

A Biblical Appreciation of Sex

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Introduction

While the word ‘sex’ does not appear in the Bible, the reality of sexual attraction, sexual expression and sexual contact is very clearly portrayed. Indeed, where the Bible’s teaching about the dangers of sexual temptation abounds, it does so against the background of appropriate sexual expression, which is the gift of God to his creatures, whom he has made in his image. This essay seeks to provide a context for understanding the nature and implications of sexual abuse, by developing a ‘biblical theology’ of human sexuality. However, given our context as Anglicans, we shall consider the way in which the Anglican tradition has understood sexuality, before proceeding to consider the teaching of Scripture.

1. The purpose of sex according to the *Book of Common Prayer*

In Christian history, there has been a variety of views taken about the nature and purpose of human sexuality. For example, the view prevalent at the time of the Reformation is reflected in the service for the solemnization of matrimony in the *Book of Common Prayer (BCP)*. Cranmer described holy matrimony ‘as an honourable estate, instituted by God in the time of man’s innocency,¹ signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church.’ He then goes on to identify ‘three causes for which matrimony was ordained’ by God:

First, It was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name.

Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s body.

Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.²

As Muriel Porter has demonstrated, this view is a radical transformation of the view that had dominated Christianity for more than 1000 years prior—that sex is defiling and incompatible with devotion to Christ’s service. Yet even so, the Reformers’ view does not go far enough in recognising the fullness of God’s purposes for sex, in that it underplays the role of the sexual union as a relational and unitive act.³ Few, if any, of the Reformers were prepared to go as far as Bucer, who would have inverted the order of the three causes listed above, and made the new first cause (‘mutual society’) the only one necessary for a true marriage.

I should prefer that what is placed third among the causes of marriage might be in the first place, because it is first. For a true marriage can take place between people who seek neither for children nor for a remedy against fornication...⁴

It is only in the last eighty years or so that the church has come closer to Bucer’s position.⁵ Prior to that, the ‘three causes’ in *BCP* were the dominant view concerning the purpose of marriage in the Church of England. This has had several effects on the view of sex in the wider community.

The phrasing of the second cause raises a number of questions. Whereas Cranmer was clearly following the teaching of St Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 concerning marriage as a remedy for immorality (*porneia*), this only reflects one such purpose of marriage in a fallen world, not its purpose when first ordained ‘in the time of man’s innocency’. While there is no doubt that marriage fulfils this ‘remedial’ purpose in a fallen world, it is not germane to marriage *per se*. Furthermore, the second cause could be taken as giving a husband certain ‘rights’. The wording is, no doubt,

intended to reflect Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 7:1-9. However, there are two problems with the *BCP* formulation. It is directed to the one who does not possess the 'gift of continency', and might be taken as implying that such a one (such a man?) has God-given 'conjugal rights' that he may demand of his wife as required, lest he fall into temptation. In contrast, the language of 1 Corinthians 7 is framed in reciprocal terms of self-giving—each spouse giving back to each other a mutually-owed 'debt' (*opheile*). It is the difference between a 'debt given to' and a 'right taken from'.

Whether or not we may entirely blame the formulation of the *Book of Common Prayer* for this phenomenon, it is a fact that, until very recently, it was widely believed that a husband had an undeniable right to sex from his wife, who should not withhold consent. Until recently, the position in most Common Law jurisdictions, including Australia, reflected the opinion of Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice of England, 1671-1676.

The husband cannot be guilty of a rape committed by himself upon his lawful wife, for by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract, the wife hath given herself in kind unto the husband which she cannot retract.⁶

John Stuart Mill, writing in 1869, was deeply critical of his society, where a wife is effectively the 'personal body-servant of a despot'.⁷ This continued into the twentieth century. Diana Russell's research in the United States indicated that 8% of 930 randomly selected women reported they had been raped by a husband. Russell writes:

Mr Goodner, the husband of one of our survey respondents, appears to have believed that his wife had a duty to satisfy his desire for oral or anal sex; if she would not do so voluntarily, he forced her to do as he wished.⁸

The marital immunity from prosecution for rape was only finally overturned by statute in most states of Australia during the 1980s, and was abolished in England in 1991 by a decision of the House of Lords.⁹

The 'first cause' listed in *BCP* also raises questions. *BCP* makes procreation the prime purpose of sex. In this, sex might be seen as a means to an end, and not valuable in its own right. This has implications for the appropriateness of contraceptives, and sexual activity where the intended result is not the conception of children.¹⁰

In light of these issues raised by the *BCP* formulation, we now turn to the Bible to see what it says about the purpose of sex for human beings.

2. The purpose of sex in the Garden (Gen 1-2)

The creation story outlines five aspects of the relationship between man and woman as husband and wife.

a. Man and woman are equally made in 'the image of God'

Then God said, 'Let us make mankind¹¹ in our image, after our likeness...' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Gen 1:26-27).

Two important implications flow from these verses. First, there is a fundamental equality between the sexes. Both woman and man alike 'image God' or are 'made in the image of God',¹² which means we must reject any view which regards women as lesser beings.¹³ Secondly, the differentiation of mankind into male and female reflects both unity and complementarity. Image bearers are made for relationship. Though not explicit in Genesis 1, this would seem to be because

of the relational nature of God. The wider revelation of the scriptures makes clear that God is eternally in relationship within the Godhead. The marital union at the human level is in some way a reflection of the divine communion of persons.¹⁴ Thus, for mankind to be made in the image of God, there must be this relational aspect, not only with the one in whose image they are made, but also with others who are made in his image.¹⁵ Such others are not restricted to husband-wife relationships. For this reason, the seriousness of the punishment for murder (namely, the death penalty) is predicated upon the significance of taking the life of one made in the image of God (Gen 9:6).

b. A mandate to procreate

And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth' (Gen 1:28).

Even before sin's entrance into the world, God's intention was for human procreation. The human body is intrinsically good. The bodies of Adam and Eve equally image God as do their souls.¹⁶ Their physical union in sexual intercourse is part of God's command, through which other image bearers will be formed. We shall draw some important implications from this presently, when we consider both the impact of the fall on the procreative mandate, and on procreation (or lack thereof) in the eschaton.

c. Created for relationship

Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him' (Gen 2:18).

The typical English translation—that the woman was made as a 'helper' for the man—is unfortunate. In English, the word 'helper' typically denotes a subordinate, inferior or servile role. The underlying Hebrew word ('ezer) does not necessarily have this connotation—in fact, the word is often used to refer to God as Israel's 'helper', which clearly in no way implies that God is inferior or servile.¹⁷ The full phrase in Gen. 2:18 is 'ezer k:negdo—literally, a 'helper corresponding to him'. The sense in which the woman is to be a 'help' to the man relates to the reason that she was created—because it is not good that the man should be alone. Woman is not created to be a servant for man: Adam's problem in the garden is not that he needs someone to do the dishes; Adam's problem is that he is alone, and so the woman is created to be his companion. The animals cannot provide this relational complement to the man.¹⁸ The woman is a 'helper corresponding to him' in the sense she was created to be his complement, the perfect companion. However, while there is equality and complementarity, there is implied also a priority of order that belongs to Adam (1 Cor 11:8-9). Adam's primogeniture, according to Paul (1 Tim 2:13), supports the continuing differentiation between men and women in the family¹⁹ and the Christian assembly.²⁰

d. A 'One Flesh' relationship

Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (Gen 2:23-24).

In contrast to the animals, which were not suitable because they were of a different 'kind' (not 'bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh'), now at last Adam has someone who is suitable for human relationship, because she is 'made of the same stuff'.²¹

The reality of Adam and Eve's 'shared flesh' in verse 23 leads our narrator to draw a normative statement about the nature of marriage in verse 24. All marriage is a 'one flesh' relationship. Certainly, a 'one flesh' relationship does include the physical joining of sexual union, but it encompasses much more than this. The one flesh relationship is the result of his leaving his original family unit and now cleaving (holding fast) to his wife. It points to a fundamental relational union of husband and wife, which transcends even the closest of all other human relationships.

In modern idiom, we speak of the strong bonds that exist between parent and child by saying 'they are my own flesh and blood'. The equivalent Hebrew idiom is 'they are my flesh and bone'.²² Gen 2:23-24 acknowledges that the marriage relationship is 'closer than family'—a man's first 'flesh and bone' relationship with father and mother is transcended by a greater one, as he leaves his parents and joins to his wife in a binding sexual union. Marriage is the permanent joining together of two individuals into 'one flesh'.

e. Naked and without shame

And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed (Gen 2:25)

A sexual relationship between husband and wife is nothing to be ashamed about. Human sexuality is part of the created order, which is declared to be 'very good' (Gen. 1:27). As Davidson puts it:

Sexuality (including the act of sexual intercourse) is part of God's creation, part of God's crowning act of creating humans. And God's creation is very beautiful/good... It is not a mistake, a sinful aberration, a regrettable necessity, a shameful experience, as it has so often been regarded in the history of Christian as well as pagan thought. Rather, human sexuality (as both an ontological state and a relational experience) is divinely inaugurated: it is part of God's perfect design from the beginning and willed as a fundamental aspect of human existence.²³

The Song of Songs extols the virtue of love between two persons, with all the sensuality and physicality of the sexual union between a man and his wife: 'love poetry from beginning to end...[i]t is a rhapsody of love, an outpouring of the feelings of people who are in love, and are experiencing it in the flesh, with all its attendant pains and pleasures.'²⁴ Despite the attempts at allegorising the Song of Songs,²⁵ it bears splendid testimony to the created goodness of the joy of sexual union between a husband and wife.

We may conclude from these five observations that sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is a good gift from God. The sexual union between husband and wife is not a cause of shame, but indeed rejoicing. Through this physical bond the man and woman as image bearers express their unity as companions and co-gerents over God's creation, and through this union they fulfil God's desire for the multiplication of image bearers (Gen 5:3) who share the creation mandate with Adam and Eve. Sin has not yet entered either their world or their horizons. However, the entrance of sin will distort all that was good, including the good intentions of their creator in the expression of their sexuality.

3. The distortion of sex outside the Garden

The effects of the Fall have two implications for human sexuality.

a. Enmity among humans and salvation through the seed of woman

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall strike your head, and you shall strike his heel (Gen 3:15).

Sin brings enmity among God's image bearers, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The divine mandate to 'be fruitful and multiply' now takes on a greater, salvific significance. Human beings need to procreate, not merely to fill the earth, but in order that the seed of the woman, who will ultimately strike the head of the serpent, might be born.²⁶

The rest of the book of Genesis traces the lines of descent from the first human pair. The focus of the account is on what we might call the 'good seeds'—the line through which God's purposes for redemption are ultimately to be traced.

Enmity among the human race expressed itself in all manner of evils, but was especially seen in the abuse of sexual relationships. The very gift of God, which would bring a blessing to families, now became the means of disrupting families. One of the surprising features of the patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) is the space given to sex, and in particular, to the instances of sexual practices which are subsequently prohibited in the laws recorded in the remainder of the Pentateuch. Almost all the major forms of prohibited human sexual behaviour are found in the stories of the Patriarchs, often with Israel's forebears as the perpetrators: rape, prostitution, adultery, incest, (attempted) homosexual rape, prohibited marriages, etc. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, whole societies are affected by the abuse of sexual relationships, bringing about the judgement of God (Jude 7).

At first glance, one might think it strange that these stories in particular would be the ones to be treasured and lovingly passed on from generation to generation. However, Genesis is not simply the 'family history', but the story of the chosen line. It is a story of threats to the line of the good seed, both through circumstantial factors (for example, Sarah's barrenness), and through human sin (for example, Abraham's duplicity). It demonstrates God's power to bring about his plans despite human sin, and his grace in the provision of forgiveness.²⁷

With the coming of Christ, the 'seed' of Gen 3:15 has come (Gal 3:16), and so there is no ongoing need to procreate for the purposes of the salvation of the human race. However, there is still the mandate of Gen 1:28 to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, which came before the salvific, procreative imperative of Gen 3:15, and so presumably continues to be in effect. Moreover, the thinking behind the Old Covenant injunctions of Mal 2:15 finds its reflex in the New Testament in 1 Cor 7:14.

For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

Furthermore, Paul's recognition that there is a marital duty (*opheile*) that a husband owes to his wife and the wife owes to her husband (1 Cor 7:3) is indicative not only of the continuing role of sexual intercourse between a husband and a wife in this life, but also of its being viewed separately from the goal of procreation.²⁸ They are only to deprive each other by mutual consent, and that being for the purpose of prayer, but only for a time (1 Cor 7:5). Abstinence from sex is not the norm. However, Paul's understanding of marriage and sex is also conditioned by the coming of Christ and is therefore to be seen in its eschatological context. Paul's exhortations in 1 Cor 7:25-40 are deliberately nuanced in light of the return of Christ: 'the present crisis...the time is short...for this world in its present form is passing away'.²⁹

Moreover, while it is 'not good for man to be alone' (Gen 2:18), there are circumstances where it is good for a man or woman not to marry. Jesus recognises that marriage is not for everyone: for some, celibacy may be involuntary; but for others it will be voluntary, undertaken for the kingdom of heaven (Matt 19:1-12).

Sex is good, but not the greatest good, and that is why it can be foregone, if need be, for the sake of the kingdom...According to Jesus there will be no sex or marriage in heaven as we know them now (Matt 22:30; Luke 20:35), but neither will there be any singleness, for both will have been replaced by a greater reality, the final union of

between Christ and his people, in which all the redeemed will be included (Rev 19:6-10).³⁰

The final point in the trajectory of the Bible's view of the purposes of sex is found in Jesus' words in Matthew 22:30. In answer to a question from the Sadducees based on the OT Levirate Law, Jesus said 'in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven'—there will be no sexual activity, because there will be no marriage. 'Like the angels', we shall not be engaged in sexual intercourse in heaven. The procreative purpose of marriage does not continue into the eschaton. Nor does the unique unitive aspect, expressed in the union of husband and wife, continue, presumably because there is only one marriage contemplated, the marriage of the Lamb and his bride.³¹ His relationship between Christ and his people transcends all other human relationships. Using mixed metaphors they are brothers and sisters of the King (Heb 2:11-12), and collectively his bride. The eschaton is not simply 'Eden revisited', but a new heavens and a new earth.³²

b. Distortion of sex and relationships

To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you' (Gen 3:16).

The fall also brought about a profound distortion in our sexual relationships. Where the enmity of Gen 3:15 was specifically predicated between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the effect of sin in God's world also brought damage among God's people and specifically within families. God's procreative purpose is now achieved only through pain in childbearing. The relationship between husband and wife is now irrevocably affected: 'Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you'. While the woman's desire is sometimes explained as sexual desire, or the desire to make her willingly dependent or to desire only what her husband desires, it is usually understood that because the woman desires the husband in some way, he is able to rule over her. However, as Susan Foh has argued,³³ the context and use of 'desire' in Gen 4:7 strongly suggests that the desire of the woman is the desire to rule her husband.

The words of the Lord in Genesis 3:16b, as in the case of the battle between sin and Cain, do not determine the victor of the conflict between husband and wife. These words mark the beginning of the battle of the sexes. As a result of the fall, man no longer rules easily; he must fight for his leadership. Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband. The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship) and he must master her, if he can. So the rule of love founded in paradise is replaced by struggle, tyranny and domination.³⁴

Genesis 3:15 therefore prescribes a judgement on both the man and the woman: her disruptive desire to control her husband and his response of domination over his wife. The husband's loving headship has been replaced by 'ruling over her'. The Hebrew word for rule (*mashal*) in this verse typically describes the dominion of a ruler over a nation, including God's rule over Israel, and the reigns of both good and despotic human rulers.³⁵ It is not used of the husband/wife relationship except in the judgement scene of Genesis 3:16, where sin has now brought havoc to the original intentions for the husband/wife relationship.³⁶

The entrance of sin into God's perfect world affects the created inanimate order as well as human relationships, especially between husband and wife. Where the unitive aspect of the sexual bond was expressed by mutual love, now sex becomes the weapon to hurt, manipulate, and tear apart relationships.

In the pages of the Bible, we see example after example of the subversion and perversion of God's good gift of human sexuality as expressions of distorted relationships.

- Sex without love: Samson (Judges 14:1-2; 16:1)

*Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines. Then he came up and told his father and mother, 'I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife.' ...
Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her.*

- Sex via adultery: 'taking' not 'giving' (2 Samuel 11:2-4)

It happened, late one afternoon when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful... So David sent messengers and took her and she came to him and he lay with her.

- Lust turned to loathing: Amnon's rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13:4-15)

Amnon said to him, 'I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.' ... She answered him, 'No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing.... But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her. Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her.

- The multiplication of wives: Solomon's polygamy (Deut 17:17; 1 Kings 11:4)

And he shall not multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away... When Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart.³⁷

The Mosaic Laws pertaining to sexual sins are accordingly accounted as serious, with the death penalty frequently appearing as the appropriate punishment. From an examination of Leviticus 20, J. P. Burnside argues that the structural similarity to the Ten Commandments indicates that the primary issue when dealing with sexual offences is idolatry and the offender's relationship with God.³⁸ Moreover, Burnside argues that the identification of Lev 20:9-16 as a distinct unit within the chapter indicates that the secondary issue is the offender's relationship with his father and mother.³⁹ In other words sexual deviancy is an expression of both spiritual and familial dysfunction. Sexual misconduct is not only a sin against God but a sin against the family, for whose benefit sex was ordained to strengthen the marital bond and to produce godly seed.

The New Testament reinforces the significance of abuse of sexual relations and clearly assigns to God's judgement those who actively pursue lifestyles given to such immorality (Rom 1:24-32; 1 Cor 6:9). While Paul also includes theft, greed and drunkenness in the list of offences which exclude people from the kingdom of God in his letter to the Corinthians, there appears to be a special judgement upon those who abuse sex.

Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body (1 Cor 6:18-20).

It would appear that Paul is relying upon the significance of the body, as imaging God, in his condemnation of sexual immorality. It is not merely sinful rebellion of the mind, or even wicked acts done by the body. Rather it is an offence *against* the body, an invasion of that which is sacred, the image of God. This is true of all people generally, as image bearers of God. However, Paul argues, it is especially true for Christians whose bodies have now been elevated to the highest privilege and status, namely, that of temples of the Holy Spirit. Any sexual intercourse which does not belong to the marriage union, between a man and a woman, falls under this apostolic judgement.

However, as comprehensive as Paul's words are in proclaiming God's judgement upon sin, he is also aware that there is a way of escape. Some of the Corinthian readers themselves had behaved in such immoral ways, but had been washed, sanctified and justified (1 Cor 6:11). No sin, even that against the body, is beyond redemption and the grace of Christ.⁴⁰

4. Conclusions

With this brief survey of the biblical material before us, we may now draw some conclusions about the purposes of sex, and comment briefly on the nature and implications of sexual abuse.

1. The purpose of sex is the physical and relational expression of the fundamental joining of man and woman in marriage. The very act of sexual union expresses and symbolises the depth of this oneness, which transcends the physical act. The sex act, therefore, is designed for marriage alone, for the union of a man and a woman whose commitment to each other is both exclusive and permanent in this life.
2. Sex also has a procreative purpose. The mandate to multiply and fill the earth was designed to be achieved through the procreation of children through the sexual act. This took on a special significance between the Fall and the coming of the salvific 'seed' (viz., Christ), which elucidates some of the Old Testament laws which seek to ensure progeny. In the present, the mandate to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth still remains, but this is an injunction for this world only. Procreative sex is a pre-eschatological reality.
3. There is nothing sinful or shameful about sexual desire *per se*. The 'second cause of matrimony', according to the *Book of Common Prayer*, is unhelpful in that it imputes the notion of remedy to the original design of marriage. Marriage was ordained by God as the only proper and legitimate occasion for sexual intercourse. Nonetheless, given the frailty of sinful flesh in a fallen world, it also operates as an outlet for human sexual appetite, which might otherwise have been expressed in a way that displeases God.
4. Sexual intercourse is a mutual giving of one to the other—a mutually shared obligation (1 Cor 7:1-5). Thus there is no place for any coercive sexual activity, including marital rape, which has often been perpetrated in the name of a husband's so called 'rights'.
5. Adultery and rape attract the highest of penalties in the OT legislation—adultery because it represents a giving to another what has already been given irrevocably to one's spouse, and rape, because it represents the taking of sex without consent.
6. Sexual abuse is particularly damaging because our sexual nature goes to our core as created beings. In the words of the Doctrine Commission's preliminary report of 2007:

As embodied and social selves, living in the world after the Fall, we are vulnerable to suffering both through our bodies and through our relationships. Violence against the body, such as torture, assault and sexual abuse, creates profound and persistent

personal dislocation and pain. This is particularly true for sexual abuse and the abuse of children. It is also true for social abuse such as vilification, rejection, neglect and exploitation.

In all physical abuse, the self is violated through the body. So significant is our sexual nature, however, that the damage to body, mind and soul is intense. The fabric of our lives, physical and relational, is torn. The trust which is indispensable to all human relationships is stolen by the perpetrator.⁴¹

7. Often in the biblical narrative, sinful distortions of human sexuality present challenges to God's plans for 'godly seeds'. However, the Bible also affirms God's power to bring about good even from these evil acts. It is noteworthy that the forebears of Christ include prostitutes and adulterers. The moral failings of one generation do not necessarily 'taint' the next.

By God's grace and mercy, there is forgiveness for the perpetrator who truly repents, and there is also the possibility of healing for those who have been profoundly hurt through sexual abuse.

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This article has been peer reviewed, and is deemed to meet the criteria for original research as set out by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

Notes

¹ The version above is from the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. This service reflects Cranmer's views concerning marriage and the purposes of human sexuality, as expressed in his 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*. Apart from some modernisation of spelling, the words 'in the time of man's innocency' replaced Cranmer's original phrase, 'in paradise'.

² Cranmer's 1549 version reads: 'One cause was the procreation of children, to be brought up in the feare and nurture of the Lord, and prayse of God. Secondly it was ordeined for a remedie agaynst sinne, and to avoide fornicacion, that suche persones as bee married, might liue chastlie in matrimonie, and kepe themselves undefiled membres of Christes bodye. Thirdeleye for the mutuall societie, helpe, and coumfort, that the one oughte to have of thother, both in prosperitie and adversitie.'

³ Muriel Porter, *Sex, Marriage and the Church: Patterns of Change*, Dove, 1996, Melbourne, esp. chap. 5.

⁴ Martin Bucer, *Censura*, in E.C. Whitaker (ed.), *Martin Bucer and the Book of Common Prayer*, Mayhew-McCrimmon for the Alcuin Club, Great Wakering, Essex, 1974, pp.120f, cited by Porter, *Sex, Marriage and the Church*, p.96.

⁵ Compare Resolution 13 of the 1930 Lambeth Conference: 'The Conference emphasises the truth that sexual instinct is a holy thing implanted by God in human nature. It acknowledges that intercourse between husband and wife as the consummation of marriage has a value of its own within that sacrament, and that thereby married love is enhanced and its character strengthened. Further, seeing that the primary purpose for which marriage exists is the procreation of children, it believes that this purpose as well as the paramount importance in married life of deliberate and thoughtful self-control should be the governing considerations in that intercourse.' The English revision of 1980 (*The Alternative Service Book*) followed this lead in its Marriage Service: '[Marriage] is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, strengthen the union of their hearts and lives.' Cf. *An*

Australian Prayer Book (1978) and *A Prayer Book for Australia* (1995), which have also followed this lead.

⁶Matthew Hale, *History of the Pleas of the Crown* (1736) Vol 1 p.629

⁷ John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, reprinted in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. John M. Robson, (gen.ed.) 33 vols, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1963-91, Volume XXI, p.285.

⁸ D. Russell, *Rape in Marriage*, Macmillan, New York, 1982, p.243.

⁹ R v R [1992] 1 AC 599.

¹⁰ Note the distinct preference for abstinence in sexual relations as a means of birth control in Resolution 15 of the 1930 Lambeth conference. 'Where there is a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, the method must be decided on Christian principles. The primary and obvious method is complete abstinence from intercourse (as far as may be necessary) in a life of discipline and self-control lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless in those cases where there is such a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles. The Conference records its strong condemnation of the use of any methods of conception control from motives of selfishness, luxury, or mere convenience.'

¹¹ Clearly 'mankind' or 'humankind', rather than 'man', is the appropriate translation for the Hebrew word '*adam* here, as it stands in contradistinction to the gendered pair 'male and female' at the end of verse 27. '*adam* in verse 26 is a collective reference to mankind rather than to males or to Adam alone.' J. B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, IVP, Leicester, 1981, p. 172.

¹² D. J. A. Clines, 'The Image of God in Man', *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 19, 1968, p. 53. The Hebrew preposition *beth* (normally translated 'in') is a '*beth* of essence'.

¹³ In this regard, it should be noted that man and woman together have dominion over the created order (Gen 1:26, 28-30).

¹⁴ This is not to endorse Barth's conjecture that the difference between male and female *is* the image of God (CD III/1, pp. 84ff). For a critique of Barth's view see M. G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1980, pp. 33f.

¹⁵ 'Individuals, not just corporate groups are in the image of God. On the other hand, there is a social aspect of the image, for the image contains everything human...The task associated with the image (Gen 1:28) is one that no one can perform fully as an individual.' J. Frame, 'Men and Women in the Image of God', *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, Crossway, Wheaton, 1991, p. 230.

¹⁶ 'Body and spirit are not antithetical. They are diverse in metaphysical constitution but there is no native or necessary conflict. In unity and concord they constitute the unique personality that man is, made in the image of God.' John Murray, 'The Nature of Man', *Collected Works 2*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1977, p. 15.

¹⁷ E.g., Hos 13:9; Pss 20:3 [ET 20:2]; 70:6 [ET 70:5]; 121:1-2; 124:8; 146:5.

¹⁸ Note the same phraseology in Gen 2:20, 'but for the man there was not found a helper suitable for him.'

¹⁹ Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18.

²⁰ For an explanation of Paul's teaching concerning men and women in 1 Timothy 2, see G. N. Davies, 'Biblical Study Paper: 1 Timothy 2:8-15', *Explorations I: Personhood, Sexuality and Christian Ministry*, B. G. Webb (ed.), Lancer, Sydney, 1987, pp. 83-95.

²¹ That is, the fact that woman '*was taken out of man*' is not a sign that having been made in this derivative manner, she is an inferior being, but rather a sign of her fundamental equality and unity with man.

²² See Judg 9:2, where Abimelech appeals to his brothers by saying 'I am your flesh and bone'.

²³ R. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, Hendrickson, Peabody, 2007, p.50.

²⁴ B. G. Webb, *Five Festal Garments*, IVP, Leicester, 2000, p. 18.

²⁵ For a review of the Christian interpretation of Song of Songs, see M. H. Pope, *The Song of Songs: A Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Doubleday, New York, 1977, pp. 112-132.

²⁶ When Eve conceives Cain she declares she has gotten a man 'with the help of the Lord'. Similarly, Noah's father names his son in anticipation of the fulfilment of God's promises: 'Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed this one shall bring relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands' (Gen 5:29).

²⁷ This helps to explain the Levirate Law in Deut 25:5-10, whereby a brother-in-law was required to take the widow of his brother as his wife, in order to ensure that his brother's line might continue. It also explains the necessity for faithfulness in marriage within the covenant community (Mal 2:15).

²⁸ It is more than likely that OT saints continued to have sexual relations with their wives, even though they knew them to be barren (Gen 11:30; 21:2; 25:21; Judg 13:2, 24; Sam 1:6, 19; cf Luke 1:7, 24). The surprise for each of these examples is not that the couple were having sex, but that God had been pleased to bless them with conception, despite their age and barrenness.

²⁹ 'In this case their own "present distress" is but a part of the larger experience of suffering that the church is undergoing until its final redemption at the coming of Christ.' G. D. Fee, *1 Corinthians*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1987, p. 329.

³⁰ Webb, *Five Festal Garments*, p. 34.

³¹ Paul describes Jesus' bride as the church (Ephesians 5:32), where John describes the holy city, the new Jerusalem, as the Lamb's bride (Rev 21:2, 9; 22:17).

³² This does not necessarily indicate that gender distinctions will be nullified in the eschaton, only the sexual activity which belongs to the marriage bond will be absent. Note the discussion in Frame, 'Men and Women in the Image of God', p. 232.

³³ Susan T Foh, 'What Is the Woman's Desire?', *WTJ* Vol. 37, No. 3, 1975, pp. 374-383.

³⁴ Foh, 'Woman's Desire', p. 382. Some commentators do not recognise any headship of Adam with respect to his wife in Genesis 1-2; however, it is still recognised by such commentators that the judgement expressed in Gen 3:15 wreaks havoc within the previously harmonious marriage of the first couple, and as a consequence for all married couples.

³⁵ See, for example, 1 Chr 29:12 (God's rule), 2 Sam 23:3 (a king's rule), Isa 19:4 (despotic rule), Deut 15:6 (Israel's rule).

³⁶ 'The meaning of 3:16 would then be: "On the one hand you have a desire to dominate your husband, but he, on the other hand, is capable of dominating you". The verse speaks about power struggle in the relationship between husband and wife.' W. Vogels, 'The Power Struggle between Man and Woman (Gen 3,16b)', *Biblica*, Vol. 77 (1996), p. 207. Although Vogels does not share Foh's view that the complementarity of Adam and Eve was an ordered relationship of headship and voluntary submission, he recognises that the consequences of sin within the marriage relationship brings disruption, struggle and disharmony.

³⁷ For a discussion of the biblical teaching on polygamy see I. Gaskiyane, *Polygamy. A Cultural and Biblical Perspective*, Piquant, Carlisle, UK, 2000.

³⁸ J. P. Burnside, *Consent Versus Community: What Basis for Sexual Offences?*, Jubilee Centre, Cambridge, 2006, pp. 29-37.

³⁹ 'Within this structure, Lev. 20 sees sexual offending as raising two key questions: first, what does this or that behaviour suggest about the offender's relationship with YHWH and, second, what does it suggest about the offender's relationship with his or her father and mother?' *Consent Versus Community*, 37.

⁴⁰ 'The Conference calls upon all Church people to have in mind that, since our Lord's ministry gave a new depth and significance to forgiveness, his Church and the families within it must be a forgiving society, and that there are no wrongs done by its members, one to another, that are unforgivable, or in which a costly forgiveness may not lead to repentance and, through repentance, to reconciliation and a new beginning in living together.' Resolution 116, 1958 Lambeth Conference.

⁴¹ The preliminary report has been reprinted in the introductory essay to this collection.