Radical Celibacy: Towards a Christian Postmodern Sexual Ethic

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As part of the broad project of reconceptualizing the world in theological as opposed to secular terms, some "radical orthodoxy" theologians have begun to address the issues surrounding gender, sexuality, and marriage. These include, most notably, Graham Ward, Eugene Rogers, and (perhaps better classified in the post-liberal "Yale School") Miroslav Volf. These theologians, however, have made only limited (or poor) use of the extensive conceptual apparatus that has been built up over the last two decades by postmodern feminists and queer theorists. By using these tools in a Christian, orthodox manner in accord with the radical orthodoxy project, I will show that we are led to drastically different conclusions, to a sexual ethic that is no longer "sexual," but rather refocuses on friendship and celibacy.

Methodological Considerations

When a question has been asked over and over again and deep divisions still exist amongst the respondents, it should be obvious that we are either asking the wrong question or asking the question in the wrong way. A new generation of theologians has come of age in the "late capitalist" milieu of postmodernism, a viewpoint that tells us to question our questions. As Christians, we must be ever vigilant that the questions we ask, especially about how we are to act in the world, remain in the language of theology and do not slip into the overwhelming vernacular of the secular. Concerning questions of sexuality, we have not been vigilant enough.

Half a century ago, American theologian H. Richard Niebuhr called on Christians to return to a "radical monotheism," focusing on Christ and putting aside all other idols such as nations or science: "Radical monotheism dethrones all absolutes short of the principle of being itself."[1] In recent years John Milbank has gone about dethroning the other absolutes that have come to dominate social theory, re-centring faith on God. This "radical" approach recognizes that secular post-modern theorists too have been dethroning absolutes, but they leave nothing but a void in the place of the previous polytheism. Milbank sees that the void is not empty at all, but is filled with the Triune God.

What sort of methodology does this "radical" approach imply and

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2003.tb06294.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

which false idols does it dethrone in the realm of sexuality? Milbank writes, "In postmodernity there are infinitely many possible versions of truth, inseparable from particular narratives" and "The human mind does not 'correspond' to reality, but arises within a process which gives rise to 'effects of meaning.'"[2] This perception of reality is governed by human language and systems of signification particular to our specific narrative. What distinguishes Milbank's view from Nietzsche or the neo-Nietzschean postmodernists is that Milbank is always working with the knowledge that the world is fundamentally ordered by God, harmonious: "the 'right harmonies' within a musical sequence alone ensure that this sequence 'progresses' towards the infinite goal."[3]

The idols we have to dethrone, following Milbank, must be those particular narratives that claim to speak in the universal voice, in the voice of a god. This suggests a two-part approach: first, following secular post-modern scholars, establish a genealogy of the terminology or categorization in question. Then, relying on revelation and the Christian tradition, create a practice that is Christ-centred and thereby harmonious. In the first phase of analysis, there is much to be learned from the secular tradition, stretching from Nietzsche to Foucault to Judith Butler.

The quest for origins is "a metaphysical extension which arises from the belief that things are most precious and essential at the moment of birth," writes Nietzsche.[4] Foucault elaborates: "An examination of descent also permits the discovery, under the unique aspect of a trait or a concept, of the myriad events through which—thanks to which, against which—they were formed."[5] Does not such a methodology raise theological worries? Is the genealogist not tempted to slide down the slippery slope towards nihilism, the resultant state when the entire vocabulary has been examined away?

God is not to be found in any community's language game, so He cannot be analysed away. This is because of the utter alterity of the Divine, Who cannot be reduced to or confined in the vocabulary of any specific community. Moreover, the presence of the Divine cannot be separated from the totality of a community: "The community is what God is like."[6] For the community to question itself, to realize its own particularity, in no way does violence to God.

Even if a theological justification of the genealogical method is accepted, Butler's critique of Foucault raises further issues concerning the materiality of the body. Butler points out that while Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1,* seems to want to do away with the body, to see it only as a construction of power relationships at play, he, at the same time and in other places, writes of the body as a surface of inscription, the slate on which power acts.[7] Butler's position, articulated more fully in

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2003.tb06294.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

Gender Trouble and *Bodies That Matter*, is that Foucault's de-materialisation of the body is correct—the body is constructed and not inscribed (her concern is in particular with the sexed body, but of course there is no such thing as an un-sexed body).

Are there not substantial theological implications if we are to reject the materiality of bodies? What would this mean for Christ's human form? These questions are less perplexing than they may at first seem. Narrative theology, with its implications fully considered, implies, "Objects and subjects are, as they are narrated in a story. Outside a plot, which has its own unique, unfounded reasons, one cannot conceive how objects and subjects would be, nor even that they would be at all."[8] This narrative is no different than the discourse/power regime that constitutes the body: outside of the plot, bodies do not exist. Christ's body exists in the Christian narrative—indeed, at the centre of the Christian narrative. But God "created humankind male and female," one might object.[9] In all of God's interactions with Israel in the Old Testament, He is interacting with a specific community, intervening in one story. His actions must necessarily be in the power/discourse field that is that community. If God had chosen a different people before Christ, He would have acted in their power/discourse field differently.

Genealogy, then, is the methodology of radical orthodoxy. It is not simply a Christian methodology; it is *the superior* methodology for Christians to investigate worldly questions. The governing principles of the Christian narrative—the Triune God—of course must not be forgotten, but it is a genealogical analysis that makes space for the story of Christ to guide our judgments. Those who do not follow such a methodology inevitably fail, for they are attempting to map human space, human language, human time onto God's domain and vice versa. The secular divisions, categorizations, and vocabularies must first be revealed and rejected before we can attempt to map the Divine design onto Earth.

Critique: Rogers, Volf, Ward

An enormous corpus of work exists on the questions of gender, sexuality, and marriage in the Christian tradition. In the past few years, innovative material has been produced purporting to bring what might be called a "radically orthodox" approach to these questions. Such an approach claims to be radically monotheistic in that it is totally God-centred, making ethical arguments based on heavenly and not earthly justifications.

Eugene Rogers published *Sexuality and the Christian Body* with the intent of "offering a defence of marriage wide enough to include same-sex couples and committed celibates" that is "Centrally concerned with Trinity, Christology, hermeneutics, nature, and grace."[10] He wants to critically analyse

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2003.tb06294.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

the rhetoric of both conservatives and liberals in a manner reminiscent of the utopian views of ethical language commensurability put forth by Jeffrey Stout. The liberals, Rogers thinks, do not produce a convincing Biblical argument for the acceptability of gay marriage and inappropriately bring science directly into the religious discourse. Conservatives, on the other hand, are accused of selective literalism, idiosyncratic use of the notion of vocation, and problematic uses of natural law.

Rogers emphasizes the sanctifying property of marriage, emphasizing the (previously neglected) role of the Spirit in the ceremony of marriage. Just as the Spirit is the mindful witness to the relationship between Father and Son—the witness who will fulfil His role of actively completing the relationship—so too does the marriage ceremony, mimicking the Trinitarian relationship, place the couple's community as mindful witnesses who complete the holy process. And gay people need sanctification and community support too.

Rogers makes a long and complex argument intended to make space in the interpretation of Aquinas and Barth for homosexual marriage. One of the facets of the argument makes the analogy between homosexuals and Gentiles. Just as Barth, in his later writings, seems to shift emphasis in his famous doctrine of election, placing the Jews in a more significant, sanctified place. Rogers finds the link between sexuality and the Jews and Gentiles in the words of Barth himself: "Because the election of God is real, there is such a thing as love and marriage."[11]

In an extended exegesis of Rowan William's essay, "The Body's Grace," Rogers defends the centrality of the material body to the Christian tradition. In response to potential criticism of William's over-psychologising the body, Rogers writes, "Bodies... are one of the ways in which Christians ought to take particulars seriously: God chose the Jews; the incarnation took place in a particular place and time... And so, to sum up, it really does matter whether someone has a penis or a vagina... Christians believe other things that are just that bodily."[12] Christ is the Saviour because of his concurrent particularity and universality: he is a circumcised Jew and yet Paul writes that the resurrection (another bodily act) eliminates the distinction between Jew and Gentile. This is the grace of the body. Extended to homosexuals, one is born sexed as male or female, but the grace of God eliminates this sex—and sexual orientation—in the eyes of God.

Although some see Rogers' work as just another liberal attempt to justify Church-sanctioned gay marriage,[13] his effort to ground the discussion of Christian ethics in Christian theology is laudable. His analysis, however, is problematic because he tries to square the circle: he tries to apply theological imperatives to secular language (gendered bodies, sexual orientation). Rogers is right when he identifies the heart of the

Christian story in the particularity and universality of Christ. Christ is both within our narrative and beyond, the only exception. But in universalising the community of God, it is God's community, not human bodies, in which difference is eliminated.

Wayne Meeks, in an illuminating and comprehensive study of the use of the image of the androgyne in the ancient world, shows that in a variety of communities and discourses the image of the reconciliation of the male and female was a common symbol of the return to the original, non-sexed being. This process "became the sign not so much of a sect as of the radically isolated individual, who, by leaving behind the differentia of male and female, leaves behind the cosmos itself—empirically speaking, the world of settled society."[14] Paul is using the image of the de-differentiation of male and female not to tell of the change from bodily individuals to individuals whose only attachment is to Christ but rather he is using this process to signify the change from God's message applying to one story, one community to the universal, applying to all communities. These individuals redeemed by Christ might not be as "radically isolated" as Meeks suggests, but are no longer a part of a sect, for they now are a member of the community of Christ. Paul's message is about communities, not about bodies: bodies remain as they were: as constructs of the discourse/power of their community (now the community of Christ, so the bodies are formed differently, no longer circumcised, for instance).

Rogers' unjustified focus on the genital endowment of humans as composing the essence of their sex destabilizes his entire argument. For instance, how can he make the case that the difference between gay and straight relationships is analogous to that between the Gentiles and the Jews if the difference between gay and straight relationships is dependent on essentialist sexual identities whereas the difference between Jews and Gentiles is the difference between two communities, two stories? Again it is evident that a genealogical investigation is necessary before theological conclusions should be considered.

Influenced by the violence that has afflicted his homeland of Croatia, Miroslav Volf explores the possibilities for Christian forgiveness and reconciliation—but also gender relations. Volf argues for a model of individual human identity based on the Trinity. Following the doctrine of *perichoresis*, each individual commingles with each other, but remains distinct. In order to prevent the total elimination of the self in others (in order, thereby, to be more perfectly modelled on the Trinity), "we must attend to the boundaries of identities by enforcing rules that protect identities and by providing environments that nurture them."[15] Such a model of identity, Volf proposes, would satisfy the objections to traditional discourses of identity raised most notably by Luce Irigaray.

Volf is explicit about his essentialist pretensions. He considers whether God is (or should be!) gendered and concludes in the negative. Gender is entirely human, but "what human beings share with animals is the *sexed body*—a body that carries indelible marks of belonging to either male or female sex... Men's and women's gender identities are rooted in the specificity of their distinct sexed bodies."[16] This is desirable, according to Volf, because "the stability of the sexed body also makes fluidity of gender identities possible"—you could not have *fluidity* without a somatic referent. This leads to the conclusion that "we must both assert that the differences between men and women are irreducible and refuse to spell out in advance what these differences are."[17]

The content of gender changes over time and depends on one's culture, Volf argues. This is a good thing: there ought to be fluidity in gender identity (anchored, of course, in essentialist sex categories) so that as cultures change, gender roles can change as well. We ought not look to the gender roles found in Biblical stories, for those were reflective only of that particular culture. The Bible can be instructive in telling the process by which gender roles ought to come about, not their content. It is in 1 Corinthians 11 that Volf finds a basis for modelling such a process of gender identity formation: "Neither is woman without man nor man without woman" (v. 11). To be a man, then, is to be "not without" a woman, and vice versa. This implies a relationship between the two genders in which each is both distinct and yet defined in relation to the other. Further, "This holds true quite apart from whether men and women live in heterosexual relationships."[18]

Several points may be made here. First, Volf is aligning himself with the critique of Western philosophical (Irigaray) and religious (Daly) discourses that are phallogocentric, excluding women as "other." Such critiques necessarily assume irreconcilable, essential differences between the sexes—otherwise, the voice of the other would be assimilated into the voice of the speaker. This approach itself can certainly be practically useful in the political project of displacing the man-centred idiom that has dominated and continues to dominate nearly all communities. But Foucault has convincingly argued that language is just one aspect (perhaps manifestation) of the power/knowledge matrix that constructs selves. An emphasis solely on language can lose sight of the other technologies of the self that are involved in this process such as regimes of discipline and self-examination.

Judith Butler has further contested this essentialist position: "The effort to *include* 'Other' cultures as variegated amplifications of a global phallogocentrism constitutes an appropriative act that risks repetition of the self-aggrandizing gesture of phallogocentrism, colonizing under the sign of the same those differences that might otherwise call that totalizing concept

into question."[19] In other words, the reification of the categories of male and female, the postulation of an imagined origin for them before the Law, and the potential reconfiguration of the relationship between them (as Volf is so often suggesting is necessary), these are all based on the elimination of difference amongst women just as the current signifying economy is based on the elimination of difference between men and women. Volf, instead of creating a space in which male speech does not obliterate the place of woman, has committed the equally heinous crime of treating all women as undifferentiated, indeed, as members of an undifferentiated Other. It is exactly Volf's sort of belief in an underlying "truth" of the sexed bodies that allows for the creation and reproduction of gender roles, roles which cannot exist without an Other.

Graham Ward comes the closest to offering a radically orthodox position on sexuality. Ward, too, attempts to re-ground the theology of the erotic in the Christian tradition rather than in the secular marketplace: "It is the body of Christ... which governs a theological reading of bodies *per se*. The eucharist becomes then, as Aquinas recognised, the sacrament governing the nature of all the other sacraments—including the sacrament of marriage."[20] The Church is seen as an erotic community, a body desiring its consummation.

The prevailing Christian attitude with regard to sexuality has been shaped by the conceptual schemes of Anders Nygren and Karl Barth who are concerned by the intermingling of *agape* and *eros*, Ward suggests. The emphasis in the work of these two theologians is on the separation of these two humanly and holy loves. Barth finds a place for "genuine eros" in marriage, but it still remains secondary to agapic love. But, pointing to the invention and medicalisation of different forms of love and sex in the early modern world, Ward argues that these categories are culturally determined. The other extreme position in opposition to Nygren's and Barth's—the Nietzschean conflation of human and divine desire into one category—is equally problematic, he suggests: it eliminates difference, and it is difference that constitutes desire. He concludes that desire for the difference of the Divine is the only true form of desire.

An analogy can thus be built between the libidinal economies (plural, not totalising and phallogocentric) of human desire and the pneumatic economies of Divine desire. Each of these economies culminates in the joining of flesh—in marriage or redemption. "Sexual difference, in its endorsement of both separation and relation, constitutes human creatures as *imago dei*. In attraction-in-difference is reflected the difference-in-relation in the Trinitarian God."[21] Sexual difference is the signifier of theological difference, that is, the difference between I and Thou or Christ and Church. The body is symbol and not material. Following Butler, Ward

argues that gender is performed through ritual, a performance that he likens to participation in the Divine narrative in which the body is a symbol.

Ward assents to the conclusions of a genealogical analysis of gender: kinship, he argues, is symbolic, so we ought to reconsider "The politics of the heterosexual family... which render unnatural (if not criminal) homosexuality and, what is possibly worse, reifies two models of sexual orientation."[22] He readily admits that sexual difference is a creation of modernity, but he does not abandon this language completely. It is now sexual differences (plural) that he writes about, differences which are irreconcilable so that they may not be brought into submission to a totalising uniformity.

If sexual difference is the signifier of theological difference, it is necessarily binary. Ward has lost his promising emphasis on differences (plural): an I-Thou or God-Church relationship does not have differences, it has difference. Ward argues against Barth that the traditional view of woman is merely as a complement of man, and this does not allow for the radical difference found between I-Thou or God-Church. But is it really the case that Thou does not function as a complement to I, Church as a complement to God? The latter of the pairs is inseparable from the former, its identity is totally dependent on the former. Thou and Church are Others, created by and subsumed in I and God, incapable of speaking in a voice of their own not defined by I and God.

The place for human sexual desire that Ward finds is necessarily dependent on difference (singular). Sexual difference is, as Ward puts it, "mediated by desire." He seems to have forgotten the promising possibility for eliminating difference without the violence of universalisation he earlier proposed: shifting the emphasis to differences (plural). Sexual desire is totally dependent on the singularity of difference; in an economy of differences, desire no longer has a role of mediator.

Ward's conclusion is that we ought to look positively upon relationships that "displace... heterosexist symbolics, revealing a love which exceeds biological reproduction."[23] These are homosexual relationships, but also heterosexual intercourse not for the purpose of procreation. He finally degenerates into the rhetoric of the "mystery of attraction"—which partner in a same-sex relationship is utterly Other is a matter of "elusive grace." Therefore, even homosexual relationships partake in heterosexual desire, he argues. But Ward does not see that sexual desire is integral to the symbolics he wishes to displace. The economy of human desire is a product of the heterosexual symbolics of difference; homosexual sex is simply the Other in this symbolic structure. So, by embracing homosexual sex as *exceeding* the heterosexist symbolics, Ward is doing exactly what Irigaray warns against: the voice of the Other

(female) can never exceed that of the male because in the language being spoken the female is no more than a creation of the male, utterly dependent. Similarly, homosexual desire is utterly dependent and can never displace or exceed heterosexist symbolics while the language of sexual desire is being spoken.

Towards Celibacy

How, then, are we to formulate a Christian sexual ethic, one which is not dependent on the particular vocabulary of our local narratives and is informed by the Christian tradition? Secular gender theorists have done much useful work on the first part of this task. Foremost among these is Judith Butler, who has drawn upon the genealogical work on the term "gender" done by French theorists who see gender as societal values (or power relations) inscribed on or inseparable from a constructed body. But Butler, following Foucault, has a tendency to see desire as constructed but at the same time universal. Every form of discourse/power regime produces desire in such a way that one is tempted to see sexual desire as being before the Law, for it is in part through desire that discourse/power regimes act.

Irigaray and others examine sexuality in Marxist terms: men (the only subjects) historically have used women as objects of exchange around which to organize societies, secure alliances, guarantee familial continuity, etc. Women have been commodities in a system of production, their (non)selves being owned, standardized, categorized, and exchanged. Desire only flows in one direction: from subject to commodity. Such an analysis derives from a structuralist anthropological view (Lévi-Strauss), but is in many ways genealogical, for it does not speak of a time before commodification, it does not seek a moment of origin for subjugation.

The implication that Irigaray and Monique Wittig take from this model is that, in order for women to stop being mere objects of exchange, they must end the process of exchange, that is, sexual relationships with men. "Lesbian is the only concept I know of which is beyond the categories of sex (woman and man), because the designated subject (lesbian) is *not* a woman, either economically, or politically, or ideologically. For what makes a woman is a specific social relation to a man..."[24] What Irigaray and Wittig fail to explain is how sexual desire can exist outside the male economy of desire (unless sexual desire is before the law). Why is it not the case that Eros—the set of culturally specific practices and pleasures that surround the act of copulation—exists only to signify the exchange of women? If this is the case, as I think it is, lesbian sexuality would be no more than a bad copy of the symbolics of oppression.

When Eros is revealed to be mythological, what remains? Is the possibility of "real" pleasure eliminated? The mapping of pleasure onto the

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2003.tb06294.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

body has for so long been dominated by the male economy of desire that an alternative is difficult to envisage. It must involve the re-mapping of the body in such a way that the regions our particular community considers "sexual" are not privileged. As members of the universal Christian community, the particular mappings of pleasure onto the body may be abandoned, leaving a system in which a touch is never "sexualised" or not "sexualised"—it is simply pleasurable; a system in which the knee or the stomach or the toe or the penis can all be centres of non-erotic pleasure.

In a Christian community in which the category of the sexualised has been eliminated, marriage is eliminated, for the sexual act no longer exists. In its place, there is now space for friendship of a deeper order. This is a friendship blind to gender and sex, a friendship of the embrace and caress, both literally and metaphorically (but it is certainly not procreative). In our fallen, particularized world, sexualisation has destroyed the human touch—again, literally and metaphorically. By obliterating this false binarism of the sexual and the non-sexual we may reclaim the gap it has produced. In this way, the Christian community can and must become a community of radical celibates.

The Christian Tradition

There is, of course, a long tradition of Christian celibacy from which to draw wisdom. Dale Martin has argued that Paul, in line with his cultural practices, does not differentiate between desire for the male or the female—what Paul is concerned with is desire in excess. In the ancient world, sex was seen as analogous to food in moral thought: one ought not be a glutton or gourmand just like one ought not to be a homosexual or masochist.[25] Paul's message to the Corinthians must be separated into that which concerns the particularities of the Corinthian community and that which is intended for the universal Christian community. "It is good for a man not to touch [obviously metonymy] a woman" (1 Corinthians 7:1) is the message directed at all members of the Christian community. A Christian community living in imitation of God is one of celibates. Paul continues with a specific message to resolve immediate problems within the Corinthian community: "Because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband..." (v. 2). These immoralities concern this specific community that Paul is addressing, as does his advice.

Augustine knew well that the invention of the act of sex is part of the particular rather than universal community of God. In urging married couples to have sex only for the purpose of procreation, he cleared the space previously occupied by the sexualised. When sex is mechanical, sex is obliterated. The mythology of Eros found in the narrative of the romance

from antiquity to today has no place when sexual intercourse in marriage is only for procreation. Marriage itself, Augustine argues, is no more than an institutionalised friendship. As Eric Fuchs observes, "Augustine, although he was more sensitive than others to the social dimension of the couple, was unable to conceive of the possibility that sexuality could hold tenderness, friendship, spirituality..."[26] Sexuality was radically different from friendship and from marriage—it was a biological function like excretion to be performed and not mythologized.

Aelred of Rievaulx provides a striking and controversial example of the possibility for radical celibacy in the middle ages. A debate rages in the scholarship concerning Aelred's sexual orientation, a question which should become irrelevant when he is placed in the context of radical celibacy. Much of this debate is centred on Aelred's assertion that it is equally bad to have sex with other men as it is with women.[27] Aelred wrote perhaps the greatest Christian treatise on friendship, *De Spirituali Amicitia*, in which he urged Christians to form strong spiritual, asexual friendships, and laid out a method of doing so. Spiritual friendships, he believed, should be based on more than affection—they should also be based on reason, virtue, and love of God. McGuire's summary of Aelred's thought is startlingly reminiscent of the notion of radical celibacy just developed: "In condemning genital sexuality as sinful and vicious, Aelred still believed in tenderness, affection and touching, and in being open and talking intimately about one's personal life. At the same time he did not feel pain or guilt for appreciating physical beauty in other human beings."[28]

The question naturally arises: what does the view of Christian sexuality that has just been developed mean for the (too) much-disputed possibility of homosexual marriage in the Church? To take a side on this question would be like a Christian pacifist arguing whether a certain military conflict is a just or unjust war.[29] In a world of violence, of oppression, of inequality, the Church ought to be disengaged from the economy of desire just as it ought to be disengaged from the economy of violence. It ought to provide a community that nurtures the intimacy of spiritual friendship and to provide a culture not of controlled eroticism but one in which the erotic is not manufactured. The individual Christian, whether she is married or not, thinks of herself as gay or straight, can and ought to join in this vision of a peaceable, loving community. A radical monotheist, who is radically orthodox, must also be radically celibate.[30]

1 H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), 37.

2 John Milbank, "'Postmodern Critical Augustinianism': A Short *Summa* in Forty Two Responses to Unasked Questions," *Modern Theology* 7:3 (1991): 225; 234. Milbank also makes reference to eros and agape, but is using them

in a technical, Deleuzean sense that will not be considered here.

3 Milbank, "'Postmodern Critical Augustinianism'," 235.

4 Nietzsche, *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, 3 quoted in Michel Foucault. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 143.

5 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 146.

6 Milbank, "'Postmodern Critical Augustinianism'," 228.

7 Butler, "Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions," *The Journal of Philosophy* 86:11 (November 1989): 601-607.

8 Milbank, "'Postmodern Critical Augustinianism'," 225.

9 Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 183, for example, raises this point.

10 Eugene Rogers, *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 2.

11 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* III/1, 318 quoted at Rogers, *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, 153.

12 Rogers, *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, 238.

13 see Gilbert Meilaender's long review: "What Sex Is—And Is For," *First Things* (March 1994): 15-21.

14 Wayne A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *History of Religions* 13:1 (August 1973): 207.

15 Volf, "'The Trinity is Our Social Program': The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement," *Modern Theology* 14:3 (July 1998), 410

16 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 174; emphasis in original.

17 Ibid., 175; emphasis in original.

18 Ibid., 187.

19 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1999 [2nd ed]), 18.

20 Graham Ward, *Cities of God*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 182.

21 Ibid., 188.

22 Ibid., 183.

23 Ibid., 200.

24 Monique Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman," *Feminist Issues* (Winter 1981), 53.

25 Dale B. Martin, "Heterosexism and the Interpretation of Romans 1:18-32," *Biblical Interpretation* 3:3 (1995), 343.

26 Eric Fuchs, *Sexual Desire and Love*, 117 quoted in Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 402.

27 John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 223.

28 Brian McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience*, 350-1250, (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1988), 303.

29 See Stanley Hauerwas' interesting and suggestive discussion of this question in *Dispatches from the Front: Theological Engagements with the Secular* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994). I think one could take this analogy even further, and make the case that all sex is a form of violence, and celibacy is the Christian pacifist position.

30 Thanks are due to Julia Salzman of Stanford University, in dialogue with whom many of the ideas expressed here were begotten.