

# **THE APOSTLE PAUL** and **HOMOSEXUALITY**

A SOCIO-HISTORICAL STUDY



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# **THE APOSTLE PAUL AND HOMOSEXUALITY: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL STUDY**

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Thesis for the fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in New  
Testament of the North-West University

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“Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation – as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

***2 Peter 3:14-16***

This thesis is dedicated with gratitude to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, in the hope that this Church in our day will be strengthened to the glory of God. Let us never fear faithfulness to God's Word. Today the clarity of God's Word must be proclaimed without wavering, lest we fail in the Great Commission given us by our Lord.

***P H Botha***

# ABBREVIATIONS

## BIBLICAL BOOKS

### Books of the Old Testament

Gn, Ex, Lv, Nu, Dt, Jos, Jdg, Ru, 1, 2 Sa, 1, 2 Ki, 1, 2 Ch, Ezr, Ne, Est, Jb, Ps, Pr, Ec, Ct, Is, Je, La, Ezk, Dn, Ho, Joel, Am, Ob, Jon, Mi, Na, Hab, Zp, Hg, Zc, Mal.

### Books of the New Testament

Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn, Acts, Rom, 1, 2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1, 2 Thes, 1, 2 Tim, Tit, Phm, Heb, Jas, 1, 2 Pet, 1, 2, 3 Jn, Jude, Rev.

### Apocrypha

Wis, Jdt, Sir.

### Other

Spec Laws  
Disc  
Ep  
Paed  
Ant

On the special laws  
Discourses  
Moral Epistles  
Paedagogus  
Jewish Antiquities

Philo  
Dio Chrysostom  
Seneca  
Clement of Alexandria  
Josephus

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like many other people I have thought about the biblical understanding of homosexuality. Because of my previous study on sexual purity before marriage and the exegetical work done on key biblical passages for that study, I thought I understood where the real issues lay regarding the subject of homosexuality. This study is an attempt to contribute to the current discussion in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa on the topic of homosexuality.

In bringing this study to its final format I have received the indispensable help of others. First and foremost I wish to express my gratitude to my promoter, Professor Fika J van Rensburg. I am indebted to him beyond what mere words could convey in terms of gratitude. Our academic relationship spans five years and has developed into a warm friendship. It has been to my matchless benefit to be associated with him. I have profited much from his biblical knowledge, scholarly experience and overall passion and love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

I also want to thank Reverend Erlo Stegen of Mission Kwasizabantu for his support and spiritual guidance. It is very special to be associated with a person who preaches the Word of God unambiguously and who has given and dedicated his life to Christ and Christ alone. Through his dedication Mission Kwasizabantu had become a home to the spiritual homeless and a refuge for the spiritual weary. The Mission has also been my home since 1994.

I would like to express appreciation to Dr André van Niekerk and the North-West University for the financial support to complete this study. It is my prayer that the critical reader of this thesis will acknowledge that the money was well invested. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to my friend, Reverend Frits van der Merwe, for proofreading the manuscript.

A special word of thanks to the personnel of the Ferdinand Postma and Jan Lion Cachet Libraries for their help and assistance. All my requests were always met with a smile and helpful attitude. All work done for me was executed in a spirit of kindness and benevolence.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife Andra and my son Chris, whose lives are inextricably bound with my own and who shared in the sacrifices associated with this study. Andra typed the original manuscript, sometimes under much pressure time-wise and then again difficult circumstances at other times. Her perseverance, criticism, comments and editorial and stylistic advice meant much for the general improvement of the final product. To Chris a special word of thanks for understanding when there was little time for anything else but this thesis. His support and help with the laptop computer was vital to finish the work.

To God and the Lord Jesus Christ be all the glory.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Overview:**

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Problem statement
- 1.3 Aim and outcomes
- 1.4 Central theoretical argument
- 1.5 Research methodology
- 1.6 Schematic summary
- 1.7 Chapter Breakdown

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, homosexuality refers to the attraction of a person to another person of the same gender. Homosexuality is derived from ὁμο (Greek: the same) and not from *homo* (Latin: man). All the references to homosexuality in the New Testament are in the Pauline<sup>1</sup> corpus. These references, with one possible exception, refer to male homosexuality (1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:10, Rom 1:26-27). The one possible exception is Romans 1:26, which may refer to female homosexuality (lesbianism). It should be noted that there is no consensus among scholars in understanding and interpreting these passages of Scripture.

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<sup>1</sup> I accept the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals. Modern higher critical scholarship casts more doubts on the authenticity of these epistles than on any of the others claiming authorship by Paul. According to the view that denies his authorship of the Pastorals, a pseudonymous writer uses the authority of Paul's name to combat rising Gnosticism in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Doubt about Paul's authorship also stems primarily from differences in vocabulary and grammatical style that appear when the Pastorals are compared with other Pauline Epistles. However, many well-known biblical scholars regard Paul to be the author of the Pastorals and regard the above-mentioned reasons not as sufficient to doubt Pauline authorship (Gundry, 1981; Lategan, 1990; Roloff, 1988; Kümmel, 1984; Guthrie, 1974). The early church father Clement of Rome wrote that Paul *reached the limits of the west* (1 Clement 5:7) and called upon Timothy to join him there. This suggests an early acceptance of Paul as author of the letters to Timothy. I, therefore, accept in the light of the above the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals.

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Traditionally, main stream Afrikaans church denominations<sup>2</sup> resisted homosexual relationships and practices strongly. Homosexual relationships were judged to be sin. However, more and more dissenting pronouncements are being made by theologians on what the Bible is actually teaching on homosexuality. In 1980, Daniël Louw (Barnard, 2000:87) of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch, said: *because core-homosexuality is mostly an unchosen condition in the psycho-physical structure of a person's sexual orientation, we have to conclude that homosexuality as such, cannot be regarded as sin.* Louw (1995:65) has been quoted to say: *I have no clear answer whether homosexuality is right or wrong.*

The Anglican theologian Torquil Paterson (1984:45) argues: *At this point it is necessary to state a fact concerning the being of the homosexual, namely that he is in no way responsible for his being, and that, therefore, there can be no guilt attached to it . . . His very being is to a greater or lesser extent homosexual.*

Barnard (2000:104) states: *If we have to ask what the New Testament teaches us about homosexual orientation, we have to answer in all honesty: Nothing!* He continues: *For me it is clear that Paul's minority report within the New Testament canon judges abnormal homosexual practices negatively, but there is no pronouncement on homosexual/hemophilic orientation.* The South African Council of Churches (SACC) wrote in its submission to the parliamentary committee on the Equality Bill: *The SACC wants to see the concept of family broadened to include all kinds of family. Among our members were Protestant, Catholic, African Independent and Pentecostal Churches, representing the majority of Christians in South Africa. Truth in the Bible is evolving with time. Some things that were prohibited in the past are no longer prohibited.*

Over and against these accommodating pronouncements the Muslim Judicial Council and the Jewish Ecclesiastical Court stated unconditionally that homosexuality is irreconcilable with their faith. According to prominent international Jewish Rabbis (Jewish Action Magazine, Winter 1992-93) *there is not a single source in all Jewish disciplines of holy literature that tolerates homosexual practices or homosexual orientation. Jews, who approve of homosexuality, do so without any reference to the holy Jewish literature. It is totally without support from any holy Jewish literature written during the last 3 000 years.*

A clear "no" has been signaled from Christian bodies. The International Church Council Issue Paper concerning Homosexuality (1999) declares that *the Bible considers homosexuality, in thought and practice as sin, that the Bible teaches practicing homosexuals will not inherit the Kingdom of God, and that God called only heterosexual men and women as leaders in the Church of Christ.*

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<sup>2</sup> The Afrikaans Church denominations within the reformed tradition include among others the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church), the Hervormde Kerk in Afrika (Reformed Church in Africa), the Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (Reformed Churches in South Africa), the Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk (Afrikaans Protestant Church), and the Evangelies Gereformeerde Kerk (Evangelical Reformed Church).

The Draft Lesbian and Gay Rights Charter, published in volume 8 (September 1992) of Lesbian and Gay Rights states:

1. *It shall be unlawful to discriminate against lesbians and gay men in churches, mosques, temples, synagogues or other places of worship. This includes the right to worship in a place of their choice, and the right to be a member of, or a minister of a religious institution, regardless of sexual orientation.*
2. *Lesbian and gay issues shall be openly raised and discussed in religious institutions as a normal and natural variation of human sexuality.*
3. *It shall be unlawful to promote homophobia and teachings that present the notion of lesbian/gay behaviour as being sinful.*

In the Editorial article of the *Kerkbode* (2 March 2001)<sup>3</sup> it is stated that the decision of the General Synod of the DRC of 1986 is still in force: Homosexuality is a deviant sexual form and homosexual practices and homosexual relationships should be rejected as being in conflict with the Bible. In opposition to the above decision the Church Council of the DRC Tamboerskloof, decided nevertheless to elect a practicing homosexual person to the Church Council (*Kerkbode*, 2 March 2001:1). Members of the congregation appealed against the election. The appellate division of the DRC Ring of Cape Town heard this appeal and the appeal was sustained. A group of practicing homosexual ministers<sup>4</sup> within the DRC, using the pseudonym *Ubi Caritas* (*Kerkbode*, 4 April 2001)<sup>5</sup> wrote and confirmed the fact that there are gays within the church – *as members and officials*. As a group of ministers within the church they plead: *Look again with an open mind at the so-called condemning Bible portions*<sup>6</sup> and weigh the exegetical testimonies that the Bible portions cannot be taken at face value as rejecting homosexuality as such.

In 1973 the American Psychological Association designated homosexuality as a normal variant of sexuality (Gagnon, 2001:400-403). In the light of this designation Du Plessis (2001:7) queries the General Synod of the DRC decision in 1986 regarding homosexuality. The Western and Southern Cape Regional Synod's (1999) apology to homosexual people and the Eastern Transvaal Regional Synod's (1999) decision not to take a condemning decision on homosexuality, are widely welcomed in *Die Kerkbode* of 6 April 2001 by homosexuals and theologians alike (Buys, 2001:4; De Waal, 2001:3; *Ubi Caritas*, 2001:1; Bartlett, 2001:6). A reinterpretation of the so-called condemning Bible portions is pleaded for. This calls for a paradigm shift within the DRC, which, with

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<sup>3</sup> The *Kerkbode* is the official church newspaper for the DRC in South Africa.

<sup>4</sup> The letter is pseudonymous as this group of homosexual ministers fear persecution in light of the General Synod's decision of 1986. They plead, however, for an acceptance of their sexual orientation within the clerical ranks of the DRC and to be allowed to be ministers of the Word, whilst openly practicing their homosexual orientation.

<sup>5</sup> The Latin phrase translates as "*Where is love?*" It refers to the experiences of homosexual people of the attitude towards them, which often lack love and understanding.

<sup>6</sup> The so-called condemning Bible portions are to be found in the Old and New Testament. The New Testament Bible portions are: Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 and 1 Timothy 1:3-11.

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its 1986 decision, finds itself outside the more liberal interpretation of these Bible portions. Desmond Tutu (Barnard, 2002:123) concludes that *rejecting practicing gays is nearly the ultimate blaspheme*. For Monti (1995) homosexual unions are not of a lower order than heterosexual marital unions. Those who reject homosexuality on the grounds of biblical teaching (based on the condemning Bible portions) are referred to as *Bible punchers and Pharisees* and a clear warning is directed to them: *Repent! Stop playing God over other people* (Barnard, 2000:121).

This new interpretation of Bible portions referring to homosexual practice gives rise to interpretations, which assume homosexuality to be a normal and acceptable variant of heterosexuality. This is argued to be the case theologically and social-historically (Barnard, 2000:35), that a contemporary justification must govern the hermeneutical process (Cahill, 1996) and that the Church must not be prescriptive (Landman, 1996). Barnard (2001:3) is of the opinion that portions of Scripture referring to homosexuality was written within a specific cultural setting and cannot be directly transferred as such and made applicable to contemporary society. For this reason he says he cannot denounce sex between two men involved in a firm and intimate relationship. Landman (2001:3) pleads in favour of making the Bible a user-friendly book, which earnestly seeks to realize worthwhile relationships with God and people. Spangenberg (2000:1) also states that Christians need to accept that it was not God who wrote the Bible, but people who made mistakes. This is said to support his argument that the time has come to think in a much more nuanced manner about the Bible and its teachings. To some extent Botha (2002:7), professor in New Testament at the University of South Africa (UNISA), summarises all of the above when he says: *the Church must get away from the idea that he (sic) is the great patriarch which lays down the rules and sets the regulations for something like sex*.

Bartlett (2002:11)<sup>7</sup> suggests that there are already signs that indicate a change in the Church's attitude towards homosexuality. Scholars are asking that the Church formulate a new viewpoint after considering both the context of the Bible and the contemporary society. The principle is: *You listen to science and then consult the Bible and see if you understood correctly* (2002:11). In the interpretation of the biblical portions concerning homosexuality, one needs to consider the current scientific points of view. Muller (2002:10), a minister in the Reforming Church (South Africa), is of the opinion that the Bible nowhere states that God hates homosexuality (as is the case with divorce) and that the few Bible portions referring to homosexual deeds cannot at all be put on an equal footing with the contemporary meaning of what we regard as gay.

The above paragraph indicates a developing paradigm shift regarding homosexuality, especially within the DRC. It is probable that this paradigm shift is fundamentally due to

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<sup>7</sup> Dr André Bartlett is the convener of the study-commission on homosexuality of the DRC Southern Transvaal Regional Synod. The topic of their study is: *A reconsideration of the Church's viewpoint [of homosexuality] with the aim of effective pastoral outreach to homosexual people*.

a shift in hermeneutics. When one studies the pronouncements, remarks, and requests made by the predominantly DRC theologians they seem to lack support from focused research which could result in a biblically justified response regarding homosexuality. The core of the problem seems to be that there is no clarity and no concurrent understanding of the meanings of the Greek words and phrases used by the apostle Paul. The current philosophies of life (e.g. post-modernism; humanism; socialism), affective experiences (feelings and emotions), cognitive strivings, politics and homosexual pressure groups all form part of the new hermeneutical process and jointly seem to determine the outcome of this process.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Paul writes letters to the congregations in Rome, Corinth and Ephesus as well as to Timothy in person. In these letters he makes certain pronouncements regarding homosexuality. These Bible portions<sup>8</sup> have been referred to by the homosexual fraternity as the *condemning Bible portions*:

Romans 1:24-28 *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; . . .*

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **homosexuals**, nor **sodomites**, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists will inherit the kingdom of God.*

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<sup>8</sup> The quotes are from the New King James Version (Life Application Bible, 1996).

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1 Timothy 1:9-10 *...knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, . . .*

In these pronouncements of Paul the following phrases/words are central:

μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν  
(exchange natural use for what is against nature)

ἔξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους  
(burned with passion for one another)

ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι  
(men committed shameful acts with men)

ἄρσενοκοίτης - (a homosexual)

μαλακός - (a homosexual)

The meaning of these phrases/words in their contexts will have to be researched to be able to deduce and understand the implication of their meanings for the concept of homosexuality and its applicability today. Within Reformed Theology there was always more or less unanimous certainty that homosexuality is in conflict with the will of God for mankind, that mankind was created as heterosexual beings and, therefore, homosexuality is a deviation from this created reality, and that it is to be regarded as sin. Hermeneutically these condemning Bible portions are interpreted differently today and as such, thus the argument goes, do not support the Reformed stance traditionally accepted as the norm (Barnard, 2000:89-115).

It needs to be established whether such a paradigm shift is justifiable.

The main research question is: *What was the most probable understanding by the first hearers/readers of the words ἄρσενοκοίτης and μαλακός and cognate phrases in the letters of Paul?*

The individual problems to be researched to formulate an answer to this question are:

- a) What is the current state of the research regarding the concepts ἄρσενοκοίτης and μαλακός and relevant phrases?
- b) What was the prevailing code(s) regarding ἄρσενοκοίτης and μαλακός in the first century AD?
- c) What is a valid interpretation of Paul's pronouncements on the phenomenon of homosexuality in Romans 1:24-27?

- d) What is a valid interpretation of Paul's pronouncements on ἀρσενοκοΐτης and μαλακός in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10?
- e) What is a valid interpretation of Paul's pronouncements on ἀρσενοκοΐτης in 1 Timothy 1:9-10?
- f) What is a valid biblical guideline on homosexuality for believers today?

### 1.3 AIM AND OUTCOMES

The aim of the study is to establish what the most probable understanding by the first hearers/readers of Paul's letters is of the concepts ἀρσενοκοΐτης and μαλακός and relevant phrases.

The following outcomes must be demonstrated:

- a) An overview of the current state of research done on the concepts ἀρσενοκοΐτης and μαλακός and relevant phrases.
- b) A socio-historical overview of the ancient prevailing code(s) with reference to homosexuality within Judaism, Hellenism, and early Christianity.
- c) A focused exegesis of Romans 1:24-27.
- d) A focused exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.
- e) A focused exegesis of 1 Timothy 1:9-10.
- f) A valid biblical guideline deduced from the Scripture portions for believers today.

### 1.4 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is that Paul denounces homosexual relationships and practices as sin and, therefore, they should also today be regarded as sin.

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## 1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is done in terms of Reformed theology. To solve the individual problems the following methods are used:

- a) The state of the research done regarding ἀρσενοκοΐτης and μαλακός and relevant phrases is determined by means of a literature study.
- b) The phenomenon homosexuality in the first century AD is constructed in terms of the socio-historical research method as applied by Malherbe (1989). This is done with reference to:
  - i) the Jewish community.
  - ii) the Graeco-Roman community.
  - iii) the First Century Christianity in general.
- c) A focused exegesis of Romans 1:24-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10 is done according to the grammatical-historical method (Du Toit and Roberts, 1978). A word-exegesis is done by means of the componential analytical method. The data from the Louw and Nida Lexicon (1989) is used for this purpose. The following words/phrases are studied:

μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν  
(exchange natural use for what is against nature)

ἔξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους  
(burned with passion for one another)

ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι  
(men committed shameful acts with men)

ἀρσενοκοΐτης - (a homosexual)

μαλακός - (a homosexual)

- d) A valid biblical guideline is deduced from the findings of the research done.

## 1.6 Schematic Summary

Problem Statement	Aim	Methodology
<p>a) What is the current state of the research done regarding the concepts <i>ἀρσενοκοίτης</i> and <i>μαλακός</i> and relevant phrases in the theological hermeneutics?</p>	<p>a) An overview of the current state of research done on 'homosexuality' in theological hermeneutics.</p>	<p>a) The state of the research done regarding homosexuality in theological hermeneutics is determined by means of a literature study.</p>
<p>b) What was the prevailing code(s) regarding <i>ἀρσενοκοίτης</i> and <i>μαλακός</i> and relevant phrases in the first century AD?</p>	<p>b) A socio-historical overview of the prevailing code(s) on homosexuality within Judaism, Hellenism, and early Christianity and with special reference to Rome, Corinth and Ephesus.</p>	<p>b) The phenomenon homosexuality in the first century AD, with special reference to the societies in Rome, Corinth and Ephesus, is socio-historically constructed in terms of the socio-historical research method as applied by Malherbe (1989). This is done with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) the Jewish community.</li> <li>ii) the Graeco-Roman community.</li> <li>iii) First Century Christianity in general.</li> </ul>
<p>c) What is a valid interpretation of Paul's pronouncements on <i>ἀρσενοκοίτης</i> and <i>μαλακός</i> and relevant phrases in Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and 1 Timothy 1:9-10?</p>	<p>c) A focused exegesis of Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and 1 Timothy 1:9-10.</p>	<p>c) A focused exegesis of Romans 1:24-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and 1 Timothy 1:9-10 according to the grammatical-historical method (Du Toit and Roberts, 1978). A word-exegesis is done by means of the componential analytical method. The data from the Louw and Nida Lexicon (1989) is used for this purpose. The following words / phrases are studied:</p> <p><b>μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν</b> (exchange natural use for what is against nature)</p> <p><b>ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους</b> (burned with passion for one another)</p> <p><b>ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι</b> (men committed shameful acts with men)</p> <p><b>ἀρσενοκοίτης</b> - (a homosexual)</p> <p><b>μαλακός</b> - (a homosexual)</p>
<p>d) What is a valid biblical guideline for homosexuality for believers today?</p>	<p>d) A valid biblical guideline deduced from the text for believers today.</p>	<p>d) A valid biblical guideline is deduced from findings of the research done.</p>

## 1.7 CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

A brief overview of the state of research on homosexuality is given in chapter two. The importance of anthropology for the understanding of cultural influences is demonstrated in chapter three. Sexual immorality as a general attitude with Paul is researched in chapter four. This attitude needs to be acknowledged for the understanding of Paul's judgment concerning what is immoral. Chapters five through seven are exegetical. The relevant Bible portions are studied in context and meanings are construed with full regard for the historic-grammatical context. Chapter eight proposes the most probable meanings for the words/phrases under discussion and assesses the outcomes set for this study.

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# CHAPTER 2

## THE STATE OF RESEARCH ON HOMOSEXUALITY IN THEOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS

Even a smell of a primary source is better than a shelf of secondary sources.

*Leander Keck*

### **Overview:**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Methodology
- 2.3 Construction of the general context for understanding homosexuality
- 2.4 Old Testament sexual morality
- 2.5 Graeco-Roman sexual morality
- 2.6 Judaistic sexual morality
- 2.7 New-Testament sexual morality
- 2.8 Contemporary sexual morality
- 2.9 Summary

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study emerges from concern about a theology of human sexuality. The aim of this chapter is to bring together some of the multitude of sources regarding human sexuality in general but then especially those concerned with homosexuality. The debate on homosexuality challenged the church and indeed also the Bible to give credible answers to questions regarding same sex relationships. The problem of homosexuality is no longer just the problem of the world<sup>1</sup> outside of the church; it has become the

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<sup>1</sup> The biblical authors found it necessary to admonish the believers and Church of the day not to be involved in same sex relations as many in the world of its time did. This is abundantly clear from Scripture portions like Leviticus 18:22 & 20:30; Romans 1:10-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:3-11. These Bible portions are also

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church's problem. The state of research on homosexuality reveals confusion in the use of the Bible in Christian and secular debates about the acceptance of homosexuals into the Christian faith community. This confusion is enhanced by the presuppositions, theological points of departure, emotional experiences, superficial reading of Bible portions, inadequate hermeneutical methodology, et cetera. There have been a number of studies of the Bible portions usually quoted with regard to homosexuality. Whilst most studies are exegetical they do not explore the wider societal contexts (Scroggs, 1983a:VI).

It is assumed within many churches that homosexuality in the time of the New Testament must have been the same as it now is. This is taken for granted. But, to uncritically assume that the phenomenon an ancient author opposed is the same phenomenon that exists in our own time, is invalid. This study therefore views the exegetical process as unfinished until the construction of the context within which the texts originated, has been done as well.

## 2.2 METHODOLOGY

I agree with Van Unnik (1980:203) that one should first research the meaning of words and phrases from the New Testament in their contemporary context for their most probable meaning before one could understand their meaningfulness within the New Testament. The contemporary context represents a dynamic society and not just décor against which early Christianity is presented (Van Rensburg, 1994:1). Early Christianity had a Jewish history and found itself being influenced by contemporary society, which was non-Christian in thought, religion and politics. Thus it can be assumed without contradiction that the New Testament not only originated in different cultural and social circumstances than ours, but that it also shows the influences of these cultures and societies.

I further agree with Malherbe (1983:15)<sup>2</sup> that the main sources for the social construction of early Christianity are literary sources. Archaeological data and modern sociological theories are, therefore, of lesser importance but will not be ignored since the social dimension of early Christianity will be studied to come to an understanding of *homosexuality* in the writings of Paul.

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frequently quoted in the contemporary debate to counteract the inroads made by the homosexual fraternity into the Church today. Homosexual people are found in the Church and the world alike.

<sup>2</sup> Malherbe (1983:17) emphasizes that the New Testament writings must be of primary importance in any socio-historical study. We must begin with these writings and read them with a sensitivity and understanding with regard to their social dimensions before we argue for larger patterns of conformity. Secondary sources would include references in other literary sources concerning relevant social circumstances and remarks and observations from which deductions can be made relating to the relevant social circumstances under discussion.

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This study is in the first place a theological study. For this reason the objectives of the social-scientific disciplines are not the points of departure for this study. This presupposes that the social-scientific results will be used in the description of the different first century communities inasmuch as it enlightens the concept of *homosexuality*. Research will concentrate on the relevant social description of the identified groups by concentrating on the social phenomena (Van Rensburg, 1994:6). This implies that information from the relevant Bible portions to be studied, will be used and correlated to the historical and social data. The aim is to come to a viable definition and understanding of the concept *homosexual* as used by Paul.

This study is done with a specific theological perspective<sup>3</sup> in mind. The New Testament is much more than a product of man alone or a product of evolving global social circumstances.<sup>4</sup> God uses (inter alia) the social phenomena to reveal his perfect will for mankind. Codes of conduct thus established, may supercede time and culture, to be authoritative also in contemporary situations, the post-modern age we are living in.

I view the text of the New Testament not as merely a product of human endeavour or manipulation, but as the product of organic divine inspiration.<sup>5</sup> The relevant Bible portions are therefore studied not only to determine the meanings of the Bible portions, but also what the Bible portions (as used by the Holy Spirit) actually do or are supposed to do (as intended by God) in the lives of the first Christians as well as Christians today. My interpretation of the message of the relevant portions concerning *homosexual conduct* will be shaped by a couple of factors which will impact the application of the message for believers today. In the first place factors concerning my own personality, my general and scientific background, theological tradition, philosophy of life and worldview, my Sitz in Leben, my relationship with God and personal experience thereof, the authority of the Scriptures as the Word of God, will fundamentally influence my interpretation and what I understand the outcome or message to be. Secondly, the intended readers of this study will in some ways influence the process of interpretation.

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<sup>3</sup> The point of departure for this study is to be found in reformed theology. This inter alia means that Romans, 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy are viewed to be part of a volume of books known as the New Testament, which is canonical and therefore, authoritative for the believer in his/her relationship with God and his/her neighbours. This view correlates with the point of departure for Van Rensburg (1994) in his study of the concept *alienism* in 1 Peter.

<sup>4</sup> Elliot (1981:21) confirms that the books of the New Testament are not only the product of a social world but *is a product of and a contribution toward a social world in the making*. This, however, negates the dimension of the involvement of the Triune God *in the social world in the making*.

<sup>5</sup> This view opposes that of mechanical dictation or automatic writing or any process, which involved the suspending of the action of the human writer's mind. Such concepts of inspiration are found in the Talmud, Philo and the Fathers, but not in the Bible. The divine direction and control under which the biblical authors wrote was not a physical or psychological force and it did not detract from, but rather heightened, the freedom, spontaneity and creativeness of their writing. The fact that in inspiration God did not obliterate the personality, style, outlook and cultural conditioning of the authors does not mean his control of them was imperfect, or that the authors inevitably distorted the truth they had been given to convey in the process of writing it down.

## 2.3 CONSTRUCTION OF A GENERAL CONTEXT FOR UNDERSTANDING HOMOSEXUALITY

Holmberg (1990:1) argues convincingly that sociology is not new to New Testament Studies. It was introduced to New Testament Studies as early as 1920<sup>6</sup>. Very important to us is the answer to the question whether historical sociology is possible at all. A world of difference exists between sociology applied to contemporary society where the researcher can test theories against evidence collected and historical sociology where only fossilised evidence is to be found that has been preserved by chance or for purposes very different from those of the researcher.

The approach, therefore, begins with the writings of the New Testament, reading them with a sensitivity to their social dimensions before we draw larger patterns (Malherbe, 1983:17). The implication of this approach is that questions asked and models employed by social scientists today may very successfully inform any socio-historical study of the New Testament. However, models are handicapped in their applicability by the simple fact of rigidity. In some approaches, e.g., the Bible books are simply regarded as the product of social processes, disregarding God's direct involvement (Elliott, 1986:78). Accordingly these texts can only be studied by applying valid social-scientific models.

It is to be recognised that there is a divide between the Bible's historical and cultural setting and contemporary life. Hiebert (1997:15) argues that anthropology is much needed to understand the cross-cultural situation because it examines the problems of cross-cultural communication and helps to understand the processes of conversion inclusive of social change that occurs when people become Christians. People are social beings and are influenced by the dynamics of their social environments.

To construct the general sociological and anthropological context for understanding homosexuality Hiebert (1997:23) provides a holistic model of humanity<sup>7</sup>. This approach recognises the contribution different fields of study can make to our unlocking of the past.

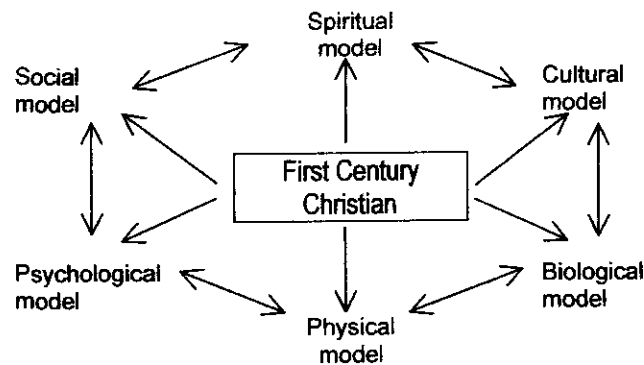
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<sup>6</sup> The basis of this approach was an idea from the sociology of literature. Types of literature or genres (*Gattungen*) are bound, shaped and moulded by specific types of social life-settings (*Sitz im Leben*).

<sup>7</sup> Hiebert (1997) very comprehensively criticizes reductionism and Geertz's (1972) stratigraphic approaches to human beings. In these approaches answers are found in biological or psychological causes without any serious attempt to integrate, leaving us with fragmentary understandings.

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An integrated approach to the study of the first century people and their culture may then be presented as follows:



Adapted from Hiebert (1997:26)

From this it is deduced that, for example, the physical characteristics of people affect the cultures they create. Cultures mould the spiritual characteristics of people and influence the ideas about sexuality. The interaction of models<sup>8</sup> must be studied in order to determine how people's cultural models affect them psychologically, how their psychological models affect them physically (sexually), and how both affect and are affected by their culture.

In line with Hiebert's approach above, Theisen (1975b:35-54) argues that New Testament Theology is interested in describing, analyzing, and explaining typical social behaviour of the members of early Christian groups.<sup>9</sup> This is a very valid point if we want to make any headway in bridging the gap between the Bible's historical cultural setting and contemporary life.

Constructing the general historical context brings with it the realization that the socio-historical discipline, like theology lays claim to give valid results. Sociology within the historical application *explains* theology within the cultural setting and theology again can accommodate sociology within its divine and human reality. Sociology has changed the way we see and understand the reality of early Christianity.<sup>10</sup> As Meeks (1982:276) puts it, the connotations of the verb *mean* have to be significantly extended.

<sup>8</sup> A model can be defined as *an abstract, simplified representation of some real world object, event, phenomenon or interaction, constructed for the purpose of understanding, control or prediction* (Malina, 1975:43). Models are not absolutes but necessary tools in all understanding in the unavoidable task of sorting and patterning phenomena, in our case homosexuality, in its historical setting.

<sup>9</sup> The interest is not so much nested in the individual case as in what is typical, repeated and general. It looks for the structural relationships (Hiebert's integrated model) that are valid for several situations rather than analyzing the singular, unique and particular situation.

<sup>10</sup> The social situation has to be included if we are to understand the reality the texts speak about. It is not simply *background*, or supportive clarifying information concerning the text and useful to know. Rather, it is a dimension of the meaning in itself regarding the text and the reality (context) of the text. It has much to do with the factuality of the texts.

In real life *meaning* is richer and more complex than mere grammatical or semantical analysis can grasp.<sup>11</sup>

Ancient social conditions should be taken into consideration when doing biblical interpretation. This is important for the study of the Bible portions on homosexuality because of the relation between the social background of the Bible and the theology of the biblical authors. The Bible portions did not originate within a vacuum, and the social-historical construction of the biblical milieu<sup>12</sup> is vital for grasping the meaning of a portion or even a word, idiom or phrase.

## 2.4 OLD TESTAMENT SEXUAL MORALITY

The Bible reflects an exotic and fascinating world. A world far removed from the contemporary world we are living in and yet our world is to some extent directly under its influence. Matthews & Benjamin (1993) introduce the reader to this world in a rather comprehensive work and unlock the time and culture of ancient Israel to the understanding of the modern reader.<sup>13</sup> Culture, society and religion were coextensive in the biblical world (Matthews & Benjamin, 1993:xii). The religion of the ancient world inspired its culture, and handed it on from generation to generation. Stories involving sex and violence in the Bible were not fundamentally romantic (Patai, 1959:47-49).

Irregular sexual practices went counter to the inherent decency and good sense of God's people, and violated the national conscience of Israel (Mace, 1953:223). They were *deeds that ought not to be done* (Gn 20:9). The high sexual standards in Israel stood in marked contrast to those of the nations around it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Holmberg (1990:157) concludes that the message of the New Testament is not stripped of all temporal or cultural markers because it was a message that was received, understood, and accepted by a specific community of men and women who thought in Old Testament categories (grace, law, sacrifice, wrath, mercy, salvation) and in categories that had been influenced by the contacts between Judaism and the Graeco-Roman (Hellenistic) culture.

<sup>12</sup> Cultural milieu as a meaning-giving context includes the totality of the conditions under which people live. It includes material conditions, education, the ways their psychological needs are met or not met, their socio-economic efforts and relationships with people and groups, institutional influences, religious beliefs, normative symbols, ideas and other spiritual aspects, the expression of sexuality within the community and behavioural patterns.

<sup>13</sup> The differences being highlighted in our modern era that have direct bearing on this study are important to grasp. The Biblical world is an Eastern world; ours is Western. The world of the Bible is changeless whilst our world is ever changing. Biblical people thought of themselves as households; we think of ourselves as individuals and perhaps most important, as well as most difficult for the modern reader to understand, in the world of the Bible there is no separation between religion and daily life. Therefore, promiscuity in the world of the Bible was not simply a lack of sexual discretion, but rebellion against God.

<sup>14</sup> The Hebrew view of sex showed that sex was an endowment from God, which was to be used in the building of the family. There the seed of the man was precious and, therefore, to be used. To waste it was an irresponsible act. To bestow it upon an improper person or object was an abomination. The book Song of Songs, however, shows clearly that sexuality was to be enjoyed notwithstanding its functional purpose.

With regard to homosexuality we find that only the male form is addressed and the female form is treated as if it is non-existent (Mace, 1953:224).<sup>15</sup> Same sex intercourse as a sexual misuse has earned itself the name *sodomy* through association with Genesis 19:5-7.<sup>16</sup>

Any attempt to uncover the roots of the Old Testament's view of sex must take into account the question regarding the nature of humanity. The distinction between the sexes is a *creation* by God since there is no such distinction on the divine level; the polarity of the sexes belongs to the created order and not to God. It exists because of the creative initiative of God and not because of the request of man (Gn 2:18). Sexuality is, therefore, an element in human life over which man does have control. Not only is dominion granted to humanity over the rest of creation but also over the *personal* world of man, which includes sexuality. Sexuality must be seen as an intended part of human creation in the image<sup>17</sup> of God and because God intended it from the beginning, it is an essential aspect of human existence. From the beginning mankind was created only as male and female, a fact that will be important for our interpretation of the New Testament understanding of sexuality.<sup>18</sup> It is also clear from Genesis 2:18b that man by himself is less than human and that he needs an *other* in order to reflect the totality of God's image and to fulfill God's purpose. This *other* is *woman*, the only companion fit for him. She was the doorway into community (Cole, 1960:188).

The command to exercise the created sexuality is depicted by the word *know*<sup>19</sup> to signify coitus in all its complexity (Gn 4:1). The choice of the word to denote sexual

<sup>15</sup> In Leviticus 18:22 male homosexual deeds are denounced as an *abomination*, while in 20:18 it is judged as punishable by death. In the latter the offence seems to be treated simply as a misuse of sex without any suggestion of its connection with non-Israelite cults.

<sup>16</sup> Mace (1953:224), as many other scholars do, regards the sinfulness of Sodom as proverbial of the most abandoned kinds of wickedness (Gn 13:13; 18:20; Is 3:9; La 4:6) in the Old Testament and the two references in the New Testament (2 Pet 2:6-7 and Jude 7). There is no room for doubt that it describes wickedness of a sexual nature. The term *Sodomite* however is used in the Old Testament almost invariably in connection with apostasy (Dt 23:17-18; 1 Ki 14:24; 22:46; 2 Ki 23:7; Jb 36:14; Ho 4:14). This suggests that it had at first perhaps a specific nuance, which later became more generalized, and showing that Israel's abhorrence of sodomy was largely due to their hatred of foreign cults.

<sup>17</sup> Here one should consider what is meant by man's creation *in God's image, after His likeness*. Sapp (1977:7) convincingly argues that the usage of *likeness* guards against misinterpreting *image* in concrete and material terms. The word *image* implies likeness to God in that man possesses the capacity to think, to communicate, to act self-consciously, and to respond to God's will for him. Image, therefore, means that humans reflect God's nature and possess qualities similar to God's.

<sup>18</sup> God commands male and female to exercise the sexuality He has created. There is also an element of blessing in these words, which is repeated whenever the promise of great achievements is bestowed (Gn 9:1; 12:2; 17:2-6; 22:17). Until the woman is created, the man is incomplete and alone, without suitable companionship. The fact that God creates the sexes and establishes sexuality and then exercises the sexuality, establishes a relationship: human existence as male and female.

<sup>19</sup> יָדָע (*yada* – know). This root occurs 944 times and expresses a multitude of nuances of knowledge gained through the senses. The root is found in Akkadian, Ugaritic and the Qumran materials. It is used to designate sexual intercourse on the part of both men and woman (Gilchrist, 1981:366) as seen in the statement *Adam knew Eve his wife* and its parallels (Gn 4:1; 19:8; Nu 31:17, 35; Jdg 11:39; 21:11; 1 Ki 1:4; 1 Sa 1:19). It is used in addition to describe sexual perversions such as sodomy (Gn 19:5; Jdg 19:22) and rape (Jdg 19:25). Most of its usage is,

intercourse has deep psychological overtones (Sapp, 1977:20). It should therefore not be dismissed as merely a euphemism. Exercising sexuality means much more than mere *intellectual comprehension* or *making acquaintance*.<sup>20</sup> Knowledge involved entering into a relationship with that which is known. Heterosexual coitus conveys knowledge of who one is, in his or her most fundamental nature, as male or female. In their sexual life they discover the deepest possibilities of human companionship and mutuality. Thus the word *know* in the Old Testament signifies *coitus*.

Baily (1955:2) however, does not agree with this interpretation for *yada* in Genesis 4:1 and Judges 19:22. Although he grants that it is used at least ten times in the rest of Scripture denoting *coition*, he interprets the use of the word in the abovementioned Bible portions as such that it may mean no more than to *get acquainted with*. Although few commentators render a non-coital meaning for *yada* in these texts, it is frequently assumed to be the case with non-academics supporting the pro-homosexual cause. A non-coital interpretation may be based on linguistic considerations alone, cultural considerations<sup>21</sup> or a combination of both (Baily, 1955:3).

Old Testament sexual morality with regard to homosexuality is directly addressed in only a few Bible portions<sup>22</sup> and assumed to be the case in a few other Bible portions (Helminiak, 1997; Bailey, 1955; Boswell, 1980).<sup>23</sup> There is no evidence that the Israelites ever approved of homosexual practices. The attitude towards homosexual practices, as reflected in the Old Testament, is certainly not one of approval or even toleration. Homosexual acts between females are not mentioned at all, but when committed by males were punished by death. The Old Testament does not differentiate between kinds of homosexual acts; the laws term the offence of homosexual acts simply lying with a male *as with womankind*.<sup>24</sup> The impression from the Bible is that homosexual acts were perhaps relatively uncommon in Israel but were regarded as deeds, which merited the severest penalty. Whilst the Law condemned male homosexual practices and punished them with death, the method of execution was not prescribed. However, the Mishnah and the Talmud prescribed stoning. Although the Law took no cognisance of homosexual acts between females, the Talmud regards

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however, concerned with God's knowledge of man and his ways, man's knowledge, to distinguish, to express acquaintance and to designate relationship to the divine.

<sup>20</sup> The word has the connotation of *experiencing, becoming acquainted, even being able*. Today we might call such knowledge *existential* or use the word *experience* in the place thereof. Hence sexuality provides the opportunity for the most complete, most accurate, most fulfilling, most satisfying and most comprehensive knowledge of one another available to man and woman.

<sup>21</sup> Cultural considerations include knowledge of the local circumstances and social conditions to interpret the motives, conduct and intentions conveyed by a word within context.

<sup>22</sup> Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13.

<sup>23</sup> Genesis 19:1-11; Judges 19.

<sup>24</sup> ~~coitus femineus~~— literally, with *the lyings of a woman*. The Septuagint has *κοίτην γυναικός* and the Vulgate has *coitu femineo*.

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lesbianism as obscenity, which disqualified the women from marriage with a priest. The Old Testament prohibited an adult<sup>25</sup> male from committing any homosexual acts.

In summary, given the Hebrew understanding of *yada*, knowledge necessarily involved entering into relationship with that which is known; in a sexual sense such knowledge is not available or possible to males entering into a sexual relationship. Sexuality provides the opportunity for the most complete, most accurate and most fulfilling knowledge available to humans (Sapp, 1977:21), but only in the context male and female, never in the context male and male. Maleness or femaleness can only be comprehended when exercised in the deepest and most intimate relationship possible with someone of the other sex. Therefore, coitus, as well as other heterosexual experiences, conveys knowledge of who one is, in his or her most fundamental given nature, as male and female. This standard is faithfully upheld throughout the Old Testament in stark contrast to Graeco-Roman sexual morality.

## 2.5 GRAECO-ROMAN SEXUAL MORALITY

Homosexuality in classical Greek society is richly documented, but all Greek art, literature and archival material with the exception of a little poetry was the work of males. Female homosexuality is sparsely documented. The five most important sources of material on homosexuality are (1) late archaic and early classical homosexual poetry; (2) Attic comedy, especially Aristophanes and his contemporaries; (3) Plato; (4) a speech of Aiskhines, the *Prosecution of Timarkhos*; (5) homosexual poetry of the Hellenistic period (Dover, 1978:9).

The Greeks were aware that individuals differ in their sexual preferences. The Greek language has no nouns corresponding to the English nouns *homosexual* and a *heterosexual*. Dover (1978:60) adequately demonstrates that the Greeks assumed that mostly any individual responds at different times both to homosexual and to heterosexual stimuli and that hardly no male both penetrates other males and submit to penetration by other males at the same stage of his life (Dover, 1978:87).

From about the sixth century onwards, the Greeks regarded homosexual desire by a man or youth for a boy, or by a man for a youth, as natural (Dover, 1974:213). The Athenian adolescent growing up in the time of Plato, took homosexuality for granted because his father's and grandfather's generations took it for granted. It was neither *unnatural* nor *effeminate* if he experienced homosexual desire for younger boys.

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<sup>25</sup> The Talmud in expanding Leviticus 20:13 suggests that *mankind* signified any male without distinction of age. This prohibition extended to active sodomy (Baily, 1955:62) whilst passive sodomy was prohibited by another law (Dt 23:17).

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Pederasty<sup>26</sup> is generally used to describe the sexual attraction of an adult to an immature child, but to the Greeks it signified the love of a man for a boy who had passed the age of puberty but not yet reached maturity. Homosexuality in the modern sense, between two adults of the same age group is seldom attested to in ancient Athens (Tannahill, 1980:86). The Greek love for boys is not hostile to marriage, but supplements it as an important factor in education<sup>27</sup> and denotes a decided bi-sexuality among the Greeks. The rape of boys also existed (Licht, 1949:457).

In vase painting, homosexual relationships are shown with very few exceptions in one of two ways. There are a number of examples of anal intercourse, in which the participants are members of the same age group but more often what is shown is interfemoral connection. The older person is usually shown as making the advance and there is little suggestion of *education*.

Pederasty was not regarded as an abnormality in ancient Rome (Vanggaard, 1972:127) and neither was it regarded as a weakness of the personality. Pederasty was no longer a means employed by the state in the education of the young, controlled by the highest authorities and an obligation for the older men to take upon themselves. It was not institutionalised as was previously done in Greece. In the late Hellenistic period pederasty is to be regarded as an erotic<sup>28</sup> phenomenon. In the state religion of Rome, phallic worship did not occupy an important place. However, images of phalli were common and can still today be seen in Pompeii.

Greek and Roman texts are full of homosexuality in action. Catullus boasts of his prowess and Cicero celebrates the kisses from the lips of his slave-secretary. According to taste and preference some chose women, some boys and some both. Horace repeatedly relates he adores both. Virgil preferred boys only and the Emperor Claudius, women only. Hadrian's catamite, Antinous, was honoured by an official cult after his death. The plays of Plautus are full of homosexual allusions. In Roman society *sodomy* was regarded as merely licentious, no concealment was necessary and lovers of boys were just as numerous as lovers of women (Veyne, 1985:28). In Rome the

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<sup>26</sup> Pederasty (παιδεραστία) is etymologically a combination of παῖς (boy) and ἐρᾶν (to love). The word *pederasty* did not have a negative connotation to it that it has for us today, because it was regarded as an expression for one variety of love. There were in Greek antiquity those who repudiated the idea of the love of boys and the seduction of boys was unreservedly repudiated. Women in general objected to everything that had to do with this love of boys (Licht, 1949:442, 446-447; Veyne, 1985:32; Scroggs, 1983a:19, 50).

<sup>27</sup> Throughout the two centuries (from the early sixth to the early fourth century) during which pederasty flourished, the Greeks maintained that it was for the sake of higher education. When a boy finished his orthodox schooling he was taken under the wing of an older man (usually in the thirties).

<sup>28</sup> As pure eroticism, homosexuality was prominent in pre-Christian Hellenism. A vast homosexual prostitution existed and there were very little if any moralistic attitudes towards prostitution. Petronius in his *Satyricon* depicts the sexual abandonment of his characters in shared hetero- and homosexual relations. The same attitude is to be found in the works of Catullus, Tibullus and Vergil. Suetonius testifies to the fact that homosexuality formed part of the erotic many-sidedness of Nero and Caligula. Nero married two men in succession (Nissinen, 1998:71; Vanggaard, 1972:132; Karlen, 1971:50).

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favourite male slave took the place of the freeborn *ephebos*.<sup>29</sup> Legislation in place meant to suppress homosexuality was in fact meant to stop freeborn citizens from being ravished like slaves.<sup>30</sup> This protected freeborn male youths and girls alike.

It is clear that in the Graeco-Roman world one's behaviour was judged not for one's preference for girls or boys, but by whether one played an active or a *passive* role. To be *active* was male. To take one's pleasure was virile, to accept it servile. The freeborn male who was a homosexual of the passive kind was looked upon with utter scorn. The passive homosexual was not rejected for his homosexuality but for his passivity, a very serious moral and political infirmity.

## 2.6 JUDAISTIC SEXUAL MORALITY

The views of Hellenistic Jewish authors were shaped not only by contemporary views of Graeco-Roman philosophers but especially by their own Scriptures. Gagnon (2001:161) concludes that the number of texts<sup>31</sup> that attest directly to the issue of homosexual intercourse are numerous enough and unanimous, allowing for an accurate assessment of Judaist views on the matter. Evidence from texts suggests strongly that early Judaism unanimously rejected homosexual conduct. The relevant texts are primarily from the writings of Philo and Josephus.<sup>32</sup>

Other references<sup>33</sup> also exist and echo the stance of Philo and Josephus. Over and above the texts, which explicitly address homosexuality, there are many other texts,

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<sup>29</sup> If the master was so oversexed that his girl slaves were not enough, he had to ravish the boys. The important thing was to respect women, virgins and youths of free birth (Veyne, 1985:29; Tannahill, 1980:92).

<sup>30</sup> The Lex Scantinia of 149BC was later confirmed by Augustan legislation, the Lex Julia. The lawgiver was not trying to ban homosexuality but solely tried to protect the young citizen against infringement of his or her person. Rome was a slave-owning society in which the master had sexual dominance, so that slaves expressed their compliance to the sexual dominance of their master in the saying: *There is nothing shameful in the doing of whatever the master orders*.

<sup>31</sup> Actual instances of homosexual behaviour amongst Jews covering the period 200BC to 200AD are not attested. A specific case is reported for ca 300AD when Rabbi Yehudah ben Pazzi caught two men having sex in an attic.

<sup>32</sup> Philo was the Jewish philosopher from Alexandria, Egypt, who lived ca 10BC-45AD and Josephus was a Jewish priest, general and historian who lived ca 37-100AD. He lived in Jerusalem to the age of about 30 years and then took up residence in Rome under the patronage of the Emperor. Philo addresses homosexual sex in *On the life of Abraham*, *Special Laws*, and *On the Contemplative Life*. Josephus does so in *Jewish Antiquities* and *Against Apion*. Gagnon (2001) discuss the texts in detail in a most comprehensive study on homosexual practice.

<sup>33</sup> In the *Letter of Aristeas 152* (ca 200-100BC, Alexandria) the author attests to the fact that Jews are morally superior to the non-Jews in that the latter *not only draw near to males but also defile their mothers and even their daughters. We Jews are quite separated from these practices*. In the Sibylline Oracles 3 (ca 163-145BC, Alexandria) we read that when the Romans come to dominate the world, *immediately compulsion to impiety will come upon these men. Male will have intercourse with male and they will set up boys in houses of ill fame and the Jews are mindful of holy wedlock, and do not engage in impious intercourse with male children and avoid adultery and indiscriminate (confused) intercourse with males*. The *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (ca 50BC-100AD) urges that *the limits of sexual intercourse set by nature not be transgressed by intercourse between males, nor should females imitate . . . the sexual role of men*. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (ca 150BC-100AD) speaks of *corrupters of boys* and of Sodom, which *exchanged the order of its nature*.

which allude to homosexual intercourse including those, which broadly forbid πορνεία (sexual immorality). The Qumran community did not expressly forbid same-sex intercourse, but did provide punishment for a member who even accidentally exposed his genitals to other males (Gagnon, 2001:162).

No Jew in antiquity would argue for a pro-stance towards male-male sexual intercourse given the severe stance against homosexual intercourse in the Levitical laws. The Levitical laws were recognised and applied to all male-male intercourse, regardless of the relative age, status or active/passive role of the participants.

Apart from the obvious fact that the Levitical law forbade same-sex intercourse, Jews, like Greek and Roman critics of same-sex intercourse, rejected homosexual conduct on the ground that it was *contrary to nature or against nature* (παρὰ φύσιν).<sup>34</sup> Evidence for their stance was drawn from the creation narratives where God intended heterosexual<sup>35</sup> intercourse and they understood and argued for *anatomical complementarity or fittedness* of the male and female sex organs (Waetjen, 1996:103). Gender-transgressing feminization of the receptive homosexual partner evidenced and demonstrated homoeroticism's misdirection (Sapp, 1977:31).

In conclusion one can summarise that Judaism regards homosexual behaviour as a sin and a crime and that Jewish tradition assumes that such behaviour is not the result of anything else (Umansky, 1997:181). Created as a male, a man must remain pure and unblemished in his nature as maleness. To surrender it sexually by assuming the role of the opposite sex is a desecration of the divine order of creation. Same-sex sexual relations are forbidden. Sexual relations must be conducted within God-given boundaries.

## 2.7 NEW-TESTAMENT SEXUAL MORALITY

Jesus made no *direct* or *explicit* comments on same-sex intercourse, just as He made no direct comments about many other important topics. The collective body of the

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<sup>34</sup> Four reasons can be precipitated from sources why only intercourse between male and female was considered to be *in accordance with nature or natural* (kata physin). Of primary importance are (1) homosexual intercourse cannot lead to procreation; (2) homosexual intercourse is contra to God's sexual intention for males and females by uniting two non-complementary sexual beings. The focus centers on the inherent degradation of males being penetrated as if they are females. The other two reasons are of lesser importance being that (3) homoerotic desire constitutes an excess of passion and (4) even animals do not practice homosexual intercourse.

<sup>35</sup> Taxonomic classification, the typing or categorizing of human beings was governed by the natural fact of sex. Genitals determined gender. Therefore humankind was divided into two types of human beings, male and female. The interpretations of the text concerned with the creation of the male and female bear witness to this binary differentiation. Consequently man (*ish*) and woman (*ishshah*) belong together. The integrity of this divine established differentiation of male and female is guarded by the Holiness Code of Leviticus 17-26. There is no compromise of sexual identity. Man's sexual identity is defined by God, his orientation is ordained by God and because his sexual activity is ordained to be within a heterosexual context, homosexuality is not a third kind of natural sex or alternative sexual orientation in God's created world.

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Jesus tradition includes, therefore, no statement to the effect that same-sex intercourse is good or bad. However, Jesus was not silent about same-sex intercourse in as much as the inferential data clearly outlines Jesus' perspective (Gagnon, 2001:187).<sup>36</sup> Nothing in the Jesus tradition suggests that Jesus abrogated the Torah. Although Jesus does not explicitly refer to same-sex intercourse, implicit references exist.<sup>37</sup> The impression one gets from Matthew 5:27-32 is that Jesus took sexual sin seriously. He regarded all sexual activity (thoughts and deeds) outside of lifelong marriage to one person of the opposite sex as unacceptable. Jesus' encounters with women who were considered sexual *sinner*s do not support the conclusion that Jesus was soft on sexual *sin*. Jesus forgave sexual sin, like all other sins, in the expectation of transformed behaviour. What is clear from the evidence that the Bible portions do offer, is that Jesus is no defender of homosexual behaviour. In what he says and in what he fails to say He confirms the authority of the Old Testament witness against same-sex intercourse and the Old Testament is unanimous in its rejection of homosexual practice as are the Jewish authors in the centuries just before and after Jesus' birth.

The key Bible portions in the New Testament<sup>38</sup> are Romans 1:24-27 and the vice lists in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10. Romans 1:24-27 is central for the understanding of New Testament attitude towards homosexual conduct and on which Christians must base their moral doctrine. It makes an explicit statement not only about same-sex intercourse among men but also about same-sex intercourse among women (Gagnon, 2001:229). Here we need to come to grips with Paul's thoughts if we want to reach a valid understanding of sexuality and especially same-sex sexuality.<sup>39</sup> Paul clearly relied heavily on the Hebrew Scriptures for his understanding of God's will for man (Furnish, 1968:28-44). In general on none of the issues on sexuality did Paul deviate substantially from the traditions, which he spent a large part of his life learning, living and protecting.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Given the first-century Judaistic context it is most unlikely that Jesus would have adopted a fundamentally different stance toward same-sex intercourse. Jesus' appeal to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 in his discussion of divorce (Mk 10:1-12) confirms his support of an exclusively heterosexual model of monogamy. Jesus' opinion on sexual ethics was in general more rigorous than those of his contemporary culture.

<sup>37</sup> No first-century Jew for example, could have heard Jesus' reference to sexual immoralities (*πορνεία*) in Mark 7:21-23 without having in mind the list of forbidden sexual offences in Leviticus 18 and 20 (incest, adultery, same-sex intercourse, bestiality, fornication and prostitution).

<sup>38</sup> The New Testament is in organic continuity with the Old Testament. The authors of the New Testament were basically satisfied and at ease with what the Old Testament taught. What the Old Testament said about sexuality was accepted and assumed by the authors of the New Testament.

<sup>39</sup> Paul's attitude and expression are somewhat complex and at times paradoxical, a fact noted in his own time: *Our beloved Paul wrote to you . . . speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures* (2 Pet 3:15-16).

<sup>40</sup> By his own affirmation, Paul was a strict Jew before his conversion, in fact a Pharisee and a son of Pharisees (Acts 23:6; 26:4-11). In Galatians 1:14 he says, *I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.*

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Paul unlike Jesus did not spend his entire life in Palestine. He was a cosmopolitan, a world traveler who spoke and wrote Greek. Furnish (1968:44-50) will have it that the Judaism that Paul learned was neither pure Old Testament nor Palestinian Judaism, but Diaspora Judaism, which was substantially influenced by Hellenistic thought and language.<sup>41</sup> It is essential to the understanding of Paul to realise that although he may have used some of the same language as Hellenistic philosophy, this does not mean he intended the same content or meaning. Paul condemns only πορνεία (sexual immorality) and not sexuality properly expressed.

As with the Old Testament and Jesus, Paul's concern is with the misuse of sexuality and not sexuality *per se*. He denounces both male-male and female-female practices as contrary to nature. Both the ἀρσενοκοίτης (*arsenokoites*) or active homosexual or sodomist and the μαλακός (*malakos*) or *catamite*<sup>42</sup> are threatened with spiritual retribution by disinheritance from the kingdom of God.

## 2.8 CONTEMPORARY SEXUAL MORALITY

Historically Christians have taught that people do not have the right to do with their bodies as they please. Such a view is undermined today by defenders of three discernable and outspoken factions in contemporary culture: feminists, abortionists and homosexuals.<sup>43</sup> Questionable assumptions, sometimes most unscientific, in ethics, the human sciences and political thought presupposes a society tolerant to homosexuality in personal, ecclesiastical, and civil spheres. There can be no doubt that the visibility of homosexuality today is high and the organised pro-homosexual movement to dignify homosexuality and to have it recognised as *normal sexual practice* has infiltrated every area of culture: from the church to the television, from education to legislation (McCafferty & Hammond, 2001:5). The growing number of proponents of this view are of the opinion that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality and that it even contains examples of loving, committed homosexual relationships<sup>44</sup> within its pages. The call to

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<sup>41</sup> Paul was known as the *Apostle to the Gentiles* (Rom 1:14), people whose sexual morals were generally lower than those of the Jews. The influence of dualistic anthropologies tended to bring the Gentiles to see sexuality in ways totally alien to Paul's outlook as a Jew.

<sup>42</sup> The interpretation of these two words has commanded a huge amount of attention by academics and non-academics alike. Both words *arsenokoites* and *malakos* occur in a vice list in 1 Corinthians 6:9, and *arsenokoites* recurs in 1 Timothy 1:10. The translation of these two words varies as may be ascertained from the different English Bible translations. In the twentieth century they have often been taken to refer to people who engage in male homosexual sex.

<sup>43</sup> I am in principle agreement with Bahnsen (1978:5) when he says: *the ironic problem with the modern discussion of homosexuality is its virtually uncritical perpetuation of cultural prejudices in an unconditional sense especially where the contemporary culture is the point of departure*. This reiterates the simple fact that the Bible has lost its authority within contemporary society to teach, admonish and guide societal moral approaches.

<sup>44</sup> The following women partners in the New Testament are sometimes referred to: Tryphaena and Tryphosa (Rom 16:12); Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:1); Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38-42) and in the Old Testament: Ruth and Naomi (Ru 1:16-17) (D'Angelo, 1997:441-455). The following male partners in the Old Testament are referred to:

receive homosexuality as morally acceptable behaviour is now being heard in ecclesiastical circles and by the church at large (Barnard, 2000:87). Theologians are calling for the reinterpretation of the Bible portions historically taken to condemn homosexual acts and appeal to the church to *normalise* homosexuality as an acceptable variant of sexuality (Bartlett, 2002:11).

White & Niell (2002:15) understands the same-sex controversy, at its core, to be a controversy over the authority and interpretation of the Bible. Schaeffer (1982:37) in his discussion of relativism and the denial of absolutes in current society says that some current forums of homosexuality are to be seen as a philosophic problem referred to as *philosophic homosexuality*. Much of the current debate centres on sexual and gender identity (White, 1993:133). This is reiterated by Keen (1992:72)<sup>45</sup> in reference to sex and gender confusion as the underlying problem within alternative human sexuality. The priest Fr Oraison (1977:2) states that a man who is homosexual is not responsible for his situation, it is not a chosen condition but a condition ordained by God. This leads to a quite recent development, the distinction between *homosexual* and *homosexuality*.<sup>46</sup> The defense of homosexuality can be summarised in Corvino's (1997:3-16) arguments against the three most common objections: that homosexual relationships are unnatural, that they are harmful and that they violate biblical teaching.

Much effort in the current debate centers on the subject of *nature*. From this follows the appeal for a third category.<sup>47</sup> Bahnsen (1978:30) is adamant there can be no third natural sex or alternative sexual orientation in God's diverse world. The appeal to textual data in the contemporary debate brought about two major categories of exegetes, the *traditionalists* and the *revisionists*. Pronk (1993:265) concedes that the majority of exegetes come to the conclusion that *these texts unanimously reject homosexual behaviour*.<sup>48</sup> The minority report may be summarised in the words of

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David and Jonathan (1 Sa 18-23) with special reference to David's eulogy for Jonathan in 2 Samuel 1; Cain and Abel (Oraison, 1977:73; Horner, 1978:59-60).

<sup>45</sup> Keen (1992:72) writes: *The earthquake that is shaking men and women, their roles and inter-relationships, is part and parcel of the world culture's tectonic plates. The changes in our gender roles are only one aspect of the upheaval that accompanies the death of one epoch and the birth of another.*

<sup>46</sup> Hanigan (1988:35) underlines the difference between an irreversible homosexual orientation and the occasional experience of homosexual attraction, desire, or even overt behaviour. Homosexual orientation involves the being and personality of a person in a very fundamental way. This distinction manifests in orientation and behaviour. Finnis (1997:31) defines orientation as an overtly manifested active willingness to engage in homosexual conduct. On the other hand there are homosexual acts.

<sup>47</sup> Pronk (1993:xii) states: *For gays and lesbians we use, therefore, a third category, namely that of sexual orientation. Orientation is, as such, not the same as sex or gender. But it affects both.* This implies a distinction between *homosexual acts* and *homosexuality*. In the biological sense homosexuality is, therefore, not unnatural because it is a *natural biological predisposition* outside of the control of the homosexual person. This notion of a third category is quite recent in origin. Not all biblical scholars agree that Paul had no understanding of the concept of sexual orientation (Brooten, 1996:190; Schoedel, 2000:47). I also agree that knowledge of sexual orientation would not have mattered to Paul at all because not orientation but homosexuality as expressed in the deed is the focus of his condemnation and that includes all forms of homosexuality irrespective of its roots or origin.

<sup>48</sup> Pronk (1993:265) states that exegesis, as such, furnishes no answer to the question of what weight has to be attributed to the textual data involved. He then mentions that personal theological presuppositions pre-determine the outcome of the exegetical process and secondly the predetermined position on homosexuality determines the

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Boswell (1980:113-117): *There is only one place in the writings which eventually became the Christian Bible where homosexual relations per se are clearly prohibited – Leviticus – and the context in which the prohibition occurred rendered it inapplicable to the Christian community, at least as moral Law. The New Testament takes no demonstrable position on homosexuality.*

Scroggs (1983a:127) comes to a similar conclusion when he states that biblical judgments against homosexuality are not relevant to today's debate. What stands out in the current debate are the contrasts between the presuppositions Paul had about homosexual relations and the presuppositions with which we approach homosexual relations today (Siker, 1996:143): *Homosexual relations per se are not to be condemned, but with Paul, the condemnation of exploitive forms of homoeroticism (pederasty and prostitution) should be affirmed.* Contrary to this Bahnsen (1978:16) argues that tolerance of homosexuality is based on doctrinal premises that deviate from biblical teaching. This deviation constitutes an antipathy to biblical revelation. Scripture is to be understood to condemn both homosexual orientation and homosexual acts for there is no need in ethics to distinguish them. Bahnsen is strongly supported by Gagnon (2001) in his arguments that the Bible unequivocally defines same-sex intercourse as sin, inasmuch as same-sex intercourse constitutes an inexcusable rebellion against the intentional design of the created order.<sup>49</sup>

The different schools of thought represent various approaches to the Bible. Pure Humanism sincretistically forces itself onto biblical truths and systematically erodes biblical truth into an acceptable and digestible format for contemporary society. Distinctions like sex, gender, sexual orientation and sexual acts are finely tuned to the detriment of biblical truths. Acceptance or rejection of biblical authority seems to be the obvious distinction between the different approaches highlighted above. However, the authority of the Bible supersedes and reaches beyond the theologising and doctrinal premises of modern scholars. Contemporary society is tolerant to homosexuality.

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exegete's attitude in exegesis. This carries a specific viewpoint into the exegetical process (eisegesis) with the result that an unbiased reading of textual data is a myth. In my opinion this position of Pronk is untenable. Exegetical objectivity becomes obsolete and therefore the reality of Biblical norms is delivered into the exegete's position on the role of Scripture, and his secular disposition to issues of contention and is relativised into conditional truths. How could he possibly argue for objectivity for his own exegesis or sustain his arguments in the light of the majority report he acknowledges? Scroggs (1983a:125) maintains that *only exegesis, not hermeneutics, can decide what the eternal valid rule is about.*

<sup>49</sup> The two main arguments at stake here have to do with procreation and gender complementarity. From this basis flows the *nurture against nature* debate, views on *excess passion* and *animal heterosexuality*, as the creation intention of God for all living mammalian creatures.

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## 2.9 SUMMARY

It is clear from the above that the current debate on homosexuality in ecclesiastical circles and secular community is far from over. All aspects of the debate are well attested to in the available literature.

The thrust of my thesis is theological by its very nature. It recognises the involvement of God in the social circumstances of man and man's reaction thereto. This involvement is expressed in the relevant Bible portions referring to homosexuality. Understanding ancient social conditions helps to interpret Bible portions and bridge the distance between ancient and contemporary societies. Old Testament sexual morality is closely linked to the concept of *the nature of man*. With regard to homosexuality the distinction *male and female* should not be obliterated. The Bible pictures this distinction as a creation by God. Whereas Old Testament sexual morality is defined by heterosexual conduct the Graeco-Roman sexual morality is defined by bi-sexual and homosexual conduct. Pederasty was the most obvious homosexual conduct in Graeco-Roman times. Judaistic and New Testament sexual morality are closely linked because of the common Old Testament background and both unanimously reject homosexual conduct as a normal expression of sexuality. This stance is vigorously opposed by the so-called revisionists of today whose efforts are focused on *normalising* homosexuality as a variant of created sexuality over and against biblical doctrine on homosexuality.

The rest of this study will mainly take cognisance of the theological aspects in the debate, although much has been written about the ethical, biological, psychological and psychophysical aspects as well. The next chapter researches the various first century cultures and social phenomena in those cultures with special regard to sexuality.

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# CHAPTER 3

## A SOCIO-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE FIRST CENTURY AD

The modern talk about sex being free like any other sense,  
about the body being beautiful like any tree or flower,  
is either a description of the Garden of Eden  
or a piece of thoroughly bad psychology,  
of which the world grew weary two thousand years ago.

*Malcolm Muggeridge*

### Overview

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Graeco-Roman Culture
- 3.3 Judaistic Culture
- 3.4 Early Christian Culture
- 3.5 Summary

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first century AD textual data, its authors and its subjects embrace and express cultural contexts and social phenomena that are not limited to one religious tradition or any one specific period of time. Interdisciplinary discussion is currently shaping research in Biblical Studies, religion, anthropology, cultural studies, and other fields of study. This inter-disciplinary discussion is important because Jewish and Graeco-Roman culture cannot be regarded as mere *background for Christianity*.<sup>1</sup> Scroggs (1983a:16) gives substance to the preceding when he writes: *I want to convince the reader, in fact, that Graeco-Roman culture decisively influenced New Testament*

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<sup>1</sup> Current research relating to sexuality in general and homosexuality specifically, and focusing on first century Christianity is characterised by interest in both socio-historical constructions as well as the examination of ideology and rhetoric and how these relate to issues of sexuality (Shaw, 2000:401).

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*statements about homosexuality, and that this in turn, informs us about appropriate and inappropriate use of such statements in our present confrontation about homosexuality in the church.* Meeks (1987:11) ponders on the question of historical understanding of textual data, but then settles for a *bottom up* approach. To understand the moral formation of the early Christian communities, we must understand their world. To understand their *homosexual world* we will in the pages following look at the various cultures/communities that existed side by side with the Christian communities.

This chapter will endeavour to identify the main trends in the Graeco-Roman, Judaistic and early Christian cultures concerned. We need to come to an understanding of the prevailing codes regarding homosexual conduct. A socio-historical overview of the prevailing code(s) on homosexuality within Judaism, Hellenism, and early Christianity will identify the main trends. The phenomenon homosexuality in the first century AD is socio-historically constructed in terms of the socio-historical method as developed and applied by Malherbe (1989). The arguments for and against the trends will not be accommodated here because these will be fully discussed in the detailed exegesis of the textual data in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

It is of importance for the evaluating of the impact of this culture to visualise the periods and high points of these cultures on a chronological time line.<sup>2</sup> Because this study is concerned with homosexual conduct the focus will mainly be on researching and describing this form of sexuality.

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<sup>2</sup> Scroggs (1983a:1) states that Christian statements about homosexuality in the New Testament are responses to the cultural scene. He further implies that the New Testament textual data (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10) can only be understood against the backdrop of Greek *pederasty*. I maintain this is an over simplification and over-accentuation of the Greek culture as such. A visual presentation (chronological) indeed shows the cultural *distances* between these cultures and should make one aware of the fact of the commonality of language of the New Testament, which, leaning on the Greek culture so much, ignores the influence from other cultures and the historical Jesus in particular.

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## Chronology of Periods

*(Many dates are approximate)*

(All dates are BC)

		<b>GREECE</b>	<b>ROME</b>	<b>ISRAEL</b>
<b>Bronze Age</b>	3000			
	1200			
<b>Dark Age</b>		1184 Traditional date of the fall of Troy Fall of Mycenae		
	800			
<b>Archaic</b>	753	753	Traditional date of the founding of Rome by Romulus	
		900-700 Homer 700 Hesiod Semonides Sappho		
<b>Classical</b>	509	509	Expulsion of kings, founding of Republic	
	500	538		First Jewish exiles return to Jerusalem New temple completed in Jerusalem
<b>Republic</b>		516		
		490-479 Persian Wars 479 458		Esther becomes queen of Persia Ezra returns to Jerusalem
<b>Classical</b>		451-450 Citizenship Law of Pericles	Traditional date of the Twelve Tables	
		445 441 Sophocles <i>Antigone</i> 431-404 Peloponnesian War 430 411 Aristophanes <i>Lysistrata</i>		Nehemiah builds Jerusalem wall  Malachi becomes a prophet
<b>Classical</b>		459-380 Lysias 390		Aramaic begins to replace Hebrew as Jewish language
		429-347 Plato 428-354 Xenophon Demosthenes, Aristotle		
<b>Classical</b>	<i>regnum</i>	359-336 Philip II of Macedon Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Cnidus		
	<i>regnum</i>	336-323 Alexander		
<b>Republic</b>	323			
		264-241 234-149 218-201 195 169 165	First Punic War Cato the Elder Second Punic War Repeal of Oppian Law Voconian Law	Temple of Jerusalem plundered by Antiochus IV Judas Maccabeus begins revolt against Antiochus IV
<b>Republic</b>		133	Tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus, beginning of one hundred years of civil discord	
		106-43 95-46 84-54 70-19 44 43BC-17AD 42BC 37BC	Cicero Cato the Younger Catullus Virgil Propertius, Tibullus, Sulpicia, Livy Assasination of Julius Caesar Ovid  Oration of Hortensia	Herod the Great made king of Judea by the Romans

Hellenistic

30  
27 *regnum* 27BC-  
14AD  
25?  
20  
6/5

Death of Cleopatra VII

Augustus (formerly known as Octavian)

Mary, Jesus' mother, born  
Herod the Great begins remodeling temple in Jerusalem  
Jesus Christ born

(All dates are AD)

		<b>GREECE</b>	<b>ROME</b>	<b>ISRAEL</b>
		4		Herod the Great dies
		5?		Paul born
		6		Judea becomes a Roman province; Jesus visits temple as a boy
		14-37	Tiberius	
		26		John the Baptist begins his ministry; Pontius Pilate appointed governor Jesus begins his ministry
		26/27		
		29	Death of Livia, widow of Augustus Valerius Maximus	
		30		Jesus crucified; ascends into heaven; Pentecost; early church beginnings
		35		Paul's conversion on Damascus road
		40		Herod Agrippa appointed king of Judea
	<i>regnum</i>	37-41	Gaius (Caligula)	
		46		Paul begins first missionary journey
	<i>regnum</i>	41-54	Claudius	
		50-120	Plutarch	
		57		Paul writes Romans; Paul imprisoned in Caesarea
	<i>regnum</i>	54-68	Nero	
<b>Empire</b>		59	Assassination Nero's mother, Agrippina	Paul's voyage to Rome
		60		Paul writes "prison letters"
		61-112	Pliny the Younger	
		62		Paul released from prison
		67		Paul martyred
	<i>regnum</i>	69-79	Vespasian	
		70		Romans destroy Jerusalem
		73		960 Jews commit mass suicide at Masada while under Roman siege
		79-81	Titus	
		79	Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum	
	<i>regnum</i>	81-96	Domitian	
			Tacitus	
			Juvenal	
		95		Apostle John writes Revelation
	<i>regnum</i>	96-98	Nerva	

### 3.2 GRAECO-ROMAN CULTURE

The main purpose of this section is to describe the practices of and attitudes toward homosexuality in the Graeco-Roman culture as a *combination* culture.

In addition to §2.5 it could be added that the attitude to the male-male relationship from the Dorian world of the seventh century to the predominant attitude to pederasty in archaic and classical times, in the period from about 750-300BC, was on the whole very positive (Vanggaard, 1972:25). Pederasty was cultivated by heterosexually *normal* men in ancient Greece where it did not presuppose an inversely homosexual type of personality. It was meant as a central factor in the upbringing of boys and youths. Homosexual relations provided to a youth, for whom marriage lay some years ahead, the opportunity for the seduction of a partner on the same social level as himself. The Athenian youth growing up in Plato's time took homosexuality for granted and he was not taught that he was *unnatural* or *effeminate*. Men seem to have fallen in love not with effeminate-looking boys, but with boys of well-developed masculine physique, distinguished for their success in athletics (Dover, 1974:215). In pederasty, literally the *love of boys*, one partner, almost always the older, assumed the role of the active partner, and the other almost always the younger, that of the passive (Scroggs, 1983a:18).

Many boys, youths and adult males voluntarily entered into a primarily romantic relationship in which the older partner expected to and did receive sexual gratification.<sup>3</sup> However the picture that the youth was always the passive *eromenos* and on the receiving end cannot be substantiated and various authors (Dover, 1978; Scroggs, 1983; Vanggaard, 1972; Licht, 1949; Halperin, 1990) attest to the fact that the roles varied.<sup>4</sup>

There are numerous passages from Greek authors (Licht, 1949:437), which prove that boys and youths were to be had for money or presents or for both. Scroggs (1983:40) describes the so-called *effeminate call-boy*. He believes this practice to have had profound influence on the New Testament textual data concerned with homosexuality. This aspect of homosexuality was widely assessed in very negative terms and this category of homosexuality was simply referred to as *pornoï*. The *call-boy* was free

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<sup>3</sup> The older adult was the active partner, the *erastes* (lover), usually seeking out the relationship, provoking the sexual contact, and in one way or another obtaining orgasm by the use of the boy's body. The younger person, on the other hand, was the passive partner and was called the beloved, the *eromenos*. Apparently the *eromenos* did not desire, was not supposed to desire or at the least did not expect sexual gratification from the *erastes*. Indeed if the youth did feel pleasure he was considered to be no better than a prostitute (Dover, 1978:52). Scroggs (1983a:40) mentions that it was the typical pattern that the *erastes* found a more youthful boy when the present *eromenos* reached clearly into puberty or pubertal masculinity (beard appears).

<sup>4</sup> Exceptions to the rule do occur and the following generalisations are attested to in late archaic and early classical homosexual poetry; Attic comedy; Aristophanes and his contemporaries; Plato; a speech by Aiskhines, the Prosecution of Timarkhos; homosexual poetry of the Hellenistic period and Greek art:

- a) a typical romantic relationship with the *eromenos*, most often a boy or youth.
- b) the *erastes* most likely an adult, older than twenty years with the upper age extending indefinitely.
- c) relationships of inequality where the older man is the *eromenos*. This situation is however a rare occurrence and would be more associated with an adult male prostitute who retains the passive role well into adulthood.

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(i.e. non-slave) youths, or adults who sold themselves to individuals for purposes of providing sexual gratification. When such youths decided the practice was attractive enough and remunerative, they could make their living this way, getting taken into someone's house as a *mistress*. They even perfumed their hair, removed body hair and wore feminine clothes.<sup>5</sup> In 120BC Antinous, at twenty years of age, drowned in the Nile, and became famous. He had been the *eromenos* (beloved) of Hadrianus. Hadrianus had been one of the greatest emperors of Rome. This exemplifies the fact that pederastic relationships in late pre-Christian Hellenism, as did the life of the Greeks many centuries earlier, were not regarded as an abnormality, or a kind of weakness of the personality (Vanggaard, 1972:129).

In Greek antiquity there were strong repudiations of the idea of the love for boys. The seduction of boys was unreservedly repudiated (Licht, 1949:447). Women on the whole objected to everything that had to do with this love of boys. Safeguards were implemented to protect youths.<sup>6</sup> The law prohibited any male prostitute from holding city offices or participating in official civic affairs.

As pure eroticism, homosexuality was a prominent and visual element in pre-Christian Hellenism. A vast network of homosexual prostitution existed. Homosexuality formed part too of the erotic many-sidedness of the emperors Caligula (37-41AD) and Nero (54-68AD). In the State religion of Rome phallic worship did not occupy any important place. Roman life was marked by bisexuality, homosexuality, brutality and emotional caprice (Karlen, 1971:48). Suetonius' biographies of the twelve Caesars from Julius Caesar through to Domitian, is a catalogue of astounding psychosexual disease, from incest to transvestism.<sup>7</sup> Homosexual behaviour in Rome spanned the total spectrum from occasional and casual indulgence through transvestism. There was, however, none of the pedagogic rationalisation of the Greeks.

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<sup>5</sup> Such persons were seen as effeminate, having lost their masculinity, having adopted the practices of women, allowing themselves to be penetrated, to be used as if a woman. Among several words used to describe such persons was *malakos*, a Greek adjective literally meaning *soft*, but metaphorically, *effeminate*. Paul uses this word in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

<sup>6</sup> Laws were implemented to protect boy citizens from any sort of sexual harassment during the school day: teachers shall open the school-rooms not earlier than sunrise; every *choragus* (coach, trainer) who is appointed by the people shall be more than forty years of age; the superintendents of the gymnasia shall under no condition allow any one who has reached the age of manhood to enter the contests of Hermes (wrestling contests) together with boys (Tannahill, 1980:92; Scroggs, 1983a:19).

<sup>7</sup> Julius Caesar (58-44BC) slept his way to early success in the bed of King Nicodemus of Bithynia, he depilated his body and was called *the Queen of Bithynia* and *every woman's man and every man's woman*. Tiberius (14-37AD) retired to a pleasure palace on Capri where he kept *spintriae* (effeminate homosexuals). Caligula (37-41AD) committed incest with three of his sisters, indulged in both heterosexual and homosexual acts and often appeared in public dressed as a woman. Nero (54-68AD) was introduced to homosexuality by his tutor Seneca. He slept with his mother and had her assassinated (Karlen, 1971:50; Vanggaard, 1972:131). Nero raped the virgin Rubria, castrated the boy Sporus and married him. Vitellius (69AD) earned the throne by being a *spintriae* for Tiberius at Capri in his boyhood and depended for political advice on his catamite Asiaticus. Titus (79-81AD) kept a *troop* of inverts and eunuchs. Domitian (81-96AD) at first forbade castration, enforced laws against adultery and child prostitution and had many men convicted under the old Scantinian Law that forbade homosexual relations with freeborn boys, but later in his life he succumbed to bisexuality, which dominated him.

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Female homosexuality existed, but is mentioned in extent literature rather less than male homosexuality. The *olisbos* was frequently mentioned in Latin literature, usually as used by women for masturbation, but sometimes for tribadic intercourse. Seneca, Juvenal and Lucian mentioned lesbianism. Prostitution and homosexuality were common among the actors and mimes of Rome. Homosexuals gathered at the baths, along with prostitutes of both sexes.

It is interesting to note how the apostle Paul's lifespan relates to those of the twelve emperors:

Julius Caesar	:	58-44 BC	} Paul born 6 AD and died in 67 AD after writing his epistles ca. 50-60 AD
Augustus	:	27-14 AD	
Tiberius	:	14-37 AD	
Caligula	:	37-41 AD	
Claudius	:	41-54 AD	
Nero	:	54-68 AD	
Galba	:	69 AD	
Otho	:	69 AD	
Vitellius	:	69 AD	
Vespasian	:	69-79 AD	
Titus	:	79-81 AD	
Domitian	:	81-96 AD	

Paul's life parallels three (Tiberius, Caligula and Nero) of the worst sexually immoral emperors out of the twelve mentioned.

Pederasty as an erotic phenomenon in difference to the Athens of Socrates more than five hundred years earlier, was now seen as a personal matter, respected by the society in which Plutarch lived. Pederasty was no longer a means employed by the state in the education of the young and controlled by its highest authorities. It was no longer institutionalised, had no place in the cult and its symbols had ceased to be generally presenting the noblest outcomes of society.

### 3.3 JUDAISTIC CULTURE

Scroggs (1983a:67) poses the question whether Paul<sup>8</sup> can only be understood from within the confines of the Graeco-Roman debate, or did Jewish attitudes also inform the New Testament judgements? In line with the socio-historical approach a study of Judaism contemporary to the early church is necessary. Such a study has to cover both Rabbinic Palestine and Hellenistic Diaspora. These two Jewish trends held much

<sup>8</sup> Scroggs (1983a:66) acknowledges the *three explicit* New Testament references to homosexuality (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10). Regarding Paul he states, *his writings reveal such mastery of the exegetical skills of the emerging rabbinic scholarship that he must have been expertly trained in these skills by someone or some school. It is equally clear that he is informed by Hellenistic Judaism.* Acts 22:3 confirms that Paul studied with the Jewish Rabbi Gamaliel.

in common due to the common heritage of the Torah. These two forms, however, interpreted the Torah in similar and divergent ways. The first observable difference between the two was the translation of the Torah into the local language. For the Palestinian Jew this meant Aramaic, called *Targums*. As far as it concerns the Hellenistic Jew, the Torah was translated into Greek, the Septuagint (LXX).

The second level of difference has to do with *expression*, being the interpretation of the Torah. For Palestinian Judaism these traditions of interpretation are largely extant. It comprised a very large and complicated corpus of legal and theological traditions gathered together under the common denominator, *rabbinic literature*. Here the Laws of the Torah are defined, refined and expanded.

Hellenistic Judaism's literary expressions are quite different. While Palestinian Judaism built up its traditions by the accumulation of individual judgements and sayings by a vast number of rabbis or scholars, the corpus for Hellenistic Judaism is limited to a few authors who wrote entire tracts or books (Scroggs, 1983a:60).<sup>9</sup>

As the Old Testament is not the focus of this study I will only highlight the conclusions regarding Bible portions pertaining to homosexuality in the Old Testament. This would enable us to trace the influence (if any) on Paul.

The phrase *cult prostitute* (Dt 23:17) is regarded by some (Scroggs, 1983a:71) to refer to heterosexual acts while others (Horner, 1978:65; McNeill, 1977:57) see this reference as male prostitutes who performed sexual services for males. The two portions of Scripture in Leviticus deal with homosexuality in general. The prohibition in Leviticus 18:22 is stated clearly and without ambiguity. This textual data constitutes the only legal traditions about homosexuality in the Torah.

There are two pieces of narrative in the Torah (Gn 19; Jdg 19), which refer to homosexuality. The keyword in these narratives is the word *to know*. The interpretation for the *sexual* connotation had been called into question (Bailey, 1955:1-28; McNeill, 1977:42-50) but the arguments (§2.4) for a sexual interpretation is overwhelming (Scroggs, 1978:72-75; Bahnsen, 1978:31-35; Gagnon, 2001:71-78).

The Palestinian Targums translate the word in Leviticus with *shamash*, a word that frequently means *to have intercourse with*. Scroggs (1978:76) shows adequately that in their treatment of Deuteronomy 23:18, Neofiti translates the prohibition to refer to *secular* male as well as female prostitution. The rabbinic discussions also take the verse in Deuteronomy to refer to male homosexual activities. The Targums translate the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah as found in the Torah.<sup>10</sup> Male homosexuality is

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<sup>9</sup> Exponents of this Hellenistic Judaism are best represented, though not exclusively, by Philo and Josephus.

<sup>10</sup> Neofiti chooses the word *hacham*, literally *to be wise* which has the metaphorical meaning *to have sexual intercourse with*. Pseudo-Jonathan translates the passage to indicate clearly *homosexual rape*. It can be concluded

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prohibited in the Torah. In the primary law code of this period, the *Mishnah*, male homosexuality is included among the crimes punishable by death. Aligning with the Graeco-Roman cultural context the rabbis make a distinction between active and passive partners, although acknowledging that the same man can be both. They also seem to clearly identify the male prostitute with the passive role in a homosexual relationship.

The narratives of Sodom and Gomorrah as well as the Levite and his concubine are translated faithfully from the Hebrew. The common Greek word γινώσκω (*ginosko* - to know) is used and can (as is the case with its Hebrew counterpart) have the meaning to have sexual intercourse with. In the Genesis 19:5 passage the translators chose συνγίνομαι (*sunginomai*), which literally means keep company with, with the extended meaning to have sexual intercourse with, both for homosexual as well as heterosexual acts. In the Hellenistic Jewish discussions on the above Bible portions the two types of homosexuality addressed are *pederasty* and *male prostitution*.<sup>11</sup> Neither Philo nor Josephus elaborate on the Levite and his concubine. In his reference to the Sodom and Gomorrah narrative Josephus interprets it as *pederastic rape*.

With both Philo and Josephus, on the subject of *homosexuality*, there is a silence regarding such practices in the Jewish community. There is no clear evidence to the contrary. There was a great divide between the sexual purity of the Jews and the impurity of the rest of the world.

Hellenistic Judaism is closer to the New Testament churches than Palestinian Judaism. Hellenistic Jews seem to have been the authors of most of the New Testament material. Hellenistic Judaism is itself the result of two cultures combining which presupposes a mixing of language and content. As stated above the Hebrew Scripture was translated into Greek, called the Septuagint (LXX). Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are translated faithfully from the Hebrew.<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 23:18 apparently not only prohibits prostitution but also prohibits any Israelite from participating in foreign cults.

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that the Palestinian Jewish traditions intends a general prohibition against Israelite male and female secular homosexuality and prohibition against the passive partner in homosexual activity

<sup>11</sup> When Philo discusses Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 he says: *Much graver than the above is another evil, which has ramped into the cities, namely pederasty*. It would seem from these passages that Philo interprets the general prohibitions in Scripture as being against the male homosexuality that culturally manifested in his own environment. Deuteronomy 23:17-18 he seems to understand to refer to *male prostitution*.

<sup>12</sup> Leviticus 18:22: *With a male (arsen) you shall not lay the intercourse (koite) of a woman* (Scroggs, 1978:86; Brenton, 1990:153). Deuteronomy 23:17-18: *There shall not be a telesphoros (idolatress) among the daughters of Israel; there shall not be a teliskomenos (initiated person) among the sons of Israel* (Scroggs, 1978:86; Brenton, 1990:262).

### 3.4 EARLY CHRISTIAN CULTURE

In comparison with the large corpus material about pederasty in Graeco-Roman culture, the New Testament is silent. There are only three references<sup>13</sup> to homosexuality in the New Testament. These Bible portions are found in passages addressed to churches located in the Graeco-Roman world where *pederasty* was especially rife and homosexual relations of all kinds were practiced. Paul speaks of the non-Christians, but actually it is a warning to the Christians in Rome and Corinth. These words further indicate that not everything with them was *kosher* by the standards of the righteous Jew. The congregations he addressed comprised not only Jews, but also Greeks and non-Greeks and to them the piety of the religious Jewish attitude was quite alien. Not only was ordinary immorality (*porneia*) to be fought against within the congregations, but extreme sexual elements also.<sup>14</sup> Paul had to remind the congregations to live, keep and protect God's standard for sexual purity in a world to whom traditionally homosexuality and pederasty in particular, had been regarded as a matter of course, not morally condemned and even, in some circumstances, to be regarded with respect.

The Christians of the first century had to define their stand on issues of sexual immorality (Countryman, 1989:66). Schoedel (2000:72) regards the new concept of the family within the early Christian communities as perhaps the instigating factor for rejecting same-sex relations. The man could no longer express his authority by penetrating at will not only a wife, but also his male and female slaves or a young male favourite.

Jesus did not overturn any prohibitions against immoral sexual behaviour in Leviticus or anywhere else in the Mosaic law (Gagnon, 2001:227). Being a first century Palestinian Jew from Nazareth it is highly unlikely that He would secretly harbour acceptance of homosexuality. On matters of sexual ethics, the family, divorce and adultery he did not adopt a liberal position at all, but seems to be much more conservative in his overall stance on these matters, demanding more than the Torah proposed. In line with Jesus' teachings early Christianity would not accept mere outer conformity to rules of moral behaviour. Christianity marked the full transformation from a shame orientated culture to a guilt culture, in which prohibitions are fully internalized and man is ruled by conscience rather by other's disapproval (Karlen, 1971:70). The early church set herself against the libertine attitudes and practices of the Graeco-

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<sup>13</sup> Paul refers to it three times. In two of these, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10, homosexuality is strongly suggested to be the subject, but in only one (Rom 1:26-27) is the topic explicitly maintained. There are two other related passages which scholars have interpreted as alluding to judgements on homosexuality/homosexual practices: Jude 6-13 and 2 Peter 2:4-18.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Corinthians 5-7 is a good example of the vices Paul had to counter. In 1 Corinthians 5:1 he writes: *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles – that a man has his father's wife.* This by no means is strange seeing Paul's mission was in the Graeco-Roman world, which completely lacked the Jewish view of sexual acts and symbols (Vanggaard, 1972:138). It remains, however, surprising because the addressees are members of the Christian congregation and not of a secular club of sorts.

Roman world, at the same time also opposing the dualism and extreme asceticism which characterised Gnosticism (Cole, 1960:227). The Christian community grew out of Jewish soil, this heritage informing the theology of the early missionaries to the Gentiles.

It is clear that early Christian societies and their beliefs and practices did not arise in a vacuum. Love in Rome was lusty, exuberant and unclouded by the sense of sin, yet strangely blended with obscenity, depravity and hatred (Hunt, 1960:49). Relationships were flagrantly unfaithful.<sup>15</sup> But through Christianity a new ideal appears; virginity both for men and women, sexual purity in the face of sexual immorality, and loyalty in marriage to just one partner.

### 3.5 SUMMARY

Reflecting on homosexuality in the first century AD one can state that the New Testament church was not overly concerned about homosexuality as a problem. Female homosexuality gets even less attention than its male counterpart. Homosexuality is discussed as a male vice. Pederasty is seemingly said to exist only among Gentiles. The attitude to homosexuality is overall uncompromisingly negative. Like the textual data in Leviticus 18 and 20 the judgement in Romans 1 is negative and in general the indictment is on both female as well as male homosexuality. The Jewish traditions in their negative judgement on homosexuality put forward three reasons: *it is against nature; it denies pro-creation; and as it is a vice unique to pagans, homosexuality is related to idolatry.* This is stated in stark contrast to the Graeco-Roman culture that was very positive in attitude and practice to male-male relationships, especially pederasty. Not much is said about homosexual practices in the Jewish traditions. Where it is addressed, it is prohibited in no uncertain terms. The New Testament has only three direct references to homosexuality (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10). It seems to be clear from these references that the early church set herself against accommodating homosexual practices in her midst.

In the next chapters the Bible portions and other associated concepts in the New Testament will be scrutinised. The general attitude towards πορνεία (*porneia* - *sexual immorality*) forms the bedrock from which homosexual practices are vilified. An understanding of πορνεία (sexual immorality) is most important to grasp Paul's condemnation of homosexuality. Sexual immorality will be studied in the next chapter in some detail.

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<sup>15</sup> Though Roman love was imitative of Greek sexual morals, the differences were significant. Pederasty was popular, but remained forthright and openly physical. Roman men had no interest in winning youths by means of spiritual and mental attraction but to seduce or buy them. The aim was to get them into bed without intellectual bother; there was nothing educational about it. It was an appetite, the satisfying of which was needed. By the end of the first century BC adultery had become the fashion of the day (Hunt, 1960:50).

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# CHAPTER 4

## SEXUAL IMMORALITY DEFINED

How could one man chase a thousand,  
And two put ten thousand to flight,  
Unless their Rock had sold them,  
And the Lord had surrendered them?  
For their vine is of the vine of Sodom  
And of the fields of Gomorrah;  
Their grapes are grapes of gall,  
Their clusters are bitter.

*Deuteronomy 32:30,32*

### Overview

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The concept **πορνεία**
- 4.3 State of research
- 4.4 Componential analysis of **πορνεία**
- 4.5 Summary

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

A socio-historical overview of the sexual ethical codes within Judaism, Hellenism, and early Christianity shows that very definite codes were in place (Botha, 2001:41). Early Christianity inherited its sexual ethics from Judaism and has reinterpreted it in the light of the Gospel. The Christian community originated and existed within a Gentile world within which sexual immorality was rife.

In this chapter a word-exegesis is done by means of the componential analytical method. The data from the Louw & Nida Lexicon is exploited for this purpose. The word **πορνεία** (*porneia* - *sexual immorality*) is studied to provide background to the view on homosexuality as expressed by Paul in Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and 1 Timothy 1:9-10. The meaning and intention of **πορνεία** as the bedrock for Paul's

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view on homosexuality is socio-historically determined according to the method employed by Malherbe (1989), which in essence is a literature study. I hope to indicate that Paul's view on homosexuality is inseparable from his stand on πορνεία. Paul's view on abnormal sexual behaviour, like homosexuality (Rom 1:26-27), is informed by his convictions regarding πορνεία (sexual immorality). A clear understanding of the term of the word will substantiate the arguments put forward in chapters 5-7.

In chapter 4 I will endeavour to show that Paul's understanding of πορνεία (sexual immorality) is the basis on which he builds his whole doctrine concerning deviant forms of sexuality.

## 4.2 THE CONCEPT ΠΟΡΝΕΙΑ

Research shows very clearly that various forms of sexual immorality were performed in the era in which the books of the New Testament were written. This includes adultery, homosexuality, pedophilia, polygamy, fornication, prostitution, cult-prostitution, abortion and masturbation (Boring et al, 1995:210, 403, 489; Winkler, 1990:189). Sexually speaking it was the world, which the first century Christians knew and lived in. Some of the members of the church in Corinth for example, were Jews and they knew the Torah. Most of the members, however, were non-Jewish converts and they on the other hand knew the cult religions. The letters to the Corinthian church presumed knowledge of these diverse origins (1 Cor 5:1; 6:11; 7:18) for all in the congregation. There was thus no pure Christian sexual morality.

Paul provided the Corinthians and Romans with answers to their questions that occurred due to the confrontation with the customs and cultures of their time. A new ethos and ethics were established in the context of their world. The *cooking pot* was the congregation and the *catalyst* was the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which was proclaimed by Paul in the city of Corinth. Based on the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul reinterprets the ruling standard of sexuality (Jewish and non-Jewish) for the congregation. The key to the question on how the readers probably understood the idea of sexual immorality is concealed in the words, and especially the idiomatic phrases used by Paul.

Paul does not discuss sexuality as such, but abnormal sexual acts and desires (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 7:1-2) which according to him are always potentially dangerous. Πορνεία for Paul always had the meaning of defilement. Premarital intercourse with someone outside of the church is defilement of the temple of God (1 Cor 6:19). Within the church it would have been a case of deceiving your brother (1 Thes 4:6).

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Hence the advice that the sexual desire should be under control at all times. In the light of 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:13,18 it can be assumed that Paul was concerned about the integrity of the body of believers and the body (church) of Christ. All the issues which were raised, *the man sleeping with his stepmother, men who frequent prostitutes, and fornication*, are included under πορνεία. Sexuality implicates the whole person and not only the sex organs. Paul stresses that sexual intercourse results in the man and woman uniting so that they become part of each other, their bodies become one (6:16).

Paul's use of πυροῦσθαι<sup>1</sup> (to burn with desire) must be understood in similar vein. The first hearers/listeners most probably would have understood it as a *sexual passion* or *sexual lust*. In brief it refers to *passion* and *desire* in a sexual context. There is sufficient evidence from the classical Greek to place πυροῦσθαι, sexual desires, passion or lust, all on equal footing (Louw & Nida, 1989a:292; Schönweiss, 1986:458). This contrasts χρέσις in Romans 1:26-27.

The pericope 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 shows clearly Paul's viewpoint that the body is not meant for *sexual immorality*. It must be seen in the light of the total rejection of πορνεία in the New Testament. As such the following are in the New Testament judged to be sin: *sexual intercourse outside marriage (Jn 18:41), sodomy and homosexual relationships (Jude 7, Rom 1:24-27) and prostitution (1 Cor 6:12-7:40)*. When Paul, therefore, speaks of πορνεία as the counterpart of παρθένης the first hearers would have understood it in terms of sexual immorality in general which brings about impurity and defilement. Sexual relationships outside of marriage were in Paul's understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, not at all acceptable (Cole, 1960:252). Several times Paul uses the question οὐκ οἶδατε (*do you not know?*). This question time and again implies that the Corinthians indeed *knew* and had the *knowledge* concerning the issue being discussed. It is a reproachful question, which places the responsibility for an answer on the congregation and makes it unnecessary for Paul to answer it. Nevertheless, he answers the congregation and teaches them concerning several issues.

In 1 Corinthians 7:1 Paul uses an idiom, a Corinthian proverb καλόν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι. How would the first hearers have understood it? It is not completely certain. It is translated with: *it is good for a man not to touch a woman*. Some commentators understand it to mean: *it is not good for a man to marry a woman*. Others understand it to mean: *it is good for a man not to have sexual intercourse with a woman*. Paul uses ἄπτεσθαι and not ἄπτειν. The word in both instances means *to touch*. Here, however, a proverb is under discussion in combination with the word γυναικός, and this determines the meaning. The proverb γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι means: *it is not good to have sexual intercourse*. The medium ἄπτεσθαι is therefore used here with a sexual meaning (Brown, 1986:859). It seems, that if it was a

<sup>1</sup> Πυρόμαι: *to experience intense sexual desire; to burn with passion, to be sexually aroused*.

Κρεῖττον γὰρ ἐστὶν γαμῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι - for it is better to marry than to burn with sexual passion (1 Cor 7:9).

Corinthian proverb, Paul used it very specifically within the context of his argument. The first hearers would have understood it in terms of sexuality, the context of his argument (Keulers, 1953:229; Barrett, 1968:154; Schrage, 1995:59).

The question could be asked how the first hearers probably understood *sexual immorality* in the light of 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:40. Two issues are of importance here. Firstly, there is the concept πορνεία. All that can be classified under this concept would be sexual impurity. Included within the sphere of sexuality are among other things homosexuality, bestiality, pornography, pedophilia, polygamy, fornication, any sexual indulgence, masturbation, cult-prostitution and physical contact between unmarried people. Πορνεία can occur in or outside the marital affinity (Gal 5; Col 3; Rom 1,12). Sexual immorality is emphatically condemned.

It is understood that sexuality's place is within marriage. Sexuality is expressed between two people who are married (1 Cor 7:2). No sexual contact before marriage is anticipated because marriage is a Godly institution where the Godly gift of sexuality is expressed. The marriage is among other things given as a protection against πορνεία. Therefore, *sexual purity before marriage* is a life free from πορνεία and also a life free from situations that could cause πυρούσθαι. Πυρούσθαι (*to burn with sexual passion*) could lead to πορνεία. The word πορνεία in the context of 1 Corinthians 6:13 points to a sexual urge, which competes with the Lord Jesus Christ for the possession of man's body (Findlay, 1912:819). To give in to this sexual urge is to give in to harlotry. The gift of self-control is needed to live a life free from πορνεία. People who did not receive it and who could not remain celibate should get married.

### 4.3 STATE OF RESEARCH

Sexual immorality, is not lightly regarded in the Old Testament. Laws and rituals were in place and rigorously applied to give some uniformity of conduct between the sexes (Mace, 1958:143). Westermack (1934:278) showed without doubt that in all communities some or other restriction governed sexuality. Such restrictions regulated for example the age and qualifications before a person could marry, the spectrum for the selection of a spouse and the sexual conduct of engaged and married persons. In the Old Testament sex is seen as a gift from God (Gn 1:27, 31). So important was the man's sexual power that castration was regarded with aversion (Dt 23:1). Homosexuality and bestiality were condemned in strong language (Schoedel, 2000:48; Bird, 2000:148). These practices were judged as the misuse of a gift, which in its proper usage had a sacral function (Mace, 1953:143).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The sacrality of the male genitals is for example illustrated in the fact that it was used in the taking of a particular oath (Gn 24:2, 8). Antique literature does not relate that this particular ritual was still a general practice by the time of the first century church or a cultural related phenomenon within Jewish first century culture.

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For the Jew in the Diaspora, it was not primarily about the creed of a specific religious conviction, but to be part of a certain nation. Yahweh chose their nation, and their religion gave them a comprehensive and unique identity. Because belonging to a family, tribe, nation or city formed the whole identity, there was no possibility of belonging to another religion. The whole of their human existence in a foreign country was determined by religious traditions accumulated over centuries. The basic significant aspect of this religious tradition, the essence of being a Jew, was their intense focus on purity (Joubert, 1996:37). This fundamental focus on purity caused Israel, even in the Diaspora, to be separated from other nations (Countryman, 1989:23; Meeks, 1986:70).

To understand the concept of sexual immorality (impurity) within the context of Judaism, one should note the description by the cultural anthropologist Mary Douglas. She (1966:35) says impurity is essentially a substantive disorderliness. Impurity is *substance* (dirt) out of place with what is normal. In the application of this definition, it can be said that impurity is *substance* out of place within human relationships. Douglas (1966) uses the word *substance* to express the same meaning with which Countryman (1989) struggled many years after her. Countryman (1989:98) sees this *substance* (dirt) as impurity, because he reasons in terms of a religious framework and not on grounds of anthropology. In Judaism existed a dualistic sexual ethic. One part thereof was an ethic of the right of possession. The inherent sin in this regard was covetousness. The second was an ethic of purity. The inherent sin here was impurity, spiritual dirtiness (Countryman, 1989:66). Countryman sees and understands sexual ethics in the Bible in terms of this division. The early Christendom also inherited this ethic from Judaism and reinterpreted it in the light of the Scriptures (Countryman, 1989:4; Cole, 1960:227).

The surrounding non-believing world of the first century church was predominantly described as being filled with sexual immorality (Martin, 1977:55), including homosexuality, which in many instances had a religious flavour (Cole, 1960:194). Phocylides wrote during the first century and warned his readers against quite a number of sexual atrocities, which deprives one of sexual purity, namely, adultery, prostitution, incest, homosexuality, abortion and castration of juveniles (Countryman, 1989:59). The New Testament displays a harsh reaction against not only the sexual impurity<sup>3</sup> of the Hellenistic world (Seow, 1996:25), but also against the Manichean's opinion that a woman is innately corrupt (Schillebeeckx, 1976:201). Sexual permissiveness, *πορνεία* in all the manifestations, which were so prevalent in the Graeco-Roman era, is briefly, though decisively rejected in the New Testament. Sexuality is seen as God-given and good when used in agreement with God's will. Consequently marriage is seen as the intended restriction or space in which sexuality may be practiced (Sapp, 1977:58). It is the improper use of sex that is disapproved of (Nissinen, 1998:115). Therefore, sexual abuse (1 Cor 5) is strongly rejected in no uncertain terms.

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<sup>3</sup> Sexual intercourse outside marriage (Jn 8:41 and 1 Cor 6:12), sodomy, and homosexual relationships were condemned as sinful (Jude 7, Rom 1:24-27). Prostitution (1 Cor 6:9) was also declared a sin.

The New Testament does not provide much direct information on sexual immorality. It is, however, very clear that it condemns it (Cole, 1960:224). The pious Jews were shocked because of the sexual immorality amongst the non-Jewish people. One of the conditions for a non-Jewish convert to be allowed in the congregation was that he had to abstain from πορνεία (Acts 15:23-29). It is thus clear that the early Christians rejected abnormal sexual behaviour, which included all sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Thus wherever homosexual intercourse is mentioned in the Bible, it is condemned (Soards, 1995:24). Paul is adamant that the body is not meant for sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:13). Πορνεία (sexual immorality) is rejected in no uncertain terms as a sin against the self as well as sin against the Lord. Πορνεία robs the Lord of that which belongs to Him (1 Cor 6:15) and is in essence anti-Christian. Πορνεία is the enemy who aims to destroy marriage (Jewett, 2000:245). Therefore, Paul gives the advice to flee from πορνεία as one would flee from a mighty enemy in a war situation (1 Cor 6:18). Πορνεία replaces the focus on eternity with a focus on the temporal (1 Cor 6:19).

1 Corinthians 6:12-16 is the prelude to chapter 7. After Paul has defined the essence of πορνεία (1 Cor 6:12-20) he writes: καλόν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἅπτεσθαι- *it is good for a man not to touch a woman* (1 Cor 7:1). *Touch* is used here with a *sexual intention*. In conjunction with πυροῦσθαι (sexual desire) in 1 Corinthians 7:9, Paul formulates a principle regarding sexual purity. Not only is πορνεία rejected in totality, but also all situations that could give rise to πυροῦσθαι have to be avoided. Where it becomes impossible to avoid πυροῦσθαι (sexual desire), the couple must marry so that πυροῦσθαι can be quenched within marriage, that is between husband and wife (Gudorf, 2000:140). This portion (1 Cor 6:12-20) defines πορνεία in terms of its essence. Paul's whole argument is meant to define πορνεία as a rejectable sin, which has eternal consequences. Πορνεία undermines the intention of God for humans with regard to sexual purity (Hanigan, 1988:134, 141). The person who practices πορνεία ignores and denies that God's purpose with regard to sexuality is localised. It is meant to be realised within the constraints of marriage (Schmidt, 1995:43).

Paul shows clearly that sexual contact outside of wedlock is sin and needs to be classified as πορνεία. It is regarded as sin against the physical body, the temple of the Lord. This correlates with καὶ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐαυτῶν (*you are not your own*. 1 Cor 6:19), δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν (*therefore glorify God in your body*. 1 Cor 6:20) and τὸ δὲ σῶμα ...τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι (*the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body*. 1 Cor 6:13). There can thus be no uncertainty regarding the intention of Paul. Sexual contact outside of marriage is πορνεία and is rejected.

## 4.4 COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF ΠΟΡΝΕΙΑ

The componential analysis will position πορνεία within the general context of *sexual misbehaviour*. It will also clearly show the relationships with ἀρσενοκοίτης and μαλακός. This mutuality presupposes an interdependence for understanding Paul's attitude to homosexuality.

The New King James Version (1993) translates πορνεία (*porneia*) with *sexual immorality*. The New International Version (Life Application Bible, 1997) also translates with *sexual immorality*, as does the Amplified Bible (1987). Louw & Nida (1989b:771) give as possible English equivalents, *sexual immorality, fornication and prostitution*. Fornication is defined by Collins (1995:372) as voluntary sexual intercourse out of marriage. Prostitution is defined as rendering or presenting oneself to engage in sexual intercourse for money (Collins, 2000:1240). Sexual immorality is described as immoral behaviour in especially sexual matters, licentiousness, profligacy, promiscuity or sexual confusion.

Πορνεία is part of a word group that includes πορνεία (the act of sexual immorality, active prostitution), πόρνος (immoral person, adulterer), πόρνη (prostitute) and πορνεία (sexual immorality, licentiousness). This word group describes illegitimate, out of wedlock or extramarital sexual conduct inasmuch that it deviates from acceptable social and religious norms. The following judgement of Demosthenes is significant for the understanding of πορνεία: *The hetaerae (prostitutes) we have for our pleasure, the concubines for the daily care of our bodies and our wives so that we can have legitimate children and a true guardian of the house* (Reisser, 1986:498). These circumstances then led to an extended and widely ramified system of prostitution, on the one hand. On the other hand these circumstances encouraged the married Athenian women of ca. 450BC to have sexual relations with the slaves and to indulge in lesbian (homosexual) love.

The word group πόρνη is used fifty five times in the New Testament. Πορνεία as such is used twenty five times. Paul uses the word twenty one times, especially in the Corinthian letters (fifteen times). Within Pauline literature the word group πόρνη represents any form of extramarital sexual intercourse. The information in Louw & Nida Lexicon (1989b:203) leads to the conclusion that the word πορνεία, found in 1 Corinthians 6:13 (UBS, 1983) is used in the New Testament in only one semantic domain, that is domain 88. Louw & Nida (1989a:742-777) categorises semantic domain 88 as *moral and ethical qualities and related behaviour*. The domain is divided into 38 sub-domains. Πορνεία is placed under sub-domain J, *Sexual Misbehaviour* (88.271-88.288). Domain 88 is thematically divided into two sections. In the first place *positive moral and ethical qualities* (88.1-88.104) and secondly *negative moral and ethical qualities* (88.105-88.318). The sub-domain *sexual misbehaviour* is distinguished from sub-domains *Impurity* (88.256-88.261) and *Licentiousness, Perversion* (88.262-88.270). These three sub-domains (1989b:743) reflect sexuality and are followed up by

deviations of conduct, *Drunkenness* (88.283-88.288) and a more general sub-domain, *Sin, Wrongdoing, Guilt* (88.289-88.318).

Πορνεία falls within sub-domain 88.271-88.282 which is categorised as sexual misbehaviour. Louw & Nida (1989a:742) notes that domain 88 may overlap with domain 41, *Behaviour and Related States*. The reason being that all moral and ethical qualities relate one way or another to the conduct of people. Domain 88 focuses on moral and ethical qualities related to states of behaviour whilst domain 41 focuses on ethically neutral behaviour or such behaviour, which warrants no ethical aspects. There is some ethical overlap with domains 36-40 as well, since moral and ethical elements almost inevitably involve certain interpersonal relations. Domain 88 is quite large, primarily because moral and ethical qualities feature so prominently in New Testament writings.

The Domain, Sexual Misbehaviour includes the following:

88.271	πορνεία	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to engage in sexual immorality of any kind, often with the implication of prostitution</li> <li>- to engage in illicit sex</li> <li>- to commit fornication</li> <li>- sometimes incest</li> </ul>
88.272	άσέλχεια	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- behaviour completely lacking in moral restraint, usually with the implication of sexual licentiousness</li> <li>- extreme immorality</li> </ul>
88.273	κοίτη	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to engage in immoral sexual excess.</li> <li>- sexual immorality</li> </ul>
88.274	πόρνος	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one who engages in sexual immorality whether a man or a woman</li> <li>- a sexually immoral person</li> </ul>
88.275	πόρνη	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a woman who practices sexual immorality as a profession</li> <li>- a prostitute</li> </ul>
88.276	μοιχεία	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sexual intercourse of a man with a married woman other than his own spouse</li> <li>- to commit adultery</li> </ul>
88.277	μοιχός	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to commit adultery</li> <li>- specifically referring to males</li> </ul>
88.278	μοιχαλίσ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to commit adultery</li> <li>- a woman who commits adultery</li> </ul>
88.279	ἀπέχομαι ὀπίσω σαρκός ἑτέρας	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an idiom, literally to go after strange flesh</li> <li>- to engage in unnatural sexual intercourse</li> </ul>

		- to have homosexual intercourse
88.280	ἀρσενοκοίτης	- a male partner in homosexual intercourse - homosexual - active male partner in contrast with μαλακός
88.281	μαλακός	- the passive male partner in homosexual intercourse - homosexual
88.282	κύων, κυνός	- one who is a sexual pervert - one who is sexually promiscuous

## 4.5 SUMMARY

From the viewpoint of the New Testament, adultery was normally judged with reference to the married status of the woman involved in any such act. Sexual intercourse of a married man with an unmarried woman would be regarded as πορνεία (sexual immorality, fornication), but sexual intercourse of either a married or unmarried man with someone else's wife was regarded as adultery, both on the part of the man as well as the woman (Louw & Nida, 1989a:272).

Πορνεία (sexual immorality) is rejected in the Bible (Gal 5:19; Col 3:5). Πορνεία is all extra-marital sex. It is also clear that pre-marital sex is to be regarded as πορνεία (1 Cor 7:1). This does not only refer to the sexual deed, but includes all actions which would give rise to πυροῦσθαι. Sexual purity implies not only the avoidance of physical contact, but also the avoidance of πορνεία in one's thoughts (Mt 5:28). There is a total incompatibility between πορνεία and the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9; Eph 5:5).

It would seem, therefore, that God's revelation through Paul regarding sexual immorality is quite clear. All sexual relationships outside of marriage are πορνεία. Therefore, all sexual relationships outside of marriage are wrong and in terms of Biblical evaluation thereof, it is sin. In chapters 5-7 I will endeavour to show that homosexuality in Paul's understanding belonged clearly within the concept of sexual immorality as a deviation from sexuality as intended by God.

# CHAPTER 5

## EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 1:18-32

He who attempts to expound the Epistle to the Romans,  
 when his sacred task is over,  
 is little disposed to speak about his Commentary;  
 he is occupied rather with an ever deeper reverence  
 and wonder over the Text,  
 which he has been permitted to handle,  
 a Text so full of a marvelous man,  
 above all so full of God.

*Handley C.C. Moule*

### Overview

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

It is to Paul we now turn and in particular, the key Bible portion Romans 1:26-27. With good reason, Romans 1:26-27 is commonly seen as the central Bible portion to the issue of homosexual conduct. Next to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 this Bible portion is the most substantial and explicit discussion on homosexuality in the Bible and it is furthermore located in the New Testament. The Bible portion is not only concerned with same-sex intercourse among men, but also with same-sex intercourse among women (Gagnon, 2001:229).

In this chapter a focussed exegesis of Romans 1:24-28 is done according to the grammatical-historical method (Du Toit & Roberts, 1978). The data from the Louw & Nida Lexicon (1989) is utilized for a word-exegesis of the relevant phrases according to the componential analytical method. The outcome of this should bring us to a valid interpretation of Paul's pronouncements on homosexuality in Romans 1:24-27.

## 5.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND

An overview of the general background to the Epistle to the Romans highlights the current moral trends within which the Roman Christians found themselves. It also brings to the fore the continuity between the two civilisations that formed the Graeco-Roman culture. The Romans took over Hellenistic civilization and fostered its spread in Western Europe. The Romans were the only ancient people who came into contact with Greek civilization and went on to make major advances. From the earliest days Rome had been affected by Greek culture.

By the third century BC Greek civilisation had passed into its Hellenistic phase which was more superficial, but far more attractive than the earlier Classic phase (Starr, 1971:1). Even so, the Romans were very suspicious of the Hellenistic culture (Karlen, 1971:45).<sup>1</sup> Much of what the Romans took from the Hellenistic east was on the level of entertainment and physical pleasure. Despite the efforts of Cato the Elder to drive out Greek philosophers, the great systems of Hellenistic philosophy became part and parcel of the Roman culture. Seneca, Cato, Tacitus and others complained that civic corruption, religious mania, adultery and effeminacy were results of the loss of the original Roman spirit. They especially deplored the influence of the Greeks, which caused *gravitas*, *pietas*, *simplicitas* and *virtus* to be lost (Karlen, 1971:46).

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<sup>1</sup> The Roman, Cato the Elder wrote to his son in 2BC: *Concerning those Greeks, Son Marcus, I will speak to you in the proper place. I will show you the results of my own experience at Athens: that it is a good idea to dip into their literature but not to learn it thoroughly. I shall convince you that they are a most iniquitous and intractable people, and you may take my word as the word of a prophet: whenever the nation shall bestow its literature upon us, it will corrupt everything* (Karlen, 1971:45).

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Traditional ideas of class, morality and manners changed (Tannahill, 1980:106), and so did those of family and sex.<sup>2</sup> The idea of a satisfying and fulfilled life centred no longer on family involvement, but on pleasure and passion. Upper-class children were raised by slaves and by Greek chambermaids, while parents pursued impermanent sexual satisfactions and laboured climbing the *social ladder* (Shaw, 2000:409). Roman life was characterised by bisexuality, homosexuality, violence, brutality and emotional changeableness (Karlen, 1972:46).<sup>3</sup> Rome's most popular diversion was the arena, a drastic change from the Greek theatre. In the arena men were buried alive, dismembered, flogged with chains, disembowelled, decapitated and torn apart by beasts. The emotions of the Roman people needed extreme stimulation. Ovid recommended the arena as a fine place for flirtations and the beginning of a love affair. Martial and his Roman audience like the Greeks, equated masculinity with aggressiveness and dominance; one could use a younger male as a passive sexual object without loss of maleness (Karlen, 1971:56).

Only a living norm can be violated and create contradiction. There must have been many people, a majority, who believed and maintained the traditional values of the Roman society at large and utterly disapproved of such things. There were poets, statesmen, bureaucrats, military officers and private citizen's all continuing to work and live free from greed, brutality and causing social injustice.<sup>4</sup> Slaves were employed to satisfy sexual desires. It was during the early years of Nero's reign that Paul first came into contact with the Roman church. It is probable that the worst excesses of Nero, like the worst cruelty of Tiberius, did little harm to the mass of people even in Rome (Sanday & Headlam, 1962:xv). But it was not only Nero, but Seneca also who was active in Rome when Paul wrote to the congregation in Rome. Paul was at home in the Graeco-Roman world. He spoke the language, lived and worked in its cities and knew its culture. Paul surely knew the Roman world inside out (Vanggaard, 1972:138). He knew there were a great deal of immorality, abortion and the exposure of children. Prostitution and the keeping of courtesans were equally common (Yarbrough,

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<sup>2</sup> In the first century the emancipation of the Roman women was complete. Her free consent was necessary for marriage; she received an education and had liberty of movement with full economic rights. The *hetaira* (courtesan) was virtually unnecessary, for a wife, lover or single woman of one's own class might have all the freedom, charm and sexual expressiveness that the Greeks allowed only to *bad* girls (Karlen, 1971:47).

<sup>3</sup> The poet Catullus fell in love with Clodia the wife of the governor of Cisalpine Gaul. He wrote love poems to her, using the name Lesbia that may suggest bisexuality. Without Lesbia around he would write love poems to boys. He indulged in homosexuality. Tibulles fell in love with Delia, and then Nemesis the mercenary, then followed the young man Marathon who deceived him for a wealthier man and then a girl. Horace wrote love poems to both boys and girls and Propertius wrote: *A woman's love? My enemies may have it. I wish my friends the love of some young boy.* Horace also had advice for his compatriots: *Adultery and whores are just trouble. When your passions urge, and a young slave girl or boy whom you long for is at hand, would you rather be consumed with desire than possess it? Not I* (Karlen, 1971:49). Homosexuality was called the *Roman religion* (Douma, 1988:15).

<sup>4</sup> These stable people included the poor and undistinguished, who had no time, inclination urge or opportunities for more than family and work. Countless villages and small towns in the provinces continued with life as usual. Here the institution of slavery and the sexual exploitation of youths were not the norm, at least not until the spread of the Great Mother cults all over the empire. Juvenal described the worshippers of this cult as *a bunch of sexually crazed women coupling with each other, men and beasts* (Tannahill, 1980:118-120).

1985:63). Divorce was frequent and many married to get access to large fortune (Tannahill, 1980:122).

The Roman legislator promulgated legislation for the Roman world. Preachers out of the east, on the other hand, proclaimed a moral law which purported to be valid for all mankind, including the Romans (Lewinsohn, 1958:83). The moral teaching of the Christians sounded like criticism of the private lives of the imperial family members, an attack on Roman law and on the morals of Roman society. In the sphere of sex, the Romans were invited to follow an unwanted code of sexual behaviour so foreign to their own. Marriage was to be for life, divorce was wrong. Marrying again after having been divorced is also wrong. The basic principles of this new sexual morality so foreign to the Romans were clear although for many not acceptable.<sup>5</sup>

But what about homosexuality? Romans 1:26-27 seems to clearly condemn homosexual relations between both men and women. Romans 1:24-27 is also at the centre of the current debate about homosexuality. It is the core Bible portion to the issue of homosexual conduct on which Christians could base their moral doctrine with regard to homosexuality.

The exegesis of the relevant phrases in the next section should bring us to a clearer understanding of the meaning of Romans 1:26-27.

### 5.3 TENTATIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE RELEVANT GREEK PHRASES

A literal translation of the Greek text (UBS, 1983:531) of Romans 1:24-27 is as follows:

(24)

Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ταῖς  
wherefore gave up them - God in the

ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν  
desires of the hearts of them to uncleanness

τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς  
- to be dishonoured the bodies of them among them(selves)

<sup>5</sup> Lewinsohn (1958:86) summarises the apostle Paul's teaching as follows: *If a man finds sexual abstinence easy, let him remain unmarried, but if sexual impulses are so strong that he cannot live in continence, let him marry. This rule applies alike to bachelors and widowers, to men and to women. For the rest Paul does not tamper with the old tradition. It is still for parents to determine their children's future, but they must take account of the sex-instinct. No one who wishes to live in virginity is to be forced to marry, and no one unable to restrain himself sexually is to be debarred from marrying.* This seems to be a fair summary of Paul's intention in 1 Corinthians 6 and 7 and clearly highlights the superiority of Paul's teaching on sexual matters.

(25)

Οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ  
 who changed the truth - of god

ἐν τῷ ψεύδει, καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ  
 with the lie and worshiped and

ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα,  
 served the creature rather-than the one having created

ὃς ἐστὶν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.  
 who is blessed unto the ages: Amen

(26)

διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη  
 Therefore he gave up them - God to passions

ἀτιμίας, αἱ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν  
 -of dishonour the even for females of them changed

τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν  
 the natural use to the (use) against nature

(27)

ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν  
 likewise and also the males leaving the

φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν  
 natural use of the female burned in

τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες  
 the desire of them toward one another males

ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι  
 among males the unseemliness working

καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης  
 and the penalty which was due of the error

αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες.  
 of them in themselves receiving back.

### 5.3.1 Μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν (they exchanged natural use for what is against nature)

#### 5.3.1.1 Introduction

The key terms for the understanding of Romans 1:26-27 are *χρῆσις* (*use*) and *φύσις* (*nature*) which occurs in both verses 26 and 27, and *ὁμοίως* (*likewise*), which introduces verse 27. In verse 26 the natural *χρῆσις* is exchanged for the unnatural. In verse 27 the natural *χρῆσις* with women is abandoned because men burned with

ὄρεξις (*desire*) which resulted in unnatural practices. Χρήσις in verses 26 and 27 is connected by the term ὁμοίως. Μετήλλαξαν (*exchanged*) is a rare term and in extant Greek literature is used for sexual perversion only in Romans 1 (Miller, 1995:3).

### 5.3.1.2 Exegesis

The noun χρήσις<sup>6</sup> can be translated as *use, usage or usefulness* and sometimes *sexual intercourse*. We can't understand χρήσις to mean similar sexual activities engaged in by women in verse 26 and men in verse 27 (e.g. non-coital penetration). This would give a too simple reading of these verses. It will presuppose a single common category for homosexuality in the mind of Paul and his readers, which transcends any differences in practice. Some exegetes understand Paul's denouncement to refer only to pederasty (Scroggs, 1983a:101), which in the non-coital sense will only have reference to intercultural (interfemoral) connection. Χρήσις is perhaps best read as a reference to the sexual activities themselves rather than an abstract category presupposed by commentators (Miller, 1995:3). The phrase *the natural use of the male* in Romans 1:27 implies that the *ellipsis* in 1:26 is to be completed to read *the natural χρήσις (of the female)*. Therefore, in both cases χρήσις is to be understood as *regards sexual intercourse*. Paul's argument here assumes a mutuality in the male-female sexual relationship inasmuch χρήσις as sexual *use* is concerned. There is a natural *use* of the female by the male (Rom 1:27), but also a reciprocal natural *use* of the male by the female (Rom 1:26). Sexuality in Paul's understanding has its *function or use* in the complementary sexual *other*.

Others, however, argue that χρήσις in Romans 1:26-27 should not be translated *relation or intercourse* because χρήσις generally refers not to mutual gratification but to *the activity of the desiring subject, usually male, performed on the desired object, female or male*, implying that Paul focuses on marriage and *the husband's use of the wife* (Frederickson, 2000:201). It is the unnatural use of the female (wife) that Paul most likely alludes to in Romans 1:26.<sup>7</sup> The assumption that χρήσις highlights the possibility of *passion* and its consequences rather than the violation of the male-female form of intercourse needs to be addressed. This implies that the persons having sex, lack self-control experienced by the user of another's body. According to this argument

<sup>6</sup> Χράομαι - *to use, make use of; desire, yearn after, enjoy*. Louw & Nida (1989a:258) defines the meaning as: *the sexual function or use of the same or opposite sex – sexual use, sexual function*. With reference to Romans 1:26-27, Louw & Nida translate: *for the women pervert the natural sexual function for that which is contrary to nature, and likewise men give up the natural sexual function of a women*. Gagnon (2001:236) quotes Pseudo-Lucian (Affairs, 25) where he uses the word: *I will show that the womanly "use" is better by far than the "use" of a darling boy*.

<sup>7</sup> This argument is not plausible. One can hardly draw the same conclusion for the male, as the word *likewise* would have it. The reason being that the paucity of examples of the female's use of the male can be explained in part by the lack of the attention paid by male authors to female sexual experience and also by their reluctance to think of women as users, a male social role, rest on too many contemporary assumptions regarding the female-male role in sexual activity. If it was so noticeable that Paul had to write against it, it presupposes a definite *sexual model* for women as, for example pederasty as a model for understanding Paul's writings against homosexuality (Scroggs, 1983a). The conceptualization of a *female-male model* for Romans 1:26-27 is untenable within the context.

Romans 1:24-27 is not an attack on homosexuality as a violation of the complementarity of the male-female physique, but a description of the human condition informed by the rejection of love in favour of excessive passionate love.<sup>8</sup> The effort to show that *love's object was the body of another, with no specification of gender* as implied by Xenophon (Symposium 8.2, 13) does not withstand a closer examination. The outcome of this direction of thought is the denouncement of *excessive sexual desire* instead of homosexual acts. This argument postulates the possibility that Paul would be arguing for *sex without passion* within the context of marriage. In the context of 1 Corinthians 6-7 this line of thought may be dismissed in totality.<sup>9</sup>

Χρήσις presupposes in the theology of Paul a *natural use*. Fredrickson (2000:202-207) contends that sexual activity between males is not portrayed in Romans 1:26-27 as the violation of a male-female norm given with creation, but as an example of *excess passion* into which God has handed over persons who dishonoured him. Romans 1:26-27 focuses on *passion* as the immediate problem, not on the gender of the persons having sex, he contends. Indeed he (2000:201) argues that χρήσις (use) is *genderless* in its application in Romans 1:26-27 or at the least: *neither the gender of the subject nor that of the object is material to the concept of use*. However, as being unnatural it is clear from the context of 1:26-27 that the sex/gender of the partner *does* make all the difference in the definition of χρήσις (use) of another in sexual intercourse. Sex with a member of the opposite sex in juxtaposition, is defined as natural, when exchanged for sex with a member of the same sex, it is here defined as unnatural. It is the *gender* of the persons having sex, and not sexual desire as such, which constitute the problem. Excess passion in itself is not reason enough to warrant a given behaviour to be assessed as sin.

Μετήλλαξαν (*exchange*) - Verses 1:23-32 have a structure built around the verb μετήλλαξαν on the part of man and woman and the verb παρέδωκεν (*giving over or abandoning*) on the part of God:

*And they changed (ἤλλαξαν) the glory of God into an image (1:23)*

*Therefore God gave them up (παρέδωκεν) to uncleanness, to dishonour their bodies (1:24).*

*Who exchanged (μετήλλαξαν) the truth of God for the lie (1:25).*

<sup>8</sup> Five terms are recognized to describe erotic (ἔρως) love in the ancient world (Fredrickson, 2000:208): ἐπιθυμία (desire, 1:24); πάθος (passion, 1:26); ἐκκαίω (inflammation, 1:27); ὄρεξις (appetite, 1:27) and πλάνη (error, 1:27). Paul does not use ἔρως at all. To argue Paul is building his argument around the implied topic of ἔρως assumes too much.

<sup>9</sup> Foucault (1988:174) argues for *sex without passion* understanding on the basis of 1 Thessalonians 4:4 - *Having a wife in honour* as if it equals passionless sex for the male readers of the Thessalonian text. The fact for which Fredrickson (2000:209) argues: that in sexual matters πάθος is employed without regard to the gender of either the subject or the object of desire may just show the unnaturalness of the male-male or female-female desire. The argument is not about πάθος or χρήσις as such, but the fact that it is not heterosexually, but homosexually directed. This is the πλάνη (error).

Therefore God gave them up (παρέδωκεν) to vile passions (1:26a).

Even their women..., likewise also the men exchanged (μετήλλαξαν) natural relations for unnatural (1:26b-27). God gave them over (παρέδωκεν) to a debased mind to do things, which are not fitting.

Μεταλλάσσω (Rom 1:26) describes the result of the *exchange* of worship mentioned in 1:25 by itself an intensification of ἀλλάσσω in Romans 1:23. As the non-Christians perverted their worship with *idolatry/the lie* (Rom 1:25), so was also their sexual practice perverted.<sup>10</sup> The phrase μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν (*exchange natural use for what is against nature*) lies at the core of the argument in Romans 1:26-27. Sexual differentiation is justified by sexual union. This truth is defined in Paul's usage of χρῆσις. In creation man and woman fulfil a function of creative complementariness. Without her, the man is created incomplete and without him, the woman is created incomplete. It is the woman who brings man to completion and the man who brings the woman to completion. The purpose of sex is not just satisfaction of fulfilment but completion. Paradoxically, sex also serves an opposite purpose. When it becomes an end in itself and enhances a completely separated and isolated individuality, a separateness where an *exchange* takes place and the male-female separates into male-male and female-female (Rom 1:26-27) relationships *contra naturam*. Same-sex relations are not a valid mode of sexuality but a tragic maiming of the creation intention of male-female χρῆσις. That is why same-sex is not an intended mode of sexuality for it affirms incompleteness. Completeness can only be affirmed in the other who is truly other and this fact is vividly noticeable in the created physique of man and woman.

Παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεός (God gave them over) - The words *God gave them over* in Romans 1:24-26 and 28 can be understood in three ways (Malick, 1993:335). Firstly, in the permissive sense, which means God passively permitted men to fall into retributive consequences. Secondly, it can be understood in the privative sense, which means God withdrew his restraining hand from evil and lastly, in the active judicial sense, meaning that God actively gave men over to retributive vengeance.<sup>11</sup> The refusal to acknowledge God ends in blind distortion of the created reality. The reversal of the created order in worshipping *the lie* rather than God is reflected in a reversal of the created order in sexuality. Both constitute instances of overturning God's design.

<sup>10</sup> Outside Romans the related term ἐναλλάσσω is more common for sexual perversion (Miller, 1995:3). See, for example the parallels in Wisdom 14:26 and Testament of Naphtali 3:4-5. Miller argues that ἐναλλάσσω is non-specific to the type of sexual perversion and may be used for any activity, which the author considers a perversion and concludes that μεταλλάσσω is probably also non-specific. If, however, μεταλλάσσω is intended to be specific, the context must provide the information of what specific perversion is intended by Paul's use of μεταλλάσσω.

<sup>11</sup> The active sense of παρέδωκεν does not allow an interpretation for either the permissive or privative sense. The active judicial sense lines up with Paul's intention in other parts of Scripture (Rom 4:25; 6:17; 8:32; 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Tim 1:20). Thus, the best reading is to understand the phrase in the active judicial sense where the act of God is to be seen as a *penal infliction* of retribution. This action is consistent with God's holiness (Malick, 1994:337; Hultgren, 1994:318; Sanday & Headlam, 1962:45).

This is emphasized by the term *exchanged* which parallels rebellion against God with the outcomes of that rebellion.<sup>12</sup> There is a positive correlation between the sin and the retributive consequence, which by its very nature is also sin.

**Φύσικος** and **φύσις** (*natural and/or nature*) – The words *natural* and *unnatural* can be used in different senses, the biological, the moral and the religious sense. Biologically one can argue that natural means the complementarity of male and female, a congenital predisposition and conclude that homosexuality in the biological sense is not unnatural, especially measured against the norm of heterosexuality and procreation; the *traditional* grounds for the condemnation of homosexuality (Pronk, 1993:215). The *παρὰ φύσιν* (*contrary to nature*) argument, however, is a theological argument and not a scientific biological argument.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the argument for congenital predisposition and procreation are in the first place a theologically based argument with secondary support from the other sciences. Hence **φύσις** (*nature*) is not the result of empirical investigation, or speculative determinism, but a theological norm determined by God. Therefore, **φύσικος** and **φύσις** refers to one's constitution as given by God the Creator. **Φύσις** may have the figurative sense of a natural endowment or condition inherited from one's ancestors, when used as in Romans 2:27 (Malick, 1993:331).

However, there is the literal sense of physical *nature* that is beyond heritage and is based on creational intent by the Creator.<sup>14</sup> Not the male but the female possesses, because of creational intent the complementary opening for insertion by the male member, a point confirmed by the procreative capacity of male *seed* when it enters via the vagina into the female womb (Gagnon, 2001:391). The point of contention is that same-sex intercourse is a transgression of *natural boundaries*, distinguishable in the way males and females are made and not *excess passion* (Fredrickson, 2000:199); this meaning is innate in Paul's notion of sexual activity as **χρήσις** (*use*). That is why idolatry is implicitly *παρὰ φύσιν* (*contrary to nature*), not because people are *constitutional monotheists*, but because observation of the created cosmos presupposes a Creator, far greater than a god carved out of wood or stone in the image of one of God's creations (Rom 1:19-23). Not the innateness of one's passions, but rather the bodily design of humans themselves should guide us into the truth about the nature of God and the nature of human sexuality.

<sup>12</sup> The term *exchanged* which parallels rebellion against God with the outcomes of that rebellion is confirmed in verses 23 (**ἠλλάξαν**), 25 (**μετήλλαξαν**) and 26 (**μετήλλαξαν**).

<sup>13</sup> Homosexuals cannot lay claim to and own *nature* with its particular predisposition. The appeal to a God ordained special homosexual *nature* allows claims for other *natures*, for example a bi-sexual nature, a pedophilic nature or bestiality nature. This is, however, not the case. The term **παρὰ φύσιν** is at the same time inclusive and exclusive; it includes a specific *nature* and excludes all others as deviations of that *nature*. It would exclude homosexuality as *contra naturam* if homosexuality is proved not to be *natural*, that is, aligned with what is Biblically regarded to be *natural*.

<sup>14</sup> This is how Paul uses the term in 1 Corinthians 11:14 when he refers to *nature* as an argument for head coverings. Paul argues that the branches of the olive tree are *natural* (**κατὰ φύσιν**) and of the tree which *by nature* is a wild olive tree (**κατὰ φύσιν**). Branches are grafted into it *contra naturam* (**παρὰ φύσιν**). To my mind Cranfield (1985:835) correctly observes that in Romans 1:26 **φύσικος** means *in accordance with the intention of the Creator* and **παρὰ φύσιν** means *contrary to the intention of the Creator*.

*Nature* in this passage is used purposefully and in a moral sense; actions could, therefore, be taken which contradict nature. To live *παρὰ φύσιν* or *κατὰ φύσιν* (*contrary to nature* or *in accordance to nature*), implies moral categories; it denotes how man (and woman) ought, or ought not to live. Evil practices in Romans 1:26-27 are, therefore, described as *παρὰ φύσιν* and Paul condemns the gentiles on the basis of *φύσις* (Martens, 1994:55). Such actions ignore the realities of gender and reproductive capacity, reducing sex to pleasure only. Graeco-Roman and Jewish Hellenistic literature commonly employed *παρὰ φύσιν* to contrast same-sex practice with that which is *κατὰ φύσιν*. This phrase is crucial because it reveals the basis of Paul's condemnation of same-sex relations (Schmidt, 1996:297; De Kruijf, 1986:45).<sup>15</sup> Thus, the context requires us to understand natural sex as sex according to *God's creative intent*. When man gives up the Creator (Rom 1:25), he likewise gives up the creation ordinances, which include the male-female relationship as the intended context for sex (Cottrell, 2000:157). The rationale of Paul to argue that homosexual acts are *against nature* can be summarised in his creationist orientation; the Biblical creation narratives serve as a backdrop to the narrative in Romans 1:18-32. Paul's references to the sexes in Romans 1:26-27 as *females* and *males* rather than *women* and *men* follow the style of Genesis 1:27 (LXX). The inter-textual connection between Romans 1:23 and Genesis 1:26 (LXX) is unmistakable (Gagnon, 2001:290). For Paul both adultery and same-sex intercourse reject God's verdict that what was made and arranged was *very good* (Rom 1:31). It seems that Paul might have argued in terms of sexual pairing of male and females in Genesis 1:26-31.

The arguments of the anatomical and procreative complementarity of male and female are of importance in assessing what Paul meant when he contended that same-sex intercourse is *παρὰ φύσιν* (*contrary to nature*). Given the meaning of *παρὰ φύσιν* and comparable expressions used by Jewish writers to describe same-sex intercourse, the meaning of the concept in Romans is clear. It seems from Paul's argument in Romans 1:26-27 that he is referring to the anatomical and procreative complementarity of male and female. Gagnon (2001:254) is quite vivid in his discussion on Paul's argumentation in condemning same-sex intercourse.<sup>16</sup> That Paul thought of *φύσις* not

<sup>15</sup> Paul argues that he views sexual sin as specified in Romans 1:26-27, a result of rebellion against the Creator. There is no direct quote of Genesis in Romans 1:18-32, but the passage is filled with allusions to humanity's creation. The following are of special interest: *ever since creation* (1:20); *the things He has made* (1:20); *Creator* (1:20); *females* and *males* (1:26-27) as in Genesis 1:27 where it says: *male and female He created them*. For Paul, the creation account of sexual differentiation is the only *φύσις*. The word for creation (*κτίσις*) in 1:20 refers to the act or process of creation (Barret, 1991:39). Same-sex relationships constitute *obscene/shameful pleasures*, which is a perversion of the created order.

<sup>16</sup> Paul argues that even pagans who have no access to the book of Leviticus should know that same-sex eroticism is *παρὰ φύσιν* because the primary sex organs fit male to female, not female to female or male to male. Fittedness also clues to complementarity provided by procreative capacity and the capacity for mutual and pleasurable stimulation. These clues make clear that neither the anus, the orifice for excreting waste products, nor the mouth, the orifice for taking in food, are complementary orifices for the male member (Gagnon, 2001:254-255). The reciprocal point of view is well-illustrated by Barnard (2000:45): the point of departure is that *the whole body is holy – the so-called orifices for excretion of waste products as well*. Barnard queries the judgment that the anus is *solely regarded as an excretory organ* seeing that the penis is also an excretory organ and at the same time a sexual organ. He calls upon *research results by sexiologists* to support his claim that anal sex is *natural because it is sexually stimulating and if it was not natural then surely sexual stimulation would have been absent* (2000:44). He

as the way things are usually done (culture convention) but rather as the material shape of the created order can also be deduced from his illustration that idolatry entails the suppression of the knowable truth.<sup>17</sup>

Helminiak (1997:87) makes the point that for Paul *παρὰ φύσιν* meant *atypical*, that is not *against nature* but *against culture*. He contends that *παρὰ φύσιν* is a Stoic technical term, which Paul used to impress his Roman readers. Helminiak concedes that it is correctly translated to mean *contrary to nature* or *unnatural* and then states emphatically that Paul *knew of Stoicism*<sup>18</sup>... but Paul did not understand Stoic philosophy and that Paul meant *atypical*. Within Stoic understanding it is to be understood as *beyond the natural* whereas for Paul it would mean *beyond the typical* (1997:87). The translations *beyond nature* and *contrary to nature* for *παρὰ φύσιν* cannot be played off against each other. *Beyond*, the more common and general meaning of *παρὰ* with the accusative and *contrary to* (*against, in opposition to* - a specific sense of this general meaning) are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Gagnon, 2001:389).

No provision is to be made for an *atypical* translation for *φύσις* with Paul. Paul's use of *φύσις* is never abstract, but of a *concrete nature*, observable in its anatomical and procreational capacities and does not presuppose that *φύσις* should be understood to be *atypical*. Same-sex is *beyond* or *in excess of φύσις* in the sense that it transgresses or

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concludes that the Bible is not prescriptive in the ways of sexual intercourse, but definitely prescriptive in the attitude accompanying sexual intercourse. Countryman's (1989:243) conclusion that the New Testament did not justify any sexual rule, by appealing to physical purity, states (1) that the Gospel allows no rule against, in and of themselves: *masturbation, non-vaginal heterosexual intercourse, bestiality, polygamy, homosexual acts, or erotic art and literature* and (2) *bestiality, where it is the casual recourse of the young or of people isolated over long periods of time from other humans, should occasion little concern.*

<sup>17</sup> Scholars who point to the male-female *complementarity* as the key to understanding Paul's use of *παρὰ φύσιν* include: Hays (1985); Schmidt (1995); Wright (1984). Other commentators are not clear on the issue and allude to same-sex intercourse as a violation of the *natural order* or *order of nature* created and intended by God. Fitzmyer (1993:286) explicitly mentions *the order seen in the function of the sexual organs themselves, which were ordained for an expression of love between man and woman and for the procreation of children.* Cranfield (1986:125-126) takes nature as a metonym for *the way God made us.* Hoheisel (1994:294) admits that Paul viewed same-sex intercourse as being outside *the order of God or of creation* while Balz (1987:66) says that *it is a matter of an offense against the human body given with creation, false use of one's sexual potency, a renunciation of offspring, an offense against the creation - appropriate combination of man and woman and finally probably the disturbance of the bodily relationships of life willed by God. . . . Paul appeals, when he speaks of φύσιν, to an insight accessible to everyone in the reality of creation given in all that is.* Gagnon (2001:255) observes that for Paul it was a matter of commonsense observation of the human anatomy and procreative function that even non-Christians otherwise oblivious to God's direct revelation in the Bible, had no excuse for not knowing.

<sup>18</sup> The Stoic Philosopher Seneca (ca 2-65AD) laid bare the wickedness in human nature, and in his moral exhortations he approximated to Christian teaching more than any other classical philosopher. Musonius Rufus (30-101AD) and Epictetus (55 - ca 135AD) also use language comparable to the New Testament. Many terms in the New Testament have had a place in Stoicism: *spirit, conscience, logos, virtue, self-sufficiency, reasonable service, but Stoicism did not have a fully personal God, a Creator. Everything was possible through the logos.* Paul encountered Stoics at Athens (Acts 17:18). Whereas Paul identified *nature* as the *observable* the Stoics saw nature as *reason.* For the Stoics the only rational motive for undertaking sexual intercourse is procreation (McNeill, 1977:93). But this being the case, it is quite contra Paul, because he does not indicate an innate nature in the philosophical sense, but always relates to religious and cultural heritage. From the beginning of his arguments against non-Christian religion and morality, which would include Stoicism by definition, Paul has in mind God as Creator, the cosmos as the creation of the invisible God, and non-Christian religion as the fatally flawed attempt to seek in elements of nature (the lie) the manifestation of the invisible God who defies all images (Mauser, 1996:11)

*progresses beyond* the boundaries for sexuality both established by God and being transparent in nature. The capacity for pro-creation is by the very definition of same-sex eroticism annulled because of the separation of sexual interest from pro-creation (Pollak, 1985:41). In same-sex relations, *παρὰ φύσιν* means the *isolation of the sexual act*. This is so because in one form or the other, same-sex eroticism in conduct and expression denies the goodness of God's creation of male and female (Gn 1-2). Any deviation from this *creation order* by same-sex relations reiterates that humanity has deviated from God's order (Douman, 1983:69-70). Same-sex is not only contrary to God's creative intention and to *nature* itself, but also contrary to his divinely intended types, male and female.

What type of homosexuality is meant in 1:26-27? Scroggs (1983a:121) concludes that *only in Romans 1 is there a negative judgement made on both female as well as male homosexuality, which could be considered a general indictment*. He continues: *this general indictment about male homosexuality must have had, could only have had, pederasty in mind*.<sup>19</sup> Scroggs's primary argument is that Paul only condemned pederasty in Romans 1 in its more dehumanising characteristics (1983a:127-128). The descriptions, however, of homoeroticism in Romans 1:24, 26-27 as *the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, dishonourable passions, contrary to nature, burned in their lust for one another, committing shameful acts*, argues strongly to understand a context of consenting males rather than male and child. Scroggs's *pederasty model*, as the sole focus, is excluded by the very wording of Paul's argument in Romans 1:26-27. The structure of the model (Scroggs, 1983a:32) as shown previously postulates that the younger person, the *ἐρώμενος* (beloved - *erōmenos*) was passive, did not desire, or at least did not expect, sexual gratification. If a youth did feel pleasure, he was considered a prostitute. There is no evidence that he was given the opportunity to be satisfied. His bodily activity was simply to provide sexual satisfaction for his lover, the *ἐραστής* (*erastēs*). Surely in the language being used by Paul, he implies mutuality<sup>20</sup> contra what Scroggs is arguing for.

Although pederasty might have been a major form of homosexual conduct in the first century, one has to conclude with Wright (1989:295) that Paul *sees beyond particular forms of same-sex relations or same-sex relations in particular contexts*. Malik (1993:338) arrives at a similar outcome. But even if Paul's awareness of homosexuality is to be regarded primarily as that of pederasty, it does not mean that his words must be limited to pederasty. As seen above most of the terms Paul used in Romans 1 allow for more than pederasty, which includes adult-adult mutuality.

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<sup>19</sup> This to my mind is a contradiction in terms. Scroggs is arguing for a qualitative fact that his argument cannot have. Jewett (2000:235) argues against Scroggs's opinion when he says that *the evidence in this verse (Rom 1:26) is particularly damaging to the hypothesis by Scroggs that the critique of homosexuality in this pericope aims solely to attack pederasty and thus has no bearing on homoerotic relationships between consenting adults*.

<sup>20</sup> Paul argues as follows in the various verses of the Romans pericope and implies mutuality:  
*In the lusts of their hearts to, dishonour their bodies among themselves* (1:24);  
*Burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful* (1:27);  
*And receiving in themselves the penalty of their error that was due* (1:27).

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A major flaw in the assumption for pederasty as the only focus of Romans 1:26-27 is Paul's inclusion of female-female homoerotic relations in his argument. It would indeed be strange for Paul to begin with a reference to women when pederasty, as the only focus, is by definition a male vice. Paul is comprehensive in his theological statement, and that is why women are not included in a figurative way of speaking. As we have seen above Paul is very concrete in his theology. The view that Paul is discussing pederasty in Romans 1 can not logically and exegetically be determined as being the case. Male and female are necessary counterparts. Humanity is created male and female and the one is not above the other to be excluded from the effect of homoeroticism. For Paul to give a general indictment against homosexual acts he has to include both male and female. Given his Jewish background it is nothing but natural to include both.

As background to Paul's comments on homoeroticism, Schoedel (2000:43) discusses the views of some ancient authors, Plato, Philo and Clement of Alexandria. Basically all three share a negative attitude and view on homoerotic practices.<sup>21</sup> In the light of various ancient parallels, it seems that Paul is concerned in Romans 1:26 with female homoeroticism rather than woman engaging in *male homosexual practices*<sup>22</sup> or *heterosexual women committing homoerotic acts* (Fredrickson, 2000:233). Paul treats same-sex intercourse among females as an issue in its own right, holding women to the same level of accountability as men. The language of *natural use* and the link *likewise* between Romans 1:26 and Romans 1:27 clarifies that both male and female homoeroticism are seen as evidence of the same *dishonourable passions*. It implies a departure from a divinely intended, deliberately created, originally heterosexual relationship between males and females.

Female homosexuality<sup>23</sup> does not get much attention in the literature of antiquity. Perhaps the reason being that the authors of the time were exclusively male. Little, in

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<sup>21</sup> Schoedel (2000:72) concludes that the Jewish and early Christian rejection of same-sex eros was but one aspect of a new conception of the family. The male could not now express his authority by penetrating at will not only the wife but also his male and female slaves or a young male favourite. A new model for the family was emerging at that time. This seems to be an over-emphasis of the family as no other source attests to this emerging family model. This model also ignores the long moral history of the Jews and the early Christian church's submission to the ethical codes of the Torah, the common denominator of Jews and Christians.

<sup>22</sup> Miller (1995:10) says: *Thus the similarity in function described in Romans 1:26 refers to non-coital sexual activities, which are engaged in by heterosexual women similar to the sexual activities of homosexual males. So females, described first, exchanged natural function for unnatural but an exchange of partners is not indicated.* This view is not supported by Romans 1:26-27. The word *likewise* implies an exchange of partners and a moving away from the divine intention of heterosexual partners and not just a mere exchange of function.

<sup>23</sup> Scroggs (1983:140-144) lists some instances of female homoeroticism in antique literature. His conclusion is that there is virtually nothing in the texts about female homosexuality. He might, however, be underscoring the truth in support of his view on pederasty as the only homosexual model in the Graeco-Roman world. He mentions Sappho of Lesbos and a single reference in the speech of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*. Another is Plutarch's life of Lycurgus and the mentioning that παρθέναι (young girls) found female lovers. Other instances include Clement of Alexandria, Pseudo-Lucian's *Erōtes* and a final portion in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*. Smith (1996:223-251), however, takes Scroggs to task for his limited references concerning female homosexuality in ancient literature and art. Over and against the ten references listed by Scroggs, Smith (1996:223-252) states on the contrary several certain statements can be made about female homosexual practices. Considerably more is known about female homosexuality. He then lists an additional seven instances not mentioned by Scroggs from Graeco-

comparison with male homoeroticism, is said in the Graeco-Roman world about lesbianism. Romans 1:26-27 is also an only Biblical passage referring to female homosexuality. However, it can be concluded from the evidence listed, that female eroticism was not unknown and perhaps more important, it was practiced along with its male counterpart in the Graeco-Roman first century world. The literature referred to below shows that female homosexual practices were known and attested to in Greek and Latin literature. The picture of female homoeroticism may be distorted because it is viewed through a *male lens*.

There are arguments that postulate a *homosexual activity by heterosexuals* rather than a *hetero-homo perversion view* (Miller, 1995:10; Boswell, 1980:109). This argument is based on the phrases *πάθη ἀτιμίας* (*degrading passions*) and *τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι* (*committing shameful acts*). In his argument for a heterosexual interpretation Boswell (1980:108) disregards pederasty as a focus area as well as the possibility that Paul's polemical target is the practice of temple prostitution connected with idolatrous non-Christian worship.<sup>24</sup> Against this argument it is contended that although Romans 1:26 does not explicitly state that females had sexual intercourse with females, the parallel wording in Romans 1:27 strongly suggests it. The completion of the *ellipsis* presupposes the following understanding:

1:26 *their females exchanged the natural use (of the males) for that which is contrary to nature.*

1:27 *and likewise also the males, leaving the natural use of the female, burned in their desire for one another...*

The expression *natural use of the female* (as sexual partner) in Romans 1:27 suggests that the implied objective genitive of *natural use* in Romans 1:26 is the male as a sexual partner. The continuation of Romans 1:27 makes clear that the exchange for men is not that of coital intercourse for non-coital intercourse, but rather an exchange

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Roman literature and instances from rabbinic literature. Dover (1978:184) refers to numerous references and quotations to conclude *if lesbian woman had a reputation for shameless and uninhibited sexuality, they are likely to have been credited with all such genital acts as the inventive pursuit of a piquant variety of pleasure can devise, including homosexual practices together with fellation, cunnilingus, threesomes, copulation in unusual positions and the use of olisboi* (masturbation aids). Waetjen (1996:111) refers to some references but leans for his information on Dover (1978); he mentions *extravagant and uninhibited language, which was employed to express relations between women and also girls*.

<sup>24</sup> There are three reasons, says Boswell (1980:108-109), why temple prostitution is not in focus: (a) *temple prostitution was not limited to homosexual activities; (b) it is clear that the sexual behaviour itself is objectionable to Paul, not merely its associations; (c) Paul is not describing cold-blooded dispassionate acts performed in the interest of ritual or ceremony*. He refers to *lust* as motivation for homosexual behaviour. Therefore, the persons Paul condemns are manifestly not homosexual. What he derogates are homosexual acts committed by apparently heterosexual persons. It is valid to state that Paul is not concerned here with temple prostitution or any other form of homosexual prostitution. However, it is not valid to state that he is concerned about heterosexual people committing homosexual acts in lust. Rather, Paul is profoundly against homosexual acts *per se*. Boswell's view of heterosexual people committing homosexual acts goes unsupported by the Bible references.

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of sexual relations<sup>25</sup> with women for sexual relations with men (Gagnon, 2001:298; Malick, 1993:337; Schmidt, 1997:100-101). Paul is describing not individual actions, but the corporate rebellion of humanity against God; one kind of behaviour indicative of this rebellion is homosexual relationships. Same-sex relations are a specific falsification of right behaviour. Female same-sex intercourse is cited as being *unnatural* or *contrary to nature*.<sup>26</sup> The fact that Romans 1:26 puts the blame squarely and solely on women indicates that it is not unnatural forms of heterosexual intercourse that is the issue (Gagnon, 2001:299).

From the context of Romans 1:26-27 it seems clear that Paul intended his denouncement to apply in a general way to all homosexual practices among both men and women. He censures homosexual activity in general terms, reaffirming the Levitical prohibitions in 18:22 and 20:13.<sup>27</sup> The present judgement in Romans 1:27 is imbedded in the past record, this being the Old Testament.

### 5.3.1.3 Summary

The importance of three terms has been studied in this section. The three terms are part of the phrase:

μετήλλαξαν	τὴν	φυσικὴν	χρῆσιν	εἰς	τῆς	παρὰ φύσιν
they exchange	the	natural	use	for what	is	against nature

These terms are *χρῆσις* (use), *μετήλλαξαν* (exchange) and *παρὰ φύσιν* (against nature).

In summary the exegesis of the three terms points to the fact that same-sex intercourse is contrary to God's creation intention for humanity as depicted in the distinctive modes of sexuality, namely male and female. Both *χρῆσις* and *μετήλλαξαν* is informed by the intended *φύσις*. The hermeneutical arguments for understanding *παρὰ φύσιν* to mean anything else than *against* or *contrary* to the intended nature of heterosexual

<sup>25</sup> When one views the way Paul's contemporaries used the contrast *κατὰ φύσιν/παρὰ φύσιν* (according to nature/contrary to nature) in relevant contexts, it is obvious that Paul had an exchange of *nature* in mind. Plato (*Laws*, 636C) writes that *when a male unites with female for procreation the pleasure experienced is held to be due to nature, but contrary to nature when male mates with male or female with female, and that those first guilty of such enormities were impelled by their slavery to pleasure*. Plutarch (ca. 100AD) contrasts *natural* love between men and women with *union contrary to nature with males* and those who *consort with males* do so against nature (*Erotikos*, 751C, E). Philo (*Abraham*, 135) remarks that men of Sodom *threw off from their necks the law of nature to mount males not respecting the common nature with which the active partner acts upon the passive*. In *Special Laws*, III: 37-42, he characterizes pederasty as a *transformation of the male nature* (Schmidt, 1997:101). These quotes support the argument that Paul has had an exchange of female for male relations in view (contrary to nature) and not a mere exchange of function.

<sup>26</sup> Brooten (1996) refers to Plato, Seneca the Elder, Martial, Ovid, Ptolemy, Artemidoros and Dorotheos of Sidon. These references refer to female same-sex intercourse as being *παρὰ φύσιν*.

<sup>27</sup> Indicative of this widely accepted censure by Paul is the fact that even the so-called *revisionists* accept Paul's condemnation of homosexual acts (Miller, 1995:1; Boswell, 1980:112-113; McNeill, 1977:53-56).

intercourse based on anatomical, sexual and procreative complementarity cannot be substantiated from the textual data.

### 5.3.2 Ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους (*burned with passion for one another*)

#### 5.3.2.1 Introduction

In the previous section (§5.3.1) it has been shown that Paul argues that same-sex intercourse is *unnatural* and it is accomplished by using one's body in an unnatural way. To be *inflamed* or to *burn* with lust or passion is to be dominated by an all-consuming desire, and mostly it is translated with *desire*, *lust*, or *passion*.

#### 5.3.2.2 Exegesis

Ἐκκαίω - the verb is translated *inflamed* or *to burn*, and is used only here in the New Testament. It has the meaning of *being utterly consumed by fire* (Hultgren, 1994:319). This considerably stronger meaning is portrayed in the usage of the word in Hellenistic Jewish texts<sup>28</sup> where often it is metaphorically used in connection with wrath and rage.<sup>29</sup> With regard to sexual<sup>30</sup> matters, it is used in Sira 23:17 in the saying: *A fornicator will not cease until fire utterly consumes him*. The quoted phrase from Romans 1:27 relates to an idiom, which literally translates: *to burn with intense desire*. The idiom ἐκκαίομαι ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει means *to have a strong, intense desire for something – to be inflamed with passion, to have a strong lust for, to be inflamed with lust* (Louw & Nida, 1989:291).

There is an opinion that *regards homosexual attraction and desire to be as entirely natural and unambiguous as heterosexual attraction and desire*. According to this viewpoint *sexual desiring in and by itself is not disordered* (Hanigan, 1988:64). This leads to the simple equation of lust and desire. Hence sex is looked upon as being of no consequence morally beyond whatever meaning and consequence the human agents choose to bestow upon it. Not so with Paul. He uses three descriptors in his argument in Romans 1:24-27: ἐπιθυμία (*epithumia*, 1:24), πάθος (*pathos*, 1:26), and ὀρέξις (*orexis*, 1:27). In his discussion<sup>31</sup> of these terms Helminiak (1997:88)

<sup>28</sup> In the Septuagint: Ex 21:6; Nu 11:1; Jdg 15:5.

<sup>29</sup> In the Septuagint: Dt 29:20; 32:22; 2 Sa 22:9; 2 Ch 34:21,25.

<sup>30</sup> Louw & Nida (1989a:291) classify ἐκκαίομαι under domain 25: *Attitudes and Emotions* and sub-domain B, *Desire Strongly*. This sub-domain includes meanings, which are ethically neutral, ethically valued, and those, which are ethically disvalued, in the sense of being that which is not moral.

<sup>31</sup> Ἐπιθυμία simply means *desire*, a term in itself neutral which should be qualified by an adjective to cancel neutrality. In Colosians 3:5 it is qualified as *evil desires*. Therefore, says Helminiak (1997:88), the translation of

concludes that all three terms as used by Paul are *ethically neutral*. The reason being that Paul had not *sin* in mind, but ritual purity. As with Helminiak, Countryman (1989:112) also argues that Paul carefully avoids his usual vocabulary for sin when describing homosexual acts in Romans 1:24-28. In verses 24, 26 and 27 ἐπιθυμία, πάθος and ὄρεξις are used to denote the will that leads to same-sex relations. Schmidt (1997:98) argues very convincingly against the *neutrality* viewpoint of Helminiak and Countryman.<sup>32</sup> Although Paul does not specifically use the word for *sin* (ἁμαρτία) in Romans 1:24-27, he nevertheless intends the connotation clearly and the description of *sin* is the outcome realised.

In his quest to show the thrust of Paul's argument to be *against passion and not same-sex relations*, Fredrickson (2000:197-209) on the other hand argues for a non-neutral understanding of the three descriptors ἐπιθυμία, πάθος and ὄρεξις. Each term by itself is shown to *carry meaning* (a key role) in the discussion of erotic love, not mere *neutral* terms in the usage thereof. The problem in Romans 1:24-27 highlights passion and its consequences. Two further descriptors are added by Fredrickson, ἐκκαίω (inflammation, 1:27) and πλάνη (error, 1:27) to complete a list of five erotic descriptors in the text. His discussion culminates in *the fact that ἐπιθυμία and πάθος stand in parallel phrases in Romans 1:24 and Romans 1:26 and justifies our attempt to interpret them together under the theme of excessive sexual desire*. One may deny the thrust of his argument when it comes to the sin Paul has in mind, but the arguments for the *excessive eroticism* Paul is judging is quite convincing.

Apparently Paul was familiar with the literary and philosophical ways of speaking about ἔρωσ, as can be seen in the phrase *they were inflamed for one another* (ἐξεκαύθησαν εἰς ἀλλήλους) (Rom 1:27). Fire imagery was the principal metaphor of sexual love in a broad range of literary genres and in philosophy. An interesting parallel to Paul's, is to be found with Dio Chrysostom's (Discourse 4.101-102) depiction of the person devoted to pleasure, which brings together the themes of fire,

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ἐπιθυμία with *lusts* in Romans 1:24 is unwarranted. Πάθος, he argues, means *sexual desire* or *passion*. Its core meaning is neutral. Therefore πάθος in Romans 1:26 is *explicitly described as dishonourable, not as wrong*. Lastly ὄρεξις is a synonym for πάθος, occurring nowhere else in the New Testament, but the intent is also neutral.

<sup>32</sup> Particular attention is given to other occurrences of ἐπιθυμία in Romans. In Romans 6:12 Paul commands: *do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey its passions/lusts (ἐπιθυμία)*. See also Romans 7:7-8 and Romans 13:14. In 1 Thessalonians 4:5-6 believers are exhorted to express their sexuality not with lustful passion. In all these instances a *neutral* reading is not possible. The same can be said regarding πάθος. It is used twice in the rest of the New Testament, firstly in 1 Thessalonians 4:5 where it is clearly not neutral, and in Colossians 3:5 where it is used in a vice list. In Romans 1:27, Paul uses ὄρεξις to describe the desire of males for one another. This is the only usage in the New Testament. From the discussion of Schmidt (1997:98-100) it becomes clear that the viewpoint of Helminiak and Countryman is challenging, yet in the light of other views not acceptable (Louw & Nida, 1989; Gagnon, 2001; Hultgren, 1994; De Kruijff, 1986). Helminiak (1997:91) presupposes criticism for his point of view because his *conclusion radically challenges standard beliefs*. Fredrickson (2000:209) throws down the gauntlet to this challenge when he states that *discussions of erotic passion generally assume ὄρεξις as a neutral term, a structured way humans appropriate parts of the external world: ἔρωσ is ὄρεξις which has become irrational and excessive*.

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insatiability, and as in Paul's argument, the resulting movement from females to males as objects of male desire.<sup>33</sup>

Epictetus is an important source for understanding the role ὄρεξις plays in the Stoic analysis of human action and *ultimately in Paul's argument* (Fredrickson, 2000:213). Examination of an individual's ὄρεξις and its objects reveal whether he was effectual in his desires of continually wanting things over which he had no control. This parallels Paul's argument in Romans 1:27 that *they were inflamed in their desire/lust*. In Discourse 2.14.21, Epictetus outlines the philosopher's diagnosis of a person in such condition: *your desires are feverish* (αἱ ὀρέξεις σου φλεγμαίνουσαι), *your attempts to avoid things are humiliating, your purposes are inconsistent, your choices are out of harmony with your nature*. So, the capacity/appetite (ὄρεξις) for getting what they want has been inflamed, to such a point where they exchange the natural use for erotic love, for unnatural use.

The power of Paul's argument lies in the vivid simplicity with which he describes the wilful wrong sexual expression. Many human emotions run counter to God's intended design for nature and cannot be pronounced good just because of the affective experience thereof. In Paul's opinion such sinful impulses are depravity at its worst.

### 5.3.2.3 Summary

The noun ὄρεξις means (strong or intense) *desire; longing; yearning; appetite; appetency*. In isolation the word does not necessarily connote a negative desire; the context determines the alignment. It is used to denote the supreme goal of human beings as *exercising desire in accordance with nature*.

The only occurrence of the noun, here in Romans 1:27, clearly has a negative sense since the context speaks of desire for things *against nature*, specifically desire for other males. Contra Countryman (1988) the translation *lust* is not inaccurate within the context of Paul's argument (Rom 1:24-27).

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<sup>33</sup> Dio Chrysostom writes: *He is passionately devoted to all these things* (pleasures of the five senses), *but especially and unrestrainedly to the poignant and burning madness* (ὄξειαν καὶ διαπύρον μανίαν) *of sexual indulgence through intercourse both with females and males and through still other unspeakable and nameless obscenities; after all such indiscriminately he rushes and also leads others, abjuring no form of lust and leaving non untried* (Discourse, 4.101-102).

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### 5.3.3 Ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι (*men committed shameless acts with men*)

#### 5.3.3.1 Introduction

The recalling to memory of *you shall not lie with a male as with a women* in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 summarises perhaps the point of contention; namely, behaving toward another man as if he was a woman by making him the object of male sexual desire. The Greek word ἀσχημοσύνη (*shameful*) used here (Rom 1:27), is also used in Revelation 16:15; cognates are found in 1 Corinthians 7:36; 12:23 and 13:5.

#### 5.3.3.2 Exegesis

Ἀσχημονέω - Louw & Nida (1989a:759) classify this word under domain, *Moral and ethical qualities and related behaviour* and then under sub-domain T, *Act shamefully*. The meaning of ἀσχημονέω is defined as: *to act in defiance of social and moral standards, with resulting disgrace, embarrassment and shame*. English equivalents are: *to act shamefully, indecent behaviour, shameful deed*. 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, Romans 1:27 and Ephesians 5:4 are quoted as illustrations of such usage.

Paul uses three terms to describe sexual acts: *παρὰ φύσιν* (*against nature*), *ἀτιμία* (*dishonour*) and *ἀσχημοσύνη* (*shameful act*). Φύσις has been discussed in some detail in a previous section. In his consideration of ἀτιμία, Helminiak (1997:87) concludes that the term means *without honour*, hence the possible translation *degrading*. For Helminiak ἀτιμία clearly refers to a negative judgement in the arena of public opinion, a person's standing or valuation in the eyes of others. The adjective ἀσχημοσύνην translates as *shameless* or *shameful*. He suggests that ἀτιμία is a parallel to ἀσχημοσύνη because both indicate negative public opinion. In all its usage in the New Testament it involves something sexual. The crux of Paul's argument for Helminiak is that Paul did not mean to say *those acts are wrong; he is saying that they are unusual and do not enjoy social approval*.

Countryman's (1989:109-117) analysis that Paul evaluated same-sex intercourse as *dirty* but not *sinful*, insists that the descriptions of same-sex behaviour in Romans 1:24, 26-27 as *uncleanness, the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, dishonourable passions, contrary to nature, burned in their desire for one another and committing indecency* does not connote sin for Paul.<sup>34</sup> But it is obvious that the stance

<sup>34</sup> Countryman (1989:117-123) argues that in Paul's mind, God handed non-Christians over to homosexual practices only after they were already filled with the sinful vices in Romans 1:29-31. Gagnon (2001:274) refutes Countryman's stance by referring to the two most extensive vice lists in the undisputed Pauline letters outside of Romans 1:29-31. These are 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21. In the beginning of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 the sexually immoral (*fornicators: πόρνοι - πορνοί*), idolaters, adulterers, males who play the sexual role of females and men who take males to bed, are mentioned. Galatians 5:19-21 begins with *sexual immorality*

of Countryman and Helminiak is not accepted within the academic fraternity, but meets with serious criticism (Schmidt, 1997; Smith, 1996; Hays, 1988). *Males committing shameful acts with males* is derogatory in its relationship to the previous phrase of *being inflamed in their desire for one another*. The first alludes to the language in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 that prohibits same-sex relations between males of all ages, not only pederasty. The term *shame* was in addition to *shameful act* also used for sexual organs, whose privacy was well accentuated in Exodus 20:26 and Leviticus 18:6-18. The term ἀσχημοσύνη is clearly in context a euphemism for sexual intercourse of a shameful type. Paul's language and obvious intent has as its aim to remove any vestige of decency, honour, and positive attitude from same-sex relations. In this Paul seems to act in consistence with his Jewish cultural tradition.

The phrase ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν (*men with men*) defines the sexual act by reference to a woman (Lv 18:22); this formulation emphasizes the inappropriateness of a male as the object of the sexual act between males (Bird, 2000:151). Seeing that the prohibition in Leviticus 18:22 does not appear to echo the creation account or emphasize the procreative function, it simply describes the normative pattern of sexual relations.

Paul wrote *males with males*<sup>35</sup> and did not use a similar phrase to that of Plato (Laws, 3.836C): Ἄρσένων καὶ νεῶν (*men with boys*). The words being used in verse 26 are also indicative of adults. Lesbianism was usually understood to be between adults (Karlen, 1971:21), thus arguing for adult-adult actions, not adult-child actions (Malick, 1993:338). The activity of adults rather than adult-child behaviour seems to be the intention of *natural use of the woman* (τὴν φύσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας) as found in verse 27. The phrases *toward one another* (εἰς ἀλλήλους), *men with men* (ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν) and *their error* (τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν) describe reciprocal activity with adults by choice. Paul's words *males with males* (ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν, 1:27) did not refer to men and boys, as did Plato. Paul compares *male* homosexuality to *female* homosexuality (ὁμοίως - likewise). Female homosexuality was simply understood in mutual adult terms and woman-girl relationships are not attested to at all. The phrase *natural use* [function] of the woman (τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας, 1:27) describes the activity of adults. The phrases *toward one another* (εἰς ἀλλήλους), *men with men* (ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν), and *their error* (τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν) describe reciprocal activity with adults contra the *pederasty model* described by Scroggs (1983:32-33).

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(fornication: πορνεία - porneia), *uncleanness, licentiousness* (as also in Eph 5:3-4 and Col 3:5-8). In Romans 13:13 *unrestrained sexual activity* is mentioned (compare 1 Tim 1:9-10 as well) and also at the very end of 2 Corinthians 12:20-21. Gagnon (2001:275) concludes that *the prominence of sexual vices in the textual data does not necessarily mean that sexual vices are the worst of all sins, but it may suggest that sexual vices are the most pernicious in terms of temptation and addiction*.

<sup>35</sup> There are four views to be evaluated. Scroggs (1983a) proposes that Paul refers to pederasty (male with child) relations; Gagnon (2001) reason for adult homosexual acts whilst in the third place Boswell (1980) and Miller (1995) argues for heterosexual adults performing homosexual acts. Jewett (2000:237) is the opinion that neither pederasty nor homosexual acts between adults are at stake in verse 27; Paul condemns homoeroticism without making any distinction between pederasty and relationships between adult, consenting males or between active and passive partners as Roman practice of the day was inclined to do.

### 5.3.3.3 Summary

In Romans 1:27 Paul uses the terminology of homoeroticism, perhaps more so in the case of males than females. The phrase *males with males* indicates adult male homosexual relationships. It is problematic to force the term *males with males* into a *pederasty* straightjacket. If the only pattern of male homosexuality that Paul could have known was pederasty, there is no counterpart on the female side as suggested in 1:26. The unnatural relations of women with women are not *pederasty*, because there is no historical attesting to the fact of *woman - (girl)child* homosexuality in antiquity (Wright, 1989:295).

## 5.4 CONCLUSION: ROMANS 1:26-27 AND BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

It is generally held that Paul wrote Romans in the middle fifties from Corinth. In chapter one he addresses homosexual conduct and one may assume with some confidence that what he writes about was evident to him at Corinth and elsewhere.

The key words for understanding Romans 1:26-27 are *χρησις* and *φύσις*. The natural *χρησις* (use) implies male-female sexual relationships, which is *inter alia* also the *nature* which is at stake. This must also be read and interpreted against the larger section of Paul's exhortation (Rom 1:18-32), concerning God's wrath toward the non-believers who had rejected God. Thus, homoerotic terminology used, for both males and females, is based on an allusion to the prohibitions against homosexual acts in the Hebrew Torah. The statement that such acts are *παρὰ φύσιν* (*against/contrary nature*) refers to the created order as reported in Genesis. These acts show a disruption or confusion of the sexual intention of God for males and females. This was ordained in creation.

Paul condemns homosexual acts *per se* whether performed by heterosexuals, bisexuals or innate homosexuals. The homosexual act is indicative of the *ὄρεξις* (*lust/desire*) and represents homosexuality as a sin in God's eyes. It is further an indication of rampant unrighteousness, which includes not only homosexuality but also *πορνεία* (*sexual immorality*) in general, *wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, murder, strife, deceit, etc.* Those who practice such things says Paul, are deserving of death (Rom 1:29-32).

The modern notion of *orientation* does not find any ground in the letters of Paul. For Paul it is clear: the practitioners of such acts are excluded from the kingdom of God. The act defines the outcome. Boswell's (1980:107-117) comments that *Paul's reference to homosexual activity is not to stigmatise sexual behaviour of any sort cannot be sustained.* His argument that Paul says nothing about persons who are

*naturally homosexual* is misleading because Paul's condemnation of homosexual acts is all-inclusive.

The vocabulary used by Paul does not favour a particular homosexual style, *pederasty* or *heterosexuals practicing homosexuality*. It is stated in such a way as to condemn homosexuality in general, making no allowance for exclusions based on age difference or other evaluative criteria.

Paul targets homosexuality in general as a movement away from God's intention for and design of humanity, and thus from godliness. That is why *παρέδωκεν* (He gave them over, Rom 1:24, 26, 28) is not simply permissive or privative but descriptive of a judicial act of God giving humanity over to judgement for turning away from the Creator. Homosexuality is, therefore, not a proper expression of sexual relationships but is a perversion of the created φύσις.

Although *pederasty* may have been a dominant *homosexual activity* in Paul's time, the argument in Romans 1:18-32 need not be limited to pederasty, because it is related to the creation account, and God's design for sexual fulfillment within a monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Movement away from this standard is sinful in intention and expression. Homosexual relations are a departure from heterosexual relations and because of that, homosexuality is wrong. Homosexuality rather than a specific form (pederasty) is in focus because many terms used by Paul allow for more than pederasty; the idea of general homosexual conduct inclusive of adult-adult mutuality is supported in Paul's choice of words.

Paul's whole argument culminates in *all are under sin* (Rom 3:9), and to demonstrate that the Jewish Christians, and not just the non-Jewish Christians are culpable before God. Romans 1:18-32 does not describe the origin of sin itself; Romans 1:18-32 shows how sin runs amok. God does not judge the gentiles for their ignorance, but for acting contrary to the knowledge they should have. The suppression of this knowledge shows itself in idolatry and same-sex intercourse. An absurd exchange of God for idols leads to an absurd *exchange* (μετήλλαξαν) of heterosexual intercourse for homosexual intercourse. Paul emphasizes this in his usage of the phrase *contrary/against to nature* (παρὰ φύσιν).

The context surrounding Romans 1:26-27 and the content of Romans 1:26-27 by itself makes it clear that Paul regards same-sex intercourse as sin.

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# CHAPTER 6

## EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10

Our interpretation is a thing we bring  
to history and superimpose upon it . . .  
Therefore, the liberal, the Jesuit, the Fascist,  
the Communist, and all the rest may sail away  
with their militant versions of history,  
howling at one another across the interstellar spaces,  
all claiming theirs is the absolute version.

*Herbert Butterfield*

### Overview

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 General background
- 6.3 Tentative definition of the meaning of ἀρσενοκοΐτης and μαλακός
  - 6.3.1 Introduction
  - 6.3.2 Componential analysis of ἀρσενοκοΐτης and μαλακός
  - 6.3.3 Exegesis
  - 6.3.4 Summary

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Paul uses two relevant words in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and these will be studied in detail, namely ἀρσενοκοΐτης (*arsenokoites*) and μαλακός (*malakos*).

In this chapter a focussed exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 is done according to the grammatical-historical method (Du Toit & Roberts, 1973). The data from the Louw & Nida Lexicon (1989) is utilised for a word-exegesis of the relevant words according to the componential analytical method. The outcome of this should bring us to a valid interpretation of Paul's pronouncements on homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

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## 6.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND

Paul was writing to a Christian congregation in a very real place, Corinth. First Corinthians reveals the problems, pressures and struggles of a church called out of a non-Christian society. Paul addresses a variety of problems in the lifestyles of the Corinthian Christians: factions, lawsuits, immorality, questionable practices, abuse of the Lord's Supper and spiritual gifts. In his letter Paul reacts to issues and concerns, which had been communicated to him.

In 146BC the old city of Corinth was totally destroyed in the war with Rome. The locality of the city was so strategically placed that the Romans decided to rebuild the city on the same location a century later (Harrison, 1985:283). It was a natural trade centre. Two harbours serviced the city, Cenchrea in the east and Lechaem in the west. As a Roman colony, Corinth grew and in the time that Paul visited the city in 49 AD the population was more than half a million people strong. In the city existed a Jewish community large enough to build and maintain a synagogue (Acts 18:4).<sup>1</sup>

Corinth was a town with a reputation for sexual immorality and commercial prosperity. The very word *korinthiazesthai*, to live like a Corinthian, had become part of the Greek language, and carried the meaning of living in *drunken and immoral debauchery* (Barclay, 1975:2). Above the Isthmus towered the hill of the Acropolis and on it stood the great temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.<sup>2</sup>

Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, was a very cosmopolitan place. As an important city, it was intellectually alert, materially prosperous, and yet immoral in lifestyle and conduct. Strabo (8.6.20) calls Corinth *unhealthy* for three reasons: its position, so advantageous for trade; the Isthmian Games; and the thousand prostitutes in the city. In the days of Paul, the population was very mixed.<sup>3</sup> The Roman element is illustrated by the number of Latin names associated with Corinth in the New Testament, such as Lucius, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus, Quartus (Rom 16:21-23), Titius Justus, Crispus (Acts 18:7-8), Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17). It was a city where *Greeks, Latins, Syrians, Asiatics, Egyptians, and Jews, bought and sold, laboured and revelled* (Morris, 1987:18).

<sup>1</sup> A doorpost of a synagogue was found with an inscription on it (Wright, 1979:264). This inscription may refer to a later date than Paul's visit to Corinth, but it could also confirm the existence of a synagogue in the time of Paul.

<sup>2</sup> There were more than a thousand prostitutes connected with the temple of Aphrodite in old Corinth (Strabo, 8.6.20.). The goddess could be styled *Aphrodite Kallipygos, Aphrodite of the Beautiful Buttocks* (Athenaeus, 12.554C). Shrines were erected to *Aphrodite the hetaira as patroness of harlots* (Athenaeus, 13.559a). Dio Chrysostom (Discourses, 8.5) speaks of Diogenes observing large numbers gathering at Corinth because of its harbours and its prostitutes (Morris, 1987:18).

<sup>3</sup> There were the Roman veterans whom Julius Caesar had settled there and secondly, merchants settled in Corinth, for her situation gave her commercial supremacy. Thirdly, many Jews were among the population and in the fourth place Phoenicians and Phrygians, and people from the east with their exotic customs settled in the city. Barclay (1975:4) quotes Farrar saying *this mongrel and heterogeneous population of Greek adventurers and Roman bourgeois, with a tainting infusion of Phoenicians; the mass of Jews, ex-soldiers, philosophers, merchants, sailors, freedman, slaves, trades people, hucksters and agent of every form vice; a city without aristocracy, without traditions and without well-established citizens.*

It was probably when Paul was in Ephesus in 55AD that he, learning that things were not well in Corinth, wrote to the church there. The Corinthians had written to Paul by the hand of Futunatus, Stephanas and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:15-18). Paul sent Timothy with the letters, knowing perhaps that their force would be backed up by the recollection of his own emissary (Bray, 1999:2). Paul paid three visits to Corinth and he wrote four letters: the *previous* letter; 1 Corinthians; the *severe* letter and 2 Corinthians.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Paul uses the words *μαλακός* and *άρσενοκοίτης*, usually thought to refer to homosexuals. These two words will be studied in detail in the exegesis of the Bible verses below.

### 6.3 TENTATIVE DEFINITION OF THE MEANING OF *άρσενοκοίτης* AND *μαλακός*

The literal translation of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 is as follows:

(9)

ἢ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι Θεοῦ βασιλείαν  
or know you not that unrighteous of god (the) kingdom

οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν μὴ πλανᾶσθε οὔτε πόρνοι  
they will not inherit? not be let astray no fornicators

οὔτε εἰδωλόατραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ  
nor idolaters nor adulterers nor homosexuals

οὔτε ἄρσενοκοῖται  
nor homosexuals

(10)

οὔτε κλέπται οὔτε πλεονέκται, οὐ μέθυσοι,  
nor thieves nor the covetous, not drunkards,

οὐ λοῖδοροι, οὐχ ἄρπαγες βασιλείαν Θεοῦ  
not revilers, not extortioners (the) Kingdom of God

κληρονομήσουσιν  
they will inherit

#### 6.3.1 Introduction

In 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 the words *μαλακός* and *άρσενοκοίτης* are usually thought to point to *homosexuals*. *Μαλακός* (*malakos*) literally means *soft* and

has no apparent connotation with sexual immorality. Ἄρσενοκοίτης (*arsenokoites*), obviously has sexual connotations,<sup>4</sup> which in its literal translation means *a male person who has intercourse with males*.

Some English versions of the Bible translate ἄρσενοκοίτης (*arsenokoites*) and μαλακός (*malakos*) with *homosexual*, which represents a generic combination of the two words. The New King James Version (1993) translates these words as *nor homosexuals, nor sodomites* whilst, the New International Version (1991) translates *nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders* and The Amplified Bible (1965) reads, *nor those who participate in homosexuality*. These differences show that further study is needed to acquire more clarity on the meaning of the words.

### 6.3.2 Componential analysis of ἄρσενοκοίτης

The Domain, Sexual Misbehaviour<sup>5</sup> includes the following (Louw & Nida (1989a:742):

88.271	πορνεία	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to engage in sexual immorality of any kind, often with the implication of prostitution</li> <li>- to engage in illicit sex</li> <li>- to commit fornication</li> <li>- sometimes incest</li> </ul>
88.272	ἀσέλγεια	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- behaviour completely lacking in moral restraint, usually with the implication of sexual licentiousness</li> <li>- extreme immorality</li> </ul>
88.273	κοίτη	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to engage in immoral sexual excess.</li> <li>- sexual immorality</li> </ul>
88.274	πόρνος	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one who engages in sexual immorality whether a man or a woman</li> <li>- a sexually immoral person</li> </ul>
88.275	πόρνη	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a woman who practices sexual immorality as a profession</li> <li>- a prostitute</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Boswell (1980:341-344) denies that ἄρσενοκοίτης refers to a homosexual person in general, but more specifically to the male prostitute, who could serve heterosexual and homosexual clients. The sin is prostitution, not homosexuality. Scroggs (1983a:13) is of the same opinion: *Even if such a male did service other males, it is prostitution per se, which is prohibited, not homosexuality in general*. I will argue below that these opinions are not substantiated by Scripture.

<sup>5</sup> The Domain, Sexual misbehaviour was discussed in detail in Chapter 4, §4.4:4.2 above.

88.276	μοιχεία	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sexual intercourse of a man with a married woman other than his own spouse</li> <li>- commit adultery</li> </ul>
88.277	μοιχός	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to commit adultery</li> <li>- specifically referring to males</li> </ul>
88.278	μοιχαλίσ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to commit adultery</li> <li>- a woman who commits adultery</li> </ul>
88.279	ἀπέρχομαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an idiom, literally to go after strange flesh</li> <li>- to engage in unnatural sexual intercourse</li> <li>- to have homosexual intercourse</li> </ul>
88.280	ἀρσενοκοίτης	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a male partner in homosexual intercourse</li> <li>- homosexual</li> <li>- active male partner in contrast with μαλακός</li> </ul>
88.281	μαλακός	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the passive male partner in homosexual intercourse</li> <li>- homosexual</li> </ul>
88.282	κύων, κυνός	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one who is a sexual pervert</li> <li>- one who is sexually promiscuous</li> </ul>

From the above table it is clear that **μαλακός** and **ἀρσενοκοίτης** are interpreted by Louw & Nida to belong to actions termed sexual misbehaviour and are not, therefore, to be confused with sexual behaviour taking place within the constraints of marriage.

### 6.3.3 Exegesis

Louw & Nida (1989a:772) define the meaning of the **μαλακός** as: *a male partner in homosexual intercourse, a homosexual* and translates the phrase **μαλακοί οὔτε ἀρσενοκοίται** with *homosexuals*. It is possible, they add, that **ἀρσενοκοίτης** in certain contexts refers to the active male partner in homosexual intercourse contrasting **μαλακός**, *the passive male partner*. Louw & Nida (1989a:773) defines **μαλακός** as *the passive partner in homosexual intercourse, a homosexual*.<sup>6</sup>

Various theological dictionaries show continuity of meaning for **ἀρσενοκοίτης**:

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<sup>6</sup> Louw & Nida (1989a:773) make the point that, as in Greek, a number of other languages also have entirely distinct terms for the active and passive roles in homosexual intercourse.

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Bagster (1975) defines ἀρσενοκοίτης as *one who lies with a male, a sodomite*. He defines μαλακός as *soft; soft to the touch, delicate*, as used in Matthew 11:8 and with reference to 1 Corinthians 6:9: *an instrument of unnatural lust, effeminate*.

Abbott-Smith (1929) shows ἀρσενοκοίτης to be a compound of ἄρσιν and κοιτή, and translates it with *a sodomite*. Μαλακός in reference to persons and their mode of living is translated *mild, gentle and soft or effeminate*. *Soft and effeminate* in reference to 1 Corinthians 6:9 is noted to *carry obscene meaning*.

Moulton (1978) glosses ἀρσενοκοίτης as *one who lies with a male, a sodomite* and μαλακός as a person who is *an instrument of unnatural lust, effeminate*.

Liddell and Scott (1983) translate ἀρσενοκοίτης as *one guilty of unnatural offences* and μαλακός (in a derogatory sense) as *soft, effeminate*.

Bauer (1979) defines ἀρσενοκοίτης as *a male who practices homosexuality, pederasty; sodomite* and μαλακός in reference to persons as *soft, effeminate (especially of catamites) and men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually*.

The witness of the Septuagint (LXX) cannot be ignored in determining the meaning of the word ἀρσενοκοίται. The Septuagint (LXX)<sup>7</sup> translates the Hebrew text of Levitikus as follows:

Lev. 18:22	καὶ	μετὰ	ἄρσενος	οὐ	κοιμηθήσῃ	κοίτην	γυναικείαν
	and	with	man	not	you shall lie	the intercourse	as a woman

Lev. 20:13	καὶ	ὃς	ἂν	κοιμηθῇ	μετὰ	ἄρσενος	κοίτην	γυναικὸς
	and	who	shall lie	with	a man	the	intercourse	of a woman

The earliest extant version of the LXX is the translation executed at Alexandria in the third century BC (Brenton, 1990:1). The parallel between the LXX's ἄρσενος οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην (Lv 18:22) as well as κοιμηθῇ μετὰ ἄρσενος κοίτην (Lv 20:13) and Paul's ἀρσενοκοίται is inescapable (Wright, 1984:129). Wright argues that it is likely that the ἀρσενοκοίτ-group of words is a coinage of Hellenistic Judaism or Hellenistic Jewish Christianity, and in all probability the LXX provides the key to all of their meaning.

Boswell (1980), Gagnon (2001), Scroggs (1983a) and Martin (1996) represent four specific viewpoints when it comes to the exegesis of the relevant Bible portions. The

<sup>7</sup> The Septuagint being used is that of Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton (1897-1862) done in 1851 with a literal English translation accompanying the Greek text. Included with the Septuagint is the Apocrypha. It was reprinted under the title *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* in 1990 by Hendrickson Publishers after it was first published in 1851 by Samuel Bagster & Sons, London.

essence of their arguments, following the exegetical outcomes, will be discussed below. Gagnon (2001) represents the majority opinion that *inter alia* is also in line with the arguments of this thesis.

Boswell (1980:341ff) claims that the first half of the compound (ἀρσενο-) denotes not the object but the gender of the second half (-κοίται).<sup>8</sup> But, as shown above, it is not the case with the LXX translation, whether in the support of word formation of the word itself or the designation of meaning. Boswell denies that the meaning of ἀρσενοκοίτης refers to *male homosexual activity* without qualification; but restricts the meaning to that of *active male prostitute*. This includes heterosexual intercourse, which Wright refutes (1984:145; 1987:398). The core of Wright's argument is that the inspiration for the neologism<sup>9</sup> ἀρσενοκοίτης lies in the Greek of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (LXX). This is supported from the evidence of the early Latin, Syriac and Coptic<sup>10</sup> renderings of the Pauline texts, which all paraphrastically preserve the verbal force of *men lying with men* (1980:144-145). This confirms that ἀρσενοκοίτης denotes *male homosexual activity*.

Gagnon (2001:312) gives the literal meaning of the neologism as follows: *bedders of males, those [men] who take [other] males to bed; men who sleep or lie with males*. The translation *practicing homosexuals* does not convey the probable reference to the *active partner* and the translation *homosexuals* alone also pose a problem because the focus of ἀρσενοκοίτης is on the *act* of having sex with other males. It also excludes

<sup>8</sup> In the effort to refute Boswell's (1980:342) argument, Wright (1984:129) quotes various usages of the compound ἀρσενοκοίτης to show that out of twenty-two compounds of -κοίτης there is no support for Boswell's claim. The first element in fact specifies the object of the *sleeping* or its scene or its sphere, e.g. χαμαικοίτης - *sleeping on the ground*; ήμεροκοίτης - *sleeping by day*. Thus δουλοκοίτης - *sleeping with slaves, not slaves sleeping with others*; μητροκοίτης - *not mother who sleeps around*; and πολυκοίτης - *sleeping with many others*. Wright (1984:130) concludes that *invariably -κοίτη - has a verbal force on which is dependent the object or adverb specified in the first half of the word*. The rest of the argument entails a discussion on ἀρρενας and ἀρρενοκοίται, the difference to be noted is only in dialectical diversity with no difference in semantic significance in the variations. Thus all variations of ἄρσην and ἄρρην should be considered. The -ρρ- affected especially Attic whilst -ρσ- spellings predominate in the LXX, the papyri of the Ptolemaic period and the New Testament. (The -ρρ- spellings is dominant in the Roman and Byzantine eras.) The above suffices to conclude that if no semantic importance attaches to the difference between ἄρσεν and ἄρρην, likewise it can scarcely be pertinent in the case of their compounds.

<sup>9</sup> The neologism, ἀρσενοκοίτης, occurs for the first time in extant literature here in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and later in 1 Timothy 1:10. *Sodomite* as a translational equivalent is best avoided, because the Greek word does not incorporate the proper name *Sodom* and because the natives of Sodom were guilty of many other evils besides same-sex intercourse. Ἀρσενοκοίτης makes no direct allusion to the story of Sodom. Wright (1986:125-153) argues persuasively that the neologism ἀρσενοκοίτης was probably coined by Hellenistic Jews (Paul?) from compounding two Greek words appearing in the LXX's rendering of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. The Greek word for *male* is ἄρσεν and the word for *bed* or *lying* is κοίτε to which has been added a masculine personal suffix - (t)ES denoting the agent or doer of the action. Scroggs (1985:8b, 108) subscribes to this view as well. He observes that the rabbi's used the phrase *miškab zākūr* (*lying off/with a male*) drawn from the Hebrew text of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, to refer to homosexual intercourse. It is possible that the Hebrew phrase may have been in circulation prior to Paul's letters, in which case, ἀρσενοκοίται (homosexual intercourse) and its derivatives would be a straightforward Greek translation.

<sup>10</sup> The Peshitta text of 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 breaks ἀρσενοκοίται into three words, literally *those who lie with men*. The Coptic versions in both Sahidic and Bohairic dialects render the Greek word by two Coptic words *lying with males* or *sleeping with males*.

those, if the meaning is narrowed down to *homosexuals* who are heterosexuals or bisexuals who have same-sex intercourse. Peterson (1986:187) argues that the term *homosexual* is totally inappropriate to use at all and he takes Wright to task for the use of the word. Wright, however, has shown adequately that *homosexual* and *homosexuality* denote the meaning of ἀρσενοκοΐτης the best.<sup>11</sup> Peterson's dislike for using *homosexual* is based on the modern usage of the word. He argues that *within both non-Christian and Christian antiquity, no categories of homosexuals and heterosexuals existed. Instead, acts were the crucial matter.* However, some looseness in the use of *homosexuals* does seem to be required for ease of public discourse on the subject. A person *who practices homosexual acts* is mostly understood to be a *homosexual* irrespective of their known or unknown orientation.

Broken into its roots, it literally translates as *the ones (masculine) who lie/sleep with men* (Peterson, 1986:187). In both classical and Roman antiquity, male sexuality was regarded as *polyvalent*. A man might be *variously* a husband (ἀνὴρ), a frequenter of prostitutes (πορνοκόπος), a lover of another man or young man (ἐραστής), a lover of youths (παιδεραστής), and/or a man having relationships with women outside of wedlock (μοιχός) (Peterson, 1986:188).<sup>12</sup> This might be the case, but men are still recognised by a *name* for the sexual deeds they practice, e.g. *husband, fornicator, pederast, adulterer and homosexual.*

That ἀρσενοκοΐτης refers to same-sex intercourse is strengthened by its pairing with μαλακός. Gagnon (2001:316) reasons from his deduction from the vice list that ἀρσενοκοΐτης and μαλακός can be recognised as a pair where μαλακοὶ is identified with being passive homosexual partners and ἀρσενοκοῖται refers to the active partners in homosexual intercourse.<sup>13</sup> The context of the textual data in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 makes clear why the μαλακοὶ and ἀρσενοκοῖται belong with other forms of sexual immorality, πόρνοι (*those who fornicate, commit incest or have sex with prostitutes*) and adulterers; they all participate in a form of sexual behaviour

<sup>11</sup> Wright (1984) cites textual data challenging Boswell's (1980) translation of *male sexual agents* or *active male prostitutes* in favour of *homosexuals*. The texts cited are those with the word group ἀρσενοκοΐτ- as denoting *homosexual activity* (139, 140); *homosexual conduct* (137); *male homosexuality* (131, 133, 134); *homosexuality* (141, 145); *male homosexual activity* (144); *that homoerotic vice which Jewish writers... regarded as a signal token of pagan Greek depravity* (145).

<sup>12</sup> If, as Peterson (1986:188) argues, the word *homosexual* is unacceptable, what would one do with words like *fornicator, adulterer, pederast* and such like. A male who frequents the prostitutes is a *fornicator*. A male who has sex with a woman he is not married to, is an *adulterer*. A male who has sex with a male youth is a *pederast*. Why then should the male who has sex/performs sexual acts with other males not be called a *homosexual*. In my opinion the interpretation of Wright is accurate as it stands, given the context of 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10. Read in conjunction also with Romans 1:26-27 and Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (LXX) the meaning is confirmed.

<sup>13</sup> Normally, as shown previously, the older adult was the active partner, the ἐραστής (*erastēs* – lover), usually seeking out the relationship, provoking the sexual contact, and in one way or another obtaining orgasm by the use of the boy's body. The younger person, was the passive partner and was called *beloved*, the ἐρώμενος (*erōmenos*). The age of the ἐρώμενος varied, if a boy prior to puberty, he may be called παῖς (*pais* – boy) or if past puberty, he may be identified as a μειράκιον (*meirakion* – lad). The above denotes the active and passive persons in pederasty, which holds true for any male-male situation, there is always a active and passive partner involvement. Age reversals are attested to as well as adult-adult relations, although much more infrequently than pederasty (Scroggs, 1983a:34).

other than that sanctioned in the context of a monogamous lifelong, non-incestuous, opposite sex-marriage bond.<sup>14</sup> What was wrong for Paul in the case of same-sex intercourse was the fact that the participants were members of the same sex. The question was not whether the sexual relationship was characterized by mutual consent, parity of age or age disparity, procreative capacity or procreative incapacity, innate sexual urges or contrived sexual urges, or any other extrinsic or intrinsic motivations, but the observable fact of same-sex relationships.

In the light of the work of other scholars (Wright, 1984; Gagnon, 2001; Dover, 1978; Boswell 1980), Scroggs' quest to make pederasty the only possible focus of the Pauline textual data concerning *homosexual acts* is less than plausible<sup>15</sup>. One is left with the impression that Scroggs is forcing<sup>16</sup> a model onto the textual data to satisfy a personal presupposition. Although consenting that ἀρσενοκοίτης next to μαλακός in the list (6:9-10), seems to mean literally *one who has intercourse with males* and that the conjunction of these two words seem to force some sort of connection between μαλακοὶ and homosexuality he concludes that pederasty was the only *model* in existence in the world of Paul's time. Μαλακός and ἀρσενοκοίτης point in Scroggs' opinion to a very specific form of pederasty (effeminate call-boy), one the entire literature agree is evil. The generic model of pederasty is not attacked, only the specific form described (the effeminate call-boy).

To judge Scroggs' view more objectively one should consider the information given by Veyne (1988) in an article titled *Homosexuality in ancient Rome*. The Romans had three standards for sexual love (Veyne, 1985:26), namely *free love or exclusive marriage, sexual activity or passivity, freedom or slavery*. To seduce one's slave was of little importance but it was disgraceful for a Roman citizen to act as a passive instrument of another's pleasure.<sup>17</sup> One of the earliest relics of Latin literature, the plays of Plautus, are full of homosexual allusions. A much-repeated way of teasing a slave is to remind him of what his master expects of him, i.e. *to get down on all fours* (Veyne, 1985:29). The Roman world was the world of heroic bravado, where the important thing

<sup>14</sup> In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul draws on the Levitical proscription of incestuous behaviour (πορνεία - *porneia*) in Leviticus 18 and 20, which reinforces the supposition that Paul had in mind the proscriptions against male same-sex intercourse in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 when he referred to ἀρσενοκοῦται in 1 Corinthians 6:9 (Gagnon, 2001:327). The overlap in the vice lists in 1 Corinthians 5:10-11 and 6:9-10 indicate that all unrepentant participants in πορνεία, be it incest, fornication, adultery or same-sex intercourse, are to be expelled from the community. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 forbids all πορνεία, here sex with a prostitute, on the grounds that it joins in a *one-flesh* union two people other than a husband and a wife in holy matrimony.

<sup>15</sup> Scroggs (1983a:62-65) discusses *the status of malakos, malakia and malthakos at length* in an excursus.

<sup>16</sup> In the light of Scroggs' (1983a) research he should have come to a more nuanced conclusion. He sites evidence of *homosexuality* between youths of approximately the same age (133-135) and of adult lovers (*erōmenoi*) (135-138). Here there are examples quoted of *passive submission* by adults, for example *Cicero suggests Anthony was playing the passive role, as if he were then a wife*. Scroggs also quotes from the speeches of Aeschines and Demosthenes (137).

<sup>17</sup> Artemidorus (Onirocritica, 88-89) singles out *relations that conform with normal behaviour*, i.e. with one's own wife, with a mistress or with a male or female slave: but *to let oneself be buggered by one's own slave is not right*. Plato (Laws, 840C) drew up laws of a utopian city, from which he banished pederasty, which he said *was against pederasty and Sodomy as an excessively licentious and unnatural practice*.

was to be the ravisher, regardless of the sex of the victim. The two governing principles were *to be free and not to be the passive agent*. Thus, the sort of homosexuality, which was completely tolerated, consisted in active relations between a master, and a young slave, his catamite.

Ἄρσενοκοῖται (*arsenokoitai*) may be a technical term for the active partners in homosexual anal intercourse; μαλακοὶ (*malakoi*) for the passive partners. Waetjen (1996:108-109) advances the generic *pederasty model* as the type of homosexuality Paul opposes in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and translates the words as *...nor soft ones (malakoi) nor pederasts (arsenokoitai)...* Here, *malakoi* refers to *boys or young men between the age of eleven and seventeen*. Waetjen also argues that Romans 1:27 must be read to exclude same-sex relations between male adults of more or less the same age (1996:111). Martin (1996:125) states concerning the *malakos* that *the term refers to the effeminacy of which the penetration is only sign or proof, it does not refer to the sexual act itself*. Throughout ancient literature *malakoi* are men who live lives of decadence and luxury. All penetrated men were *malakoi*, but not all *malakoi* were penetrated men.<sup>18</sup>

To Martin (1996:332-355) *malakos* means *effeminate* and could not be narrowed down to a single act or role, either *male prostitute, call-boy* or *the penetrated man in homosexual intercourse*. Against Martin and Scroggs<sup>19</sup> one could advance the argument that although Paul's criticism of men who are *soft (malakos)* could cover anything from mere effeminacy to the adoption of the passive role in penetration (same-sex eros), it is reasonably clear from the statement (1 Cor 6:9-10) that the meaning of the term *malakoi* is determined by its association with the term *arsenokoitai*, which obviously has to do with same-sex eros, and as such, serves as a general condemnation of same-sex relationships for both the passive (penetrated) and active (penetrator) in such a relationship. This seems at least to be the level of agreement for most scholars: viewing the terms as passive and active partners in male-with-male sexual activity (Fredrickson, 2000:218).

Gagnon (2001:307) is also careful not to be too bold in his judgement of the meaning of *malakos* and in his own reading the meaning in 1 Corinthians 6:9 probably lies somewhere between *only prostituting passive homosexuals and effeminate heterosexual and homosexual males*.<sup>20</sup> Philo uses the word *malakia* (softness,

<sup>18</sup> The real problem of being penetrated was that it implicated the man in the feminine, and *malakos* referred not to the penetration per se but to the perceived aspects of femaleness associated with it. The word *malakos* refers to the entire ancient complex of devaluation of the feminine. Thus, people could, for example use *malakos* as an insult directed at men who loved women too much (Martin, 1996:127).

<sup>19</sup> The translation of *malakoi* as *effeminate call-boys* (Scroggs, 1983a:106-108) and *the effeminate* (Martin, 1996:117-136) seek to render the word unusable for those who regard homosexual behaviour as sin. The view of Scroggs seems to be speculative in the light of all the evidence sited; in any case even if it was true, then Paul's blank condemnation would include it without regarding it as the *only* point of reference.

<sup>20</sup> It seems so improbable that Paul would have *general effimacy* in view. In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, Paul, for example argues strongly and in general that woman who pray and prophesy should wear a veil. He notes short hair is natural for men, not for women. Yet despite the inappropriate headgear, hairstyle or conduct of women in the congrega

effimacy) twice alongside the term *anandria* (*unmanliness*) in his discussion of homosexual behaviour in *Special Laws* 3.3-3.42 to refer to the behaviour of passive homosexual partners who cultivate feminine features. This, concludes Gagnon (2001:309-310), given the collective evidence from Philo<sup>21</sup> and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, puts to rest the qualifications imposed on the term *μαλακοί* by Martin and Scroggs. Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 6:9 *μαλακοί* should be understood to mean *the passive partners in homosexual intercourse*.

### 6.3.4 Summary

1 Corinthians 6:9 confirm Paul's rejection of homosexual conduct in general. The combination of the terms *μαλακοί* (*malakoi*) and *ἀρσενοκοῖται* (*arsenokoitai*), is understood to apply to every conceivable male-male type of same-sex intercourse. This being the case because there are always at least two people involved, the one who is passive (receive) in the sexual act and the other who is active (give) in the act.

## 6.4 CONCLUSION: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10 AND BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

The relevant words in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 are *ἀρσενοκοῖται* (*arsenokoitai*) and *μαλακός* (*malakos*).

A translation of *ἀρσενοκοίτης* renders *the ones (male) who lie/sleep with men*. As in the case with Romans 1:26-27 Paul's choice of words in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 does not imply only *pederasty* but is a general condemnation of male same-sex relations. Paul did not choose one of the common current words or phrases denoting pederasty, but a term reflecting the Levitical ban (Lv 18:20; 20:13). The significance of Paul's choice of *ἀρσενοκοίτης* is the fact that it is not attested to before 1 Corinthians. Scroggs' (1983a:106-108) contention that the word refers to the *active partner* who keeps the *μαλακός* (*malakos* - effeminate call-boy) is totally unconvincing because it is based on *it is not hard to imagine that Paul's basic attitude towards pederasty could have been*

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tion, he at no time suggests, it will lead to exclusion from the kingdom of God. Not so with *μαλακοί* (*malakoi*). In 1 Corinthians 6:9 *malakoi* is sandwiched between *μοιχοὶ* (adulterers) and *ἀρσενοκοῖται* (people who have something to do with same-sex intercourse). Immoral sexual intercourse would seem to be the point of reference for *μαλακοί* as well. The epithet *soft* (*with meaning in the bad sense*) itself then suggests males playing the female role (passive) in sexual intercourse with other males.

<sup>21</sup> Philo treats the discussion in *Special Laws* 3.37-3.42 under the category of pederasty and alludes to the active partner as a *paiderastēs*. Philo makes it clear that *male-female* types include adults, who employ various means to prolong *their youthful beauty*. Philo apparently had in mind the *κίναϊδος* (*kinaidos*), a man who, out of a desire to be penetrated by other men, permanently even as an adult, assumed the role of the passive partner, with effeminate mannerisms. There is no criticism leveled by Philo against any age disparity in the relationships (Nissinen, 1998:62, 78, 83).

*seriously influenced by passing a few coiffured and perfumed call-boys in the marketplace* (Scroggs, 1983a:43). In ἀρσενοκοῖται Paul has adopted or fashioned a term that is little more than a substantial transcript from the book of Leviticus (LXX). It simply speaks of males lying with males. No one claims that Leviticus refers to pederasty, and the New Testament at no point refers to pederasty as such. The opposite may be true; Paul in his choice of language seems to have deliberately avoided the plethora of terms that could denote pederasty, as if he only had that type of homosexuality in mind. It is clear that Paul, in ἀρσενοκοίτης intentionally sided with the Levitical condemnation.

Since Jewish writers of the time condemned homoeroticism based on the model of dominance, Paul is likely to be referring to the passive *receptive* μαλακοί and the active ἀρσενοκοῖται. The μαλακοί-ἀρσενοκοῖται act is to be condemned and both participants are by their very activity excluded from the kingdom of God. The theme of immorality (πορνεία) forms the basis for Paul's view of community boundaries. The Corinthian Christian community is reminded that limits are placed on its behaviour – it may not engage in immorality (πορνεία, 1 Cor 5:1–7:40). By listing certain forbidden practices (a vice-list), he offers a way to judge community limits. Paul's use of the μαλακοί-ἀρσενοκοῖται act in the vice-list shows his conviction that the Christian community is to be distinguished from the world of its time.

The combination of μαλακοί (effeminate males who play the sexual role of females) and ἀρσενοκοῖται (males who lie with males) is significant as it stands. Being included alongside a list of offenses that lead to exclusion from the kingdom of God, cannot but classify it by its very nature as sin. The context of the vice-list makes it clear that the μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκοῖται belong with other forms of πορνεία. They all participate in a form of sexual behaviour other than that sanctioned in the context of a monogamous, life-long, non-incestuous, heterosexual marriage. A responsible hermeneutic could not but understand the combination of μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκοῖται in relation to πορνεία, as sin. The combination of the two words, thus understood, refers to every conceivable type of male-male same-sex intercourse.

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# CHAPTER 7

## EXEGESIS OF 1 TIMOTHY 1:3-11

The physical differences between the man  
and the woman are a parable  
of physical and spiritual differences  
of a more ultimate nature

*Emil Brunner*

### **Overview:**

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 General background
- 7.3 Tentative definition of the meaning of ἀρσενοκότης
  - 7.3.1 Introduction
  - 7.3.2 Componential analysis of ἀρσενοκότης
  - 7.3.3 Exegesis
  - 7.3.4 Summary
- 7.4 Conclusion: 1 Timothy 1:9-10 and Biblical sexuality

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

Significant minorities of scholars hold that the Pastorals are the work of Paul, whether directly or indirectly by the use of an *amanuensis* (Marshall, 1999:58). The authorship of 1 Timothy is perhaps not that critical for the studying of the word ἀρσενοκότης, although it is quite significant that the neologism appears only in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10. Much of what is written above concerning ἀρσενοκότης in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (chapter 6) is likewise true of the use of ἀρσενοκότης in 1 Timothy 1:9-10. Some additional arguments may, however, be given to elaborate on that which had been written in chapter 6.

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## 7.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND

It is most reasonable to associate the Pastoral Epistles with the leaders of the congregations in the two areas mentioned in the letters, Crete and Ephesus (Marshall, 1999:85). Timothy was not a pastor, or elder, or bishop of the Ephesian church. He was a *delegate* doing what he had often done for Paul. He was sent into a difficult situation where true teaching and loyalty to Paul's gospel were needed. He probably stood outside of the church structure described in 1 Timothy 3 and 5 and had no title (Mounce, 2000:lviii). Timothy was a long-time friend and trusted co-worker of Paul. The first letter to Timothy is not a manual directed at an unknown church situation; when Paul writes about how to conduct oneself in the house of God, it is probably the Ephesian house of God which is the immediate focus of the letter.

The list of fourteen vices in 1 Timothy 1:9-10 describes the kinds of people for whom the law was envisaged and contrasts them with the righteous for whom the law is not intended. The list follows distinctive literary patterns and twelve terms are paired into eight groups. The salient feature of the vice list is its resemblance to the Decalogue, upon which it is based (Mounce, 2000:30).<sup>1</sup> The first three couplets correspond to offences against God, corresponding to the first four commandments in the Decalogue. The remaining vices, offences against other persons, correspond to the next six:

- a) *those who beat their fathers and mothers*  
**honour your father and mother**
- b) *murderers*  
**you shall not kill**
- c) *fornicators, homosexuals*  
**you shall not commit adultery**
- d) *kidnappers*  
**you shall not steal, you shall not covet**
- e) *liars, perjurers*  
**you shall not bear false witness**

The influence by the Old Testament on Paul is well established (Bruce, 1977:41-52). The overt reference to the Law strengthens this influence. The list consists of types of sinners who would in general be condemned by Jews and non-Jews alike. It contains an inventory of persons guilty of severe and shocking crimes (Marshall, 1999:379). Compared to the lists in 1 Corinthians one can see the similarities:

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<sup>1</sup> Vice lists are common to Paul – Romans 1:29-31; 6:9-10; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 6:9-10; 12:20; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:31; 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5, 8; 1 Timothy 6:4-5; 2 Timothy 3:2-5; Titus 3:3. Vice lists tend to be general (Debelius & Conzelmann, 1983:22-23) and include especially heinous sins. It is suggested that in 1 Timothy 1 Paul is not describing the specific sins of the opponents, but rather is describing in general the type of person for whom the law is still applicable.

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<b>1 Cor 5:10</b>	<b>1 Cor 5:11</b>	<b>1 Cor 6:9-10</b>	<b>1 Tim 1:9-10</b>
immoral	immoral	immoral	godless
greedy	greedy	idolators	idolators
robbers	idolators	adulterers	impious
idolators	revilers	<b>malakoi</b>	profane
	drunkards	<b>arsenokoitai</b>	dishonourers
	robbers	thieves	murderers
		drunkards	adulterers
		revilers	<b>arsenokoitai</b>
		robbers	enslavers

Paul does not seem to care about any specific item in the lists; there is no indication he wished to emphasize any one or group of vices. The one is as serious as the other. They all exclude the practitioner from the kingdom of God and the Law was given for such persons. It goes without saying that Paul disapproves strongly of all such activities. The words *μαλακός* and *ἀρσενοκοίτης* in the lists, therefore, do not carry any particular weight over and against the others in the lists. They are as *bad* as the rest with the same eternal consequences. Paul, it would seem tailored his vice lists to the needs of the specific communities he addressed (Gagnon, 2001:305).

### 7.3 TENTATIVE DEFINITION OF THE MEANING OF ἀρσενοκοίτης

A literal translation of 1 Timothy 1:10 is as follows:

(10)	...πόρνοις	ἀρσενοκοίταις,	ἀνδραποδισταῖς	ψεύσταις,	ἐπιόρκοις,	καὶ	εἰ
	for fornicators	for homosexuals	for kidnappers	for liars	for perjurers	and	if
τι	ἕτερον	τῇ	ὑγιαινούσῃ	διδασκαλίᾳ	ἀντίκειται,...		
any	other thing	the	sound	teaching	opposes		

#### 7.3.1 Introduction

In 1 Timothy 1:10 *ἀρσενοκοίτης* is usually thought to point to *homosexuals*. The word *ἀρσενοκοίτης* (*arsenokoitēs*), has obvious sexual connotations,<sup>2</sup> which in its

<sup>2</sup> This can be deduced from the fact that Boswell (1980:341-344) denies that it refers to a homosexual person in general, but more specifically to the male prostitute, who could serve heterosexual and homosexual clients. The sin is prostitution, not homosexuality. Also Scroggs (1983a:13) is of the same opinion: *Even if such a male did service other males, it is prostitution per se, which is prohibited, not homosexuality in general.* With Scroggs, however, it

literal translation - as has been argued in Chapter 6 - means *one who has intercourse with males*.

### 7.3.2 Componential analysis of ἀρσενοκοΐτης

The placement of ἀρσενοκοΐτης in the domain for sexual misbehaviour<sup>3</sup> highlights the sexual connotation of the neologism. This fact would become even clearer in the exegesis that follows.

### 7.3.3 Exegesis

Both 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10 speak of ἀρσενοκοΐται (*arsenokoitai* - *those who lie with males*). In both cases, condemnation is strong. 1 Timothy calls such behaviour as something that the law prohibits and contrary to sound teaching (1 Tim 1:10) and 1 Corinthians excludes those guilty of it from the kingdom of God. Most exegetes and most Bible versions relate them to homosexual acts (Pronk, 1993:272). 1 Timothy 1:9-10 reinforces rather than provides an additional or alternative understanding to 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (Gagnon, 2001:332).<sup>4</sup>

As with 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Scroggs tends to narrow down the meaning of ἀρσενοκοΐτης in 1 Timothy 1:9-10. By arguing that πόρνοι, ἀρσενοκοΐταις, and ἀνδραποδίσταις<sup>5</sup> are to be taken as a topical unit, he ascribes to πόρνοι the meaning of male prostitutes (*normal Greek usage* – Gagnon, 2001:332) rather than *sexually immoral persons*, the broader sense usually ascribed to in the New Testament. Ἀρσενοκοΐται is then limited to men who lie with the aforementioned male prostitutes. The ἀνδραποδίσταις is said to have captured men for the *homeroetic interests of some of their clientele*. This is alleged by Scroggs' (1983, 119-120) particular interpretation of *people who sell boys and girls to brothel houses*.

What did Paul mean by ἀρσενοκοΐτης? What informed him in using this word to the extent he did? Much had been made of Paul as Hellenistic Jew. However, by his own

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is using the effeminate call-boy who is in focus, and not adult male prostitutes. The exegesis done in chapter 6 above confirms the sexual connotation of ἀρσενοκοΐτης which is implicated by the views of Boswell (1980:341-344) and Scroggs (1983a:13).

<sup>3</sup> The Domain, Sexual Misbehaviour has been discussed in detail in chapter 4, §4.4. above.

<sup>4</sup> It is significant, nevertheless, because if Paul had not written the Pastoral Epistles (as most scholars propose), it confirms that Paul's opposition to homosexual behaviour continued in the early post-Pauline churches.

<sup>5</sup> The word ἀνδραποδίστης (*andrapodistes*) means *slave dealer, kidnapper*. Scroggs (1983a:119-120) argues that the preceding context described a particular type of *slave dealer*: people who kidnap and sell boys or girls to be *slaves for brothel houses*. Harril (1999:97-122) supports Scroggs inasmuch as he has shown the meaning of ἀνδραποδίστης to literally mean *men-stealers*, and it was a derogatory term applied to slave dealers who were notorious for procuring slaves through illegal means and for financial gain. The issue of contention though, was the kidnapping of freeborn citizens with or without an accompanying feminisation for homoerotic clients. Philo, however, treats the sins of ἀνδραποδίσταις in *Special Laws* 4:13-19 without once mentioning homosexual prostitution (Gagnon, 2001:333).

confession he was first and foremost an orthodox Jew.<sup>6</sup> The derivation of ἀρσενοκοίται from Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 - as argued in chapter 6 - its actual usage in Judeo-Christian literature, and the unqualified Judeo-Christian rejection of all forms of homosexuality make the narrow interpretations of Scroggs (1983), Harril (1999) and Countryman (1989) less than plausible. In my opinion Gagnon (2001:334) is correct in his assessment that ἀρσενοκοίται has in mind the broad prohibitions in Leviticus against all forms of male-male intercourse, and this is established clearer in 1 Timothy 1:10 than in 1 Corinthians 6:9, because in 1 Timothy 1:8-9 the vice list is described as coming from *the Law*, or at least prohibited by the Law. Four arguments over and against Scroggs' (1983a:118, 120) argument for the possibility that *law* refers to civil law are advanced by Gagnon (2001:334): First, in 1 Timothy 1:7, the author refers to Christians *desiring to be teachers of the Law*.

Secondly, Paul alludes to the Mosaic Law with phrase: *now we know that the Law is good* (1 Tim 1:8). He does so in Romans 7:12, 16 as well, where καλός (*kalos*) is used in both cases. Thirdly, this law legislates not merely against social disorder but against whatever is opposed to *sound teaching that conforms to the glorious gospel* (1 Tim 1:10-11). Perhaps the most convincing is that fourthly, the vice list corresponds to the order of the Decalogue.<sup>7</sup> Putting the prohibition of same-sex intercourse under the common denominator of the seventh commandment against adultery points to the fact that early Judaism and Christianity rejected same-sex intercourse in the widest possible sense. This was done because same-sex intercourse, as with any sexual intercourse outside of marriage, was regarded as immoral. Not only forms of same-sex intercourse that were exploitative such as with *call-boys* were rejected, but indeed as we have seen (§6.3.3 above), all forms of homosexual acts were rejected.

The narrow meaning that Scroggs (1983a:119-120) proposes for πόρνοι in 1 Timothy 1:10, *male prostitutes*, is very doubtful and cannot be sustained.<sup>8</sup> A πόρνος is a person

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<sup>6</sup> Paul wrote in Philippians 3:4-5: *If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the Law, a Pharisee; concerning the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. Paul's credentials are impressive: upbringing, nationality, family background, inheritance, orthodoxy, activity & morality.* In 2 Corinthians 11:22: *Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I.* And Galatians 1:13-14: *For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.* Paul had been one of the most religious Jews of his day, by his own testimony. He kept the law scrupulously and relentlessly persecuting the Church (Acts 9:1, 2). He was more zealous for the Law than the Judaisers. He had surpassed his contemporaries in religious knowledge and practice.

<sup>7</sup> The summary of the Decalogue in Pseudo-Phocylides 3-8 connects homosexual behaviour with adultery - *Neither commit adultery nor stir up passion for males.* Philo (Special Laws 3.1-82) regarded the seventh (LXX:sixth) commandment against adultery as a rubric to include incest, intercourse during menstruation, pederasty, bestiality, prostitution, and other matters connected to sexual intercourse. The *Didache* depended on the Decalogue for its construction of the second commandment of the *way of life*, placing the prohibition of pederasty within the heading of the seventh commandment against adultery: (7) - *'you shall not commit adultery, you shall not corrupt boys, you shall not commit πορνεία (porneia)* (Marshall, 1999:379).

<sup>8</sup> See 1 Corinthians 5:9, 10, 11; 6:9; Ephesians 5:5; Hebrews 12:16; 13:4; Revelation 21:8; 22:15. Paul's references here are broad to include sexual immoral people in general, adulterers and fornicators in all categories.

guilty of sexual immorality, usually an adulterer or fornicator. Marshall (1999:380) confirms that in classical Greek it could mean a *male prostitute*, but this reference is excluded as a meaning to ἀρσενοκοίτης in 1 Timothy 1:9-10. Mounce (2000:38-39) is of likewise opinion and translates the pair πόρνοις - ἀρσενοκοίτης as *fornicators, homosexuals*. The two words describe different ways in which the seventh commandment can be broken; Paul is interpreting the commandment in a wider sense than adultery. The meaning of ἀρσενοκοίτης is much debated.<sup>9</sup> Whatever the meaning in 1 Timothy 1:10, it refers to a form of illicit sexual activity that breaks the seventh commandment. Fornication, homosexuality,<sup>10</sup> and bestiality<sup>11</sup> are especially prohibited in the Old Testament and New Testament (Reisser, 1986:498-499) and there is evidence that homosexuality was very common in Ephesus (Hanson, 1983:59).

### 7.3.4 Summary

The exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 established that same-sex relationships are to be rejected; likewise in 1 Timothy 1:10.

The occurrence of μαλακός and ἀρσενοκοίτης in the vice list in 1 Corinthians 6:9, and of ἀρσενοκοίτης in the vice list in 1 Timothy 1:10, confirms the reading of Romans 1:26-27. Μαλακός has mostly a bearing to the context of the textual data, on males who actively seek to transform their maleness into femaleness in order to make themselves more attractive as receptive (or: passive) sexual partners of men, and ἀρσενοκοίτης has as focus men who serve as the active partners of the μαλακός. The context of 1 Timothy 1:10 indicates that the term has inter-textual connections to the Levitical prohibitions of homosexual intercourse. The exegesis of 1 Timothy 1:10 affirms and supports the arguments and conclusion of the exegetical work done in chapter 6.

## 7.4 CONCLUSION: 1 TIMOTHY 1:9-10 AND BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

Ἀρσενοκοίταις (*arsenokoitais*) is found in the vice list (1 Tim 1:10) sandwiched between πορνοίς (*pornois*) and ἀνδραποδισταίς (*andrapodistais*), that is between

<sup>9</sup> Bailey (1975:57) argues that it refers just to the sex act with someone of the same sex. Boswell (1980:341) prefers a meaning of *active male prostitutes* because in his opinion the first half of the word ἀρσην (male) refers not to the object of the second half, κοίτη (to sleep with males) but to the subject (a male who sleeps). Scroggs (1983a:119) says it refers to a male who uses an *effeminate call-boy*. Wright (1984:129), however, argues convincingly, that this neologism was coined based on Leviticus 20:13. He is supported in this by Hays (1986:184) and De Young (1991:158-165). Wright (1984:125-153) argues that the term should be understood to generally mean *homosexual* including, but not limited to the most common form in Greek culture. i.e. *an adult having a sexual relationship with a male teenager*.

<sup>10</sup> Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; cf Wisdom 15:14-26.

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:23, 20:15; Deuteronomy 23:18, 27:21.

fornicators and kidnappers. The combination πορνούς and ἀρσενοκοίταις, *fornicators*, and *homosexuals*, refer to the breaking of the seventh commandment: *You shall not commit adultery* (Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18).

It would seem that πόρνοις refers to male fornicators, and the second to *male same-sex relations*. These two words describe two ways of breaking the seventh commandment. Ἀρσενοκοίτης has the meaning of *a male having intercourse with a male*. Whether it refers only to the act itself or to the *attitude/condition* of a same-sex orientation, cannot be determined by its usage in the text. The evidence overall does not seem to support an interpretation other than what is generally understood as *homosexual*, inclusive of the category of an adult male with a male teenager. Paul's argument is based on the Old Testament prohibition in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Placing the prohibition of same-sex intercourse under the rubric of the seventh commandment against adultery points to the fact that Christianity in the first century rejected same-sex intercourse because it regarded any sexual intercourse outside of marriage, a monogamous union between a man and a woman, as πορνεία (*sexual immorality*). Therefore, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10, collectively, indicate that the term ἀρσενοκοίταις has inter-textual connections to the Levitical prohibitions on same-sex intercourse and to the exclusive endorsement of monogamous heterosexual marriage based on the creation intention and design according to Genesis 1-2. Ἀρσενοκοίταις also refers to the Decalogue prohibition of adultery.

Ἀρσενοκοίταις is best interpreted as homosexuals, based on the actual deed of the *homosexual sexual act*.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF HOMOSEXUALITY

If the Bible is really so much a problem for Christianity,  
and specifically for theology, would it not be better  
for theology to abandon the Book altogether?

Theology can survive with or without the Bible.

The churches are not going to be offended one way  
or another by the fact that the Bible

complicates their theology or even undermines it.

They have survived for too long for that to be a problem.

*Robert P Carroll*

I use the term *homosexuality* to indicate the practice of same-sex intercourse. The public debate over homosexuality centers, not so much on the morality of homosexual intercourse, but on the various changes to public policy advocated and verbal pressure applied by the gay rights movement (§1.1). Objections to homosexuality may include the rejection of what may be called the *homosexual lifestyle*, or the view that homosexuality is an alternative to heterosexuality; an alternative lifestyle, one capable of providing the same sort of companionship, fulfillment and sexual pleasure as heterosexual relationships. Basic to all arguments is the question: *Is it wrong simply by virtue of being a sexual act between two persons of the same sex, without regard to its further characteristics?* In my opinion the only possible answer to this question is a theological one (§2.2). Not only does the theological answer supercede other arguments, but it presupposes any psychological, biological, anthropological, sociological and cultural arguments, and evaluates them in terms of the Scriptures.

This view opposes the view of the so-called revisionists or the pro-homosexual school of thought who argues to interpret the Biblical texts in their historical context. In practice the result of their interpretation means that Scripture is made irrelevant in its application for today on moral issues. Scriptural references are bound up in their historical context never to be released or to render them useless so that the gospel allows no rule against the following, in and of themselves: masturbation, non-vaginal heterosexual intercourse, bestiality, polygamy, homosexual acts, or erotic art and literature. This has been argued in **Chapter 1**. The condemnation of homosexual action *per se* seems to

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be singularly inhuman in the revisionist view, and it therefore may be concluded that anal sex is an acceptable way of sexual experience which may not in principal be rejected (§2.8). The Bible, therefore, - according to this argument - gives no grounds to argue that homosexual deeds are unacceptable.

In **Chapter 2** I have argued that the Bible does speak of *homosexual acts* (§2.4 & §2.7). There is consensus enough among scholars (exegetes and commentators) to prove acceptance of this fact, even though the textual data do not render the present day term *homosexuality*. The Bible often describes the behaviour that has come to be known as homosexuality. Leviticus describes the sin of *homosexuality* as *a male lying with a male, the lying of a female – that is lying with a male as one would with a female*. Paul uses descriptive terminology in Romans 1:26-27 as well: *For their women exchanged the natural use for that which is unnatural, likewise males leaving the natural use of the female, burned with desire toward one another*. It is, therefore, invalid to assert that the Bible does not refer to homosexuality just because it does not refer to it by that name. When the Bible speaks about homosexual acts, it speaks of homosexuality and implicates homosexual orientation (§5.3.3.2). It may be true that in antiquity monogamous and committed homosexuality did not present itself frequently, particularly among males, but the act of homosexuality defines the content of the relationship, whether one calls it homosexual or by any other name. The modern notion of innate homosexual orientation would have made no difference to Paul's opposition. Paul's criticism does not focus on homosexuals or heterosexuals but more generally on persons who participate in same-sex erotic acts.

The distinction between sexual orientations is clearly an anachronism that does not help to understand Paul's line of argumentation. As pure eroticism, homosexuality was prominent and visual in pre-Christian Hellenism. This is the outcome of **Chapter 3** where it was concluded that the Graeco-Roman culture decisively influenced New Testament statements about homosexuality (§3.5). Paul does not mention *τριβαδές* (*tribades*) or *κιναιδοί* (*kinaidoi*), that is, female and male persons who were habitually involved in homoerotic relationships, but if he knew about them (and there is every reason to believe that he did), it is difficult to think that, because of their apparent orientation, he would not have included them in Romans 1:26-27 (§3.2). For him there is no individual inversion or inclination that would make the conduct less culpable. It has been argued that nothing would have made Paul approve homoerotic behaviour. The common view that sexual orientation was not recognised in the ancient world is problematic, because of the speech of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium* where sexual orientation is clearly intended. Those who claim that something like the modern category of an exclusive, innate homosexual orientation did not exist in antiquity, therefore, seem to be wrong. In general the current theories of homosexual causation (like innate orientation) are, at least broadly speaking, compatible with ancient theories that may have contributed to Paul's views.

In **Chapter 4** I argued that πορνεία is the general background against which Paul's arguments on homosexuality must be evaluated (§4.2). A couple of years before writing the letter to the Romans, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth about the subject of πορνεία (*porneia* - sexual immorality). In 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Paul gives a general treatment of the relationship of the use of one's own body to the gospels proclamation of freedom in Christ (§4.2). In so doing he draws on the particular example of sex with a prostitute, as with the example of homosexual intercourse in Romans 1:26-27 to make his point in case. In 1 Corinthians 6:16 Paul cites Genesis 2:24: *a man... shall be joined to his wife and the two will become one flesh*, to establish that intercourse with a female prostitute makes a Christian man *one body* with her. Here is confirmation that whenever Paul considers sexual behaviour of any sort as πορνεία (immoral) his standards remain tied to Genesis 1-2 and not the convention of the day or culture specific norms. For Paul the only legitimate sexual union for Christians is that between one man and one woman in permanent, exogamous, and monogamous marriage. All other forms of sexual intercourse is contra God's intention and design as depicted in Genesis 1-3; such sexual intercourse, inclusive of same-sex intercourse is πορνεία, that is immoral perversions of this bond (1 Cor 6:18-19).

The number of Scripture portions that speak directly to the issue of homosexuality shows that homosexual practice was not as marginal an issue as some would like to think as I argued in paragraph 2.1. Frequency of mention should not be equated to degree of importance. The fact that Paul cited the issue of homosexuality three times is more than enough to establish that Paul regarded homosexual conduct as an extremely serious offence in which Christians should not be engaged (§4.3). If Paul was opposed to homosexual conduct, the likelihood of other New Testament authors having a less rigorous stance, is non existing. According to the *Apostolic Decree* cited in Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25, non-Jews did not have to be circumcised but they still had to abstain from πορνεία (*porneia* - sexual immorality). That πορνεία would have included same-sex intercourse is evident from the fact that the prohibitions of the *Apostolic Decree* derive from the laws of Leviticus 17-18.

The exegesis of Romans 1:18-32 in **Chapter 5** confirms that the Bible portions referring to homosexuality are part of a much larger Biblical philosophy of life that consistently portrays only one model for sexual relations, that between a man and a woman in lifelong monogamous partnership. On the descriptive level, throughout the Bible there is not a single hero of faith that engages in homosexual conduct: no patriarch, no matriarch, no prophet, no priest, no king, no apostle, and no disciple. The Song of Solomon is devoted to singing the praises of committed heterosexual love. Every proverb or wisdom saying refers to heterosexual, not homosexual, relationships as fitting for the lives of the faithful. In short the universal silence in the Bible regarding an acceptable same-sex union, combined with the explicit prohibitions, speaks volumes for a consensus disapproval of homosexual conduct.

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Paul's own views did not depend on any one theory or model of causation but rather on the male-female complementarity embedded in creation. All could access this truth through either Scripture or nature (§5.3.1.2). A Biblical theology of homosexuality should recognise that the Bible not only denounce homogeneity, but homosexual conduct in all its variations, whether it stems from innate orientation or not (§5.3.3.2). Not the innateness of one's desires or passions guides a person in discovering the truth about human sexuality. Rather the material creation, the physical and observable, the bodily intention and design of humans themselves, guide a person into the truth of the nature of God and the created nature of human sexuality respectively (§5.4).

The study shows this to be Paul's understanding of the matter. Paul did not separate personal humanity from biological humanity, the so-called *ordered ontology* of being a human; a human has an essential created structure which is sexually and personally differentiated, as male and female (§5.3.1.2). Sexual differentiation at both the personal and biological level is an aspect of the *structured being* (ordered ontology) of human life. The Genesis narrative cannot be ignored; it establishes the norm of heterosexuality (male and female; male or female), which the rest of the Bible assumes as natural (given, ordered ontology) whenever the particulars of sexual morality are addressed. And it is important to realise that Paul understands homosexuality to be among the departures from this norm, that is, ordered ontology.

The phrase *παρά φύσιν*, against nature, as used by Paul is crucial, because it reveals the basis of Paul's condemnation of same-sex relations (§5.3.1.2). The sexual identity of a person carries moral implications and this sexual identity is a created status. Homosexuality denies the realities of gender and bodily sexual differentiation. Paul's understanding of *human nature* goes deeper than popular *custom* – he understands that *male and female* were created for each other with complementary sexualities grounded in the distinctive observable constitutions of their sexual organs, and that this arrangement has been legitimized since creation only by marriage. In Romans 1:26-27 it is doubtful that Paul is speaking of nature in the sense of custom. *Φυσικός* and *φύσις* (nature) refer to one's constitution as given by God the Creator, and, therefore, it is argued that Romans 1:26 bears the idea of a natural constitution as established by God in the creation of the human race. In Romans 1:26 *φυσικός* means *in accordance with the intention of the Creator* and *παρά φύσιν* as Paul uses it means *contrary to the intention of the Creator*.

**Chapters 6 & 7** render the meaning of *ἀρσενοκοίτης* and *μαλακός* as *homosexual*. However, it is to be recognised that the word *ἀρσενοκοίτης* in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10 is a compound word that refers to *males in bed* (§6.3.1.3). This word seems to be legitimately and sufficiently translated by the English word *homosexual*. The pairing of the neologism *ἀρσενοκοίτης* with *μαλακός* (§6.3.1.3) in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 strengthens the notion of male and male (adult) sexual relations. The vice lists (§7.2) of prohibited behaviours are not random choices, but follow the sequence (1 Cor 6:9-10) and content of the Decalogue. The sins in Romans 1:26-31

also correspond to Exodus 20, but homosexuality replaces adultery. In Romans 1 Paul mentions homosexuality as a particular non-Christian sexual sin and then lists non-sexual sins. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 he mentions various sexual sins; here the list is more comprehensive (§7.3.1.4). Every sexual act that the Bible calls sin is essentially a violation of heterosexual marriage, whether existing or potential in character. The focus of Paul is then on the act, which implicates the *desire* or *orientation* as well. The Genesis textual data is quoted by both Jesus (Mat 19:3-8) and Paul (1 Cor 6:12-20; Eph 5:21-32).

In summary I conclude that Paul is concerned in Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10 to offer evidence of attitudes and behaviour that represent sin, that is, the distorting effects of godlessness. Homosexual conduct is one such sin. Paul rebukes what he considers sinful behaviour and call people to repentance. Based on Paul's view of *πορνεία* and his understanding of *sexual purity*, especially his discussion on marriage and celibacy (1 Cor 6:12 - 7:40) I conclude that Paul would not condone modern homosexual activity any more than he did in his time. It is all summarised in his response to the Corinthian Christians: *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I, therefore, take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!* (1 Cor 6:15).

In Romans 1:26-27 there is an unambiguous indictment of homosexual behaviour as a violation of God's intention for humanity. All the Scripture portions studied (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10) regard homosexual activity as immoral and to be renounced. The theological structure in which Paul places his condemnation of *relations contrary to nature* is a weighty one indeed. Nothing in Scripture or in the Christian tradition of the first centuries counterbalances his judgement. Arguments in favour of acceptance of homosexual relations find their strongest arguments in empirical investigations and contemporary experience. At the end of this study I am not persuaded by Boswell's (1980) argument for *heterosexuals engaging in homosexual acts* or Scroggs' (1983a) proposal for a *pederasty model* for the understanding of Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

The most probable understanding by the first hearers/readers of the words *ἀρσενοκοίτης* and *μαλακός* would have been a *male who take another male to bed* and the *effeminate male* respectively. It may well be that they understood the first to be the penetrator and the second the penetrated. A valid interpretation of Paul's pronouncements on the phenomenon of homosexuality in Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10 is that he denounces homosexual relationships and practices by both men and women.

This study has shown that there can be no valid appeal made for a third natural sex or alternative sexual orientation within God's created reality. The socio-historical background and the exegesis of the relevant Bible portions do not support such an appeal to the textual data. Homosexuality should be rejected as an abnormal

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expression of sexuality because biblical sexual morality is defined by heterosexuality. The attitude to homosexuality is throughout the Bible uncompromisingly negative. Only if one turns to extra biblical authorities can one approve of the practice of homosexuality, but then, the Bible, the church's one authority for faith and practice has been abandoned.

**Πορνεία** (sexual immorality) is closely linked to the attitude towards homosexual conduct. **Πορνεία** is all extra-marital sex. There is a total incompatibility between **πορνεία** and the Kingdom of God. Homosexuality is clearly sexual conduct outside of heterosexual marriage and thus to be regarded as **πορνεία**. Therefore, it is wrong and in terms of the biblical evaluation thereof, it is denounced as sinful conduct.

The contribution of this study to the current debate can be summarised as follows:

- Paul is not concerned with the origins, motivations or gratifications of homosexual conduct. Neither the phenomenon of mutual consent between adults nor genuine loving homosexual relationships are of any value to him. Homosexual conduct in whatever form of expression is for him outside the boundaries of God's intention for mankind.
- The Bible rejects homosexual intercourse because it is a violation of the gendered creation of male and female. Homosexuality distorts, confuses and blurs the sexuality intended by God for humanity. Homosexual intercourse represents a suppression of the visible evidence in nature of the male-female anatomical, biological and procreative complementarity.
- Same-sex intercourse is **παρά φύσιν**, contrary to nature. Romans 1:26-27 denounces homoeroticism for both females and males in no uncertain terms. The reference to female homosexuality in Romans 1:26 excludes any single sexual model (pederasty, heterosexuals performing homosexual acts, or only passive-active roles) as point of departure for Paul.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9 pronounces judgment on both the **μαλακός** and **ἀρσενοκοίτης**, that is, on effeminate males who play the role of females (the penetrated) in homosexual intercourse and on active male partners (the penetrator) who take the former to bed.

Tolerance to homosexuality predetermines a reinterpretation of the Bible portions condemning homosexual behaviour. At stake is the authority of the Bible as the Word of God. Humanism and relativism have made huge inroads into current theology to effectively question the absolutes in the Bible. The current formulation of the concepts of sex, gender and sexual predisposition presupposes a specific reading of Bible portions concerned with homosexuality. Such a reading of the Bible concludes that the biblical view of homosexuality is not relevant to the current debate.

# OPSOMMING

Hierdie proefskrif is 'n teologiese studie. Die uitgangspunt vir die studie hou rekening daarmee dat God betrokke is in die sosiale omstandighede van die mens en dat hierdie betrokkenheid weergegee word in die Bybeldele wat na homoseksualiteit verwys (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Kor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10).

Ou-Testamentiese seksuele moraliteit is nou verbonde met die konsep *menslike natuur*. Die onderskeid tussen manlik en vroulik moet nie geignoreer word in die beoordeling van homoseksualiteit nie. Die Bybel dui aan dat hierdie onderskeid deur God só geskep is. Hierdie gegewe realiteit word in die Nuwe Testament verdiskonteer deur seksuele moraliteit te definieer in terme van heteroseksuele optrede in teenstelling met die Grieks-Romeinse seksuele moraliteit wat bi-seksuele en homoseksuele optrede as normale uitdrukking van seksualiteit beskou het. Beide die Nuwe Testament en die Judaïstiese tradisies verwerp homoseksuele dae as normale uitdrukking van seksualiteit. Uitsprake oor homoseksualiteit in die eerste eeu nC is hoofsaaklik beperk tot manlike homoseksualiteit; vroulike homoseksualiteit kry relatief min aandag. Homoseksualiteit is beskou as 'n manlike onsedelikheid. Pederastie was gesien as 'n heidense onsedelikheid en kry geen implisiete of eksplisiete aandag in die Bybel nie.

Die sleutelwoorde om Romeine 1:26-27 te verstaan is *χρῆσις* (natuurlike gebruik) en *φύσις* (menslike natuur). *Χρῆσις* impliseer heteroseksuele verhoudings, wat onder andere ook die menslike natuur verteenwoordig, naamlik manlik of vroulik. Homo-erotiese verhoudings word daarom gesien as *παρὰ φύσιν* (teen die menslike natuur). Homo-erotiese verhoudings dui op seksuele verwardheid ten opsigte van die seksuele bedoeling van God vir die mens. Paulus baseer sy veroordeling van homoseksualiteit op die waarneembare natuur en seksuele daad. Hy veroordeel dan ook sowel manlike as vroulike homoseksualiteit. Hy maak geen voorsiening vir seksuele oriëntasie nie. Die homoseksuele daad is dui op *ὄρεξις* (wellus; begeerte) en daarom is homoseksualiteit 'n sonde voor God. Vir Paulus is die mense wat homoseksualiteit beoefen, uitgesluit van die Koninkryk van God.

Soos in Romeine 1:26-27 dui Paulus se keuse van woorde in 1 Korintiërs 6:9-10 op 'n algemene veroordeling van manlike homoseksualiteit. Die keuse van die neologisme *ἀρσενοκοίτης* is betekenisvol omdat dit 'n eerste gebruik van die woord daarstel en in sy gebruik van hierdie woord het Paulus 'n woord saamgestel wat 'n byna letterlike transkripsie van Levitikus 18:22 (LXX) verteenwoordig. Paulus se kombinasie van *ἀρσενοκοίτης-μαλακός* verwys waarskynlik na die aktiewe en passiewe (penetreerder en gepenetreerde) rolle in die homoseksuele daad. Beide deelnemers

aan die daad is uitgesluit van die Koninkryk van God. Die gebruik van ἀρσενοκοίτης in 1 Timoteus 1:9-10 onderstreep die betekenis van die kombinasie ἀρσενοκοίτης-μαλακός in 1 Korintiërs 6:9-10.

'n Geldige interpretasie van Paulus se uitsprake oor homoseksualiteit in Romeine 1:26-27, 1 Korintiërs 6:9-10 en 1 Timoteus 1:9-10 hou dus in dat homoseksuele verhoudings en dade vir beide mans en vrouens veroordeel moet word. Homoseksuele optrede in enige vorm is sonde.

## KEY PHRASES

Homosexual	Homoseksueel
Homosexuality	Homoseksualiteit
Sexual immorality	Seksuele immoraliteit
Sexual orientation	Seksuele orientasie
Romans 1:26-27	Romeine 1:26-27
1 Corinthians 6:9-10	1 Korintiërs 6:9-10
1 Timothy 1:9-10	1 Timoteus 1:9-10

Πορνεία	Sexual immorality	Seksuele immoraliteit
Χρήσις	Natural use	Natuurlike gebruik
Παρά φύσιν	Against nature	Teen die natuur
Ἄρσενοκοΐτης	Homosexual	Homoseksueel
Μαλακός	Homosexual	Homoseksueel

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