

# **AN INSIGHT INTO THE FALLACIES OF CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISM** **(With an Emphasis Upon Sexuality and Body Perception)**

by Gordon Gill (Revised September 2017)

## Introduction

This document is the product of research precipitated by my negative experience--see Appendix B for details--at what I now recognize to be a fundamentalist church parish. (The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines fundamentalism as, "The strict maintenance of orthodox religious beliefs or doctrines, especially belief in the inerrancy of Scripture and literal acceptance of the creeds....") The parish is located in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and has traditionally been affiliated with the national Episcopal Church.

Adherents of Christian fundamentalism customarily cling to early renditions of English-language Scripture, despite modern scholars' findings that sundry passages therein constitute inexact translations of original text. The fundamentalists' resistance in accepting enhanced interpretations arising from improved translation proficiency, together with a failure to recognize variations in knowledge acquisition between that of ancient people who lived in now-bygone times vis-a-vis our contemporaries today, has led to restrictions on the role of sexuality in 21<sup>st</sup> century society (sociologists estimate over 90% of us are heterosexual, so that will be the emphasis here), along with a strident downplaying of human body aesthetics.

The purpose of this paper is to explore these topics, which seem bereft of fresh critical analysis. Thinking people should welcome an opportunity to use the text herein both as a basis for dialogue and for determining whether fundamentalist ideas should be allowed to overshadow their own spiritual lives.

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## **PART I - Observations on Key Fundamentalist Issues**

*NOTE: Discussed in Subparts A & B below are two matters of core concern to persons depicted as “fundamentalists.”*

### **A. Sexuality**

#### **1. Sexual Expression and the Bible**

In explaining their perception of sexual engagement suitable for the unmarried--i.e., none at all<sup>1</sup>--fundamentalists often claim to find grounds for such stance in St. Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> century letters (sometimes referred to in the New Testament [N.T.] as “epistles”) to various Christian communities then springing up in the eastern Mediterranean locale. Documents believed to constitute copies of Paul's Greek text were translated into English by a special staff assembled under the British crown in 1611 to draft the “authorized” *King James Version (KJV)* of the Bible. Scattered verses therein employ the word “fornication,” defined in modern dictionaries as willing sex among singles.<sup>2</sup> We shall seek to determine (1) if such 17<sup>th</sup> century use of fornication--coming more than a millennium and a half after Paul--accurately reflects happenings in biblical times, and (2) whether there is scriptural or other justification for treating unwed sex--and even kinds of wed sex--as objectionable.

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<sup>1</sup> Here are five samples of fundamentalist writing: (1) *The Other Side of Morality* (G/L Publications, Glendale, 1969; page 121): “Christians are to avoid *any kind* of sexual looseness, *any kind* of premarital ... sex.” [Emphasis in original.] (2) *Our Corinthian Contemporaries* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1971; page 59): “Outside of marriage no one has the right to use his sexual powers....” (3) *Sexual Understanding Before Marriage* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1971; pages 65 & 114): “[N]ecking and petting on social dates are a violation of the general teaching of the Scriptures.... For a person to give of himself sexually out of the bounds of wedlock can only lead him to despair....” (4) *Sex For Christians* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1976; page 128: “[I]ntercourse by unmarried people is sin.” (5) *True Sexual Morality* (Crossway, Wheaton, 2004; pages 135 & 178): “Individuals not married to each other must never have sex with each other.... Sex outside of marriage is always wrong....”

The text in this subpart--coupled with extensive support provided in Part II, *infra*--will show that the above-quoted exhortations are unpersuasive.

<sup>2</sup> In his book *Sex and Love in the Bible* (Association, New York, 1959), Professor William Graham Cole provides--at pages 247-248--the etymology of this word, viz., its Latin root was derived from *fornix*, meaning arch or vault. Roman brothels were located in underground vaults; hence, the term *fornication*. That is to say, such sex act entailed paying for unemotional copulation, decidedly different from the expression of tender affection for a beloved.

Actually, a general nonexistence of [consensual-nonidolatrous-noncommercial] sexual coupling by unwed biblical-era males and females basically obviates the need for Bibles to contain any English word in such context.<sup>3</sup> That is to say, unlike the lifestyle we pursue today in which marriage is commonly deferred for years, Israelite tradition held that “Girls were expected to marry soon after attaining puberty. Consequently, there were few unattached women in Hebrew society (available for sex),” as we learn from James C. Hefley’s *Sex Sense and Nonsense* (David C. Cook, Elgin, 1971) at page 32. Still, it is pertinent to acknowledge here author Steven Sapp’s analysis on page 33 of his book *Sexuality, the Bible, and Science* (Fortress, Philadelphia, 1977) where he observes that whatever social sex might have occurred in the early days [perhaps largely involving widows-editor], typically “no harm was done.”

*However--to comprehend the true nature of sex-associated acts that are, in fact, covered in Scripture--consider the following two items:*

The first of these--explored in the 43<sup>rd</sup> session (August 1994) of Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense, a major conference of theologians--involves 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:2, (authored by Paul), a passage containing “fornication” in *KJV*. But it is clear from a transcript of the proceedings that the theologians deemed the subject activity to rather have constituted pagan ritual copulation. Significantly, these scholars advanced no suggestion--in either conference papers or post-conference critiques--that amorous interaction between romantic singles is germane to the cited biblical text.

The second can be found on page 752 of *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Prentice Hall; Upper Saddle River; 1990). Thus, “fornication” in the *KJV* translation of Acts 15:20 (written by Luke) is construed as incest. And again, there is no reference to sex play between singles.

The salient message to be derived from the foregoing examples is that, contrary to what fundamentalists would have us believe, neither such activity--both labeled “fornication” in *KJV*--bears relevance to the joyous rewards that 21<sup>st</sup> century sweethearts routinely obtain through affectionate sexual bonding. The *New International Version [NIV]* of the Bible remedies these two translation deficiencies--and others as well--by substituting the word “immorality.” In fact, “fornication” appears nowhere in *NIV*, the whole concept being absent from such recast Scripture.

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Firm support for rejecting a theory (commonly held by fundamentalists) that Paul was rebuking persons engaging in unwed sex comes from the Rev. Raymond J. Lawrence, Jr.--priest, pastoral counselor, and formerly teaching chaplain at St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital (Houston)--who tenders comment on pages 43 & 261-262 of his book *The Poisoning of Eros* (Augustine Moore, New York, 1989): “That Paul held to a view of sexual relations strictly limited to the boundaries of

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<sup>3</sup> A notable exception is the poignant account of lovers’ delight expressed in the O.T. book Song of Songs. For an overview of this heartwarming biblical story, see the last two pages of Part II.

monogamy ... is most unlikely.... The popular notion that sexual expression should be limited absolutely to the bounds of a single bonded pair has no unequivocal historical, philosophical, ethical, or theological support.”

Indeed, Paul--raised as a Jew--would have been guided by the thought on page 56 of Professor James A. Brundage’s book *Laws, Sex, and Christian Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1978), viz., that “ancient Jewish law viewed voluntary sexual relations, whether commercial or noncommercial, with considerable tolerance,” and also by the notation on page 17 of *Novum Testamentum XIV* that, “Pre-betrothed, pre-marital, non-commercial sexual intercourse between men and women is nowhere considered a moral crime in the Torah.”

*As is made evident below, today’s scholars demonstrate that named religious figures involved in formulating antisex precepts--in the early years of Christianity and in the Middle Ages or later--possessed minuscule comprehension of the physiology and psychology of sex, voids adversely affecting the utility of their thinking.*

Professor Brundage discredits (page 64) 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> century philosopher Tertullian for having claimed “sexual craving and delight, even in marriage, can have no place in Christian life.... [C]oitus causes spiritual insensitivity; sexual intercourse drives out the Holy Spirit....” The professor further notes (pages 86-87) that Origen, a 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> century Christian theologian who also sought to severely denigrate sex, shocked even some of his contemporaries by advocating castration as a “method of combating sexual temptation.”

*New Testament Studies* (volume 28, page 130) stresses that 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> century writer “Augustine ... contaminated the biblical outlook on sexuality.” Moreover, Professor Roland H. Bainton cautions on page 41 of his book *What Christianity Says About Sex, Love, and Marriage* (Association, New York, 1957) that Augustine’s perspective derives from the early Manichees and Pelagians,<sup>4</sup> who regarded sex play as a scurrilous endeavor and discounted the positive emotional engagement awaiting lovers immersing themselves in the sex act. In her book *Body, Sex, and Pleasure* (Pilgrim, Cleveland, 1994), Professor Christine E. Gudorf refutes (page 131) Augustine’s conviction that “women were not capable of being real companions of men.”

Professor Gudorf further demolishes (page 83) 13<sup>th</sup> century Christian churchman Thomas Aquinas for having relegated sexual pursuit to a “lower animal nature, not part of the higher rational nature [linking] us to the Almighty and which is characteristically human.” She also alerts us (page 239) that Aquinas accepted a standard hypothesis prevalent in olden times (but now seen universally as lacking any merit) that “semen contained whole and complete men, who needed only nurture in the womb. These little men become defective--that is, female--under ... presence of southerly/moist winds during pregnancy.”

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<sup>4</sup> The Episcopal Church officially holds a dim view of Pelagian theology. See page 869 in the *Book of Common Prayer* stating that, “Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (*as the Pelagians do vainly talk*).” [Emphasis supplied.]

Shuddering with trepidation that--correct or not, what do you think?--the female sex drive is “insatiable” (see chapter VI of *Witchcraft in Europe* by Professors Charles Kors and Edward Peters [University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2001]), cruel medieval inquisitors acting in behalf of church officials like 15<sup>th</sup> century Pope Innocent VIII persecuted numerous women on spurious sex allegations. Moreover, reckoning somehow that females ascribed with attributes of devils were engaging in surreptitious “demonic copulation” with sleeping victims, this pope had them put on full ecclesiastical trial (where, of course, they would not prevail.)

In his book *Sexual Attitudes* (Prometheus, New York, 1995), Professor Vern L. Bullough reveals (page 54) that 12<sup>th</sup> century monk Gratian unwarrantably denounced what he chose to call “unnatural sex.” The professor explains--amazingly so to a man or woman of our time accustomed to resourceful bed partners--that generations of fundamentalist clerics have construed the monk’s language as condemning “intercourse in any position except with the female on her back....”<sup>5</sup> Further in this connection, Michael Coogan notes on page 212 of his book *God and Sex* (Twelve-Hachette, New York, 2010) that, “In post-biblical tradition, Adam had a wife before Eve, the notorious Lilith, who left him ... because when they made love he refused to let her be on top.”

A *San Francisco Chronicle* front-page article (November 29, 1994) explored the oft-confused perception of sexuality within organized religion. The Rev. Robert Warren Cromey, a local Episcopal priest interviewed for the piece, noted that “fear of sex and pleasure”--stemming from the ancient Greeks’ speculative differentiation between the spirit (good) and the body (bad)--induced our church fathers to adopt unwarranted negative stances on sexual protocol. Professor

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<sup>5</sup> But consider the opposite view: Page 101 of *Glamour* for July 2006 notes, “most women say [straddling a man offers] the easiest position for reaching orgasm.” Indeed, page 268 of its June 2007 issue quotes 26-year-old Gina as saying, “I’d had orgasms by myself, but couldn’t relax enough with a guy [until] I started climbing on top.” Further, 24-year-old Meagan confirms on page 267 of the May 2008 issue that “lying down on him [offers] more direct clitoral contact--fantastic!” Likewise, 21-year-old Stella tells us on page 70 of *Jane* for November 2006, that “Usually when I’m on top, I can orgasm sans [manual] help.” *Cosmopolitan* confirms on page 95 of its January 2007 issue that “Orgasm ... usually is easiest with woman-on-top.” Also, page 164 for September 2007 stresses that, “To increase your chances of climaxing during intercourse ... get on top.” *Glamour* for March 2017 quotes, at page 139, 30-year-old Laura: “I tell my partner [that having] me on top [of you works best].” Page 108 of *Cosmopolitan’s* April 2009 issue notes “Woman-on-top is a definite G-spot winner,” while page 115 for January 2017 and page 162 for April 2017 say G-spot stimulation is maximized when women-on-top limit penetration to the first three inches of their vagina. Northwestern University’s Assistant Professor Laura Berman claims a bonus on page 150 of her book *Real Sex for Real Women* (DK, New York, 2008), viz., partners positioned below can caress “your breasts, back, and bottom.”

So it is amply clear from the above excerpts that careful selection of intercourse position can heighten arousal of a woman’s sensitive body tissues. Fundamentalists maintaining homage to Gratian and his devotees would unjustifiably deprive women of such benefit.

Bullough elaborated in an online panel discussion arranged by the Closer to Truth scholarly organization that, “Christianity has been hostile—it’s what I would call a sex-negative culture ... the best sex was no sex.” Dr. Karen A. McClintock informs us on page 41 of her book *Sexual Shame* (Fortress, Minneapolis, 2001) that, “The goal was procreation. All other aspects of sexuality were considered sinful. The ghosts of this perspective still haunt us.” [!] On page 244 of his book *Sexual Relation in Christian Thought* (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1959), Professor Derrick Sherwin Bailey notes, “[A]dvances in scientific knowledge have rendered untenable a view of physical sexuality which has obsessed the mind of the church for more than fifteen centuries and has profoundly and adversely influenced the sexual attitudes of the West.”<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, it has! Modern fundamentalists--embracing remnants of such flawed ideology in striving to prop up their various antisex theories--continue to inveigh against intercourse between unmarrieds. In addition to the five examples in footnote 1 on page 3, a Baptist professor on the Family Research Council website seeks to persuade his readers that “Premarital sex ... is illegitimate since it violates the exclusive claims of one’s future spouse.” While some individuals--apprehensive that a past sex life might scare away potential mates--may elect to remain virginal, their choice has no bearing upon the appropriateness of physical intimacy for others (i.e., most people); see “What’s Your Number [of Lifetime Sex Partners]?”-*Wall Street Journal*, May 5, 2015, page D1. Also, the professor inexplicably fails to consider social benefits of remarriage among nonvirgin widow(er)s.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For example, Massachusetts Historical Society papers issued June 1891 identify (at page 494) instances of perceived sin occurring at the particularly culpable Groton congregation: “[D]uring the fourteen years between 1761 and 1775, no less than sixty-six [persons] confessed to fornication before marriage.” Imagine that! (Such deed often occurred in early times because friends would “bundle” in bed together to share warmth when heating fuel was in short supply.)

<sup>7</sup> Southern Baptists--seen as proponents of fundamentalism--introduced in the 1990s so-called virginity pledges, wherein adolescents vow to abstain from sex until they wed (which portends that pledgers not marrying before well into their adulthood will, for many years, be limited in the fulfillment they can realize from interim relationships pursued). But while responsible people might well wish to dissuade emotionally immature juveniles from engaging in genital contact, we should be aware that the Baptists’ virginity pledge experiment has largely failed. That is to say, the great majority (88 percent) of pledgers eventually decide to reject fundamentalist teachings and have premarital vaginal sex, according to a Columbia University study reported on page 5B of the *San Antonio Express-News* for January 21, 2005.

Another thing that should trouble the Baptists is an article in the January 2001 issue of *American Journal of Sociology*, at pages 859-912, which notes it is not uncommon for pledgers still in high school to marry hastily--and, unfortunately, often to an ill-suited partner--in desperate efforts to keep their pledges. Compounding that dilemma, financial responsibilities suddenly thrust upon these young newlyweds may pressure some to abandon school and enter the job market prematurely. Moreover, persons who break such pledges often act on impulse and are, accordingly, less apt than nonpledgers to have arranged for needed contraception.

An old ascetic Jewish sect surviving into the Common Era--the monastic-minded Essenes--expressed disapproving attitudes toward sex. According to volume V, pages 163-168, of *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (Macmillan, New York, 1987), chroniclers of the period (notably Josephus, Philo, and Pliny the Elder) plus the recently discovered Qumran--or Dead Sea--scrolls, reported that single and married Essenes (the latter after their procreating years) were drawn to celibacy as an integral facet of that sect's austere lifestyle. Few persons nowadays would adopt the philosophy observed by these simple folk who shunned, among other things, the kinds of commercial transactions comprising a basic (and crucial) cornerstone of our modern economy. Indeed, there is no manifest reason for 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians to bind themselves to Essene theology.

*There follow accounts of a number of antisex expressions set forth by medical professionals having connections with organized religion.*

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Swiss neurologist and Vatican advisor [!] Samuel Tissot speculated that manual stimulation of one's sex organs presages insanity, according to a 1994 article in volume 20 of the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*. Notwithstanding that subsequent research discredited such conjecture, Tissot's influence with church authorities regrettably "furnished a pseudoscientific basis for the traditional hostility toward sexual pleasure." (page 179) A like-thinking contemporary of his who similarly contributed to the fundamentalists' antisex frenzy--British gynecologist Isaac Baker Brown--fancied that masturbatory excitation of the clitoris could trigger epilepsy.

Sundry websites disclose that in the 1890s, Battle Creek (Michigan) Sanitarium physician Dr. John Harvey Kellogg--a church activist who often discoursed approvingly on sexual abstinence--sought to curb solo-gratification in adolescents under his care by fiendishly smearing carbolic acid on girls' clitorises and embedding wire in boys' penises. Another doctor practicing during his era made patients sleep with hands tied to a neck collar and feet lashed to bed footboard; moreover, the Chicago-based Orificial Surgery Society's response to female "self-abuse" in those days was clitoridectomy (at least until its member physicians' licenses were revoked).<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Harold Shryock--graduate of the College of Medical Evangelists (in California) and 20<sup>th</sup> century educator--is known for his pet hypothesis (in *On Becoming a Woman*, Review & Herald Publishing, Hagerstown, 1951) that, "The practice of masturbation lowers a young woman's regard for her reproductive organs. It causes her to think of them only as a means of physical gratification.... It tends to rob a young woman of her incentive for accomplishment. She loses interest in worthwhile enterprises largely because her supply of nervous energy has been depleted [and] she feels constantly let down and fatigued. She adopts an attitude of stupidity simply because she cannot muster sufficient energy to stay alert. Study no longer appeals to her. Thus, her mental development lags." Wow!

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<sup>8</sup> In 1906, a dietary treatment business started by Dr. Kellogg morphed into the Kellogg food company we know today. Do the disquieting Kellogg sanitarium practices--indelibly linked to the Kellogg commercial brand--spoil your appetite at the dining table?

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The experience of Christians in Great Britain can be helpful to us in thinking through these issues. According to *Time* magazine for October 28, 1966, at page 44, the British Council of Churches--disconcerted that common folk were routinely challenging, as lacking in justification, theological condemnation of unwed sex--appointed a committee of 13 clergy to prepare a statement reinforcing the historic ban. However, the committee balked, finding intercourse not inappropriate at all within a "total encounter."

Three years after the British incident, U.S. psychiatrist David R. Reuben, in his book *Everything You Wanted to Know About Sex--But Were Afraid to Ask* (McKay, New York, 1969), explored constraints on sex (affecting marrieds and unmarrieds alike) extant on this side of the Atlantic. On page 312, Dr. Reuben quoted a female patient of advanced age who had recently perused--for the first time in her life--a sexuality guide that opened a meaningful vista to the rewards (previously unimaginable to her) of fondling her husband's penis: "I was always taught [by her fundamentalist church-going mother?] that no decent woman did that kind of thing.... [But now, I'm also] thinking of trying some of the other [stimulative techniques] I read about in that book." Better late than never, I suppose.

Fundamentalists may react negatively to women touching male sex organs, as did Dr. Reuben's patient until she educated herself, because of startling language in Deuteronomy 25:11-12. Such passage refers to severing a hand of the woman alluded to therein as punishment for having--in seeking to protect her husband from a man fiercely assaulting him--grasped and jerked the assailant's "private parts." (NIV)

Recognizing that much O.T. content suffers distortion arising from countless generations of oral storytelling before being reduced to writing, a possible explanation for this biblical account is that--apart from the obviously salutary effort undertaken in behalf of her imperiled husband, God's condemnation of which being inconceivable to most of us--the woman did commit some infraction (subsequently lost to history) which justified a measure of discipline. But ordinary females such as Dr. Reuben's patient who stroke a male's sex organs to provide mutual pleasure can hardly be deemed as engaging in reproachful conduct.

However, regardless of what the O.T. woman's deed might have been, research by Dr. Jerome T. Walsh reveals that severing a hand is probably not what the Israelite elders really decreed for her. Writing in the Spring 2004 issue of the *Journal of Semitic Studies*, he postulates (at page 56) that it was likely much less drastic, i.e., merely a shaving of the hair encircling her vulva.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Our society likely finds such disciplinary technique puzzling, though, because many modern women--desiring sleek external genitals--routinely shave their own pubic hair. See an in-depth article on this subject in the *New York Times* for September 1, 2005, at page E3.

Perhaps an explanation of the shaving penalty is that biblical-era females sported a patch

Anyhow, nonfundamentalists see nothing improper about women lovingly caressing and savoring a man's body. Evidence of this comes from the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation website, which discloses that for males in their upper teens--i.e., at the threshold of adult-level sexual intimacy--more than half (53 percent) have already "been masturbated by a female."

Moreover, it is highly significant (and dispositive) that *NIV*--which is not timid in pressing on its readers myriad morality lessons the editors discern from Scripture--omits commentary on the Deuteronomy passage cited above. *NIV* evidently is not convinced that this 3,500-year-old directive applies to the world of today.

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A study aid used in U.S. Episcopal church-school education to shape the spirituality of adolescents verging on adulthood (viz., the Confirmation manual authored by Lambert and Fender and published by Morehouse-Gorham Company) says nothing whatsoever about the significant role sexuality commonly plays in human interaction. Its absence indicates that these writers do not regard the subject, albeit important to cultivating young peoples' social consciousness, as germane to a religious curriculum.

But the omission of sexual references from such source need not surprise us. Rachel Moss explains on page 62 of her book *God's Yes to Sexuality* (Collins/Fount, London, 1981) that, "Neither the Old nor the New Testament can be treated as a code book of timeless truths which can be isolated from the situations in which they were uttered.... The Bible does not present a united front with reference to sexual ethics, because it was written from and to different communities, whose circumstances and needs were far from identical. It therefore represents not one tradition but a number of traditions, whose very diversity is evidence that they were living and changing."

*Based upon all the foregoing, it seems compelling that reasonable people--including committed believers--who consider the subject matter addressed in this section can scarcely not conclude that the fundamentalists' sex ideas, lacking foundational support, are plainly unrealistic.*

## 2. Biblical Marriage and Sex

Describing King Xerxes's acquisition of a wife in Esther 2:3-4 & 17, *NIV* annotations say "young virgins were taken from their homes [to a] harem. Their sole purpose was to serve the king and to await his call for sexual pleasure.... Esther's presence and beauty pleased the king enough that he crowned her queen...." Whether her eagerness to ingratiate herself arose from beguiling

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of hair down there, so taking it away from them as a form of punishment caused embarrassment when friends noticed it missing; or, alternatively, maybe the intent was that they would suffer discomfort from potential itching as the hair grew back (at least, women have told me that's what can happen). Do you have any better ideas?

coquetry or out of genuine emotion, she seems to have played her cards right, so to speak.

Direct reference to alluring attributes of wives' bodies appears in Proverbs 5:19: “[M]ay her breasts satisfy you always....” (NIV)

As expressed symbolically in Ezekiel 16:7-8, relative to the reported covenant between the Lord God--or Yahweh--and the people of Jerusalem, the girl child portrayed in this passage matured and was ready for a husband: “And when you reached the age of maidenhood, your breasts were full-formed and your pubic hair had grown ... you were old enough for marriage.” (*Living Bible*)

Paul declared (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7, verses 3-4) that the body of both husband and wife must be freely offered to the other for the physical delight of sexual union; in effect, each has a claim on the other's sex organs. Nonetheless--while recognizing enamored attraction (verse 9)--he discouraged new marriages (verses 1, 8, 26 & 27). He believed--wrongly, as we now know--our Lord's return (the Parousia) was imminent (verse 29); thus, entering into permanent domestic relationships, which by their nature require tending to long-range needs of a spouse, seemed pointless as well as an impediment to the performance of ongoing religious obligations (verses 32-35). Paul also conjectured that a widow--who he implies has already satisfied her carnal cravings and, accordingly, perceives no further need for relief from sexual frustration--will be happier if she does not remarry (verse 40). [He didn't say whether women of his day agreed. Do you?]

In Ephesians 5:22-24, Paul directs wives to dutifully submit to their husbands.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> In *Human Sexuality*--edited by Edward A. Powers (United Church Press, New York & Philadelphia, 1977)--pages 35-36 reveal that, “When woman does appear in the legal codes [of Israel], she has the role of a dependent and normally an inferior.... Her sexuality was the exclusive *property* [emphasis supplied] of the male [and her infidelity] merited the death penalty.... The husband's sexual infidelity was not ranked as a crime [and divorce] was an exclusively male prerogative.”

Moreover, author Stephen Sapp (identified hereinbefore) notes that, “[T]he woman was, in a fundamental sense, the *property* [emphasis supplied] of her husband.... Coitus with another man, therefore, was fundamentally an affront to the husband's exclusive possession of his wife.... This ‘chattel motif’ naturally led to a double standard, by which the wife could sin only against her own marriage, whereas the husband could not sin against his marriage but only against that of another man.”

In the O.T., “adultery” refers to a man's infringement upon another man's marital property right; accordingly, the spouse-coveting sanction in the Tenth Commandment (Exodus 20:17 & Deuteronomy 5:21) forestalls men from expropriating other men's wives. Matthew 5:28 (N.T.) broadens the scope of adultery to cover a person who looks “lustfully” at *any* woman while plotting for sex, e.g., (1) a man who looks at an unmarried woman and then proceeds to engage her in raw, unembellished intercourse, or (2) a woman who looks at another woman while

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:7 reveals an intrinsic difference between husbands and wives, viz., the latter are presumed “weaker” than the former. And not only that, Leviticus 27:3-7 divulges exactly how much more value Bible-based religion accords males vis-a-vis females. Consider infants, where males are worth five shekels, but females only three; for persons over 60 years of age, the male/female ratio in shekels is 15:10; such dissimilarities apply in other age brackets, too. (Hey, don’t accuse me of degrading women. I’m just telling you what our Bible says.)

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Historically, a virginal bride (like most property in so-called “mint condition”) was treasured over one previously penetrated by another man. However--except among fundamentalists--the notion of bridal virginity has lost favor, as we learn from psychologist and therapist Eleanor Hamilton, Ph.D., who is quoted on page A15 of the *San Francisco Chronicle* for February 24, 1980: “Virginity is about as useful as your appendix. It used to be that a man wanted his wife to be a virgin when they married. These days, I don’t know of any young man who would marry one.... Sexuality is a primary function--put it on the shelf ... and you have an 80 percent chance of disfunction.”

To establish whether a bride came to the marriage bed intact, Deuteronomy 22:13-17 set forth a chasteness test by which fabric discolored by blood seeping from a torn hymen at initial intercourse with her husband suggests prior virginity.<sup>11</sup> Although application of this test to a menstruating bride would be inconclusive because of uncertainty as to the blood source, dicta set forth in Leviticus 15:24, 18:19, & 20:18 and Ezekiel 22:10--inhibiting intercourse during menstruation--promote deferral of vaginal entry until the flow has dissipated. Consonant with these biblical provisions, fundamentalist clergy today may be expected to admonish husbands to confine their sexual passion at such time to caressing and kissing their wives’ clitoris and labia, while waiting for her vagina to clear itself.

Polygamy was widely embraced in biblical society. Indeed, *NIV* annotations tell us “many great Old Testament leaders such as Abraham, Jacob, and David had more than one wife” and that some men maintained concubines for supplemental or transitory sex. Additionally, in her book *Sex Texts from the Bible* (Skylight, Woodstock, 2007), Professor Teresa J. Hornsby notes on page 46 that, “The author of Judges accepts polygamy as a normal way of life for Gideon.” Moreover, men of lesser stature were polygamous too; see 1st Samuel 1:2. Criticism aimed at Solomon in 1 Kings 11:3-6 for his having accumulated 700 wives was predicated not upon that high number, but rather, their non-Israelite origins. Anyhow, by insisting--in furtherance of their antihomosexual tactics--that marital unions in the biblical tradition can consist only of one man and one woman, fundamentalists

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hinting of potential friendship, whereas primarily she is seeking the latter’s body to satisfy her desire for fleshly delight. [Lust per dictionary: uncontrolled sensuous appetite.]

<sup>11</sup> In his book *Sex and the Bible* (Prometheus, Buffalo, 1983), Professor Gerald Larue reminds us on page 73 that in our modern world, “The unbroken hymen can no longer be accepted as proof of virginity [i.e.] hymens can be stretched and torn [by] insertion of tampons.”

inexplicably overlook our polygamist ancestry.

Under the O.T. law of levirate (explained in Deuteronomy 25:5-10), the brother of a husband who dies without a male heir is obligated to copulate with--and impregnate--the widow. That this is serious business can be seen from noting that Onan's defiance of such edict (by prematurely withdrawing from his sister-in-law Tamar and ejaculating outside of her body) resulted in his being put to death therefor (see Genesis 38:8-10). Today's fundamentalists may wish that they could somehow perpetuate this widow-impregnation directive.

### 3. Sexual Terminology in the Bible

In correspondence to his Christian brethren--as recorded in Galatians 5:19--Paul addressed their assertedly sinful behavior relative to acts of sexual engagement. The 1611 *KJV* identifies four such categories (adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness) while modern *NIV* translators itemize three (sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery). We have already mentioned fornication and adultery, so let us now analyze the other above-listed words.

“Debauchery” and “lasciviousness” refer to sexual relations essentially callous or insensitive, and hence, unacceptable. (In clarification, no woman who enthusiastically engages in sex play--vaginally or otherwise--would complain that she has been debauched by a lascivious man.)

The word “impurity” brings to mind one of Jesus's teachings from the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew 5:8, viz., “Blessed are the pure in heart....” This passage obliges us to strive for mutual harmony; see 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:22 for amplification. In the context of the subject matter here, maintaining purity requires each participant in a sex act to satisfy his/her partner's rightful expectations of physical and emotional fulfillment.

The term “sexual immorality” is broad enough to embrace acts perceived by virtually everybody as sordid, e.g., pedophilia, coercive exploitation, and incest. Relative to the latter, we can ponder how Adam & Eve and their offspring could have produced a line of descendants in the absence of at least a modicum of incest; an intriguing mystery, stemming from Genesis 4:17, is who might have been the parents of son Cain's wife. While an early form of sex--characterized by idol worship and portrayed in Scripture as “prostitution”--is not seen to be prevalent in our time, annotations in *The Interpreter's Bible* (volume 10, page 64) explain the concept as “intercourse with [pagan] priestesses....” Do you suppose the latter activity might have differed from our 21<sup>st</sup> century-style coupling? Anyhow, beside the 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians passage referred to on page 4, accounts of sex involving pagan idols appear in Numbers 25:1-3, Ezekiel 23:5-7, Hosea 4:10-12, and Micah 1:7.

Regarding “uncleanness,” Leviticus 15:18&24 posit that leakage or spillage of sex fluids is repugnant and unholy. Thus, picture a couple sleeping with their legs entwined, allowing the woman's menstrual drippings to ooze onto the man's body. Or--incidental to intercourse--his semen spurts across her breasts, belly, or buttocks. This O.T. chapter instructs couples to cleanse their skin

and any bed, chair, rug, etc., they may have soiled. However, whereas *KJV* embodies uncleanness in Paul's N.T. Galatians letter, examination of the *NIV* translation gives no indication that he employed the Greek equivalent of this word. Its absence may mean that modern followers of the Lord who randomly release sex fluids are not obliged to tender two doves or pigeons to a priest for sacrifice, as Leviticus 15:14&29 bid they do. Nevertheless, it would not be unrealistic for us to speculate that fundamentalist clergy expect compliance with such commands.

#### 4. Conclusion

Among findings in Sections 1 through 3: (1) erroneous inclusion of "fornication" in the *KJV* translation, (2) unwarranted endorsement of certain ancient religious theories, and (2) faulty interpretation of a number of Bible passages.

We also pointed up the fundamentalists' ongoing preoccupation with sex. Significantly in such regard, Episcopalian layman Bruce Bawer relates on page 212 of his book *Stealing Jesus: How Fundamentalists Betray Christianity* (Three Rivers, New York, 1997), that when fundamentalist preachers address male-female interaction, "they almost invariably focus on sexual acts."

A conspicuous example of this is the fundamentalists' proclivity to seeking imposition of restrictions on the rest of us by lobbying legislators to enact or retain criminal statutes designed to thwart certain everyday sex practices. Consider, for instance, Virginia's so-called Sodomy Law (Title 18.2, §361A) which prescribes up to five years in prison or a \$2,500 fine for anybody whose amorous frolicking goes beyond vaginal intercourse. Virginia fundamentalists love this statute and vigorously oppose periodic efforts to repeal it, as seen in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* for January 14, 2004, at page B3. But continuing such effort would be a waste of their time, because on March 12, 2013, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit invalidated it on constitutional grounds (see *MacDonald v. Moose*, 710 F.3d 154).

As disclosed in *The Washington Post* for November 14, 2010, at page G5, American nurses employing a synthetic fabric during World War I to bandage wounded soldiers discovered that the material was superior to common rags for absorbing vaginal blood when they menstruated. Learning of this discovery, the bandage manufacturer decided after the war to convert its factory to producing sanitary-napkins. However, the company's marketing plan was stymied when a leading magazine of that era (*Ladies Home Journal*) declined to print its advertising because of fundamentalist opposition to writing about the vagina; the fear was that doing so might induce women to contemplate the joy of sexual intercourse, which--according to a standard proposition then circulating through society--was thought more than a bit indecent for all ladies, married or single.

Additional trouble attributable to fundamentalism is seen on page A6 of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* for June 16, 2003. Thus, specimens of the titan arum flowering plant, noted for its eight foot-long fleshy spike, were brought from their native Sumatra to the West in mid-20th century for display in botanical gardens. However, because their Latin name--*amorphophallus titanum*--

translates into English as “big, shapeless male organ,” women caught salivating over them were subject to reprimand.

Lastly, Tamara Kreinin--president of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States--stated on pages 6-7 of her organization’s 2002 Annual Report that, “The momentum [the religious right] have gained has presented advocates of comprehensive sexuality education and reproductive rights with significant political, social, and economic obstacles. Today’s conservative political configuration encourages ideology to trample over sound public health policy and scientific research.”

## B. The Bible and Body Perception

### 1. Fundamentalist Views

*A phenomenon frequently associated with fundamentalists is their obsession--for which they claim to find support in Scripture--with coercing others to keep their bodies mostly covered, most of the time. They vehemently object to persons pursuing (albeit discreetly) recreational activities that do not inherently require protective body covering, and they automatically cringe upon beholding undraped human images in the world of art. Following below is a sampling of fundamentalist tactics revealing their singular mind-set in this regard.*

(a) While canvassing residents near his church in East Moss Point, Mississippi, a Baptist preacher--ignoring a “No Trespassing” sign--unfastened the gate protecting a wooded property and proceeded to a clearing where he encountered the owner and his young son, together with his wife and an unidentified man who were relaxing nude. The preacher thereafter filed a criminal complaint against the woman, alleging she had wilfully and lewdly displayed her naked body (albeit she had donned a brassiere, blouse, and shorts before greeting him). Although a county court fined her \$50 and imposed a 20-day jail sentence (suspended), the state supreme court unanimously reversed the conviction because the requirements specified by the cited statute (i.e., the nudity must be intended to offend in a public place) were not met. You may read the full report of this outrageous prosecution in any reputable law library at *Pendergrass v. State*, 193 So.2d 126 (1966).

(b) *The Washington Post* of October 12, 1982, observed at page B5 that the preacher at a College Park, Maryland, independent church had urged the town council to reject a business’s proposal to open a spa site. He complained that a photograph taken in another spa operated by the same owners showed “four people who seemed to be without clothes,” and that features customarily found in spas (padded deck, dimmed lights, piped-in music) “promote lust and sexual immorality.” He failed, and the spa opened as planned.

(c) Proclaiming ominously that “Anything with nudity offends me,” a Baptist minister intimidated the Stamps, Arkansas, council into banning--for the entire city population--rentals of numerous R-rated films, according to page 13 of the *Houston Chronicle* for April 12, 1985.

(d) After the *Kansas City Times* published a December 12, 1986, front-page story on that city’s prestigious Nelson-Atkins museum having acquired for \$2.5 million a prized painting of Persephone (famous maiden in Greek mythology), a Baptist pastor complained in a letter to the newspaper’s editor that he was “shocked” by her nudity, visible in the accompanying photograph.

(e) The *Austin American-Statesman* for March 21, 1993, reported on page 10 that “Baylor University regents, bowing to Baptist pressure ... voted unanimously Friday not to add a nude figure drawing class to the art curriculum.” A university spokesman sheepishly acknowledged, “We have clearly heard the voices of Texas Baptists.”

(f) According to page G6 of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* for May 14, 1995, notwithstanding an individual’s assertion that he and his friends “drive to the road’s end and walk several hundred yards” to an isolated beach where they can sunbathe unencumbered by swim attire without likelihood of being observed, a Baptist pastor in Mims, Florida--who had heard about such activity--protested that the group was violating “a public ethic of moral decency....”

(g) As noted on page 3A of the *Madison Capital Times* for December 30, 1999, a pastor and his followers (Wisconsin Christians United)--imagining some parallel between bare skin and evil acts said to have occurred in the O.T. communities of Sodom and Gomorrah--had during the previous summer unlawfully blocked public access to the state’s Mazomanie riverfront park as a protest against visitors using its beach nude. Such custom, going back a half-century, is known to local government authorities. Although the pastor was fined \$150 for his criminal deed, the group didn’t give up, as seen in an August 7, 2001, account of members circling, and shouting taunts at, a sunbathing woman. Responding to a subsequent legislative proposal to curb bare bodies in the park (gaining only limited support and opposed by local supervisors), the Madison newspaper editorialized on November 15, 2003, in favor of allowing nudity: “[T]he supervisors have it right. Leave the beach alone.”

(h) As shown on page 243 of Michael Sims’s book *Adam’s Navel* (Viking, New York, 2003), the *Los Angeles Times* had reported that government space officials planned to affix a drawing of a nude human couple to an intergalactic rocket for the enlightenment of alien creatures encountering it and wondering what we earthlings look like. Notwithstanding that the drawing omitted--as a sop to fundamentalist squeamishness--the “vertical slit” (Mr. Sims’s words) between the female’s labia, a

reader wrote to the newspaper declaring he deplored “spread[ing] this filth beyond our solar system.” Many of us, however, don’t think of God’s handiwork as “filth.”

(i) According to the May 2008 issue of *Texas Monthly* magazine--in a scathing article titled “Faith, Hope, and Chastity”--that state’s conservative Board of Education directed a school textbook publisher to delete “the clitoris from a drawing of female anatomy....” As educated people know, the function of this organ is to provide pleasure through stimulation either by its owner or by others. The board may be surmising that without a drawing to guide them, adolescents won’t learn of its existence; that girls can hardly not be aware of the clitoris when washing their adjacent folds and crevices may never have occurred to these politicians. Incidentally, Texas is one of the “Bible-belt” states (along with Louisiana and Alabama) that have illegalized the sale of vibrators for the purpose of solo-gratification; thus, women traveling down there must bring along their own toys.

*So, how should we assess the foregoing? In his well-researched, 208-page book Nakedness and the Bible (\$22.95--includes shipping--from Amity Marketing, Box 1978; Ferndale, Washington 98248), Paul M. Bowman convincingly shows that fundamentalist proponents of a simplistic “anti-nudity theology” (as he appropriately describes it) misunderstand a number of O.T. and N.T. accounts. A highly favorable review by the senior cleric of an Anaheim, California, church applauds Mr. Bowman’s text as constituting “his ‘magnum opus!’ [Relevant scriptural passages therein are examined] with the patience and skill of a neurosurgeon.... This is a must read for every Christian.” I believe my independent analysis of a sampling of these passages is harmonious with the sound explanations presented in his fine book.*

(a) To go about unattired was the custom for Adam & Eve in the tranquility of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:25). But after disobeying God’s instruction to refrain from consuming certain fruit, they feared punishment and endeavored to hide by cloaking their bare bodies in fig-leaf adornment, designed to blend with the greenery of the garden and thereby shield themselves from God’s wrath; nevertheless, God routed them out and expelled them (Genesis 3:1-24). By failing to comprehend that nowhere in the cited text is it stated that God ever expected the pair to eschew nakedness (i.e., they covered up solely on their own initiative), fundamentalists assume divine will mandates that humans restrict what others see of their bodies; actually, Scripture imparts no such message.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> A 1993 article in the *Duke Law Journal* (volume 43, page 113) mentions this biblical pair in a discussion of criminal convictions of women prosecuted in a Rochester, New York, court for going topless at a local public beach (while sunbathing-playing volleyball-picnicking) in purported contravention of a statute outlawing exposure of “private or intimate” body parts, specifically defined to include female breast tissue below the tops of the areolae. The trial judge grounded his decision (in *People v. David*, 549 N.Y.S.2d 564) on a supposition that the statute’s clothing requirements are justified by the Eden cover-up narrative, which--to quote him--converts the women’s partial disrobing into a “catalyst for shame, and for immoral behavior.” [Continued]

(b) God did outfit the banished duo with body cover (Genesis 3:21), not for the purpose of maintaining a level of propriety--as fundamentalists assert--but to shield them from thorns and thistles outside the garden. Such theme is consistent with the subsequent O.T. and N.T. text that also mentions covering one's person to protect against a harsh environment, while not giving any hint that prudery should dictate concealment of body parts: Compare Job 24:7 (referring to a need for cold-weather garb), Job 31:19-20 (describing the warming properties of sheep fleece), and James 2:15-16 (pertaining to apparel designed for warmth).

(c) Fundamentalists misinterpret--as a command for body coverage--the narrative of Noah's sons Shem and Japheth tiptoeing backward toward their sleeping father as he lay with his genitalia exposed (Genesis 9:20-23). But it is apparent from verses 24-25 that the sons' reason for averting their eyes had nothing to do with any shame of nakedness; rather, their motivation was triggered by Canaan (a grandson through a third son, Ham) having committed a heinous act against the body of their father while the latter was intoxicated and helpless (though not specified in Scripture, such act is deemed by Talmudic authority--see page 128 of Ibn Ezra's *Commentary on the Pentateuch* [Menorah, New York, 1988]--to likely have been incestuous sodomy or castration).

(d) Fundamentalists wrongfully infer an antinudity message in the story of King David's recovery of the stolen ark of the covenant and his subsequent return to Israel, where he cast aside his traveling clothes prior to summoning the community to celebrate (2nd Samuel 6:20); one of his wives--Michal--berated him for appearing naked before the crowd. However, the text makes clear that Michal's concern was confined simply to slave girls seeing him without royal regalia; significantly, she expressed no problem with the presence of unenslaved women or men, thus establishing that his nakedness, by itself, was not an issue.

(e) In citing 1 Timothy 2:9 in an attempt to support their contention that women must not publicly expose more than a modicum of skin, fundamentalists focus upon the first part of such passage (wherein Paul exhorts females to attire themselves in modest dress), while disregarding the last part (modest, to Paul, meant simply not accessorizing their ensembles with opulent gold or pearl, or braiding their hair in an ostentatious manner). Indeed, nothing in the passage indicates that Paul's motivation--predicated upon valuing women's natural selves over gaudy adornments and fancy coiffures--has anything to do with measuring the extent to which the epidermis is covered.

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However, an appellate court voided the convictions [see 585 N.Y.S.2d 149] because (1) the intrinsically similar external breast structure on males and females [i.e., individuals of each sex possess two globular chest protuberances--breasts--complete with nipples] renders the statute's gender differentiation violative of constitutional equal protection clauses, and (2) societal outlook is seen as having advanced beyond a cultural psychology stressing female-centered eroticism, to a natural physiology incorporating inherent commonality of the two sexes. Accordingly, these factors negate the old notion that a woman's breast constitutes a unique "private or intimate" (the key statutory words, as shown above) body part.

Back in Subpart A, we discussed the antisex Essenes. Well, according to academician Jonathan Z. Smith--writing in the Winter 1966 issue of the journal *History of Religions*--that same group compelled men and women patronizing public baths to drape their groin zones with loincloths. (Do you suppose the latter might have been blue or pink, determined by the respective gender?)<sup>13</sup>

Further, 3<sup>rd</sup> century Bishop Cyprian--behaving in an authoritarian and dictatorial manner--is recorded as cavalierly ordering the church's highly pious consecrated virgins to cease bathing in mixed-sex settings, despite their protests that "since they did not feel shame, nor did they look immodestly at anyone, they saw no problem" with communal nudity, as we learn on page 28 of Dean Margaret R. Miles's *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Beacon, Boston, 1989). Moreover, devout church nuns bathed naked in public--nonchalant about the presence of men--until this overbearing bishop unaccountably ordered them to stop, according to page 325 of Professor John M. Rist's *Augustine* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

An article by Professor Susan Broomhall on 16<sup>th</sup> century French author and member of religious orders [!] François Rabelais (appearing in Australian journal *Lumina*-1998, volume 4) tells how he and some contemporaries--unnerved by, and wary of, the power inherent in the female pudendum--helped shape the fundamentalist agenda. Thus, Rabelais is famously known for anxiously exclaiming, "The devil took flight when a woman showed him her vulva." Related concerns from that period: "Physicians considered that the uterus avidly sucked the energy of men, which was demonstrated after the sexual act by the flaccid state of the penis." And, "The vagina always resembles a horrible, unnatural and monstrous entity." Maybe there is a smidgen of truth regarding the uterus, but nonfundamentalists think such portrayal of the vagina is preposterous.<sup>14</sup>

*In summation, we have addressed a selection of faulty scriptural and other interpretations upon which fundamentalists rely in endeavoring to rationalize their antagonistic stance toward beach aficionados who disrobe in secluded locations to enjoy surf and sand, and devotees of the arts who seek to fully replicate the splendor of the human figure. Notably, in his book The Good Life (Harper, San Francisco, 2002), religious educator Peter J. Gomes asserts on page 135 that, "God*

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<sup>13</sup> The cited *History of Religions* article reveals that church baptismal procedures once called for candidates to get naked as a symbol of innocence. When a particularly stunning Persian lady stripped for the Christian monk Conon, only a vision of John the Baptist making a sign of the cross above the monk's genitals (i.e., virtual castration) prevented her unleashed pheromones and proximity of her bare flesh from inducing an erection in him.

<sup>14</sup> To be sure, not everyone in those days looked with disdain upon exposed female bodies. As one example, the renowned artist François Clouet painted a nude in her bathtub, identified as French noblewoman Diane de Poitiers; the work hangs prominently today in the National Gallery of Art, Washington. [Do you know--as shown in *The Wall Street Journal* for June 10, 2016, page D6--that "...the Catholic Church declared the painting of nudes a 'mortal sin'"?] Further on Diane, according to a Drexel University online article (year 2012), "... French King Henry II had his wine cups fashioned on her 'apple-like breasts.'"

*is not put off by the nudity of his creatures....*<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Examining the Merits of an Alternate Approach

*Respected sources, identified below, guide us to a resolution of the question at hand.*

(a) Dr. Seward Hiltner, professor of pastoral theology at the University of Chicago's Federated Theological Seminary and visiting professor at the Menninger School of Psychiatry, observes on page 23 of his book *Sex and the Christian Life* (Association, New York, 1957) that, "[R]elatively well-educated people usually seem indifferent about having their children glimpse them in the nude...." He regards as positive such an approach casually practiced within a family household.

(b) In his book *Sex in Christianity and Psychology* (Oxford, New York, 1955), Professor William Graham Cole notes with favor at page 295: "Pre-school boys and girls accompany one another to the toilet and continue conversation with complete nonchalance while they evacuate bowel and bladder. Children raised in such an atmosphere seldom reveal any morbid curiosity about the anatomy of the opposite sex, or any shame about their own bodies."<sup>16</sup>

(c) On page 72 of the January 1982 issue of *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality*, Stuart M. Finch, M.D.--psychiatry lecturer at the University of Arizona's College of Medicine--responded to a reader querying whether it is socially or culturally acceptable (i.e., okay) for adolescent girls to behold penises and testicles which they may happen upon by chance from time to time. Dr. Finch assures us that, "Observation of anatomic differences should be part of the learning experience and should not be associated with guilt or secrecy."

(d) Alarminglly, researcher Marie-Louise Booth found that "individuals with less childhood exposure to parental nudity experienced significantly higher levels of adult sexual anxiety...." See *Dissertation Abstracts International*, volume 53, number 11-B (May 1993), 6055.

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<sup>15</sup> Let us do acknowledge the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Adamites, who glorified the body through liturgical worship in the nude until their theology was subsumed into Martin Luther's emerging movement. (They should not be confused with the religious Doukhobors, who immigrated by the thousands into western Canada at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and became known for piously expressing pacifist ideas through public nudity.)

<sup>16</sup> To demonstrate that this concept is not simply a manifestation of academic theorizing, consider the upbeat feature article in *The Washington Post* for August 2, 1983, highlighting students attending area colleges. Describing (at page B4) the relaxed atmosphere prevailing in her family home, Cara Lee Macdonald--a 20-year-old pre-law major at the University of Virginia--forthrightly told the reporter her father and two brothers "see me naked all the time. I sleep without anything on and when going to the bathroom, I never bother to put on a robe." She also says her mother, a former model, is nonjudgmental about innocuous nudity.

(e) Relevant here is the modern downplaying of early psychiatrist Sigmund Freud's determinations on "penis envy" in young girls, who he suggested could feel slighted for lacking their brothers' cute dangling appendages. Professor David G. Myers asserts on page 417 of his text *Psychology* (Worth, New York, 1986) that old conceptions presuming females "have weak superegos and suffer penis envy are now discounted." Indeed, no woman has ever told me she experienced childhood penis envy.

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We further learn from a research article in *Cosmopolitan* magazine, beginning at page 203 of its June 2001 issue, that students of both genders are attending campus parties where nudity--albeit not sexual contact--prevails. It names Brown and Yale universities, though there are others as well. The students look upon intermingled bare flesh as a means of accomplishing a long-overdue de-mystification of external genitalia.

A number of students attending the college gatherings proudly told the magazine they find them a beneficial catalyst for their emotional growth. One woman enthusiastically said the first of many such parties she has attended "was a pivotal point in my acceptance of my body [when] another girl complimented me, and I went home and started looking in the mirror.... I have an athletic build [and] look curvaceous and strong when I'm naked." Describing the impromptu reaction of a different party guest, the article reported "a pretty girl with long blonde hair jumps up and down, her breasts bobbing with her. 'I love this!' she cries to no one in particular." Doubtless, the fundamentalists are appalled.

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There are websites catering to women comfortable with their bodies who desire to place nude photos of themselves on the Internet. An especially noteworthy site ([www.ishotmyself.com](http://www.ishotmyself.com)) describes itself as "a self-portraiture project, where women from around the world submit a series of digital photographs they have shot of themselves naked. The resulting collection of images is a celebration of the diversity of women--physically, artistically, and psychologically.... For some women, contributing to the project is purely a creative endeavor, for others it's a cathartic release of a lifetime of inhibition." Such inhibition most certainly had roots in fundamentalist notions foisted on the unwary during their childhood and adolescence; happily, these women are now liberating themselves. Anybody logging onto the site may view abundant examples merely by clicking "Free Tour." And some of my female readers may find irresistible an urge to take and submit candid photos of their own bodies.

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*As reported in 1994 by the Journal of Sex Research (pages 133-142), 116 Australian female college students were polled relative to their views on full breast exposure by women on the country's public beaches where toplessness is both common and legal. The tables below show the*

percentages of respondents agreeing with various statements, separated between those who have gone topless and those who have not.

	<u>Percent Agreeing</u>	
	<u>Topless</u>	<u>Non-topless</u>
<u>A. Topless Attitude Scale</u>		
1. Women should have the right to go topless	98%	77%
2. Toplessness has nothing to do with sex	71	50
3. Toplessness offers a sense of freedom	82	64
4. Topless women are exhibitionists	11	43
5. Going topless reflects decaying morals	2	27
6. Topless women may arouse males	60	64
7. Going topless confers feelings of liberation	73	66
8. Topless women are more subject to assault	18	45
<u>B. Sexual Attitude Scale</u>		
1. Men should not wear G-strings	19	48
2. Nudity should not be allowed on television	11	30
3. Prostitution should be legal	57	38
4. Intercourse is acceptable in a relationship	96	64
5. Intercourse is acceptable on a first date	45	13
<u>C. Perception that Significant Others Disapprove of Toplessness</u>		
1. Female friend	5	34
2. Male partner	11	54
3. Mother	34	70
4. Father	53	73

[Editor's Comment: Some women--though uninhibited--may elect to go *non-topless* because of large breasts needing bra support to prevent uncomfortable jiggling during beach volleyball games.

A tiny number--two percent--of the women who go *topless* may do so less than wholeheartedly to avoid potential embarrassment if friends were to learn they endorse the fundamentalists' negative attitude toward female nipple exposure (i.e., 100% percent of all topless women minus the 98% in line A1 who maintain they have a right to reveal their breasts = 2% who question such right, but expose theirs anyhow). Presumably, these are the same 2% shown in line A5 who effectively deem as indecent, per se, any open display of bare female breasts.]

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Uninhibited expressiveness on the theatrical stage emerged sometime ago. *Newsweek* noted in its November 13, 1967, issue at page 76 that "[T]he dancers of Ann Halprin's Dancers' Workshop in San Francisco create nude ballets designed to help liberate their emotions and conquer the

audience's fear of the human body....” Further, Lake Erie College (Painesville, Ohio) early on produced three plays calling for nudity, e.g., the popular *Equus* in 1984 starring junior-class student Sarah Tetzloff in a nude role. Also, the *New York Times* reported (October 8, 1998, on page E5) that a New York City Opera performance of *Orfeo ed Euridice* included “one extended scene involving fully nude dancers [portraying] heros and heroines in all their naked splendor....” And--as seen below--such trend continues repeatedly into the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

Presented at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. (a prestigious performance hall having, as honorary trustees, the current and all living former first ladies), the choreograph masterpiece *Vienna Lusthaus* evokes images of pre-World War I Europe. It was rendered with full male and female nudity, deemed effective in integrating the “artistic and intellectual ferment” of the period, with a setting depicting “a dreamy state of mind where reality and fantasy collide.”

---*Washington Post* (January 17, 2003-Weekend section, page 24)

A presentation by the acclaimed Toronto Dance Theatre features nude performers of both sexes. Its director describes the nudity as “both playful and serious.”

---*New York Times* (February 13, 2005-section 2, page 7)

A work designated “Untitled Feminist Show” was staged at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. In a newspaper review, we learn the performers “first walk down the aisles, softly breathing together ... nearly wordless ... yet so much gets said. [The goal is] demolishing gender stereotypes and roles. And, yes, they do it all without a stitch of clothing.”

---*Minneapolis Star-Tribune* (January 7, 2012)

Washington, D.C., performing arts collective member Rachel Manteuffel writes of her “Actor’s Education in Onstage Nudity [for her current romantic play with co-star Matthew Sparacino, who was] a stranger to me until I started wearing only underpants [at rehearsal. For the performance] I didn’t have to show my breasts [conspicuously on center stage, but] felt so safe that one night I ... flashed the audience. [Matthew and I became fully] comfortable with each other’s body.”

---*Washington Post* (October 26, 2014-Sunday Magazine, pages 28-31)

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*For examples of how the concepts discussed in this section touch numerous peoples’s lives, see Part IV herein, items 28-40.*

### C. Historical Record/Future Expectations

*Following below are other matters involving fundamentalist doings.*

Fundamentalist-minded clergy have a bad track record vis-a-vis earthly professionals (i.e., scientists, etc.) in comprehending the nature of God's relationship with this world. Indeed, such clergy in Rome persecuted Galileo--a 17<sup>th</sup> century earthly professional--for affirming Copernicus's hypothesis that (contrary to previous belief) the earth revolves around the sun, not vice versa. But, in recognition that the scientific community has long validated the acumen of these pioneering astronomers, it seems improbable that even the most fervent 21<sup>st</sup> century fundamentalist clergy would publicly endorse the pre-Copernicus mode of thinking.

Moreover, analyzing in the *New York Times* for April 5, 2015 (Sunday Review, page 3) an essentially literalist construction of Scripture--a method pursued by fundamentalists in developing outrageous or otherwise questionable theories in the sexual domain--columnist Frank Bruni reports that such a simplistic approach "prioritizes scattered passages of ancient texts over all that has been learned since-as if time had stood still...."

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Having devoted considerable effort in various past attempts to impose upon others their negative attitudes toward unwed sex and benign clothing-free activity, fundamentalists may decide at some point to redirect their focus elsewhere. So what might they do? Considering the condemnation in Isaiah 3:16 of "ornaments jingling on [women's] ankles" and the prospect in verses 18 & 20 that "the Lord will snatch away their ... ankle chains" (*NIV*), it should not be surprising to see them pursue an anti-ankle chain campaign. Or they might target all of the everyday accouterment that Isaiah denounces in verses 18-23, viz., headbands, necklaces, perfume, purses, shawls, etc. (This prophet likely could not in his wildest imagination have foreseen the introduction of navel rings--those sporty baubles popular with many 21<sup>st</sup> century women and depicted in department store sportswear advertisements as well as appearing in the wholesomely regarded Miss America pageant--which otherwise might well have shown up on his master list of forbidden accessories. And what about nail polish on fingers and toes?)

### D. Summary

*Let us end with what learned clergy and others have to say relative to the fundamentalists' fallacious interpretation of Scripture.*

Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong pointedly notes on pages 3 & 134 of his book *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism* (HarperCollins, New York, 1991) that "Those whose religious security is rooted in a literal Bible do not want that security disturbed. They are not happy when facts challenge their biblical understanding or when nuances in the text are introduced or when they

are forced to deal with either contradictions or changing insights.... Fundamentalism is both an expression of and an assisting cause in the terminal sickness that hangs over religious life today.”

The Rev. Anne McConney confided in the January 2004 issue of *Episcopal Life* monthly at page 19 that, “Fundamentalism has no use for debate and no capacity for dialogue; fundamentalism, by necessity, relies on intimidation.... It is probably the most dangerous movement in our world today. For the danger of fundamentalism is not its narrow world views nor its rulebook belief system nor even its grievous tendency to exclude; its danger lies in its insistence that everyone must be compelled, by law or force if necessary, to hold the ‘beliefs of the true believer.’ It destroys the creative tension of the community and sets in its place a community of drab uniformity, where problems cannot be acknowledged.... Fear is the taproot of fundamentalism....”

Further on this sad theme, Episcopal Bishop John Bryson Chane emphasized on page 2 of his Washington Diocese newsletter for November 2007 (in connection with “current religious and cultural revolutions” at home and abroad) that, “God and our understanding of theology are being challenged by [the “evils” of] religious fundamentalism driven by fear, rather than by faith.... Add to that the [deleterious] impact of the religious right on our government’s domestic and foreign policy, and efforts [by clergy clinging to scriptural “inerrancy” and “myopic fundamentalism”] to deconstruct the Anglican Community and our own Episcopal Church.” All quotes are the bishop’s.

A scary aspect of the fundamentalists’ *modus operandi* is their untoward pressuring of politicians to force a conservative religious platform upon the general society. Indeed, the late Senator Barry Goldwater--though conservative in his economic perspectives--was so alarmed by reactionary church influence creeping into politics that he expressed extreme disillusionment in “his own party as he’s seen it surrender to a fundamentalist Christian Gestapo,” according to *The Arizona Republic* for June 17, 1993, at page A23. And a dozen years later, nothing had changed: Former U.S. Senator and Episcopal priest John Danforth lamented in a *New York Times* op-ed article (March 30, 2005, at page A27) that the same party was continuing to allow its historic political doctrine “to become secondary to the agenda of Christian conservatives.”

Also, investigative journalists provide us with relevant insight. In connection with the famous Scopes “monkey-trial” involving Tennessee’s religion-based prohibition on schools teaching about evolution, columnist H.L. Mencken wrote in the *Baltimore Evening Sun* for September 14, 1925, of “the menace that Fundamentalism offers to civilization.” [Editor’s note: Mencken coined the term “Bible Belt” as a moniker to describe the hotbed of fundamentalist religion found in the South.] Additionally, the *Washington Post* for October 22, 2006, included a piece (page 5 of its Book World section) by acclaimed writer Bryan Burrough, in which he concludes fundamentalism is a harmful “pathogen” and that “the fundamentalists most dangerous to our future are not Islamic and foreign, but Christian and homegrown.”

## **PART II - Writings Exposing the Fallacies of Fundamentalism**

*NOTE: If any readers question the validity of the content of Part I, their doubts should be put to rest by the excerpts below of pertinent writings by 26 learned persons. As can be seen, these individuals are (or were) engaged in a variety of disciplines:*

*7 Seminary faculty  
5 College faculty  
4 Psychiatrists/Psychologists  
3 Bishops or other high church leaders  
3 Lay researchers (includes 2 joint authors)  
2 Church clergy  
1 College chaplain  
1 Federal appellate judge*

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### **A. Religious Educators, Ecclesiastical Authorities**

A1. Dr. Joseph Fletcher; professor of social ethics at Episcopal Theological School:

The Christian churches must shoulder much of the blame for the confusion, ignorance, and unhealthy guilt associations which surround sex in Western culture.... [Jesus] said nothing about birth control, large or small families, childlessness, homosexuality, masturbation, fornication or premarital intercourse, sterilization, artificial insemination, abortion, sex play, petting, or courtship.

---*Situation Ethics*, page 139

A2. Dr. David R. Mace, executive leader in the Society of Friends:

[T]he time has come--and more than come--for the church to reverse its negative and punitive attitudes toward sex, and to take a more positive approach.... If Christianity persists in presenting itself as an antisex religion, it will not get a hearing in this generation.

---*Christian Response to the Sexual Revolution*, page 126

A3. The Rt. Rev. John Shelby Spong, Episcopal Bishop in the Diocese of Newark:

[I]n our generation the rules [of sexual conduct] have become so out of touch with reality that they are simply disregarded.... Does [the] status [of mature single people] require sexual abstinence? I think not.

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[C]ompanionship can be on many levels—from a working relationship or a brief social connection to a deep friendship in which time is invested, life is shared, and intimate moments are spent together. Is sex to be ruled out by the guardians of public morality from all of these relationships, because they each fall short of the solitary standard of marriage? ... There are voices that would say yes.... I would like to propose that no is the proper and only moral answer....

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The prohibitions of the past have been abandoned, not because people are evil “secular modernists” but because life has changed and those prohibitions are simply no longer appropriate. To expend ecclesiastical energy clinging to those prohibitions, to pass resolutions recalling people to those prohibitions, to seek to revivify those prohibitions, will prove an exercise in futility. Finally, such activities will so discredit the church that whatever moral authority it has in other areas of life will be dissipated as well.

---*Living in Sin?*; pages 210, 212, & 217

A4. Drs. Rustom and Della Roy, committee appointees at National Council of Churches:

Christians should immediately desist from putting so much emphasis on the occurrence or nonoccurrence of premarital coitus as such.... Rightness or wrongness has nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with whether or not physical juxtaposition of sex organs has occurred.

---*Honest Sex*, page 87

A5. The Very Rev. Gary R. Hall, Dean-Washington National Cathedral:

For the church to say, ‘No sex before marriage,’ is not realistic.

---Interviewed in *The Washington Post*; August 2, 2013; page C6

A6. Professor William Graham Cole, Williams College (later, president of Lake Forest College):

There can be no quarrel with the secular world [with respect to the latter's acceptance of nonmarital sex]. It is right and the church has been wrong....

----*Sex and Love in the Bible*, page 418

A7. The Rev. Frederic C. Wood, Jr., Episcopal Chaplain at Vassar and Goucher colleges:

[T]he church ... often promulgates attitudes which inhibit health and morality in the sexual sphere.... To make intercourse outside the covenant of marriage easier certainly does not mean to remove the moral challenge [but] might even lead to a more wholesome attitude toward sexuality itself.... And the popular belief that greater social acceptance of sex outside the covenant would lead to sexual license and to disregard of all moral considerations is not demonstrable. From counseling and listening to college students involved in premarital affairs, I see no more evidence of sexual irresponsibility and license than I do among my married peers. Indeed, if anything, I see less.

----*Sex and the New Morality*; pages 34, 120-121

A8. Professor Marvin M. Ellison, Bangor Theological Seminary:

The church's traditional ethic [of confining sex to married partners] denies the rich diversity of sexual experiences and relationships that bear moral substance....

----*Christianity and Crisis*; November 12, 1990-page 352

A9. The Rev. Andrew M. Greeley:

I suspect Catholic historians of the future will describe the church's obsession with sex ... as a chapter in our history comparable to the [lamentable] Inquisition and Crusades.

----From his memoir *Confessions of a Parish Priest*, 1986

A10. Dr. Walter Wink, professor at Auburn Theological Seminary:

No sex act is “ethical” in and of itself, without reference to the rest of a person’s life, the patterns of the culture, the special circumstances faced, and the will of God. What we have are simply sexual morals, which change--sometimes with startling rapidity--creating bewildering dilemmas. Just within one’s lifetime we have witnessed the shift from the ideal of preserving one’s virginity until marriage, to couples living together for several years before getting married. The response of many Christians [this means fundamentalists-editor.] is merely to long for the hypocrisies of an earlier era.

---*Sexuality and the Bible*, page 10

A11. Philo Thelos, clergyman:

The modern Christian church is a self-appointed, worldwide enforcer of a multitude of heavy sexual burdens ... threatening people everywhere with an eternity in Hell if they do not accept and live under these burdens. Millions of people are afraid of sex, confused about sex, and guilty about sex all because of the faulty standards set by an apostate church. Sex has become the unmentionable subject, and a ‘nasty’ practice because of the church’s ignorance.

---*Divine Sex: Liberating Sex From Religious Tradition*, page xiii

A12. 1991 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)-Chairperson unidentified:

A Christian ethic of sexuality is needed that honors but does not restrict sexual activity to marriage alone.... Similarly, it is wrong to condemn nonmarital sexual activity simply because it falls outside a particular formal institutional arrangement.

---*Keeping Body and Soul Together*, pages 38-39

A13. A.E. Harvey, lecturer at University of Oxford (later, Sub-dean of Westminster):

What we do not find are any specific [biblical] laws or injunctions against casual sexual relationships.

---*Promise or Pretense: A Christian’s Guide*, page 63

A14. The Rev. Dr. L. William Countryman, Professor-Church Divinity School of the Pacific:

At one extreme, one cannot defend the promiscuous person who desires only personal gratification at whatever expense to others. At the other [extreme are] those widowed persons who wish to contract a faithful and giving relationship without benefit of legal marriage.... Between these extremes, there lies a large area of difficult individual desires. People will have to wend their way through such decisions, however, for the gift of celibacy is not given to all....

Some nonmarital liaisons may in fact prove to be preparatory to marriage in the stricter sense. Others may serve to meet legitimate needs in the absence of genuine alternatives. Still others may be abusive and exploitative. Only the last is to be condemned.

---*Dirt, Greed, and Sex*; page 264

A15. Professor Karen LeBacqz, Pacific School of Religion:

The two redeeming purposes of sexuality have always been understood as procreation and union.... Both [Catholic and Protestant] traditions have moved toward affirming union as primary....

---*The Christian Century*; May 6, 1987-page 436

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## B. Academic and Professional Scholars

B1. Stella Resnick, Ph.D., clinical psychologist:

[S]exuality has been stunted for hundreds of years ... and there is a thread of repression and shame and negativity that runs through our culture.

---*Chicago Tribune* (November 7, 1993-page 1)

B2. Professor Richard Hettlinger, Kenyon College; consulting editor, *Human Sexuality* magazine:

[T]hose who avoid all sexual commitments out of ... an unexamined bondage to rigid parental or religious prohibitions are likely to remain stunted in their growth as persons. There is a danger that ... engaged couple[s who] concentrate their energies on avoiding intercourse [may] never have the opportunity to see each other as nonsexual objects. Concentration of hope and expectation on the blissful pleasure to be enjoyed in the distant future may distract their attention from more mundane factors which affect the desirability of the partner as a lifelong mate.... As a result, a couple may find themselves virtual strangers on the honeymoon.

---*Human Sexuality: A Psychosocial Perspective*, page 68

B3. Responding to a controversy involving Professor Leo F. Koch of the University of Illinois, as summarized in *The Christian Century* (April 27, 1960-page 501), viz., over his “advocating in a student journal that young couples who are so disposed live together [unmarried, with no constraints on sexual relations]”

(#1) Speaking medically, [Professor Koch’s] ideas seem sound.... Let me add that typical Christian morality, with guilt overtones, is utterly out of focus with modern concepts of mental health.

---Nathan M. Synlock, M.D., psychiatrist (Letter to editor of *The Christian Century*; May 25, 1960-page 643)

(#2) As a veteran family life educator, marriage counselor, and writer and lecturer on premarital and marital topics, I should like to state flatly that the conventional moral code regarding premarital chastity does a great deal more harm than good in contemporary American society. This code not only leads some young people into firmly fixed pornographic attitudes and prudishly repressive sexual behavior (from which matrimonial ceremonies cannot free them), but it instills guilt feelings in countless other youth who proceed to violate the marital taboos.

Fortunately, however, a growing number of young people have been able to perceive the false, superstitious basis of the outmoded sanctions against premarital coitus and are proceeding maturely, stably, wisely, and happily with wholesome and desirable premarital sexual relations which greatly aid them in their marital sexual adjustments....

---Dr. Robert A. Harper; past president of the American Academy of Psychotherapists and the American Association for Marital and Family Therapy, and fellow of the American Psychological Association (in a statement issued in connection with this controversy)

B4. Professor Alfred C. Kinsey; behavior researcher, Indiana University:

[T]he *church*, the home, and the school are the chief sources of the sexual inhibitions, the distaste for all aspects of sex, the fears of the physical difficulties that may be involved in a sexual relationship, and the feelings of guilt which many females carry with them into their marriages [Emphasis supplied.] The failure of a female to reach orgasm in her marital coitus may be a considerable source of marital discord.... Premarital petting experience provides an opportunity for the female to learn to adjust emotionally to various types of males. Thus, she may acquire some wisdom in choosing the particular male with whom she hopes to make a permanent, life-long adjustment.

---*Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, pages 264-266

B5. Damon Linker, Ph.D., contributing editor & senior writing fellow at University of Pennsylvania:

America's traditional religious consensus on sexual morality--which supported laws against ... all forms of non-procreative sex, from masturbation to oral and anal sex, whether practiced by members of the same or different genders, inside or outside of marriage--began to break down in the 1960s.... The religious right hopes to reverse this retreat. That opens the troubling prospect of the state seeking to impose the sexual morals of some Americans [i.e., fundamentalists--editor] on the nation as a whole.

---*Washington Post* (September 19, 2010-page B1)

B6. Lawrence Lipton, lecturer/instructor at Univ. of Southern California & Univ. of California:

[R]eligious teachings .... are still under the dead hand of [colonial-era witchcraft accuser] Cotton Mather.... Meanwhile, the outstanding fact of life in our time is the increase in unmarried sex, not as a preparation for marriage but as an end in itself. In effect, it does, of course, prepare [young men and women] for a more successful sex life in marriage, but only if they succeed in wriggling out of the [fundamentalist] straitjacket of guilt....

---*The Erotic Revolution*, page 187

B7. Judy Kuriansky, Ph.D., fellow of American Psychological Association & adjunct professor-Columbia University:

In the midst of repression in today's society, it's crucial to have outlets for healthy self-expression about sex. Sex aids in releasing stress-reducing chemicals, exercising muscles, lowering blood pressure, and eliminating pain. Psychologically, sex helps relieve depression. Socially, it contributes to satisfying relationships and increased enthusiasm in the work environment.

---Dr. Kuriansky's basic message presented in various print media

B8. Gordon G. Gallup, Jr., Ph.D., on faculty at State University of New York-Albany. (Lead author of a 2002 study examining beneficial properties of semen deposited in vaginas of college women [who, ideally, employ non-condom birth control and confine their penetrative coupling to physically sound partners-editor]):

[T]he vagina absorbs a number of [mental health-fostering] components of semen.... Females who engaged in sexual intercourse but did not use condoms ... evidenced significantly lower levels of depression symptoms than those who used condoms....

---*Archives of Sexual Behavior*, volume 31, pages 289-293

B9. Judge Richard A. Posner, United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

With nonmarital sex so utterly commonplace, the word *fornication*, with its strong pejorative connotation, has virtually passed out of the language.

---*Sex and Reason*, page 55

## **Corroboration that SONG OF SONGS Reveals a Desire For Sexual Union, Not For a Marital Commitment**

*NOTE: Fundamentalists typically denounce sexual intimacy outside of wedlock. However, the eleven quotes below affirm that sundry religious scholars interpret this scriptural story without condemnation.*<sup>17</sup>

1. In *The Erotic Word* (Oxford, New York, 2003), David M. Carr notes on page 119 that, “These lovers belong to each other, but they do not appear to be married.”

2. In a 2000 compilation of essays by Sheffield Academic Press, J. Cheryl Exum tells us on page 24 that, “[T]here is no indication the couple ... we meet in the Song are married, yet they are clearly lovers....”

3. In *New International Biblical Commentary: ... Song of Songs* (Henderson, Peabody, 1999), Roland E. Murphy and Elizabeth Huwiler observe on page 243 that, “According to many [interpreters], the central couple is not married. This view is supported by the fact that the lovers must part in the morning.... Also, most of the couple’s love-making apparently takes place out of doors, in the wilds, and in gardens....”

4. In *People of Passion: What the Church Teaches About Sex* (Moberly, London, 1997), Elizabeth Stuart and Adrian Thatcher note on page 204 that, “[F]ertility [an essential for marriage among early Jews] is not a concern of the Song; instead it revolves around desire and the quest for its fulfillment.... The Song shudders with passionate imagery, glows in the beauty of the body, and the glory is mutual.” [Editor’s note: Ms. Stuart is a co-editor of the British journal *Theology and Sexuality*.]

5. In *The Intercourse of Knowledge* (Koninklijke Brill, Leiden, 1997), Athalya Brenner remarks on page 88 that, “Quite a number of the plants repeatedly mentioned have been used as female contraceptives throughout the Mediterranean world for, quite literally, ages.” Such concern with pregnancy prevention indicates that a shared pursuit of orgasmic euphoria--rather than procreation aspirations associated with the married--underlay the pair’s amorous coupling.

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<sup>17</sup> Citing studies Bible scholar Samuel Noah Kramer has made of Song of Songs, Marvin H. Pope informs us on page 499 of *The Anchor Bible* (Doubleday, New York, 1977) that references in several of its passages to the woman’s garden--expressed by both the man and the woman--constitute “a euphemism for the vulva.”

In her aforementioned book at page 168, Professor Teresa J. Hornsby notes that “Song of Songs holds at least thirty-eight references to fruit, blossoms, and trees. The blossoms connote images of nipples, and of the clitoris; the images of tree trunks, beams, and rafters should remind us of a hard, erect penis.”

6. In their volume *Song of Songs* (Random House, New York, 1995), Ariel and Chana Bloch note on page 14 that, “[The] theme is the wonder of a woman with a man—an unmarried woman, with no concern about perpetuating the family line and no motive but pleasure.”

7. A document commissioned by the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church (*Continuing the Dialogue*, published by Forward Movement, Cincinnati, 1995) states on page 45 that the passages in this biblical story are “in praise of sexual love, celebrating youthful passion, with no reference to God or to marriage....”

8. In *Sexual Paradox: Creative Tension in Our Lives and in Our Congregations* (Pilgrim, New York, 1991), Celia Allison Hahn notes on page 192 that, “The story is clearly not about marriage or procreation ... but about the delights of erotic love.”

9. Writing in *The Christian Century* for May 6, 1987, at page 438, Karen LeBacqz notes that this biblical account is not about “married ... sexuality, nor are [offspring] the justification for the sexual encounter. It is passion, pure and simple.”

10. In *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Fortress, Philadelphia, 1978), Phyllis Trible asserts on page 162 that, “[T]o the issues of marriage and procreation the Song does not speak.”

11. In an article titled “The Interpretation of the Song of Songs,” published in the October 1937 issue of *The Journal of Theological Studies*, H.H. Rowley wrote on page 358 that, “I am not persuaded that ... the Songs had anything to do with [wedlock]. They appear rather to be a series of poems in which a lover enshrined the love he gave and the love he received.”

### **PART III - Recommendations For a Proposed Course of Action**

The analysis herein of baseless fundamentalist notions is predicated upon a variety of scholarly books, articles published in professional journals or miscellaneous magazines and reviews, and newspaper accounts appearing in metropolitan dailies or nationally circulated papers. There are also supportive biblical commentaries, legal documents, and World Wide Web sites.

Accordingly, in view of this multiplicity of respected sources, it is clear that the fundamentalists need to rethink their position. If--after doing so--they wish to continue maintaining disapproving stances on conventional manifestations of sexual expression and on intrinsic nicety of the unadorned human body, they should be willing to elaborate upon any underlying support they believe they can muster. Merely uttering vague generalities, without responding to the points raised in this paper, will contribute nothing of value to proper scholarly discourse.

Notwithstanding the Episcopal Church's 1979 General Convention resolution A053 having set forth "sexual chastity [of unmarrieds as a governing standard of] Christian morality," followed by 2000 General Convention resolution D039 denouncing "promiscuity [defined in dictionaries as indiscriminate, or random, selection of lovers, e.g., nymphomania in females and satyriasis in males]..." we ought to be mindful of Bishop Spong's 1990 observation--see Part II herein, item A3--that "clinging to [archaic sexual] prohibitions will so discredit the church that whatever moral authority it has in other areas of life will be dissipated...."

Anyhow, pressing needs facing our church cannot be adequately dealt with if clergy must divert significant portions of their time and energy responding to miscellaneous sex theories amassed by fundamentalists.<sup>18</sup> Examples of what the church ought to be doing better include (1) helping

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<sup>18</sup> Episcopalians recently experienced a major schism, whereby multiple fundamentalist parishes within the denomination departed, following their lack of success in forcing the church to condemn same-gender relations as wicked. (To be sure, these fundamentalists are equally disposed to rejecting unwed heterosexual intercourse.)

While exploring same-gender sexuality is not a function of this paper, fundamentalists opposed thereto would seem obliged to expound on the implications of Leviticus 20:13, which advances the breathtaking concept of putting the males to death! Similarly, is female/female sexual expression\*\* necessarily "vile" (*KJV*) or "shameful" (*NIV*), as characterized in two sample translations of Romans 1:26?

\*\*Here are two relevant stories offering some level of detail.

(1) A *Washington Post* lifestyle feature (December 9, 2008, at page C7) observed, "[S]eemingly every college woman with a MySpace page has kissed another girl for the camera." However, according to a *St. Petersburg Times* article (August 7, 2005, at page E1), such phenomenon usually does not reflect any true lesbian inclination, but rather, hints of general sensuousness and openness to sexual experimentation, useful attributes in sparking the interest of

couples at the onset of potentially serious relationships learn to safeguard themselves against imbalances where tenderness expressed by one gets way ahead of the sensitivity felt by the other, leading to devastating emotional pain, and (2) seeking--albeit in a restrained manner, so as not to open ourselves to an accusation of irresponsible meddling in politics--repeal of the onerous federal marriage tax now tending to deter loving, dual-income couples living together from entering into holy matrimony.

In closing this part, let us acknowledge the possibility of reversing societal secularization trends if people see the wider church actively renouncing unwarranted constraints--past and present--on natural human interaction. But in a spirit of loving grace, we can approach wayward fundamentalists in a manner consonant with Paul's wise guidance dispensed in Galatians 6:1 (i.e., prod as necessary, but gently so).

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men and in initiating intimate relations with them. Dr. Elizabeth Armstrong, assistant professor of sociology at Indiana University, is quoted therein as saying women can exuberantly engage in "girl-girl activity without threatening their heterosexual identity."

(2) A 24-year-old woman wrote to *Chicago Tribune* advice columnist Amy Dickinson (published November 26, 2015) that "When I was 21, I ... had a sexual relationship with another female.... I am not gay.... I experimented like a lot of us do at that age." [An insightful research study appearing in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior* for June 2016 observed that from 1990 to 2016, adult women enjoying one or more female sexual partners more than doubled, i.e., from 3.6 percent to 8.7 percent; such increase was determined to have arisen through a surge in bisexual--rather than lesbian--intimacy.]

This woman is puzzled, though, that her current boyfriend is expressing discomfort over such dalliance "that happened before we even knew each other." The columnist--downplaying justification for the man's anxiety--responded in support of the woman: "[M]any people are simply bewildered by another person's ability to enjoy a sexual relationship back and forth across gender lines. It is confusing. But he must move through this."

## **PART IV - Miscellaneous Vignettes Portraying Real People**

NOTE: The following excerpts from well-known periodicals provide--for enlightenment of home-body types who may be unaware--insight into ongoing (1) male/female erotic play, and (2) openness to innocuous situations entailing exposure of persons' ungarbed bodies in the presence of others of the opposite gender. Despite the fundamentalists' campaign to aggressively steer unmarrieds from all things of a sensual nature, participants in the various episodes described are typically receptive to enriching themselves through meaningful and rewarding closeness with like-minded people.

Many of us would be pleased if we were to learn that all persons mentioned below have embraced a spiritual commitment. Yet, tragically, there is the possibility--as Dr. Mace ominously pointed out (see Part II, item A2)--that some who are prepared to dedicate themselves to the church have been, and continue to be, frightened away by the fundamentalists' sexual negativism and general discomfort with the unclad body, per se.

Readers (at least, nonfundamentalist ones) may detect an especially touching element of sweetness in vignettes 1 through 5, seen either in the obvious warm feelings of love for a very precious person already found, or in the expectation of realizing mutual devotion with the future love of one's life.

### **1. Women Pondering their Formative Years**

Celeste: "I married my husband when I was 34. I fully intend for him to be the last man I ever sleep with. I'm sure glad he wasn't the first. If I hadn't had any experience before him, I would never have known what a great lover and all-around good guy I have. I tell my daughter to sow plenty of wild oats before she settles down...." Ashley: "I have had some great relationships and a few horrendous affairs. And may I just say I don't regret being with a single one, because at the time I was with each, it meant something, whether it was a soulfully emotional experience or just great sex."

----*Chicago Tribune* (August 17, 2005-section 5, page 6)

### **2. Contemplative Young Adults Analyzing Their Values**

"My roommate and I are 18 years of age, coeds at Tufts in Boston.... [W]e do not hop in bed with every guy who comes along, but we believe it is useful for a girl to have a variety of sexual experiences so she will know when the right guy comes along."

----*Boston Globe* (April 17, 1978-Living section, page 22)

### 3. Fruits of a Joyous Relationship

“I’m not saying girls should run out and get it over with, but when you’re ready, there’s nothing wrong with sex. I was ready. I really cared about the guy I was with, and I’m glad I did it, because it’s just one more thing I can enjoy about life and my relationships, and there’s nothing bad or wrong or regrettable about that.” (Marisa, 19)

----*Seventeen* (July 2003-page 62)

### 4. Quite Pleased in Retrospect

“The sexual revolution allowed me to enjoy a lot of loving with a lot of men with no regrets. Now I’m savoring a strictly monogamous affair with a very special guy, a relationship that wouldn’t have been possible without the lessons learned from previous lovers.” (Cindy Lindner; Tempe, Arizona)

----Title & date unavailable

### 5. First Things First

“[N]ow that I’m married, fidelity is important. My [premarital sexual] affairs just reinforced my feelings toward my husband, and I’m glad I got it all out of my system before marriage. Now I can settle down.”

----Title & date unavailable

### 6. The Norm in Higher Education?

“University of Virginia graduate Phalana Tiller remembers friends saying that the biggest thing about college relationships was ‘being able to have sex and not be afraid of getting caught in the act.... In the dorms you were inundated with the knowledge that people were having sex. You could be sitting and reading at 10 in the morning and this banging would start on a wall.... In one dorm there was a girl always screaming out during sex.’ A friend ... told me that his daughter’s roommate at Loyola College of Baltimore would have sexual intercourse with her boyfriend almost every night....” (Compiled by Patrick Welsh, teacher at T.C. Williams High School; Alexandria, Virginia)

----Washington Post (April 28, 1996-page C2)

### 7. Thinking It Through

“Healthy sexual experimentation means, first, to always have safe sex, and second ... we need to figure out what we like and don’t like....” (Tosha Michel, a 20-year-old student at Santa Monica College)

----*Los Angeles Times* (August 20, 2002-page E2)

## 8. Social Routines in College

A male Ohio State senior explains, “We’ve discarded the idea that loss of virginity is related to degeneracy. Premarital sex doesn’t mean the downfall of society....” And, describing how she and her classmates arrange for intercourse with their boyfriends, a 20-year-old Radcliffe student remarks, “My generation knows that any time of day is a good time and that all you need is fifteen minutes.” A Bennington junior asserts, “If a girl reaches 20 and is still a virgin, she begins to wonder whether there is anything wrong with her as a woman.”

----*Newsweek* (April 6, 1964-pages 52-54)

## 9. Simple, but Adequate

In response to an interviewer inquiring as to her motivation for engaging in casual sex, a 24-year-old female graduate student answers, “Pleasure.”

----*Washington Post* (August 15, 2004-Sunday Magazine, page 25)

## 10. Better Late Than Never

“[My parents] very clearly brought home that my job in life was to remain a virgin [until marriage; but after eventually making love anyhow with my then-boyfriend, I] felt cheated that I had wasted all that time when I could have been intimate [but for] that obscure rule that didn’t make any sense to me.” (Shelley Lessin Stockwell--former flight attendant and later a motivational workshop organizer--in an interview on radio station KFOX in Redondo Beach, California)

----*Los Angeles Times* (May 31, 1990-page 11)

## 11. Summing It Up Succinctly

“If you could boil it down to a simple credo, the only ethical requirements for any sexual act should be: Do I want to do it? Does it hurt anyone else?” (Kurt Rust, University of California freshman)

----*San Francisco Chronicle* (March 1, 1966-page 10)

## 12. Not Exactly Unusual Nowadays

“I live in an apartment with three other girls, all of whom are in romantic relationships. My roommate and her beau [use] our bedroom, another couple takes up the other bedroom, and the last couple ... the living room [couch.]”

----*Washington Post* (May 6, 2015-page C6)

### 13. Keeping Count

It appears not uncommon for single college students to maintain formal lists of their sex partners. Jennifer Broussard, a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania who did so says, "More and more of us are admitting it is not something to be ashamed of.... I don't want to forget the names on my list, whether they're good or bad. I like to ... learn from them." Asserts Boston College senior Anna Schleelein, "You're seeing a group of girls whose mothers raised them to accept that they have sexual needs and desires [but] that they need to use protection." Facing advanced study abroad after she graduates from Brown University, Susan Harrison--a senior acknowledging multiple sex partners--contends, "It doesn't make sense to start a serious relationship in college."

Moreover, many unmarried women think counting their bed companions is not essentially different from tracking their hours slept, calories consumed, or miles jogged. A national education group estimates that, on average, a woman whose first intercourse occurs during her freshman year of college will have four more such partners before she graduates. But Georgetown University alumna Kristin Thorne knows former classmates who initially planned to limit their sexual coupling to 10 men, only to readily revise that figure upward when number 11 came along.

----*Washington Post* (May 22, 2004-page C1)

### 14. Rewards of Introspection

"Women frequently deny themselves the right to enjoy sex because we've been socialized to believe [that intercourse among the unmarried] is dirty and evil. Some research suggests that centuries of this thought have dimmed our ability to climax as easily as men do. If abstinence is for you, great. However, don't condemn the women in this world who engage in sex." (Melissa Combs; Ann Arbor, Michigan)

----*USA Today* (August 23, 2005-page 11A)

### 15. Growing into Adulthood

In differentiating between those for whom sexual expression is ill-advised and those for whom it essentially falls within the bounds of acceptability, perceptive society recognizes "the distinction between premarital sex at 14 or 15 and premarital sex at 21 or 22."

----*Washington Post* (May 4, 2008-Sunday Magazine, page 28)

### 16. Feet and Toes

"And then he unveiled his heart's desire: to suck a woman's toes.... 'May I?... [Yours] look so sweet.' He sucked each toe as if it were the leg of a tiny crustacean and he was after the meat."

----*New York Times* (January 10, 2016-Styles section, page 6)

### 17. A Look at Personal Growth on Two Campuses

Darlene Mininni, staff health coordinator at the University of California, Los Angeles, provides students with standard information on pregnancy prevention and STDs. But to fully educate her charges, she also tenders personal answers to questions like, "How does a woman have an orgasm?" Moreover, UCLA students can download tips from campus computer sites, e.g., "Is it better to have sex before you compete athletically, or should you conserve your energy?" and "Is there a G-spot, and if so, where is it?"

Eileen Wallace, a 19-year-old student interviewed at the University of Wisconsin, spoke candidly of her bedroom tryst with a male friend and another girl: "It was awesome.... How much more opportunity am I going to have to do this type of thing? This is your chance. You're young now, it's your time." Cassandra Lomasney and her boyfriend (also Wisconsin students) relate that heterosexual women on campus tell lesbian acquaintances, "O.K., I'll try [a same-sex fling]." Cassandra estimates half her female friends have had intimate physical contact with other women. But eventually, many free-spirited college students decide to settle down. Amanda, a Wisconsin junior who has had upwards of 30 sex partners, reports she is "looking for a relationship now."

---*Rolling Stone* (March 23, 1995-page 80)

### 18. Enhancing the Quality of Dorm Life

Amherst College administrators--sensing single freshmen would benefit from easing gently into social interaction with their peers, rather than jumping from the outset into a round of sexual intercourse--began distributing a booklet specifying practices designed to provide a scaled-down, yet still satisfying, alternative. Accordingly, a suggested sequence of "massage," "erotic videos," and "mutual masturbation" is offered for their consideration.

Although the college president points out that students using coed bathrooms tend to behave nonchalantly like siblings--and the dean of students muses that the downsides of such sharing (e.g., one male student complained about "long hairs in the shower") may blunt sexual tension--such facilities are nevertheless equipped with condom dispensers. Another male student emphasizes that "I can use a urinal and talk to a girl at the same time."

---*Washington Post* (October 1, 1999-page C4)

### 19. A Practical Approach to Dating

"I can't expect to fall in love with every guy I go to bed with, that's just silly. But there's no reason why you can't have an intimate relationship.

---- Title and date unavailable

## 20. Enlightened Decision-Making

Ashlyn Howell--currently a 25-year-old conference manager in Richmond, Virginia--disclosed to a reporter writing a story on male/female relationships that she first had sexual intercourse as an 18-year-old during the summer before her freshman year in college. Explaining that it was time to lose her virginity and wishing it to happen with someone she liked and trusted, she welcomed as a partner her best friend since sixth grade. Looking in the bathroom mirror while brushing her teeth beforehand, she resolutely primed herself: "I'm getting ready to have sex. Okay, cool, whatever." Seven years after that encounter--which occurred in a beach house's white wicker bed--she reflects upon her decision as a deliberate one which she does not regret.

While not all instances of first intercourse in ongoing dating relationships go smoothly, here are two that did: Margo DeSantis, now a real estate agent in Pelham, New York, and a mother of two, fondly recalls having done it with her boyfriend on her parents' living room floor: "I remember thinking this is what our bodies were made for." Danielle Dunbar, a graduate of Wittenberg University and presently employed by National Public Radio, happily reminisces that the whole experience with her boyfriend (thrice that day, including in her car) was "picture-perfect adorable."

----*Washington Post* (July 22, 2006-page C8)

## 21. Achieving Fulfillment

"I think sex is cool and people should have a lot of it." (Anna, 22-year-old female graduate student)

----*New York Times* (January 11, 2004-section 9, page 1)

## 22. Providing for Unmet Needs

"This week is V-week on campuses across the country, the V standing for valentine and vagina.... 'Love Your Body' days are common; during one such celebration last fall at Washington University in St. Louis, a talk called 'Good Vibrations: Women and Orgasms,' given by a lecturer in women's studies, drew so many students that the speaker had to repeat it immediately afterward. Heffalumps, a sex-toy store that sponsored a sales booth, ran out of merchandise."

----*Washington Post* (February 14, 2004-page C2)

## 23. Young Female Perception of Genital Organs

A 28-year-old woman reflected upon "her 7-year-old self and her anatomical curiosity at the time, which included wondering whether all vaginas are the same. To answer this question, not satisfied with her mother's 'I guess so,' [she] explored the private parts of her 1-year-old sister [and toyed with] her own anatomy in bed at night...."

----*Chicago Tribune* (November 5, 2014)

24. Taking Charge of her Body

“I’ve been on the pill for most of my adult life [while acknowledging it once failed her]. I’m not ashamed that, as a 29-year-old [single] woman, I’m sexually active....”

----*Washington Post* (July 6, 2014-page A15)

25. Her Willingness To Be a Special Someone

“Luke hugged me, caressing my back with firm hands as his tongue found mine. We moved to the couch, and I sat on his lap, shedding my clothes, wrapping my arms around his neck. The moment was so intense I could not stop myself from moaning, ‘I love you.’” [This story--which Leah provides us in recounting her overall sexual experimentation with men--is included here because it beautifully reflects uplifting emotions felt in the budding stages of a relationship. Although that guy was unable to return her feelings in the long run, Leah Vincent is now “happily married (and) mother of a young daughter,” according to an *Elle* magazine online profile sparked by publication of her memoir addressing personal womanhood issues.-Editor]

----*New York Times* (January 19, 2014-Styles section, page 11)

26. Responding To Her Own Hormonal Demands

“[L]ike a lot of young girls, I discovered the bathtub faucet....”

----*Glamour* (January 2015-page 72)

27. Steadfast in Finding Physical Gratification Despite Adversity

Litsa Dremousis, a 49-year-old woman who contracted a neuroimmune illness at age 24 (necessitating reliance upon a cane or crutches, though she can and does walk up to a mile or more daily) but has adapted well enough to engage in periodic sex encounters, interspersed with several long-term intimate relationships. In her own words, “If I had known [of the future limitations facing me], I wouldn’t have waited until I was 20 to lose my virginity.... I still love sex, [albeit requiring] creativity ... to work with or around [my disability with partners amenable to, e.g., forgoing woman-on-top]. Is it still fun for me now? Heck, yes. I’m grateful I can still romp.” We should offer her our heartfelt prayers.

----*Washington Post* (October 18, 2016-page E1)

## 28. Modifying Her Standards

A 30-year-old California woman related: “When I was 18 or 20, I was ... very into sex and wanting it most days [though often motivated by a desire to satisfy men. Now, more aware of my own physical needs] I tell my partner how and when I want it.... He’s happy to make me feel good.”

----*Glamour* (March 2017-page 115)

## 29. Of Particular Interest to Female Students

“About 1,000 students from six colleges in Maryland have signed petitions in support of 24-7 campus access to over-the-counter emergency contraception.... This year a Maryland lawmaker proposed a bill requiring that level of access at public colleges and universities.” Alice, a graduate of St. Mary’s College testifying in favor, said although she and her boyfriend were very careful, she needed a morning-after pill when their birth control failed during sophomore year. “Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania made headlines in 2012 for [installing a vending machine] to sell emergency contraceptives. [So did] Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.... Pomona College [in California] has one, too, in a residence hall.” The dean of students at the latter school asserts, “This is a common-sense measure....”

----*Washington Post* (April 3, 2017-page B1)

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## 30. Happenings Across the Nation

“Rosemary Murphy, 31, an intensive care nurse standing surfside on Lighthouse Beach [a short distance from New York’s Robert Moses State Park, wore] only an ankle bracelet and tattoo.... ‘Why not? It’s not like the Puritans are about to pull ashore on a boat.’ If they did, they might be startled to see 3,000 nude people ... playing volleyball or Frisbee or testing the water.... In what some see as a sign that Americans’ cultural mores may be shifting along with their tan lines, this scene is being repeated at hundreds of public beaches throughout the country.... Last year, officials of Cape Canaveral National Seashore in Volusia County, Florida, agreed to set aside part of Apollo Beach as a clothes-free zone.... In June, California [similarly established] Grey Whale Cove, a 20-minute drive south of San Francisco....”

----*New York Times* (September 2, 2001-section 9, page 26)

## 31. Making Perfect Sense

A 23-year-old woman attending an anniversary celebration of the famous 1969 music festival in upstate New York strode the grounds wearing nothing but flip-flops and glittery eye shadow. “Why not? The body is beautiful,” she said. “I’ve always wanted to walk around in public nude. At Woodstock it’s a tradition, so I feel it’s okay.”

----*Washington Post* (July 24, 1999-page C5)

### 32. Relishing Nature's Benevolent Elements

A reporter assigned to write a story on the nude beach scene traveled to the southwestern tip of Martha's Vineyard--an island reachable by a short ferry ride from the Massachusetts mainland--where sunbathers congregate in the nude. [Editor's note: This is a long-standing practice here, the lawfulness of which was favored by a number of local selectmen and formally approved in a 1991 citizen vote.] A naked woman cheerfully told the reporter, "It's a liberating feeling, it feels healthy to be out in the sun and wind and water without anything like clothes restricting you.... We use sunblock like anybody else, just more of it."

---*Boston Globe* (June 30, 1989-page 70)

### 34. Fun on the High Seas

"As the Carnival cruise ship *Jubilee* barrels through the Gulf of Mexico back to the port of Tampa, most of the 1,490 nudists on board have packed the [Lido] deck, kicking back in lounge chairs ... or splashing in the pool. A steady procession of naked people moves toward a soft-serve ice cream machine. Waiters and waitresses, easily identifiable because of their clothing, seem unaffected by the display of naked flesh as they deliver drinks.... The rules are a little different on a nude cruise. There's no need to segregate the men's and women's saunas.... [After] the sun goes down ... couples stroll hand-in-hand on the Verandah deck ... no one has gotten dressed."

---[*Portland Oregonian*] (September 8, 2002-page T1)

### 35. A Respected Journalist with a Penchant for Choice Words (Arthur Hoppe)

"Skinny-dipping, as you know, is the simple, time-honored sport of going swimming in the altogether.... Ah, the sudden sense of freedom! Of abandon! How untrammled you feel. How joyous. How pure and innocent. Once again, you are one with Mother Nature, unfettered with the complexities of our civilization. And how terribly, terribly you pity those who go through life laced, buttoned, zippered, and hooked by the restrictions of our prudish society."

---*San Francisco Chronicle* (August 25, 1965-page 4)

### 36. Exulting in Something New

Nineteen-year-old college student Jessi Bartoletti joined a group of men and women brought together for relaxation at a private swimming pool in Florida. As understood by all in advance, guests would be nude throughout the day. Despite initial anxiety when baring her body for the first time in the presence of numerous strangers, she later bubbled with enthusiasm, "I don't think I've ever felt this free." Her only complaint: Mosquitoes.

---*Wall Street Journal* (May 2, 2011-page A1)

### 37. Students Taking a Break from Studying

Reflecting upon the past at the oldest co-op residence at the University of California-Berkeley (built 1933) shortly before it closed due to structural deterioration, senior music major John Trevor Benson described a recent house activity that fit right in with its long tradition: “We put mattresses on the floor and everybody laid around totally naked and fed each other grapes.” Suzanne Lester elucidated that life there “wasn’t an orgy. It was just friends.”

----*San Francisco Chronicle* (April 9, 1990-page B3)

### 38. An American Travel Writer at a Distinctive Jamaican Resort

“The palms dance over the beach in necklaces of bougainvillea and hibiscus.... Every vine is lush, every breeze a caress, every bloom a new waft of tropical perfume.... But it turns out that nudity loves company, and after a few minutes I’m able to mingle more or less casually along the waterline, where people wearing nothing at all are busy staking out the best beach chairs.... Around the adjacent pool, almost every chaise longue is occupied by a bare bottom.... Steve, a mortgage broker from Washington state ... and his wife Laura have been here a week, and they haven’t left the resort once. Valerie, a 22-year-old waitress from California [asserts] ‘So far, I haven’t done anything I can’t tell my boyfriend about,’ [while volunteering her activities included playing] topless volleyball [and letting] a guy lick beer off her naked body to the whoops of the poolside crowd.”

----*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (January 6, 2002-page D14)

### 29. Acknowledging the Majority’s Preferred Lifestyle

“At Harvard’s Adams House, nude coed swimming has become so popular that special hours had to be set aside for students who prefer to wear bathing suits.”

----*Wall Street Journal* (October 9, 1973-page 26)

### 30. Luxuriating in Freedom

Jody Wright--a visitor from Arlington, Virginia--blissfully relates her experience at the waterfront resort of Pentwater, Michigan: “The secret to happiness is ... visiting the beach with a gaggle of friends on a starry July night when the moon is almost full to bursting [and] throwing off your sweatshirt and then everything else and sprinting across the beach into Lake Michigan—a giggling blur of tan lines.”

----*Washington Post* (November 25, 2001-page E1)

### 39. Beautiful to Watch, Delightful to Experience

For yoga sessions held at the One Taste Urban Retreat Center on Folsom Street in San Francisco, the term “‘bare essentials’ means just that: Men and women are completely nude during the 90-minute class [where they experience] accepting--and even revering--one’s own body.... On a recent Sunday morning, yoga instructor Meredith Medland, 33, as naked as any of the rest of the class, [explained to her group of five women and four men that] ‘We’re honoring the preciousness, the sacredness, the delicateness of the body.’ ... [S]kylights sent soft shafts of white onto the students’ bodies, highlighting the curves of their forms as if they were museum statues come to life, moving deliberately and slowly from pose to pose.”

Afterward, a 36-year-old male participant grandly exclaimed, “I like the sheer vulnerability of having no clothing....” Similarly, a 34-year-old female delightedly mused, “Not having anything on is so freeing.”

----*San Francisco Chronicle* (May 24, 2005-page E1)

### 40. A Newspaper Editorial Board Getting It Right

Disturbed by a bill introduced in the North Carolina legislature to expand the legal definition of “private parts”--a term appearing in a statute prohibiting public nudity--to explicitly include “the nipple, or any portion of the areola” of female breasts (except while breast-feeding), a newspaper editorial noted that the measure “has launched a thousand juvenile jokes--and that’s all it’s good for. Bare women’s breasts are not a serious threat.” [It seems that two topless rallies occurring over a two-year period led to this conundrum.] A reader wrote to agree with the paper: “Treating the female nipple as a sex organ, while assuming that the male nipple is safe, is pretty ridiculous.”

----*Winston-Salem Journal* (February 23, 2013)

### 41. Time for Re-Education

“[The fundamentalist element in] society sexualizes breasts to the point that people think small children will be scarred for life if they see a nipple after their first birthday.”

----*Jane* magazine (June/July 2005-page 178)

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## WHY HUMANS HAVE SEX

EXPLANATION: Professors Cindy M. Meston and David M. Buss at the University of Texas conducted a study exploring motivations for engaging in sex, identifying 237 reasons therefor. The results appeared in Volume 36, Number 4 (year 2007) of the journal *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. Below is a list of some of the leading reasons, tallied by gender; the numbers shown indicate respective positions on the list:

<u>Reasons for Engaging in Sex</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>
I was attracted to the person.	1	1
I wanted to experience physical pleasure.	2	3
I was sexually aroused and wanted the release.	6	6
It's fun.	8	4
I wanted to please my partner.	11	10
I desired emotional closeness, i.e., intimacy.	12	14
I wanted to achieve an orgasm.	14	9
The person caressed me.	21	24
I wanted to become one with another person.	23	37
I wanted sex to increase the emotional bond.	25	27
I wanted to intensify the relationship.	30	31
I wanted to try new sexual techniques/positions.	32	32
The person had a desirable body.	34	16
I wanted to communicate at a deeper level.	36	46
I wanted to keep my partner satisfied.	41	28
I wanted to improve my sexual skills.	45	36

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## WOMEN WHO VIEW SEX POSITIVELY

The organization Vulva Velvet surveys women regarding sexual matters. In 2006, it directed a 28-question inquiry to 100 women--both single and married--to document their feelings on various aspects of their sex lives. The questions covered (1) comfortableness with their bodies, (2) frequency and methods of masturbation, (3) orgasm experience with male partners, (4) extent of intimate breast or genital contact with intrigued female acquaintances, and (5) miscellaneous topics.

The questions, together with a large number of perceptive and insightful responses, appear on the organization's website ([www.vulvavelvet.org](http://www.vulvavelvet.org)). My review indicates these women generally delight in demonstrating sexual deftness; indeed, their answers to the questions reveal that they typically employ creative and resourceful ideas in efforts to please their partners and themselves.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Women and their boyfriends or husbands might add a bit of zest to their relationship by matching the pink shade of her areolae against sample hues in a paint-store color chart.-Editor

## EROTIC VISIONS DURING COITUS

(Source: *Journal of Sex Research*; Year 1979, pages 299-305)

EXPLANATION: The scenarios below describe various fantasies occurring during acts of coitus, as disclosed by 230 nonvirgin students (114 male, 116 female) questioned at a midwestern U.S. university; 93% of these students were single:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting by Category</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
1. Having sex with a former lover	43%	41%
2. Having sex with an imaginary lover	44	24
3. Engaging in oral-genital sex	61	51
4. Participating in same-room group sex	19	14
5. Being forced or overpowered during sex	21	36
6. Others observing you having sex	15	20
7. Others finding you sexually irresistible	55	53
8. Being sexually abused	11	13
9. Forcing others to have sex with you	24	16
10. Others submitting to sex after first resisting	37	24
11. Observing others engaging in sex	18	13
12. Having sex with person of same gender	3	9
13. Having sex with an animal	1	4

[Editor's Comment: Interestingly, three of the above 13 categories (or just under a fourth of them, with double digits for both males and females) concern acts comprising more than two persons. Such fantasy can--and does--transfer into reality, as we saw from vignette number 17 (hereinbefore) involving imaginative University of Wisconsin students.]

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## SEXUAL INTIMACY IN CLOSE FRIENDSHIP CIRCUMSTANCES

In a behavioral research article appearing in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* (May 1992), Professor Michael Monsour of the University of Colorado at Denver discussed friendship-based--i.e., non-romantic--physical intimacy. He reported on a survey of 164 students (median age of 24 years) which revealed 16 percent of the males and eight percent of the females had shared tender sexual moments with opposite-sex buddies.

An explanation therefor was proffered by a female respondent: "[W]e have intimate sexual relations, yet we are not dating. It is hard to explain, but we are such good friends that neither of us wants to risk the chance of losing each other as a friend by committing ourselves to one another." Isn't that a sweet thing to say?

## SEX LIVES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

A summer 2007 booklet distributed at George Mason University--main campus in Fairfax, Virginia--included a tutorial apprising freshmen of dormitory sex etiquette. In addition to offering sensible ideas for STD avoidance, the piece tenders practical suggestions for amorous students wishing not to disturb roommates needing quiet ambiance for studying. As an example, the document advises, "if you feel a need to scream, try biting down on a pillow instead." Further GMU advice for the sexually active: "You can get condoms free at Student Health Services.... You can also get prescriptions for oral contraception...." Thus, this school strives to make campus life easier for its typically busy students. [Significantly, the *Journal of Sex Research*--October 2015, pp. 936-948--reported in summary that "Sexual activity is normative in college ... virgins are a minority...."]

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## NO GENDER GAP IN SEXUAL AROUSAL

A McGill University (Montreal, Canada) research study of sexual arousal time was reviewed in the January 2007 issue of the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*. University staff found that healthy young adults watching explicit, sex-action films with thermographic devices attached to their genitals began to become sexually aroused within 30 seconds; on average, the male subjects reached full erection in 665 seconds, and the females attained optimum lubrication in 743 seconds (that minor difference not seen as statistically meaningful) .

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## SEX LITERACY IN EUROPE AS A BENCHMARK FOR COMPARISON WITH U.S.

The juin (June, in English) 2006 issue of *Lolie*--a French magazine for teen-age girls--contained an article on pages 30-31 titled, "*La Première Fois*" (or, "The First Time") which addresses questions young women face in preparing for their upcoming initial experience with intercourse. For instance, some ask, "*Esc-ce que ça fait forcément mal?*" (i.e., "Will it hurt?").

Helpful responses to their questions refer variously to a girl's *intimité, ami, or copain*, with each of these words connoting "boyfriend." Nowhere does the article mention *mari* (husband); it is generally a given in France that engaging in sex is the norm upon reaching maturity. Typical French girls would laugh if you were to suggest they wait until marriage. And--significantly--France is predominantly Christian.

Similarly, the *Seattle Times* for September 13, 2006, noted at page A9 that the widely read German magazine *Bravo* counsels that country's teens on the "angst of young life, piercings, broken friendships and yes, sex." Dr. Laura Carpenter, of Vanderbilt University, clarifies for us the unrattled view of premarital sex prevailing throughout much of Europe, viz., "older teenagers are going to have sex, it's part of life, it's a healthy aspect of growing up and you need info about it...."

## WHAT REALLY IS HAPPENING IN DATING LAND

In his book *Sexual Behavior of American Nurses* (Lancer, New York, 1963), W.D. Sprague, Ph.D., reports on page 157 that a 1961 Psychological Assistance Foundation survey of 3,510 female nurses revealed 70 percent of all ages and 64 percent of those 20-24 years had engaged in coitus while single. Ninety-five percent and 92 percent, respectively, reported petting to orgasm. Page 159 indicates 16 percent of all heterosexual nurses in the survey group--98 percent of the total--had experimented sexually with other women, an activity Dr. Sprague describes on page 146 as, "mutual masturbation, tribadism, [and] oral intercourse."

Two-plus decades later, 75 percent of "Never Married" women in the 20-24 age bracket had had sexual relations (60 percent within the three-month period immediately preceding such study), according to page 208 of the September/October 1990 issue of *Family Planning Perspectives*, published by the Alan Guttmacher Institute. And college women seem to be reaching an even higher level: The *New England Journal of Medicine* for March 20, 1990, disclosed on pages 822-823 a faculty finding that 87 percent of Brown University female students recounted having intercourse (with the adoption of precautionary measures for safeguarding health quadrupling in 15 years).

As to engaging in oral-genital stimulation, the *Journal of Sex Research* noted on pages 331 & 334 of its November 1983 issue that two-thirds of a group of 250 female college students had done so-actively or passively or both. (Tellingly, those women in the survey admitting to low self-esteem were concentrated overwhelmingly in the one-third not having oral sex.)<sup>20</sup> A few years later, City University of New York psychologist Dr. Lillian B. Rubin determined that 75 percent of 600 college students returning questionnaires from eight campuses--and fully 100 percent of 300 other adults interviewed--practice oral sex, according to page 120 of her book *Erotic Wars* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York; 1990). About a decade after that, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* noted on page 277 of its January 20, 1999, issue that as many as 82 percent of female students surveyed at a major Midwestern university had taken part in oral sex.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This journal further reports (year 2012, volume 49, page 531) on a study including female Stanford University students' experience with receiving oral sex: "Our data suggest that cunnilingus has come to be a standard practice within relationships." Here are a few students' choice quotes: Marjorie-"[A]bout 60% of the time I have an orgasm it's from oral sex." Annie-"[I experience orgasm] every time with oral sex." Shannon (periodically planting an idea in her dates' heads)-"Why don't we do 69 for a little bit?"

<sup>21</sup> Dr. David Reuben tells us on page 52 of his aforementioned book that "glands around the labia and vagina [produce] a smell [enticing bed partners to lick the source]." However, his page 53--mirroring Part II (B5) herein--notes "puritanical" folks suppose placing one's mouth on another's sex organs "is dirty, perverted, and abnormal." Such denigration of oral sex shows up in scattered old court cases (generally seen today as anachronistic): A Louisiana judge in 1914 (*State v. Murry*) labeled it a "perversion," as did a Utah judge in 1929 (*State v. Besares*), while an Ohio judge in 1944 (*State v. Forquer*) classified it "disgusting."

## APPENDIX A

### Cautionary Considerations in Using King James Bible

*Back in Part I, we noted that the KJV translators wrongfully adopted “fornication” in their text (i.e., they so labeled incest and idol worship). A result of such shortcoming is that fundamentalists today assume the 1611 writers were referring to sexual intercourse by unmarried persons--the usual modern meaning of such word--when they were not, as demonstrated. Under the circumstances, it seems prudent for us to investigate whether other textual anomalies may also be creating interpretation uncertainties. Accordingly, there follow below (1) pertinent findings of a variety of scholars on textual meanings, (2) ramifications of printing deficiencies, and (3) perils of literal construction.*

Professor David Daniell, in his book *The Bible in English* (Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2003), informs us that (1) the finished *KJV* text included innumerable passages for which the wording was arbitrarily decided after the translators--approximately 50 in number--determined they could not readily reach consensus, and (2) a coerced obeisance to the monarch imposed significant constraints upon the translators’ independence. The professor notes that members of various *KJV* translation panels “engaged in arguments, which were sometimes violent...” (page 440), and--judging from that Bible’s fawning dedicatory pages--the translators believed it prudent to placate the royal “sovereign upon whom their welfare, even their lives, might depend.” (page 446)

Further, in his book *In the Beginning* (Doubleday, New York, 2001), Professor Alister E. McGrath expounds on some of the issues that presumably prompted the *KJV* translators (despite their flair for mellifluous language) to adopt a relatively timid approach in dealing with potentially contentious subject matter. For example, pages 141 & 148 indicate James made it plain that he expected them to affirm in Scripture the “divine right of kings,” a doctrine rejected by his political enemies, the Puritans. James’s adamancy on this point doubtless derived from over 400 appearances of the word “tyrant”--applied in the context of royalty--in marginal notes affixed to the so-called Geneva Bible then in use, as we learn from page 58 of Adam Nicholson’s book *God’s Secretaries* (HarperCollins, New York, 2003). Moreover, the *KJV* writers could hardly have been unaware in 1611 of the vicious killing just three quarters of a century earlier (i.e., in 1536) of Bible translator William Tyndale, perceived by some as a heretic for embracing a fresh outlook in his interpretations of ancient Scripture. Accordingly--given the strong motivation the 1611 translators would have felt in their quest to avoid becoming similarly embroiled in controversy--it does not seem unreasonable for us to infer that a goodly number of them were willing to engage in self-censorship, i.e., to substitute alternate terminology in lieu of language they otherwise might have used.

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Dr. Benson Bobrick tells us on page 428 of his book *Wide as the Waters* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2001) that *KJV* reflects “unwarranted interpolations which view the Hebrew through a

Christian lens.” Professor McGrath explains on his page 238 that “serious misjudgments” arose from the *KJV* translators having erroneously assumed “the same vocabulary rules of grammar that applied to the classical period also applied to the New Testament.” Of further note is Episcopal Bishop Frank K. Allan’s warning (see page 13 of *The Anglican Digest* for Advent 1999) that misleading concepts were introduced into Scripture by “human beings who had their own prejudices, biases, cultural limitations, and pre-scientific world views....”

Another reason for scrutinizing *KJV* text stems from a need to consider progress in translation technique. For example, Professor McGrath observes that, “[O]ur understanding of the Hebrew language has developed considerably since 1600 [because a] wealth of knowledge has accumulated on other languages of the ancient Near East ... which cast light on the meaning of a Hebrew root.” (page 231) Also, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century “significant advances were made in understanding the everyday Greek of the eastern Mediterranean world [from] a series of vernacular papyri....” (page 236)

*KJV* and other translators face technical challenges too. For example, introductory pages to the *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)* identify a factor inhibiting conversion of text into comprehensible English, viz., our “lack of a common gender third person singular pronoun.” Additionally, the Rev. Raymond F. Collins stresses on page xi of his book *Sexual Ethics and the New Testament* (Crossroad, New York, 2000) that, “Even those who can read the Greek of a Mark or a Paul are hard pressed to capture the precise nuance of the author’s words.” The tediousness of that task is exemplified on page 151 of *The Bible Translator* journal for July 1962, which reveals that the Greek word *katargein* has 17 different connotations in English.

Professor Marcus J. Borg notes on page 240 of his book *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* (Harper, San Francisco, 2001) that the absence of quotation marks in ancient Greek manuscripts--an omission duplicated in *KJV* translations of Paul’s epistles--has led to “serious misunderstandings” by naive Bible readers. The professor explains that unsophisticated folks wrongly construe portions of Paul’s writings as reflective of his opinion, whereas they really constitute his reiteration of queries directed to him. An illustration of the professor’s point appears at 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:1, a passage containing a request by Paul’s male correspondents in that Christian community that he comment upon their conjecture that a man should not “touch a woman.” (Bible scholars regard such allusion not in a sexual sense, but rather, that a man need not necessarily “marry a woman.”) Since *KJV*’s lack of quotation marks can result in a failure to grasp that verse 1 simply conveys Paul’s reiteration of the Corinthians’ expressed ruminations (and does not incorporate this apostle’s thoughts on the advisability of marriage, a subject examined previously herein), *NRSV* editors clarified the meaning of the passage by inserting the omitted punctuation into their Bible.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Significantly, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, the leading source upon which fundamentalists rely in attempting to buttress their implacable antisex views, is one of two N.T. books (the other being Romans) that Dr. Bruce M. Metzger--former chief *NRSV* translator--characterize on page 77 of his text *The Bible in Translation* (Baker, Grand Rapids, 2001) as the least accurate part of *KJV*.

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As stated in the preface to the *NIV*, “Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, faithful communication of the meaning of the writers of the Bible demands frequent modifications in sentence structure and constant regard for the contextual meaning of words.... There is a sense in which the work of translators is never wholly finished.” Indeed, Professor Frederick C. Grant observes on page 97 of his book *Translating the Bible* (Seabury, Greenwich, 1961) that, “Of course, Bible translation is an endless process, as languages change, as additional copies of ancient manuscripts continue to turn up....”

Professor Dewey M. Beegle further explains--on page 56 of his book *God's Word Into English* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1960)--that, “Because of the change in the English language, hundreds of words and phrases in *King James* which were understood by the people in 1611 have become obscure, and pose therefore a real problem for modern readers.” And Professor McGrath notes on his page 309, “Like any living language, English changes over the years. Linguistic development is simply a sign of life, in that a language is being used and adapted to a new situation.... The paradox is that those who insist that we retain *King James* as the only English translation of the Bible actually betray the intentions and goals of those who conceived and translated it--namely, to translate the Bible into living English.”<sup>23</sup>

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Tel Aviv University (Israel) released in 2014 an archaeology finding based upon radiocarbon-dating applied to skeletons of domesticated camels (identified by strengthened leg bones reflecting their function in transporting loads for human owners), viz, such animal was not present in the Holy Land until the 10<sup>th</sup> century, B.C. However, that discovery invalidates 15 assertions (in 14 verses) of Genesis 24, which show an earlier--i.e., 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium, B.C.--use of camels as beasts of burden. Accordingly, it is disturbing that scribes writing (notwithstanding, in this instance, well after the described Genesis events) original Bible text--and whose product constitutes “raw material” for translators--appear to have erred by confusing domesticated camels with other kinds of pack animal.

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Giving recognition to the foregoing explanations of why we cannot wholly rely upon *KJV*, it is easy to accept that sundry scholars discount it. Professor Jack P. Lewis observes in his book *The English Bible* (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1981) that *KJV* “is a phantom, a figment of an imagination....

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<sup>23</sup> Speakers of other modern languages beside English are also discovering that early Bible translations do not adequately reflect word usage now observed. According to page D1 of the March 15, 2003, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, French Catholics have petitioned the Vatican to change *gourmandise* (which at one time embraced the sin of “gluttony,” but which has since evolved to mean simply enjoyment of nourishing food and wine in congenial company) to *gloutonnerie* (a French term preserving the original intent).

(page 40) [T]hose who feel they can escape the problem of [dealing with new] translations by retreating into the citadel of the *King James* have a zeal for God that is not in accord with knowledge.” (page 67) Moreover, Professor Stanley E. Porter asserts on page 21 of his book *Translating the Bible: Problems and Prospects* (Academic, Sheffield, 1999) that contemporary translators “clearly distance themselves from the *KJV*.” And Professors Steven M. Sheeley & Robert Nash, Jr., note on pages 33-35 of their book *The Bible in English Translation* (Abingdon, Nashville, 1997) that, “[S]ignificant limitations ... about the *KJV* open the door for more modern translations....” Also, Dr. Robert G. Bratcher (senior staff writer of *The Bible Translator* journal) lamented on page 93 of the January 1961 issue that, “One is hard put to understand the reason for the continuing hold the *King James* has upon the average Bible reader....” Finally, Professor Bart D. Ehrman advises, on page 209 of his book *Misquoting Jesus* (Harper, San Francisco, 2005), that *KJV* is predicated in part upon “Erasmus’s ... twelfth-century manuscript that is one of the worst....”<sup>24</sup>

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Because no original books of the Bible are known to remain intact, all translators must of necessity rely upon copies. According to page 432 of the *Bible Translator* journal for October 1989, “Before the invention of the printing press in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, [scribes copying the Bible by hand] made errors due to tired minds, failure in reading correctly....” Jan de Waard and Eugene Nida say much the same thing on page 53 of their book *From One Language to Another* (Nelson, Nashville,

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<sup>24</sup> HERE ARE ADDITIONAL TEXT DEFECTS:

As reported in a *Bible Translator* journal article - January 2008 issue, beginning at page 14:  
(#1) Leviticus 13 & 14 - Leprosy, characterized therein as unhealthy whitening of skin (to the contrary, such symptom associated with “leucoderma”)  
(#2) 1st Kings 7:50 - Door hinge (inaccurate, the device having been invented much later; “socket” adopted in *NIV*)

Genesis 43:11 - Nuts delivered to Egyptian traders (instead, “turpentine resin,” as seen by religious educator Gary A. Rendsburg, writing in a 2006 online course synopsis)

Mark 2:26 - High priest Abiathar (wrong, according to page 9 of Professor Ehrman’s book *Misquoting Jesus*; “Ahimelech” deemed correct)

Acts 5:34-36 - Uprising attributed to lawyer Gamaliel (questionable, per Professor Robin Lane Fox in *The Unauthorized Version: Truth and Fiction in the Bible* at page 211, the event occurring after the biblical writer’s death and, hence, unknowable by him)

1st Thessalonians 4:15 - Prevent (no, should be “precede,” asserted on page 294 of clergyman Philo Thelos’s book *Divine Sex*; verb remedied in *NIV*)

2nd Corinthians 11:25 - Paul portrayed as stoned (unwise interpretive language reflecting modern vernacular, viz., hashish-induced euphoria; more precisely here, “received a stoning”)

1986): “In the process of copying a manuscript there is a tendency to make mistakes.” Professor Ehrman explains on pages 46 & 52 of his book that scribes “inevitably made alterations ... changing the words they copied either by accident (via a slip of the pen or other carelessness) or by design (when the scribe intentionally altered the words he copied [e.g., 2<sup>nd</sup> century maverick Marcion excised whatever ideas conflicted with his personal predilections]).”

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We need to acknowledge shoddy print-shop practice. On page 135 of *The Learned Men* (Crowell, New York, 1949), Gustavus S. Paine tells of his discovering “mistakes made by [KJV] printers, averaging about one in ten pages.” In this connection, see the list of errors (some of them funny) on page 310 of Professor Paul D. Wegner’s *The Journey from Texts to Translators* (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1999). On page 108 of *The English Bible* (Oxford, New York, 1961), Professor F.F. Bruce calls attention to an especially egregious passage which--until it was rectified--read, “Thou shalt commit adultery,” obviously missing an adverb that changed its meaning 180 degrees.

Alarmingly, Dr. Geddes MacGreagor advises on page 137 of his book *The Bible in the Making* (University, Washington, 1982) of an astounding incident with regard to printing. It seems that Oliver Cromwell--Lord Protector of England in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century--“bribed the printers to the tune of one thousand pounds to falsify the text [of a KJV reprint].” One must wonder how much other mischief of this nature may have transpired over the years but has yet to be uncovered.

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Let us now contemplate the perils inherent in the fundamentalists’ commitment to literal interpretation. Professor Mark L. Strauss observes--on pages 80-82 of his book *Distorting Scripture* (InterVarsity, Downers Grove, 1998)--that a “quest for ‘literalness,’ though noble in principle, often results in poor translation.... An overly literal approach can contribute to a misunderstanding of the biblical text....” Also, fresh archeological investigation supports Jewish leaders’ judgment that, “The notion that the Bible is not literally true is more or less settled and understood among most conservative rabbis,” according to *The New York Times* for March 9, 2002, at page 9 of its Arts & Ideas section. (These scholars apparently uphold the pervasive role that allegory and metaphor assume in Bible text.)

A maddening example of negative consequences flowing from literal interpretation can be traced to Matthew 9:12, where KJV relates Jesus having said healthy people “need not a physician.” But medical guidance based upon techniques then in effect clashes with modern inoculation procedure. According to *The Washington Post* for June 10, 2008, at page F5), “all but two states--West Virginia and Mississippi--allow parents to opt out on religious grounds.... Saad B. Omer, a vaccine researcher at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health ... examined rates of pertussis, or whooping cough [and] found that the incidence of the disease was about 50 percent higher in jurisdictions where ... religious exemptions were easy to obtain.... [U]nvaccinated children can spread disease to those who are too young or too medically fragile to be immunized....” In short,

people applying rational meaning to Scripture do benefit themselves and others through disease-preventive measures available today.

Moreover, consider the translation of Luke 14:26, which tells us Jesus exhorted his followers to “hate” their parents and other family members. In cleaving to literalist principles they claim guide them, fundamentalists apparently must attempt to do exactly that, dreadful though it sounds. The rest of us, however, are inclined toward Professor Raymond E. Brown’s explanation on page 119 of his book *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Doubleday, New York, 1997), viz., Matthew 10:37 clarifies that--in his words--believers’ obligation is simply to “prefer [God] over family.”

Seemingly ripe for scholarly research could be a study of literalist-minded, expectant mothers who accept for themselves--notwithstanding atonement of sin through the Cross--the Lord God’s punishment imposed upon the disobedient Eve in Genesis 3:16: “I will greatly increase your pain in childbearing....” (*NIV*) In other words, Christian patients in maternity hospitals who feel a compulsion to reflect the substance of this O.T. passage in their own lives may, accordingly, choose to decline pain relief. (A rough analogy might be eschewing luxuries during Lent, i.e., both entail voluntarily acceding to hardship or inconvenience as a means of sealing one’s faith.) It would be informative to learn what medical professionals think about the wisdom of patients willingly enduring pain; specifically, can such an agenda hinder their ability to respond to critical obstetric processes? If so, what does that tell us?

## APPENDIX B

### Explanatory Letter To My Former Episcopal Parish

November 6, 1998

To the Associate Rector:

Feeling a need to communicate with someone in authority, I selected you for the reason that we meet from time to time when you preside at the Wednesday Noon Eucharist. I don't recall whether I previously informed you my wife is heavily involved in parish work at another Episcopal church, thus creating a scheduling difficulty which led in 1997 to my attending this parish (preferred largely because the midday timing of the service best suited my needs). While my year-1998 financial pledge was not extraordinary, it was not insignificant either.

Over the past year, I have gradually become aware of a facet of this parish which disturbs me greatly, viz., the rector's unrelenting obsession with sex. On the attachment, I have identified seven leading instances in which the subject has arisen, directly or indirectly. These occurrences have impacted negatively upon my fidelity to the parish.

During my lifetime, I have been affiliated with Episcopal congregations elsewhere in Virginia and also Maryland, District of Columbia, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, and California. In none of these have I been exposed to such repeated allusions to parishioners' sex lives. Indeed, neither my wife nor I can recall a sermon in any Episcopal parish--other than this one--which discussed approved (versus disapproved) sex practices. Additionally, the confirmation workbook I once used never touched upon sex at all.

Most educated people, including mainstream clergy, would likely not shy away from pondering scriptural nuances advanced by antisex crusaders. However, the rector has not set forth a case amenable to discussion; basically, all he offers are shallow platitudes devoid of scholarly reasoning. An example is the rector's article in *The Episcopalian* for May 1987. His simplistic proposition appearing therein--viz., sex before marriage is sequentially faulty, like communion before baptism--needs sorely to be reevaluated in light of my extensive and fully documented research.

That is to say, my memorandum prepared in conjunction with this year's study classes (excerpts attached hereto) reflects deliberative inquiry into relevant issues. I tender rational explanations of biblical passages typically seized upon by our fundamentalist brethren in their efforts to foist unfounded notions upon the rest of us through, e.g., manipulation of the political process. Indeed, that granddaddy of conservatives Barry Goldwater lamented that religious fundamentalists had infiltrated the Republican Party and were displacing its traditional values.

If the rector truly desires to effect widespread acceptance of the massive behavior-

modification program implicit in his pronouncements, one would expect to see him support his hypothesis by offering point-by-point rebuttal of theologians and others whose positions he apparently finds distasteful. Strangely, he does not seem to do so. Had I engaged in shoddy documentation of my conclusions while writing research analyses for my employer, I wouldn't have lasted long in the job.

Significantly, professionally trained and credentialed scholars substantiate the value to young adults of erotic encounters with a variety of social dating partners before settling upon a life-mate. The rector's fixation on preserving chastity until marriage is in direct conflict therewith; implementation of his theory would likely result in great numbers of tattered marriages arising out of basic incompatibility, not comprehended by the parties until it is too late. Do you suppose he has ever paused to think about that?

Undoubtedly, relations between the sexes have a moral element and, as such, may be appropriate for theological counsel. At this parish though, other concerns necessarily get short shrift when so much emphasis is placed upon sex restrictions. Curiously, of the three church presentations by the rector to which my wife accompanied me, sex warnings came up in two of them. (I guess fitting sex into a Christmas Eve message might be a bit difficult, even for him.) Incidentally, the rector says he deplores the recent "feminization of society," whatever that means; maybe he favors repeal of the women's suffrage amendment.

Let me acknowledge that God's message can reach us through Scripture (granting, of course, that the various biblical writers expressed outlooks reflecting their particular life experiences). A problem for modern Christians is understanding text originally written in ancient languages. I expended some effort on this subject in the aforementioned study class memorandum, concluding--for example--that it is doubtful God would have us hate our parents (a sickening thought) as the English translation of Luke 14:26 directs us to do.

I further believe God encourages us to grow and benefit from cumulative wisdom gleaned through our study of this world, thereby empowering each succeeding generation to further decipher the Gospels by applying newly found knowledge to whatever circumstances then prevail. (Specifically, sundry sex concepts which the Church pursued in the past have since been invalidated.) Notwithstanding that the grace of God remains eternal, we can strive to expand our insights into the greater scheme.

The collective result of the foregoing is that I have decided my future spiritual enrichment must lie in another parish of the Diocese. (Will you kindly see that my name is removed from current records.) I guess I've wasted a year and a half of my life while figuring all this out.

Respectfully,  
/signature/

ATTACHMENT TO LETTER - Examples of Antisex Expression

1. In the leaflet titled *Distinctives of [Our Parish]*, a passage reads, "... single persons [are to govern themselves] by abstinence from sexual activity." Why does the rector not similarly admonish us against such acts as murder, which I am under the impression Episcopalians are expected to refrain from?
2. During the January meeting of the Men's Ministry, the rector articulated that we should eschew "pornography," a word excluded from my personal lexicon because I have learned it means different things to different people. (I must guess what the rector meant by his use of the term, as he never disclosed his definition.)
3. At the same men's meeting, it was apparent that a goodly number of attendees had visited (with the rector's enthusiastic support) the then-recent gathering of the religious group Promise Keepers. While some of the latter's ideas for abiding by a righteous lifestyle appear generally positive in nature, whatever beneficial influence such organization might offer society is dissipated through its adherence to a fundamentalist-driven, antisex persuasion.
4. Enrolled with me in this year's study group was a couple, the husband of which works on the staff of presidential candidate Gary Bauer's extreme right-wing political organization, known for vigorous promotion of restrictions on sexual autonomy. That this couple resides in the District of Columbia--where there is a plethora of Episcopal churches--but comes all the way out to this rector's parish is eye-opening. They apparently are finding something considerably different from that which I am seeking.
5. The rector's Easter sermon upbraided the young stars of the movie *Titanic* for engaging in unrestrained sex, rather than defer carnal gratification until marrying. Actually though, their coupling constituted only a fractional aspect of the woman's realization that the world offered more than the sheltered life she had been living. It would seem the sex scene so overwhelmed the rector that he failed to grasp the principal message.
6. At the spring banquet, the rector in his remarks brought up sex in some negative context, the specifics of which I don't remember. I do, however, recall feeling it coming; sure enough, it came.
7. In his September newsletter column reporting on the Lambeth conference, the rector seized upon the third world bishops' denunciation of homosexuality as an opening for yet another condemnation of nonmarital heterosexual acts. Sadly--but not surprisingly--the column is silent on everything else that occurred at Lambeth, as if nothing matters but sex!