

## A Dialogue on Homosexuality and Marriage

*Hi there John, Karen referred to a discussion with you on the New Church view of homosexual marriages. She was surprised they weren't accepted. Made me think of Mr Howe's (Rev. E.C. Howe) views on women in the church. Same old same old I guess.*

*Is there such a thing as universal truth or is it all relative and evolving?? We act as if it is with regards to all sorts of things.*

*Is that to suit ourselves, or liberalism?? What about(!) women in the church??*

*You could argue that man can't see what is the universal truth about these issues, so its anyone's guess anyway. Not helpful?! Hee hee*

*W*

Hi there Wanda,

Thanks for the email. Regarding homosexuality and marriage, I don't think there is A New Church view. It was just as I understand which differs from others in the New Church. I have to begin by accepting that there are many things we cannot know unless they are revealed by God. In general terms the New Church accepts that the Writings are a revelation of such things from Him through Swedenborg. From my reading of these teachings I believe that there is universal truth which is not knowledge or statement of fact but an aspect of God's life. However throughout the centuries He reveals appearances of truth to mankind by accommodating His way of seeing life to the spiritual and mental states of the people at the time. This accommodation is similar to the way the sun's light is accommodated in order to be received by life on earth. All the different intensities of light on earth come from the universal light of the sun. No one can receive the sun's light as it is in its origins. Through the effects of global warming we are discovering how damaging not accommodating that light can be.

For me the Writings provide the most complete and holistic and acceptable intellectual picture of God and His relationship with creation. As He has revealed Himself through them He is someone I can understand and relate to. He shows that in Himself He is Divine Love and Divine Wisdom. The relationship of these two essentials of Himself is described as a marriage and from this marriage Life Itself flows forth to create.

Because He is the creator, the whole of His creation reflects His nature. Thus the Divine Marriage is reflected in the duality seen in creation, duality in the body, Ying and Yang, and sexually, male and female becoming one and producing new life. At university I loved learning about DNA and the way it splits and reconstitutes itself in pairs of proteins thus creating something new. It illustrated for me the way in which creation at a very natural level reflects the Divine.

The New Church understanding of the origin of human marriage is very different from any other religious or secular teaching I have come across. It is based on the understanding that male and female represent distinct aspects of the Divine which although distinct are created to be complimentary and so be united and become a unique one. It teaches that in the ideal male, female relationship of husband and wife brings the greatest fulfilment and joy of life that human beings can know and this lasts for ever. This marriage whilst producing much joy and delight can also produce more of the Lord's children.

The teaching also reveals that we either have a female soul or a male soul which means that each sex receives life from the Lord in a different way. But from these differences they compliment each other. The desire of love for wisdom through which to express itself and the longing of wisdom for love to give it life is the basis of these distinct and complimentary natures. These two complimentary longings give rise to the male and female sex drive on the lowest levels of the human mind. We should not dismiss love and wisdom as woolly unreal things. Scientists have discovered how important love is in the development of the human brain. Nor should we dismiss

wisdom for in the case of children have been abused there is a terrible psychological marriage created in which love is married to abuse and ideas of unworthiness. Returning to New Church teachings about marriage. Nowhere in my reading of the Writings is there any possibility for any other source of eternal happiness for human beings than through true marriage love between husband and wife. They do acknowledge that this is an ideal for human beings because the human race is unregenerate. It is only a few people experience it in its fullness in this life.

They press the issue deeper by teaching that this relationship has to arise from a chosen individual inner marriage of love and wisdom as we live our life. It is not something that we can put on from the outside. So marriage between husband and wife on earth ideally looks to the true marriage and living out its principles as best they can. While it might not be fully realised whilst earth, all the angels of heaven are in such a relationship. It is a complimentary relationship of souls, minds, lives and bodies. Husband and wife come to love and think and will as the other does.

What of homosexuality? I do not know and as far as I can see nor does anyone else in the scientific world really understand beyond all doubt where homosexuality comes from. I do not know how much is nature and how much nurture and so whether only some or everyone who is homosexual has a choice.

From my reading of the New Church teachings homosexuality is not what the Lord wills but for some reason He has to permit. It is possibly similar to the way He permits intra-sexual, and transsexual people. My suggestion is that while the Lord's life may enter an inviolate male or female soul, as that life descends it clothes itself with a mind and body which is affected by the indiscriminate effects of evils in the world which God has to permit. Evil acts where the opportunity allows. All of us are born with genetic, mental and physical differences which may be disabling to a greater or lesser extent.

As I accept that the soul of everyone is either male or female and that the Lord's wish is for us to find the happiness of true marriage love between husband and wife how can I speak about marriage in a relationship of people of the same sex, how can I encourage people to see such a relationship as the Lord's intention for them. Because we are taught that the things we come to believe in and live from become part of us I would be encouraging them into something that may actually destroy their ability to find the happiness of a marriage in heaven.

So I am caught between having compassion for a fellow human being who believes they are homosexual and having the compassion for a person who I understand is jeopardising their ability to find the eternal happiness of true marriage.

Well I had better stop.

Love from us both,

John

*I hear what you are saying John, about the origin of heterosexual marriage being in the nature of God. But that is a digital model. (Either you have a female soul or a male one.)*

*But what if the divine is more of an analogue model? That is what I observe in terms of human sexuality, we are Not just either male or female, but fall on a 'number line' of sexuality between the 2. Hmmm.*

*The 'appearance' argument is a bit tricky...it can be used to discredit things. To make them not the truth. Of course it is backed up by what has and hasn't been revealed...but maybe this revelation itself is just an appearance.*

*I think things may be more complex and mysterious than New Church teaching alludes to. Just my opinion, and not your experience I know.*

W

Hi there Wanda I think that the Divine in itself is neither male nor female but has chosen to appear to us for a Divine reason as male. The thing about revelation is that as some theologian said it is like a stone flung from heaven. It's sitting there for us to make what sense we can of it. As I read it idea of there being a continuum of male to female just does not fit the NC teaching. I explain the similar traits as them all traits being human and but the life within them may be from a male soul or female soul which makes them similar but distinct. So nurturing, strength, wisdom, cruelty etc comes from a male or female soul. I am very aware that the spheres of males and females are totally different. If we sit opposite a member of either sex with our eyes closed I think we can pick up the two distinct spheres.

See you, John.

TO BE CONTINUED.