

affirm many articles of faith to which most *evangelical Christians would also assent. For example, the first Belief affirms that the Bible is the inspired word of God in which he ‘has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation’. Other central evangelical doctrines affirmed in the Fundamental Beliefs include the *Trinity (Nos. 2–5), the *fall (No. 7), the deity of *Christ, his *incarnation and his substitutionary *atonement in death and resurrection (Nos. 4 and 9). Some other of the Fundamental Beliefs, though less mainstream, are nonetheless held in common with some in the evangelical world: ‘soul sleep’, for example (No. 26), and the requirement that members refrain from tobacco and alcohol, though the addition here of ‘the foods regarded as unclean in the Scriptures’ is less usual (No. 22). However, the distinctively SDA doctrines which, as mentioned above, lie at the foundation of the church itself – the prophetic witness of Ellen White (No. 18); the perpetual nature of the seventh-day Sabbath (No. 20); and the eschatological significance of the 1844 message, with the corollary that the second coming will soon take place (No. 24) – take SDAs away from mainstream evangelical thought. These teachings lead to a self-identification of the SDA Church as God’s remnant church for the last days (affirmed in No. 13), which has often led the church to take a triumphalist and isolationist stand, making co-operation with more mainstream Christian groups difficult and, as far as many on the SDA side are concerned, both undesirable and unnecessary.

One of the earliest significant critics of the SDA faith was D. M. Canright (1840–1919), originally a protégé of Ellen White and her husband James, and an SDA minister for almost twenty years. In his books, published after he left the SDA Church, he charged the SDAs with teaching works-centred salvation (the Sabbath doctrine), and Ellen White with plagiarism and false prophecy. Though the SDA Church has often attempted to refute them, these charges continue to underpin the fundamental unease felt by many evangelicals confronted by its teaching.

Bibliography and resources

Resources: The official SDA website is www.adventist.org. The official Ellen G. White website (www.whiteestate.org) includes historical and apologetic resources and links to online texts of works by and about her, including

the official biography in six volumes by her grandson, Arthur L. White. Canright’s works (*Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*; *The Lord’s Day from Neither Catholics Nor Pagans*; and *The Life of Mrs Ellen G. White*) can be found at various anti SDA websites (e.g. www.truthorfables.com). (All online resources accessed February 2013.)

Bibliography: M. Bull and K. Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary* (Bloomington, ²2006); General Conference of Seventh-Day Advent, *Seventh-Day Adventists Believe* (Nampa, ²2005); R. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health* (Grand Rapids, ²2008).

I. GRAHAM

SEXUALITY

The subject of sexuality is undoubtedly an important one in contemporary Christian theology. Disagreements over it threaten unity among Christians, and the church’s traditional teaching is also increasingly a challenge to Western society and thus significant in the church’s *mission. It is important to recognize the breadth covered by the concept and acknowledge that the term is often not sharply defined. This article introduces five main areas of theological importance.

Male and female

Central to a Christian understanding of human sexuality is the Creator’s differentiation of human beings, as creatures made in God’s *image into male and female (Gen. 1:27; 2:18–25). This is reaffirmed by Jesus in the Gospels (Mark 10:6–9) and also shapes apostolic teaching on sexuality (1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5:21–33), although being male and female is now to be understood in the light of our unity in Christ (1 Cor. 11:8–12; Gal. 3:28).

The significance of this sexual differentiation received little detailed attention from early patristic theologians. They held various views ranging from the irrelevance of sexual difference to our humanity (Tatian), through to emphasizing the dangers and temptations sexual differentiation brings (Tertullian), limiting its significance to procreation (Clement) or even apparently seeing it as part of God’s response to the fall (Gregory of Nyssa). As in many areas relating to sexuality, *Augustine’s thought has proved particularly influential on later Christian tradition. He establishes the

goodness of sexual difference and traces its importance through the drama of creation, God's *redemption of our fallen state and the eschatological consummation. This view became the largely unexamined Christian consensus through the medieval period and the Reformation. In recent theology a number of both Protestant (Karl *Barth) and Roman Catholic (Hans Urs von *Balthasar, Pope John Paul II) theologians have developed more systematic accounts of what it means to be male and female within their theological anthropologies. In their different ways they all highlight the importance of sexual differentiation for human *fellowship and relationship.

The issue is of contemporary significance in four main areas. First, there are ongoing debates, especially among evangelical Christians, about whether the fundamental equality of men and women is compatible with a belief in male headship and whether Scripture teaches such a hierarchical view of the relationship between the sexes (see *Ministry). Second, the extent to which, beyond biology, any differences claimed between men and women are essential and part of God's created purpose or simply social constructions of *gender identity. Third, the importance of *feminist theology. Fourth, in ethics, a theology of sexual differentiation is vital for the development of a Christian response to homosexuality and transsexuality.

Sexual desire

Scripture speaks positively of sexual desire between men and women (Gen. 2:23; Song; 1 Cor. 7:3), but also warns against lust and disordered and excessive sexual desire (2 Sam 11; Rom. 1:24), often described in terms of concupiscence within the Christian tradition. From early in church history, the latter negative emphasis has often predominated in Christian attitudes to sex. At times this has viewed all sexual pleasure in a negative light and effectively denied the goodness of being created as sexual and bodily creatures through an exaggerated *asceticism or a *dualistic understanding of humanity which has emphasized the spirit over the body and even denigrated the body and sexuality. In recent decades, the pendulum has swung back the other way with a rediscovery of a positive Christian understanding of sexual desire (e.g. Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*). In some writers (e.g. James Nelson's 'body theology' and Carter Heyward's 'erotic

theology') this has led to an exaltation of *eros* that departs from biblical and traditional sexual norms. In wider society, the understanding of human sexuality in terms of sexual desire is increasingly being replaced by the language of sexual orientation. This conceptualization of human sexuality in terms of a fixed, settled sexual attraction to someone of the opposite (heterosexual) or same (homosexual) sex or people of both sexes (bisexual) is only beginning to be subjected to theological analysis and critique.

Sexual identity

An important recent cultural development is the phenomenon of relating sexuality to personal identity. This has arisen as a result of a number of factors, including greater openness about sexual matters, the concept of sexual orientation and the social organization and political mobilization of groups whose sexuality has in the past led to their marginalization or persecution. Originally focused on homosexuality, the number of possible sexual identities has continued to expand and diversify further, especially among young people. These sexual identities are also now beginning to find their own distinctive theological voice in the development of gay and lesbian theologies (discussed in Elizabeth Stuart's *Gay and Lesbian Theologies*, Oxford, 2003) and *queer theology (the best guide now being Gerard Loughlin [ed.], *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*, Oxford, 2007). These new approaches increasingly extend beyond discussion of sexuality into wider, more traditional, theological subjects. It remains to be seen whether these will become as theologically influential as other contextual theologies such as *liberation theology and *black theology, but this is unlikely for at least two reasons. First, they generally work from presuppositions opposed to traditional Christian teaching on sexuality. Secondly, many Christians believe the creation of identities based on sexuality is false, even idolatrous, and a denial that our identity is given us by God in creation and in Christ: 'At the deepest ontological level, therefore, there is no such thing as "a" homosexual or "a" heterosexual; there are human beings, male and female, called to redeemed humanity in Christ, endowed with a complex variety of emotional potentialities and threatened by a complex variety of forms of alienation' (St Andrew's Day Statement, 1995).

Sexual behaviour

Scripture includes both general warnings against sexual immorality (*porneia*, e.g. Matt. 15:19; Acts 15:20; 1 Cor. 6:18) and a significant number of prohibitions relating to specific sexual behaviour. These have then been expanded within later Christian tradition. In evaluating sexual behaviour, Christian *moral theology has emphasized the procreational (Gen. 1:28) and relational (Gen. 2:18–24) goods of sexual intercourse and the divine gift of marriage between a man and a woman as the proper context for sexual union (Gen. 2:24; Exod. 20:14; Heb. 13:4). The emphasis on procreation led to the condemnation of various practices not explicitly addressed in Scripture, including masturbation, various forms of non-procreative sexual behaviour (e.g. oral and anal sex) and the use of contraception. The latter is still rejected by the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, but accepted by most Protestant Christians. In much contemporary Christian sexual ethics the focus of moral evaluation has shifted to the relational good of sexual behaviour and the existence of a loving relationship. Thus traditional teaching against adultery, promiscuity, paedophilia and prostitution continues to be upheld, but other non-marital sexual behaviour is more acceptable to some Christians (e.g. Adrian Thatcher, *Liberating Sex*, London, 1993).

A particular area of contention concerns homosexual behaviour. This is consistently condemned in both the OT (Lev. 18:22; 20:13) and NT (Rom. 1: 24–27; 1 Cor. 6:9–10; 1 Tim 1:9–10) and is also seen by most of the Christian tradition as unnatural sexual behaviour. A number of scholars have, however, challenged this negative stance. They have argued for a more positive response to homosexual behaviour in loving relationships. This is either because they believe the biblical prohibitions are more narrow (e.g. restricted to cultic, abusive or pederastic sexual conduct) or because of alleged new understanding of homosexuality unavailable to the biblical writers. However, the majority of biblical scholarship and almost all Christian churches are not persuaded by these claims.

The Christian church has also strongly insisted, in contrast to much contemporary popular thinking, that sexual behaviour is not essential to human flourishing. In fact, the church honours those who, like Christ himself,

commit themselves to sexual abstinence, and the early and medieval church particularly exalted virginity and celibacy.

Sexual relationships

Christian moral theology has traditionally commended marriage – a lifelong, exclusive, monogamous relationship – between a man and a woman as the only holy form of sexual relationship. Augustine defended marriage (*On the Good of Marriage*) in the face of some negative Christian evaluation and excessive exaltation of celibacy. His account of the three goods of marriage (offspring, faithfulness and sacrament) shaped the Christian tradition and is still central to much contemporary sexual ethics. Marriage is significant in Christian theology both as a created institution (Gen. 2) and as a symbol of God's covenant love for his people (Hos., Eph. 5) (see *Family).

Current debates about marriage focus on its beginning and ending. The rapid rise in cohabitation has led some to question traditional teaching against all premarital sex. A strong case can, however, still be made that the meaning, significance, symbolism and consequences of sexual union all point to it being fitting only within a marital relationship. Christians have for centuries disagreed over what circumstances, other than death, can bring an end to a marriage in such a way as to make a further marriage legitimate. Those with a strong view of indissolubility reject all remarriage after divorce, some believe Scripture allows remarriage after adultery (the Matthean exception, Matt. 19:1–12) or desertion by an unbelieving spouse (the Pauline privilege, 1 Cor. 7), while others allow remarriage in other circumstances. There are also debates as to whether same-sex relationships can be treated as marriage or as equivalent to marriage.

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A. GODDARD

SHINTOISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Shintoism is a naturalistic cosmic religion, an *animistic *polytheism. It represents the original worldview and way of life of the Japanese. Its central concept is *kami*. (The Chinese character pronounced *kami* on its own is pronounced *shin* in combination.) *Kami* is usually translated as 'god' or 'gods', but also means 'above', 'superior' or 'divine'. *Kami* means anything sacred and/or extraordinary which arouses man's fear or respect (see R. *Otto). Shintoism claims that there exist 800 million *kami*, being manifested in the beneficent beauties of nature – mountains, trees, beasts and birds. Shinto shrines are dotted around the countryside. Humankind is also a part of this world, and can never be separated from it. Every being is part of the community of the entire universe and all share *kami* nature. When a person is purified (*harai*), he recovers his *kami* nature and restores his true self. In Shintoism, the heavenly and earthly realms are not sharply separated, nor the realms of life in this world and life after death. In many homes dead relatives are worshipped as *kami*, through *syncretism with ancestor worship.

The Shinto myths trace the origin of heaven and earth to the marriage of a male deity (Izanagi, he who invites) and a female deity (Izami, she who is invited). This resulted in the birth of the sun goddess Amaterasu Oomino-*kami*. Her children came down to the human domain, and their descendant, Jimmu, is said to have been the first *tenno* (heavenly emperor) of Japan.

In the early history of Japan (fifth century AD), several clans fought to establish themselves as the political centre. Each clan possessed its clan *kami*, to whom the whole clan turned in the time of need. The leader of the clan acted

as both chief priest and military commander. The *tenno* clan (whose leader has been *tenno* up to the present day) eventually united the whole country. This meant that the goddess of *tenno* was invincible. As a result, Shintoism came to play the central role in Japanese history as a patriotic imperial cult.

In the fifth and sixth centuries, Shintoism was influenced by *Confucianism and *Buddhism, which supplied respectively the ethics and the philosophy which Shintoism lacked. Shinto's simple naturalistic faith and practice became more theoretical and ritualistic. In the ninth century, a Buddhist interpreted the Shinto *kami* as local manifestations of the universal Buddha. This provided the philosophical explanation for the co-existence of these two religions (known as *Ryobu Shinto*), which lasted until the nineteenth century. Buddhist concepts of repeated rebirths (see *Metempsychosis) and of success and failure as the result of sins in earlier lives were syncretized with underlying Shinto beliefs.

Christianity came to Japan on three occasions in history as the religious element of foreign aggression. It was first introduced to Japan by the pioneer Jesuit Francis Xavier (1502–52) in 1549. At that time, Japan was nominally ruled by *tenno*, but was actually divided among feudal lords. In such a situation, Christianity spread rather rapidly and claimed several Christian feudal lords. After the Tokugawa Shogunate consolidated its political power (1603), it severely persecuted Christians because they pledged allegiance to God rather than to Shogun. It also isolated the country to prevent Christian influence.

As soon as Japan reopened after 250 years of seclusion (1854), Protestant Christian missionaries arrived and were initially successful. In 1868, the Tokugawa Shogunate was overthrown and the Meiji imperial government was established. This government introduced several Western social, educational, political and military structures, including monarchy. The leaders of the government argued that Christianity was too individualistic for the Japanese Empire and Buddhism too weak to solidify the country. They chose Shintoism to play the role which Christianity had played in European monarchies. This was the origin of state Shintoism in Japan. A rescript read daily in schools between 1889 and 1945 declared that Japan was 'the nation of the *kami*'. When nationalists and militarists thus utilized state Shintoism to enhance Japanese nationalism,