mind, pastor should not only use Holy Scripture to help people understand that homosexuality is one of many sins that separate us from God. Even more, pastors must use the teaching of Scripture to help people understand the doctrine of *original* sin which stresses that ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God all humans conceived since that time (except Jesus!) are God's enemies by nature and in bondage to unbelief.

In other words, we sin BECAUSE we are sinners. Not only do we sin by the evil things that we do. We also sin by the many good things we leave undone. This is important to note so that those who practice homosexuality will realize that they are guilty of many other sins as well! In addition, God also counts the evil desires of our hearts as sin against Him. Therefore, even homosexual DESIRE is condemned as sin by God's Word.<sup>35</sup>

In view of the above, once the pastor teaches about sin in general and the sin of homosexuality in particular, he will then be sure to point out that no particular sin is worse than another. This fact is especially important since some Christians

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<sup>35</sup> There are some within various Christian denominations who teach that although homosexual activity is sin, having a homosexual inclination or orientation is *not* sin. But where is there support in Scripture for such a notion? This would be the same as teaching that although the act of adultery is sin, having an inclination or orientation towards adultery is not sin. But God's Word clearly teaches that the desires of our heart (that is, our "inclinations" or "orientations") are also rebellion against God (see Genesis 8:21, Matthew 5:28, Mark 7:21-23 and I Peter 2:11).

hold the erroneous view that homosexuality is somehow worse than many other sins. But Scripture clearly teaches that ALL sin is equally damnable before God because ALL sin flows from a heart of rebellion against the Lord. Sadly, many Christians do not understand this. As a result they also misunderstand the doctrine of Justification because they end up wrongly thinking that our salvation is based, in part, on the nature of our sins compared with the sins (the *really* BAD ones!) of others. Pastors must oppose this false view of Sin and Justification with a passion that is based on a proper understanding of THE PASSION of Jesus!

For example, let's say a pastor asks some of his members this question: *"Who is guilty of a greater sin? A man who kills a baby in cold blood or a 5 year old boy who decides to steal a candy bar from Wal-mart?"* Sadly, there are some Christians who will immediately point out that the murdering adult is guilty of a far greater sin. But then the pastor must point out that both the adult man and the 5 year old boy have the same evil motive. Both of them are saying: *"God doesn't want me to do this. But I don't care what God says. I choose to do this anyway!"* Even though these crimes are viewed differently in the eyes of the world, before GOD they are equally evil because of the motive in their hearts.

With the above in mind, the pastor must also point out that

even our GOOD works are sin before God because of the motives of our sinful nature. Scripture teaches that sinners strive to please God for all the wrong reasons. We may do good works as a way to appease God for sins that we have done. Or we may do good works as a way to impress other people or in the hope that God will reward us for our efforts. This sinful attitude about good works must also be exposed for the evil that it is!

Therefore, as pastors strive to minister to individuals and families affected by homosexuality they must be sure that they clearly teach people about the doctrine of sin so that these people will avoid excusing their sins, on the one hand, and avoid viewing others as "the worst of sinners", on the other hand.

### **THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION**<sup>36</sup>

As was pointed out earlier in this paper, all doctrines of Holy Scripture flow from and are properly understood in relation to the doctrine of Justification. Therefore, a proper understanding of this doctrine is important if the a pastor wishes give true freedom and hope to the person in bondage to homosexuality once he or she has been convinced by Scripture that homosexuality is a sin against the Triune God. Unless people believe that God loves them unconditionally and that He has removed the guilt of their sin through the person and work of His Son, Jesus the Christ, they will have no hope.

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<sup>36</sup> See footnote #28.

In fact, even if homosexuals want to “repent” and turn their backs on their lifestyles, if they do this from the motive that this effort will somehow merit favor from God, then even this “good” work will be sin before God.

With the above understood, the reason many people who struggle against homosexuality are unable to bear the thought that homosexuality is a sin against God is that they have been taught that God’s love for us is based on our worth and our ability to submit to His will in desire and deed. As a result, those who have tried to eliminate homosexual desire and activity from their lives but have found this impossible and then conclude that God must hate them.

One way people deal with the fact that their sin deserves God’s wrath is to create their own reality by denying their sin and either rejecting the existence of God altogether or developing a “god” in their minds who views sin differently than the God who reveals Himself in Holy Scripture. Another way people deal with the fact that their sin deserves God’s wrath is that they end up in utter despair. As a result, some people will commit suicide whereas others may choose to deal with their fear and pain through various addictions (e.g., drugs, alcohol, food and sex). In fact, many homosexuals who despair because they know they deserve God’s wrath will often pursue one sexual

encounter after another in the hope that they will find comfort and love. However, since only the love of God can bring them comfort and hope, their attempt to find love in homosexuality is all in vain.

With the above in mind, the pastor must not only faithfully teach the doctrine of Justification to the homosexual who is convicted of his or her sin before God. Even more, the time has now come for the Pastor to **PROCLAIM** Justification itself. In other words, we must offer more than information about what Jesus has done. *We must use our office as pastor to DELIVER the gift of Justification to the homosexual person who has been convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, and pastors DELIVER the gift of Justification through the Means of Grace that God has given His Church (that is, Baptism, Absolution and the Lord's Supper).*

### **THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE**

Lutherans understand "Means of Grace" as a reference to Baptism, Absolution and the Lord's Supper. These are the God-given instruments, channels or means that God uses to give Christ and the benefits of His work to lost sinners, thereby creating and sustaining faith (which joyfully receives and clings to Christ and His gifts) in unbelievers convicted of sin.

However, having said the above about the "Means of Grace", the author of this paper recognizes that one should not lump

Baptism, Absolution and the Lord's Supper underneath the category of "Means of Grace" as though all three gifts of God are completely equal to each other in the way they are used within the Church. For example, we do not offer the Lord's Supper to unbelievers who are convicted of sin until they first receive Absolution and Holy Baptism as well as proper instruction about the use of the Lord's Supper (see Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:36-42 and I Corinthians 11:23-32).

The faithful pastor will be sure to use God's gift of Absolution immediately when it becomes obvious that a person has been convinced that homosexuality is a sin against God and that he or she deserves God's wrath. Please note that the first goal of the pastor is not to find ways to try to change the desire or behavior of the person who has been convicted of his or her sin of homosexuality. Every sinners real problem is not his or her various desires or sinful actions. Rather, the real problem of every sinner is that we doubt God and refuse to believe in His Son as our Savior. For example, in John 16:8-9 the apostle records these words of Jesus Himself: *"When [the Counselor] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin...,because men do not believe in me."*

Therefore, faithful Pastors will not hesitate to give Absolution to sinners who have been crushed by God's Law and recognize that their homosexual desire and activity is sin

against God. We must proclaim Justification in the place of Christ (see II Corinthians 5:17-21) and declare that such sinners are forgiven and holy before God because of Christ and His work for us.

If the person who receives Absolution has not yet been Baptized, pastors should encourage such person to receive God's gifts in Holy Baptism while continuing to grow in the knowledge of God's Word along with other fellow saints. If the person who receives Absolution has been properly Baptized at some point in the past, the pastor will also use Baptism to assure the convicted sinner that God has claimed him or her as His own and that in Baptism the guilt of his or her sins have been washed away and he or she has been clothed with the righteousness of Christ Himself.

Finally, the pastor will also continue to instruct the repentant sinner who has been brought to faith in Christ and especially help the person understand the blessings God wishes to give to him or her in the Lord's Supper. The pastor will explain that the Lord's Supper is for people who 1) agree with God that they are sinners who deserve God's wrath, 2) believe in Jesus the Christ as their Lord and Savior, 3) believe God's Word which teaches that we receive the very body and blood of Christ when we eat and drink the Lord's Supper, and 4) believe God's Word that they are New Creations in Christ who will be moved by God's

Spirit to resist the desires of their sinful and nature and joyfully submit to God's will for their lives (see Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:8-10, Philippians 1:6 and Titus 2:11-14).

Even though the repentant sinners who trust in Christ will be moved to resist the desires of their sinful nature, they will most certainly experience the fact that even though the total saints in Christ they are also total sinners this side of the resurrection and eternal life in the New Creation. In other words, Christian will not only battle every moment with the desires of their sinful nature. Christians will also recognize that their behavior can never conform perfectly to the will of God because while the Holy Spirit is producing good fruit in our lives, as the same time, our sinful nature is always there with its evil desires and wicked motives. Therefore, Christians will also experience the fact that they will sometimes give in when tempted because we are still weak in our sinful nature.

In view of the above, Pastors must be prepared to minister to Christians who are in torment because they continue to struggle with homosexual *desires* and may even sometimes give in to the temptation of homosexual *activity*. We must always be ready to give them Justification through the means of grace and properly *instruct them about Sanctification as taught in Holy Scripture.*

## **THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION**

The author of this paper has met several individuals throughout his life who were practicing homosexuals and were either convinced that they were doomed to eternity in Hell or that their homosexuality was a gift from God. What led them to these conclusions? These individuals confessed: *"For many years I tried to stop being a homosexual and live as a heterosexual according to God's will. I asked God many times to take away my homosexual desires and to keep me from engaging in any form of homosexual activity. But it didn't work. No matter how hard I tried, I continued to have homosexual desires. Therefore, I finally accepted the fact that this is the way I must live."*

Pastors who properly understand what Scripture teaches about homosexuality must be prepared to correct this erroneous view of Sanctification expressed by the individuals mentioned above.

First of all, we must clearly explain that Sanctification is not a process whereby people become less sinful and more holy over time, as long as they put forth the proper effort. In contrast, properly understood, complete Sanctification exists at the moment of Justification in that the new nature is always bearing good fruit by the Holy Spirit. However, at the same time, the sinful nature is always there with its evil desires and behavior. This is the condition of ALL Christians this side of eternity, and Lutherans often describe this condition in terms of the Christian being both total sinner and total saint at the same

time.<sup>37</sup>

The fact that Christians are both sinners and saints does not mean that we must constantly be overwhelmed with sinful desires and always give in to each and every temptation. As Christians focus on Christ's mercy and grow in God's Word, they will find strength to resist the desires of the sinful nature in an ever increasing manner. However, this Spirit-given ability to resist temptation in an ever increasing manner (as we somehow attempt to measure our behavior) does not change the fact that we will remain total sinners and total saints until the day we die. In other words, Sanctification is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that flows from the reality of our Justification in Christ. This Sanctification never increases before God (as though our growth in Sanctification somehow merits God's favor or makes Him love us more) but always exists as a completed condition for those who are Justified in Christ.

With the above teaching of Sanctification understood, pastors can help Christians who struggle with homosexuality recognize that they can NEVER extinguish their homosexual desires by becoming "more sanctified" because their sinful nature will

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<sup>37</sup> For example, we find this teaching in the prayer of King David found in Psalm 51. In addition, the apostle Paul teaches this truth in Romans 7:14-25 and Galatians 5:16-26. Also consider that at the beginning of his first letter to the Christians at Corinth Paul addresses them as "saints" who are holy and righteous (see what Paul says about them in I Corinthians 1:1-9). However, Paul then goes on in the rest of the letter to point out how these same *saints* are guilty of many types of *sinful* behavior!

exist until the day they die. However, at the same time, we can comfort them with the fact that they are completely Justified before God in Christ in spite of their struggles with homosexuality and that the Holy Spirit will produce good fruit in their lives and help them resist the desires of their sinful nature.

At this point in the paper the author has treated the doctrines of God, Christ, Sin, Justification, the Means of Grace and Sanctification. We have learned how these doctrines are connected with each other in relationship to a proper understanding of Justification. We have also learned how these doctrines must be used by pastors as they strive to minister to those who are affected by homosexuality.

The author of these paper recognizes that much more could be said about the doctrines addressed in this paper and that there are other doctrines that could have been examined as well. However, this section of the paper has provided a basic knowledge of systematic theology and how it must be used by pastors who wish to bring salvation, hope and healing to individuals and families affected by homosexuality.

### **FOUNDATION #3: MODERN PSYCHOTHERAPIES**

In the introduction to this paper the author explained that

pastors can utilize the social sciences and various modern psychotherapies as they strive to serve those who struggle with homosexuality. In fact, in many cases a pastor may need to refer the people he is serving to those who practice various forms of modern psychotherapy because the pastor does not have the skills to help them with their physical, emotional and psychological issues.

We must understand that even though people who struggle with homosexuality may recognize that their homosexual desires and activities are sin which has been completely forgiven in Christ and that by the power of the Spirit they can strive to resist this issue in their lives, they may still have various physical problems as well as certain negative feelings and thoughts that are *either* the result of their battle with homosexuality or may actually be part of the cause of their ongoing struggle with this sin problem. Therefore, the pastor may find it necessary to refer such people for professional help.

However, as was noted in the introduction, pastors need to use discernment when they refer people to counselors who follow one of several possible psychological models. Of course, the only way a pastor can exercise such discernment is to educate himself about the various psychological schools of thought and determine what aspects are acceptable to Christians and what

aspects must be rejected by Christians.<sup>38</sup> In addition, pastors who are ministering to those who struggle with homosexuality will want to find out how each psychological school of thought views this issue.

Therefore, this final section of the paper will give a very brief summary of three popular models of psychotherapy used by many professional counselors and point out both the areas that Christians can find useful as well as the areas that Christians must reject. In addition, each of these psychological schools of thought will be examined as to how they view homosexuality.

First of all, most scholars concur that modern psychotherapy as we know it can be traced back to the pioneering work of Wilhelm Wundt who founded the first laboratory of psychology at the university of Leipzig in 1879.<sup>39</sup> However, one must recognize that Wundt's views about psychology were not completely new in the history of the world as though various people and events did not influence the development of psychological thought up to the time of Wundt. Therefore, the pastor will find it helpful to read some books that treat the history of psychology and the various people and events that have contributed to the evolution of this social science over the years.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> For an excellent treatment of the various models of psychotherapy from a Christian point of view, see Butman and Jones.

<sup>39</sup> For a brief summary of Wundt, his views and work, see Benner, 1219.

<sup>40</sup> For an excellent survey of the historical development of psychology, see Hunt as well as Leahey. In

## SIGMUND FREUD AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Sigmund Freud is one of the giants of what can be called modern psychotherapy. Freud was born in Moravia on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1856. His family moved to Vienna when he was four. Freud entered the University of Vienna in 1873 and became a psychiatrist. Freud later did work with other famous psychiatrists such as Joseph Breuer, but Freud eventually parted company with Breuer because of Freud's stress on sexual conflict as the cause for neurosis.

Freud's theory of personality is based on his concepts of the **id**, **ego** and **superego**. The id is the unconscious which contains basic human instincts guided by what Freud called the **pleasure principle** (the reduction of anxiety) and the **primary process** (the means of reducing anxiety by producing mental images of various needs<sup>41</sup>). Because the primary process reduces anxiety only to a limited degree, the ego takes over the process. The ego leads a person to satisfy his or her needs through contact with an object of desire in the outside world. However, the ego uses what Freud called the **reality principle** which uses the **secondary process** (that is, realistic thinking verses the fantasy of the dream world) that restrains the fulfillment of need until an appropriate object is found. Finally, the superego consists of the moral standards imposed upon a person primarily by his or

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addition, for a timeline of the history of psychology (387 BC to the present) go to the following web address: <http://allpsych.com/timeline.html>

<sup>41</sup> For example, a person who has sexual tension may dream about an object of sexual attraction.

her parents but also from society. Therefore, the superego can be understood as "the conscience". The ego is constantly working to balance the basic desires of the id with the rules of the superego. This struggle causes anxiety which can lead to psychological distress if not handled properly.

Obviously, there is much more that could be said about Freudian psychological theory. Therefore, one more thing we will consider is what Freud called the **life instinct**. The life instinct has to do with a person's basic needs for survival and the desire to propagate the human species. Freud believed that sex (along with hunger, thirst, etc.) is one of the strongest life instincts. Freud used the word **libido** to define the drive that motivates one to satisfy his or her life instincts. Because Freud focused so heavily on sex, the word libido is often associated with this.

Freud believed that there were various **psychosexual stages** that are part of the development of every human from infancy through adulthood. The stages are the **oral, anal, phallic, latency** and **genital**. During the genital stage (about 3 to 6 years of age) both boys and girls must deal with what Freud called the **Oedipus complex** and the **castration complex**.

In order to properly understand both of these complexes, it would be helpful to quote here the following concise explication

from Hall and Nordby:

"[The Oedipus complex], name for the Greek king who killed his father and married his mother, differs for males and females. The boy has sexual desires for the mother and aggressive feelings toward his father. The girl develops hostility toward the mother and becomes sexually attracted to the father. The girl's complex is sometimes called the *Electra complex*. The Oedipus complex lays the foundation for a person's attitudes toward persons of the same sex and of the opposite sex ... As a consequence of the Oedipus complex, the boy is afraid that his father will castrate him for loving the mother. The girl's castration complex takes the form of her envying the male because he has prominent genitals which she lacks. Her jealousy makes her want to deprive him of his genitals. Having a baby is supposed to be a compensation for the female's not having a penis."<sup>42</sup>

The above quotation helps us understand the context that Freud believed was foundational for the psychological development of one's sexual identity. If one is able to properly process the sexual tension prevalent during the genital stage, one will develop a normal<sup>43</sup> attraction for members of the opposite sex when one reaches adulthood. However, if a person did not properly process the sexual tension during this stage, one's relationship with members of the opposite sex could be adversely affected. At this point we are now ready to consider how Freud understood homosexuality.

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<sup>42</sup> Hall and Nordby, 51.

<sup>43</sup> By "normal" Freud means that which is represented by the majority of the human population. Therefore, "normal" is a statistical term and not meant to convey a moral judgment about one's sexual identity.

Even though Freud considered homosexuality to be an abnormal form of human sexual expression, he did not mean to suggest that homosexuality was sinful or immoral. By the word "abnormal" Freud meant that homosexuality did not represent the majority of human sexual behavior.

Because many people have not understood what Freud meant by "abnormal", some have wrongly assumed that Freud was opposed to homosexuality and might even seek to cure people of this problem. As a result, many within the pro-homosexual movement over the years have reacted negatively to Freudian psychoanalysis. However, some scholars have pointed out that not only did Freud see no point in trying to cure people of their homosexuality. Even more, Freud had absolutely no negative moral judgments about homosexuality and believed that homosexuals should be accepted in society. In fact, many pro-homosexual scholars will often refer to a letter that Freud wrote in 1955 to the mother of a homosexual son in which Freud clearly states that has no moral reservations about homosexuality nor does he believe that treatment will likely help. Following is a brief quotation from this letter:

**"Homoeroticism ... is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function produced by a certain arrest of sexual development ... By asking me if I can help ... in the majority of the cases it is no more possible ... What**

analysis can do for your son runs in a different line. If he is unhappy, neurotic, torn by conflicts, inhibited in his social life, analysis may bring him harmony, peace of mind, full efficiency, whether he remains a homosexual or gets changed ... "<sup>44</sup>

In view of the above, it is obvious that the faithful pastor should have some concerns when referring a person to a psychiatrist or psychologist who practices from a Freudian model. Not only is psychoanalysis a long, drawn out process that is emotionally exhausting and financially costly. Of even greater concern is the fact that many modern scholars believe that Freud's focus on sex and its connection with the Oedipus and Castration complexes during the genital stage as the basis for most neurotic behavior is far too narrow and fails to consider the complexities of the human psyche. Most important of all, a pastor will want to discover whether or not the counselor shares Freud's views about homosexuality.

With the above in mind, this does not mean that there is nothing from Freudian theory that can benefit those who struggle with homosexuality.<sup>45</sup> In fact, considering that some models of psychotherapy completely ignore the affect that one's past has on present psychological issues, a Christian can appreciate Freud's focus on the past and how it certainly can, in certain ways, affect one's psychological health in the present. Having said

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<sup>44</sup> See the full letter in Stubrin, 90-91.

<sup>45</sup> For example, see Butman and Jones, 76-88.

that, it must be stressed once again that the pastor will need to use great discernment when considering a referral to a counselor who uses the Freudian model.

## **B. F. SKINNER AND BEHAVIORISM**<sup>46</sup>

B. F. Skinner was born in Pennsylvania on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1904. Skinner received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1931 and worked for 5 years with the experimental biologist W. J. Crozier. Skinner was also influenced by earlier behaviorists such as Pavlov, Watson and Thorndike.<sup>47</sup> Skinner ended up teaching at the University of Minnesota during which time he wrote two popular books, *The Behavior of Organisms* (1938) and the novel *Walden Two* (1948). In 1971 Skinner wrote the book *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* in which he gives opinions about how human society should ideally be shaped and controlled by imposed systems of rewards and reinforcements.

Simply put, whereas Freud believed people were influenced in part by unresolved issues in the id, Skinner believed that people responded like machines when influenced by certain stimuli from the environment. Skinner distinguishes between two types of behavior -- **respondent** and **operant**. Respondent behavior refers to a stimulus that produces a certain behavior in an organism.

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<sup>46</sup> For an excellent treatment of other models of psychotherapy that are related in various ways to behaviorism (e.g., the Rational Emotive Therapy of Albert Ellis, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, the Reality Therapy of William Glasser, and Alderian therapy), see Butman and Jones, 173-252.

<sup>47</sup> See Hall and Nordby, 135-138, 168-170 and 177-179.

Operant behavior refers to the action of an organism that is triggered by a physical need. Therefore, operant behavior acts upon the environment in order to obtain the thing desired. However, such operant behavior can be easily influenced and controlled by **reinforcement** , which is any applied stimulus that can change the response of an individual. In this way, the behavior of humans can be manipulated, guided and eventually changed through a series of planned reinforcements.

As with Freudian theory discussed earlier, the above is a very simple summary of Skinner's behaviorism. What needs to be stressed at this point is that Skinner was a moral relativist who viewed human beings as machines who would automatically respond to particular stimuli and reinforcements depending on their needs or desires. Behaviorism does not ask whether a particular desire behavior is moral or not. Instead, the goal of therapy based on the behaviorism model is pure pragmatism. Various reinforcements are used to obtain the desired behavior -- whatever that behavior may be. Therefore, one acceptable goal of behaviorism therapy could be to develop a system of reinforcements that would help a person feel more comfortable about his or her homosexual identity.

This does not mean that the techniques of the behaviorism model can not be used to benefit those who struggle with

homosexuality.<sup>48</sup> In fact, even though behaviorism ignores the inner psychological aspects of humans as well as their spiritual aspirations, Christians can appreciate the focus that behaviorism places on the way humans are affected by various stimuli and reinforcements in our environment. In fact, Christians can accept that certain elements of behaviorism therapy could be used by God to curb evil behavior and keep order in society. In other words, behaviorism therapy could be one of God's gifts in the "Left Hand Kingdom" and could be used by homosexuals to help curb their evil desires.

However, having said that, pastors will want to avoid counselors whose use of behaviorism includes the naturalistic presuppositions inherent in Skinner's model. Not only will the pastor want to protect his people from the philosophy of moral relativism. The pastor will also want to make sure that his people understand that there is more to the Christian life than having one's behavior manipulated by external stimuli and reinforcements.

### **CARL ROGERS AND PERSON-CENTERED THERAPY**<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> For a treatment of some of the positive benefits of behaviorism therapy, see Butman and Jones, 154-170. Also see Jeeves.

<sup>49</sup> Carl Rogers is one of the more influential people within the humanistic psychotherapy models. Other models of psychotherapy that fall into this category, but are not treated in this paper, are Transactional Analysis, Gestalt Therapy and Existential Therapy. For an excellent treatment of these three models from a Christian point of view, see Butman and Jones, 278-346.

Carl Rogers was born in Illinois on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1902. After graduating from high school he enrolled at the University of Wisconsin, but during his sophomore year he decided to pursue a religious education. As a result, after receiving his B.A. in history from the University of Wisconsin in 1924, he then enrolled at the Union Theological Seminary in New York, which he chose to attend because of its liberal theological views. During this time he also took courses in psychology at Columbia University.

Rogers received his Ph.D. in 1931 and eventually wrote *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child* (1939). Later on he wrote *Counseling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice* (1942), in which he explained his theory of nondirective counseling. Over the next few years Rogers continued to develop his theories and presented them in one of his most influential books, *Client-centered therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory* (1951).

Rogers taught the concept of the **organism**, which is the center of all human experience. The totality of a person's experience is called the **phenomenal field**, part of which splits off and forms the **self**. The relationship of one's self and his or her total experiences will result in either **congruence** (the ability to live according to one's own experience) or **incongruence** (the self being forced to conform to the

expectations of others), depending on whether the self is able to freely live according to chosen experience without hindrance from others. In order to achieve a life of congruence, Rogers taught that every person needs two things: **unconditional positive regard** (the affirmation and complete acceptance of self from others) and, ideally, **self-regard** (self affirmation and acceptance in spite of the opinion of others).

Therefore, the goal of client-centered therapy is to reduce incongruence in an individual via an experience with a counselor who has unconditional positive regard for the counselee and affirms him or her with warmth and compassion. In addition, the counselor will facilitate the development of self-regard in the counselee by being non-directive and allowing the counselee to get in touch with his or her own feelings and desires and accept that those experiences are good and proper.

Obviously, the pastor should have great concern if a counselor is using the client-centered model without apart from a Christian worldview. Rogers would lead his clients to place all their trust in their own experience with the result that either ignored or despised all critical authority outside of themselves. In the worse case, this would lead to self worship and total moral relativism. A counselor who accepts these presuppositions of client-centered therapy would likely encourage a counselee who is struggling with homosexuality to simply cease struggling and

ignore the critical judgments placed upon them by the Christian Faith.

This does not mean that certain aspects of client-centered therapy are not useful.<sup>50</sup> For example, Roger's technique called "active listening" gives the counselor the ability to become a good listener and give the client the opportunity to express his or her true feelings without constantly being interrupted by an overly directive counselor. In addition, Christians can appreciate "unconditional positive regard" as putting into practice Christ's command that we love even our enemies. However, we strive to love people unconditionally based on God's love for them in Christ, understanding that such love for others is not in conflict with Jesus' command that we also proclaim repentance and rebuke those who are clinging to sin so that they might be saved.

The Rogerian model, left unchecked and uncorrected by Christian Truth, has resulted in many people being counseled into a life of self-worship and total disregard for any objective truth that might call into question their experiences or choices. Even though pastors can appreciate and utilize some of the techniques of client-centered therapy, a pastor must also use great discernment when referring a person to a counselor who uses this model.

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<sup>50</sup> For example, see Butman and Jones, 261-275.

Now that we have examined the theories of Freud, Skinner and Rogers, it should be noted that there are many Christian psychiatrists and psychologists who utilize aspects of these models in a responsible manner that is faithful to the teaching of Holy Scripture. The pastor should not hesitate to interview such counselors in his area to determine what models of psychotherapy they use and how they relate these models to the Christian Faith. Pastors who are working with those who struggle with homosexuality will especially want to make sure that such counselors will in no way justify or affirm homosexual desire or practice.

One other thing must be understood. There are many counselors who do not strictly conform their counseling to any one model. In other words, some have an *eclectic approach* to psychotherapy. This "eclectic approach" can be good or bad, depending on what certain counselors mean by an "eclectic approach".

For example, Butman and Jones suggest that there are four ways of understanding what it means to be an eclectic psychotherapist.<sup>51</sup> These four approaches are *Chaotic Eclecticism* (the unsystematic use of techniques without the controlling features of a particular model), *Pragmatic Eclecticism* (the use

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<sup>51</sup> See Butman and Jones, 379-400.

of whatever model of psychotherapy seems best for the individual client), *Transtheoretical Eclecticism* (the idea that a use of various models will eventually lead to the discovery of one, true, overarching model that can embrace all theories and techniques), and *Theoretical Integrationism* (holding to one model but overcoming its limitations by utilizing the techniques of other models).

Butman and Jones react negatively to Chaotic Eclecticism. Even though Butman and Jones see positive things about Pragmatic and Transtheoretical Eclecticism, they end up recommending that Christians pursue Theoretical Integrationism. The foundation model that Butman and Jones recommend is the nature of humans in their relationship to God as revealed in Holy Scripture. This biblical model of anthropology allows Christian counselors to work with assumptions about the sinful nature of human beings as well as our accountability before God and our need to receive the freedom and healing that only Christ can give us.

However, Butman and Jones go on to stress that the biblical teaching of anthropology in itself is not enough to deal with the various complexities of the human body, emotions and mind. Just as the Scripture does not give us information about the development of corrective eyewear or the procedure one should follow in order to perform heart bypass surgery, the Scripture also does not give us all the particular details we may need to

deal with the various psychological issues that afflict human beings. Therefore, Butman and Jones encourage pastors and counselors to utilize the techniques of various psychotherapies while using Scripture as the model so that discernment can be used to avoid those things that are contrary to God's will.<sup>52</sup>

## **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Pastors who wish to establish an effective ministry with individuals and families who struggle with homosexuality while also remaining faithful to the will of God must make use of the three types of foundational knowledge treated in this paper -- Holy Scripture, Systematic Theology and Modern Psychotherapy.

This knowledge will give the pastors the discernment they need so they can provide comfort and healing for their people and help them avoid various books and programs that strive to "help" homosexuals by justifying and affirming their sinful behavior.<sup>53</sup> In the same way, the pastor will be able to determine which books and programs would be helpful for those who are affected by homosexuality by faithfully setting forth the teaching of Scripture along with techniques, information and other supports that will bring ongoing healing and peace into the lives of these

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<sup>52</sup> For a very helpful summary of the core values that should make up a model of Christian counseling, see *Dimensions of a Comprehensive Christian Counseling Approach* in Butman and Jones, pp. 397-398.

<sup>53</sup> For a sample of books that give advice about counseling and ministry to homosexuals that would affirm their desires and behavior, see Chilstrom and Erdahl, Diamant and McAnulty, Garnets and Kimmel, and Switzer.

people.<sup>54</sup>

In closing, the author of this paper would like to offer the following information about resources and organizations that a pastor can use as he strives to minister to those who are affected by homosexuality:

**EXODUS INTERNATIONAL** ( [www.exodus-international.org](http://www.exodus-international.org) )

**HARVEST USA** ( [www.harvestusa.org](http://www.harvestusa.org) )

**KEYS MINISTRIES** ( [www.keysministry.com](http://www.keysministry.com) )

**NARTH** ( [www.narth.com](http://www.narth.com) )

*National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality*

**PFOX** ( [www.pfox.org](http://www.pfox.org) )

*Parents and Friends of Exgays and Gays*

**REGENERATION BOOKS** ( [www.regenbooks.org](http://www.regenbooks.org) )

*Christian Resources For Healing Homosexuality and Brokenness*

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<sup>54</sup> For a wonderful sample of books that give accurate information about homosexuality and advice about ministry to the homosexual from a Christian point of view, see Backus, Dallas, Davies and Rentzel, Davies and Worthen, Dawn, Jones and Yarhouse, Puls, Saia, Satinover, Sonnenberg.

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