

## The Liturgical Body

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### **Abstract:**

I had feared that this might be a book to alienate all possible readers: too conservative in theology to suit social liberals, and too liberal in conclusions to suit social conservatives. I am therefore grateful for constructive engagement from both sides. Cahill is exactly right when she wonders if “perhaps Rogers’ aim is not so much to produce a systematic moral analysis, as to reshape the mental universe, to recolor the background screen, against which Christians consider the reality of Christian gay men and lesbians in committed relationships”. Indeed, I seek to recover a symbolic universe, a nuptial hermeneutics, to address the reality of all Christians in committed relationships, including same- and opposite-sex marriages, celibates in community, and the committed relationship of baptism. I am gratified when Wannewetsch writes that “too often, ethical guidelines are directly aimed at so as to narrow down the rich doctrinal horizon to a window”, and that “Rogers’ exercise in ‘irregular dogmatics’ (a notion borrowed from Karl Barth) may be closer to the core of doctrinal theology”. Between the two reviewers I imagine that we have an ethicist and a theologian, a Catholic and a Protestant, a liberal and a conservative. Cahill wants more ethics and Wannewetsch less moralism. It is an index of the rethinking that I hope to provoke if both are impatient that I don’t go further. Indeed more will be needed, if an account of sexuality theologically to the right and socially to the left is to flourish. I hope that over time others more skilled in ethics and liturgics can help provide it. For this book is less about the ethical question what we are to do, than the theological question what God may be doing with us.

**Keywords:** Theology | Christianity | Marriage | Sexuality

### **Article:**

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My private title for *Sexuality and the Christian Body* was always what became the subtitle: *The Way of the Body into the Triune God*. That implies a liturgical body. Had her essay appeared in time, I would have introduced the concept with these observations by Susan Harvey:

For some years now, scholarship has been heavily preoccupied with discussion of “the body.” ... For those who study ancient [and later] Christianity, discussion has been dominated by a focus on sexuality, with emphasis on asceticism as a devotional practice of sexual renunciation or control of the body as a sexual body. While ancient [and later] Christians were surely concerned about these issues, such overriding emphases may owe more to our contemporary social debates than to the primary interests of those who pursued the Christian life in its formative centuries. For if they, too, worried about the body as an essential component of human identity, they also developed a Christian devotional life strikingly dependent on the direct engagement of bodily experience as its context.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike Harvey, I did want to address contemporary social debates. But like Harvey, I sought to remove the focus of the debate from sexuality, and turn it to the wider soteriological context in which dogmatics locates the body, the ecclesial body of the sacraments and the states of life. Thus I wrote:

“Orientation in the debates” has been away from heterosexuality and homosexuality, and toward baptism and marriage; away from an individual orientation, and toward a communal orientation; away from the nature of genes, and toward the nature of Gentiles; away from an orientation to satisfaction, and toward an orientation to sanctification; away from a sexual orientation, and toward a sacramental orientation.<sup>3</sup>

I wanted to re-orient the sexuality debates in terms of the body as Christianity rather than as modernity constructs it. Harvey answers plainly: “Why do we have a body? ... God created the body to be a means of knowing God and of being in God’s presence.”<sup>3a</sup> Hearing the word, seeing our neighbor, tasting the eucharist, smelling the incense, touching the sick we both perceive God and enter into God’s presence. Marriage and monasticism are two forms of communal asceticism in which God can transfigure us over time through the perceptions of others not easily escaped. Those who would deny marriage to gay and lesbian Christians are not denying them primarily a means of satisfaction, but a means of sanctification—a much more serious charge. The liturgical body transfigures asceticism too. No mere renunciation, through such communal forms the Church renders the body a sign. Even Symeon the Stylite, to take a difficult example, makes sense as a liturgically constructed figure. The Church calendar restrains his austerities by saving the greatest for Lent. Processions to his pillar turn him to the service of his gathered neighbors. The mass celebrated there renders the pillar an altar and Symeon’s body the incense rising up to God.<sup>4</sup> In liturgy the Spirit may catch us up into its own, proper, liturgical work of witnessing and celebrating the love between the Father and the Son.

For Christians, the body exists to perceive and manifest the glory of God. And not merely in Syriac Christianity; the Westminster Catechism famously begins, “What is the chief end of man?” and answers, “To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” In a wide sense of the word, Christianity constructs the body *liturgically*. Not sexually. Sexuality is not *straightforwardly* a way of knowing God and being in God’s presence. Liturgy and asceticism are. The only question is, is sexuality, especially homosexuality, *left out* of liturgical and ascetic practice? Or is it assumed, and therefore redeemable? If so, the task is to re-describe sexuality in liturgical and ascetic terms, so that it no longer controls, but they do. That is why the book does not center on sexuality at all, but on dogmatic arguments for marriage and monasticism, baptism and eucharist. The question is, how are the bodies of gay men and lesbians to be assumed into the body of Christ that is the Church, in such a way that they become communicative signs, signs through which the Church can communicate God’s reconciliation?<sup>5</sup> The question becomes more pressing if the Bible portrays that reconciliation as a wedding between God and humanity, and if the nuptial symbol of reconciliation exceeds itself to become the eschatological banquet of the Lamb. How shall any Christians, not excluding gay and lesbian Christians or celibates in community, begin to signify and participate in a reconciliation so symbolized? The question is not narrow but pervades the whole community, especially if Rowan Williams is right that

The whole story of creation, incarnation and our incorporation into the fellowship of Christ’s body tells us that God desires us, *as if we were God*, as if we were that unconditional response to God’s giving that God’s self makes in the life of the Trinity. We are created [and we marry] so that we may be caught up in this, so that we may grow into the wholehearted love of God by learning that God loves us as God loves God. The life of the Christian community has as its rationale—if not invariably its practical

reality—the task of teaching us [that, of teaching us] so to order our relations that human beings may see themselves as desired, as the occasion of joy.<sup>6</sup>

How can gay and lesbian Christians offer themselves, their souls and bodies, as liturgical signs for teaching us that? And how can the Church accept their living sacrifice?

Since the book presents therefore “a defense of marriage”,<sup>7</sup> I agree wholeheartedly with Cahill’s concern that “if the bible and tradition de-centralize sex in theology and spirituality, is it really a good idea to now recentralize it”? Rather I want to “centralize” the marriage of Christ and the church. Rather than stressing “the ecstatic union of eros”, as Cahill suggests I should, I have preferred to stress the stabler union of marriage, in which desire “has the opportunity to become the more reliable means of sanctification that eros may trick lovers into: acts of faith, hope, and charity”.<sup>8</sup> Despite its cover, I aimed to write a book in which not ecstasy but “visible holiness would come as climax”.<sup>9</sup>

Nuptial hermeneutics has been a central topic in cultural anthropology—the business of what marriage means, how it functions in the symbol system, what it signifies.<sup>10</sup> But the genre of nuptial hermeneutics in dogmatic theology is rare. Paul Evdokimov’s *The Sacrament of Love* may be the best example.<sup>11</sup> It makes overtures to ethics, but it is not ethics as we now divide the disciplines. One might misclassify it as devotional literature. Since *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, similarly, could hardly avoid being mistaken for a book in ethics, it will save readers some perplexity that an ethicist should warn them that it is not. As I insisted in the introduction, “Because this book is an exercise in irregular dogmatics, it does not apologize for—it glories in—its dogmatic character. That is, it delights in relating its theme to such topics as election and Trinity that may at first appear to stand at the farthest remove from sexuality. It aims to teach as much about creation, redemption, consummation, and God’s covenant with Israel, as about anything else.”<sup>12</sup> Again: “As it is concerned primarily with the symbolics, and only secondarily with the rules and virtues, of Christian marriage and monasticism, its overtures to ethics are partial and fragmentary. Just because it confines itself to nuptial symbolics—to trying to recover what marriage might be—it has little or nothing to say about other issues of sexual ethics.”<sup>13</sup> It is the merit of Cahill’s article to confirm this disclaimer. Perhaps others will go on where I left off. I intended, rather, to “change the subject”,<sup>14</sup> to propose a new constellation of relevant topics, to suggest that the body is of interest to Christian thinkers in more ways than one. Cahill wishes I had told readers more about ethical norms; I preferred to tell them about the Trinity, about Jews and Gentiles, about adoption as a type of salvation. Cahill’s insight that the book sought “not so much to produce a systematic moral analysis, as to reshape the mental universe” explains why “Rogers’ proposed sexual ethics is not set out and defended”. I never intended to propose such a thing, except as the immensely complex Christian practices of marriage and monasticism richly imply it. God forbid I should “take on the major themes of basic Christian ethics in a separate work”.<sup>15</sup>

Also because nuptial hermeneutics is rare, we mistake the form of its argument. Its proper argument is what Geertz would call “thick description”, rather than deduction. Take for example this thesis of Karl Barth: “Because the election of God is real, there is such a thing as love and marriage.”<sup>16</sup> The thesis starts with “because”, and takes the form of an implication. But we find it dense and odd; we cannot credit it as an implication; it is too austere to count as devotion. Perhaps we will call it “associational”, because it makes a claim about marriage relevant to but distinct from ethics. Thus Cahill expresses puzzlement not only over the book’s genre, but also about its mode of argument. She seems to expect deductive rather than analogical thinking, which she describes as “associations” and “loose connections”.<sup>17</sup> And she finds “a written work that presents itself as theological ... scholarship ... is not the right genre to rely so heavily on the suggestive powers of a mixed postmodern symbolic milieu”. It is a strange postmodernism that banishes Foucault and misspells his name. (*Sexuality and the Christian Body*, p. 9.) I would have thought the milieu more Anselmian than postmodern, since I go on at some length about the difference between arguments *ex convenientia* as opposed to *ex necessitate* in half a dozen places, specifying that I intend to provide no argument *ex necessitate*.<sup>18</sup> No one would claim that the quality of my arguments puts me in their league, but if arguments *ex convenientia* do not count as academic theology, then neither do Aquinas’s *Tertia Pars* or Anselm’s *Cur Deus homo*.

Thus I anticipated and put forward an explicit reply to Cahill’s complaint that she “would have been more interested in a book about gay marriage with an argument”. No doubt she would have been more interested in a book with a deductive argument. Although I would count Cahill no opponent, I did observe that “the claim that one’s opponents make no argument comes easily to the lips”.<sup>19</sup> After a lovely job of describing theological argument, Wannewetsch too finds a *petitio principii* where I find the testing of a hypothesis. To that too I had written, “The critic thinks the essay begs the question.”<sup>20</sup> I can do no better than to repeat just what I meant by the sort of argument the book would offer:

If one begins from some shared premises and attempts to make others attractive through disciplined elaboration in their terms, that is not a bad procedure in theology, but defines its usual method. It has been said of Karl Barth ... that he argued aesthetically, or by thick description: “Barth was about the business of conceptual description. He took the classical themes of communal Christian language molded by the Bible, tradition and constant usage in worship, practice, instruction and controversy, and he restated or redescribed them, rather than evolving [formal] arguments on their behalf. It was of the utmost importance to him that this communal language, especially its biblical *fons et origo*, ... had an integrity of its own. It was irreducible. But in that case its lengthy, even leisurely unfolding was equally indispensable. ... Barth had as it were to recreate a universe of discourse, and he had to put the reader in the middle of that world, instructing him in the use of that language by showing him how—extensively, and not only by stating the rules or principles of that discourse.”<sup>21</sup>

That is what I said I wanted to do.

Wannenwetsch is helping to develop what Rowan Williams has called “a language *in which to disagree*”.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, I agree with much in Wannenwetsch’s account without seeing how it counts as critique. Much disagreement may reduce to a Protestant understanding of orders of creation that do not hang suspended in grace in quite the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox manner. He wants for the moments to be more distinct, I want them to be more continuous. Or, he wants my doctrine of creation to be more robust, by which I understand more Protestant. For that reason too he seems less comfortable with the assumption of other bodily matter into the body of Christ as sacrament, so that “sacramentalism” becomes for him a term of critique. Yet these things all hang together in a nuptial symbolics. The wedding feast of the Lamb carries out God’s creatorly will to elevate human beings into table fellowship with the Trinity. My own formerly Presbyterian notion of creation has been transfigured by Eastern Orthodox writers like Alexander Schmemmann, who see creation as a whole as preparing the allembicing sacrament:

[T]he unique position of man in the universe is that he alone is to *bless* God for the food and the life he receives from Him. He alone is to respond to God’s blessing with his blessing. The significant fact about the life in the Garden is that man is to *name* things. ... [I]n the Bible a name ... reveals the very essence of a thing ... as God’s gift. ... To name a thing, in other terms, is to bless God for it and in it. And in the Bible to bless God is not a “religious” or a “cultic” act, but the very *way of life*. God blessed the world, blessed the man, blessed the seventh day (that is, time), and this means that He filled all that exists with His love and goodness, made all this “very good.” So the only *natural* (and not “supernatural”) reaction of man, to whom God gave this blessed and sanctified world, is to bless God in return, to thank Him, to *see* the world as God sees it—and in this act of gratitude and adoration—to know, name, and possess the world. ... Man is first of all “*homo adorans*.” He stands in the center of the world and unifies it in his act of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God—and by filling the world with this eucharist, he transforms his life, the one that he receives from the world, into life in God, into communion. The world was created as the “matter,” the material of one all-embracing eucharist.<sup>23</sup>

Although I find Wannenwetsch’s objections sophisticated, I believe I can pose the questions between us simply.

1. On the matter of “docetism”, not in Christology, but in anthropology, the force of the worry seems to depend on the observed shape of the male and female bodies, which count as real in a fairly narrow way; all else reduces the body to mere appearance. Wannenwetsch worries about “the marginalization of the body’s distinctive attributes”. The first question I would ask is, Why is it that when a man has a bodily (emotional, affectional, and physiological) reaction to a woman, it’s real, but when a woman has similar bodily reactions to a woman it’s mere appearance? Or why is it that the shape of the body counts as real, but the reaction of the body counts as mere appearance? Is there not a separation of body and soul here?<sup>24</sup> The desire for a

body of a particular gender—a desire that affects gay and lesbian Christians most of all—does not marginalize but heightens attention to bodies’ “distinctive attributes”. Furthermore, the desire for the body of a particular gender is itself one of the body’s distinctive attributes. I much prefer Cahill’s worry, that a book about Christian homosexuality would not marginalize but centralize the distinctive attributes of the body. “Gay and lesbian people care about [the distinctive attributes of] bodies,” I wrote; “otherwise many of them would take the easier route and settle for those of the opposite sex.”<sup>25</sup>

In fact, I devoted an entire chapter to this objection, “The Shape of the Body and the Shape of Grace”,<sup>26</sup> in which I proposed that the true human body is the body of Christ, and that other human bodies deserve the name by secondary, derivative participation in his. In Adam a logos would be divine, ashamed of the flesh that proved him a creature; in Christ the Logos would become human, befriending the flesh to make us divine.<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere Wannewetsch turns christological too.

For that reason I regret his deployment of the term “docetism” beyond christology, where he “cannot find it”, since the extension of heresy-language may impoverish rather than enrich the language in which to disagree. Rather it tends to confirm the observation that “Ours is a time in which it is depressingly easy to make this or that issue a test of Christian orthodoxy in such a way as to make ... suspect the theology of anyone disagreeing on the issue in question ... Of late, attitudes to sexuality have come to be seen as a clear marker of orthodoxy in many circles.”<sup>28</sup>

2. In his account of Romans, Wannewetsch seems to imply both that I deploy a christological reduction, and that I “reinterpret creation as nature: something merely there”. In any case I agree with Wannewetsch’s account of Romans, especially when he says that the Gentiles “dishonour God in that they honour created things as they are, i.e., as [pure] ‘nature.’” I am happy to find confirmation of what I wrote about the passage in *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth*<sup>29</sup> and therefore help for my case here, especially when he concludes that the Gentiles must honor created things “in Christ”.<sup>30</sup> I quite agree that the sin of the Gentiles is that they “insist on reinterpreting creation as [pure] nature”—which seems to tell more against natural law than a sacramental approach. Why this counts as critique I’m not sure. One drawback of my ecumenical approach emerges when traditions use “nature”-language divergently. Perhaps I confused Wannewetsch in following Aquinas to speak of nature concrete rather than pure. Aquinas can write, “‘naturally’ means ‘by nature reformed by grace’”.<sup>31</sup> God might have created the world and abandoned it to us: that would be pure nature. But in Catholic and Orthodox circles “nature” without further specification means the world as God actually did create it, not abandoned to us but destined for God—which is just what Wannewetsch means when he speaks of creation as distinct from (pure) nature. Wannewetsch’s distinction between nature and creation even conforms to the polemical purpose of Paul’s argument, which is to deconstruct, not general human nature, but the sexually labile nature of Gentiles in Jewish stereotype.<sup>32</sup> The question here, as above, is what aspects of created reality count as being “in Christ”?<sup>33</sup> Race is transparent

to Christ; is gender? Is orientation? If being a Gentile is a matter of being sexually labile and prone to homoeroticism, where does that leave us?

3. The worry about the *forma substantialis* of marriage parallels earlier ones about baptism and ordination. In the women's ordination debates, the argument was heard that you can't ordain a woman any more than you can baptize a dog: it won't take. The form applies only to the right matter. Many churches have found the matter of women right for ordination. The question about marriage is not, is the form empty, but whether the matter, with appropriate conditions, is human—as in the other two cases.

4. On the “silencing of ex-homosexuals”, I am confused as to whether “exhomosexuals” are people who no longer have a homosexual orientation, or whether, as sometimes indicated, they are people with a homosexual orientation that have transfigured it into celibate singleness or heterosexual marriage (which is how I believe the “ex-gay” ministries work). The question is simple: What is the Church to do with gay and lesbian Christians? I worry about ministries that may develop capacities for evasion, or that may break up couples on principle. Even if the whole point of regarding marriage as a practice of asceticism is to make divorce look less obvious, the question remains practical: Which liturgical form will do more to promote the stability of couples and reduce the rate of divorces: same-sex marriages, or “ex-gay” heterosexual marriages? Can ex-gay ministries or same-sex marriages better teach gay and lesbian Christians to see themselves as desired by God and occasions of joy? Which liturgical form will better allow Christians to offer their whole selves, their souls and bodies, as communicative signs?

No doubt the answer will be mixed. Whether or not it's generally advisable as a matter of spiritual direction, some gay men do find themselves happily married to straight women and vice versa. I did not mean to silence such biographies, but (perhaps maddeningly) to turn to the body of Christ and follow the Church. The Catholic Church has decided that there are at least some “homosexual persons”.<sup>34</sup> It's not a line based on either science or scripture alone, but on science and scripture ecclesially formed, or assumed into the body of Christ. It's a dogmatist's judgment.

Just if I admit the possibility of heterosexually married gay people happy with that situation, another criticism of Wannewetsch's becomes more pressing, that I don't address the process of coming out. I left it out deliberately, since I was trying to write a book about marriage rather than sexual development. But I would regard coming out as a moral imperative. (Especially for gay people happy in heterosexual marriages!) The claim would be, with David McCarthy, that

The communicative acts of coming out certainly entail self-definition, but these acts of signification come through surrender to an interpretive community. Coming out is opening one's life to be told by others. This exposure is the source of dread and panic in coming out. It is also the outcome of a desire to be known, a desire for wholeness and a



promise of unity of oneself and the world. Coming out articulates the sign-giving character of human, bodily life.

For the church, a similar statement of identity and desire is at stake when the members of the body come out with their sexual commitments. Marriage and the celibate life write the body into the story of redemption. Both are communicative, sexual acts. They are means by which the story of redemption is written through human lives, as signs of God's reconciliation, a reconciliation of the body. Coming out is a wager, opening the body to a language of redemption, opening a way for the body's agency not only in the movement of desire but in the donation of one's agency as an interpretive sign.

Any argument for or against same-sex unions in the church needs to attend to the desire of gay and lesbian Christians to make their desires known and to offer their bodies as signs of God's self-giving.

I would expect that for the most part same-sex rather than cross-sex marriages would better befit the desire of gay and lesbian Christians to make their desires known and offer their bodies as signs of God's self-giving.<sup>35</sup>

5. Under the headings of "sacramental spiritualism" and the Trinity, I find much to agree with. Perhaps the issues are again whether accounts like Schmemmann's of creation or Evdokimov's of marriage are too good to be true. So Wannewetsch finds the claim that "marriage can represent the Trinity in space and time" both too much and too little. No doubt he is right about pure nature and human capacities. But what if, by extension of divine capacities, we are made to participate in the triune life, and enjoy God forever? I have not made this up, but learned it, through Evdokimov's interpretation of the Fathers.<sup>36</sup> People shut out of such institutions as marriage might be forgiven some romanticism about them. Yet by the grace of God they can be caught up into the beginning of our "participation in the divine nature", just because "the kingdom of heaven is like a Father who gave a wedding feast for his Son".<sup>37</sup>

At the beginning of this essay I asked how the Church can best teach all Christians, through their bodies as liturgical signs, about the reconciliation between God and humanity. Marriage is of course one of the great biblical metaphors for the reconciliation that the incarnation effects:

The King's Son made a marriage feast in blood at Golgotha; there the daughter of the day was betrothed to him, to be his, and the royal ring was beaten out in the nails of his hands; with his holy blood was this betrothal made ... he led her into the Garden—the bridal chamber he had prepared for her.<sup>38</sup>

At what wedding feast apart from this did they break the body of the groom for the guests in place of other food? Wives are separated from their husbands by death, but this Bride is joined to her Beloved by death!<sup>39</sup>

At the resurrection, the Spirit of fidelity between the Father and the Son incorporates human beings too into its own proper work of celebrating their love. Indeed, because the Spirit celebrates the love between Father and Son already in the trinitarian life, the liturgy can partake in the joy of the Spirit also in the economy. By God's delight in taking the worst that human beings can do as the ironic occasion—*felix culpa*—for putting the plan through, the wedding of the lamb exceeds reconciliation at the eschatological banquet.

Jesus, you were invited to the wedding feast of others, here is your own pure and fair wedding feast: gladden your rejuvenated people, for your guests too, Lord, need your songs; let your harp utter.

The soul is your bride, the body your bridal chamber, your guests are the senses and the thoughts.

And if a single body is a wedding feast for you, how great is your banquet for the whole church!<sup>40</sup>

It is much more important that the Church recover a rich nuptial symbolics like that—wide enough to range from “a single body” to “the whole church”—than that its extension to gay and lesbian couples go through. But it is appropriate to God's sense of irony that they should help in its recovery. It would be especially fitting if Paul sees God save the Gentiles in Romans 11 by assuming the very characteristic of which he had accused them in Romans 1: action “in excess of nature”.<sup>41</sup>

#### NOTES

1 I owe the phrase to David McCarthy Matzko, “The Relationship of Bodies: A Nuptial Hermeneutics of Same-Sex Unions”, *Theology and Sexuality* 8 (1998), pp. 96–112.

2 Susan Ashbrook Harvey, “Embodiment in Time and Eternity: A Syriac Perspective”, *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 43 (1999), pp. 105–130; here, pp. 105–106.

3 Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., *Sexuality and the Christian Body: Their Way into the Triune God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 85.

3a Harvey, “Embodiment”, p. 106.

4 Susan Harvey, “The Sense of a Stylite: Perspective on Symeon the Elder”, *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988), pp. 376–394.

5 I owe the language of communicative signs to David McCarthy.

6 Rowan Williams, “The Body’s Grace” in Charles Hefling, ed., *Our Selves, Our Souls and Bodies* (Boston, MA: Cowley Publications, 1996), pp. 58–68; here, p. 58; paragraphs run together.

7 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, p. 3.

8 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, p. 212; cf. p. 82.

9 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, p. 3.

10 See for example Clifford Geertz, “The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man”, in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 39–40, 42, 43, 52.

11 Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love: The Nuptial Mystery in the Light of the Orthodox Tradition*, trans. by Anthony P. Gythiel and Victoria Steadman (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985). See also Michael Plekon, “Paul Evdokimov”, *Modern Theology* 12 (1996), pp. 85–107.

12 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, p. 8.

13 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, p. 9.

14 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, p. 9.

15 Cahill makes the claim with reference to Thomas Aquinas. I do undergird the “major themes” of the Aquinas chapters in a separate work, although I do not treat them as “basic Christian ethics”; see my *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). In the same sentence, Cahill suggests that the sexuality material belongs in a short essay; that too is available: Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., “Sanctification, Homosexuality, and God’s Triune Life” in Saul Olyan and Martha Nussbaum, eds., *Sexual Orientation and Human Rights in American Religious Discourse* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 134–160, with a “Response” by Kathryn Tanner, pp. 161–168.

16 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/1, G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, eds., (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1958), p. 318.

17 For explicit discussions of analogy, see *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, pp. 219, 239–240, 262.

18 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, pp. 11, 28, 88, 116–117, 129–130, 137.

19 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, p. 10.

20 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, p. 10.

21 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, pp. 10–11; the internal quotation is from Hans W. Frei, “Eberhard Busch’s Biography of Karl Barth” in Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, edited by George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 147–163; here, pp. 158–159.

22 Rowan Williams, “Knowing Myself in Christ” in Timothy Bradshaw, ed., *The Way Forward? Christian Voices on Homosexuality and the Church* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), pp. 20–36; here, p. 28.

23 Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, second edition (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1973), p. 15, paragraphs run together.

24 Further argument would connect more firmly the body of Christ incarnate with the bodies of Christians through the body of Christ, the Church. Stanley Hauerwas accounts for the practice of ecclesial discernment in his “Gay Friendship: A Thought Experiment in Catholic Moral Theology”, in *Sanctify Them in the Truth* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark and Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), pp. 105–122.

25 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, pp. 245–246.

26 *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, pp. 237–248.

27 Cf. Sebastian Moore, *Jesus the Liberator of Desire* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1989), pp. 89–90, 95–100; Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, §§ 3, 54.

28 Rowan Williams, “Knowing Myself in Christ”, pp. 12–13.

29 *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth*, p. 153.

30 The specific context is about men and women in Christ, which refers to the whole community and has been richly varied in the tradition.

31 Thomas Aquinas, *In Romanos 2 : 14*, ##215–216. See *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, pp. 105–106; *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth*, pp. 183–203.

32 Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 94, 95, 108–109. “Rabbinic sources actively associate homoerotic intercourse with Gentiles” as an “inherent characteristic”. Michael Satlow, *Tasting the Dish: Rabbinic Rhetorics of Sexuality* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995), pp. 203–204. Cf. *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, pp. 54–63.

33 On this question, see Rowan Williams, “Knowing Myself in Christ”.

34 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons”, reprinted most conveniently in Jeannine Gramick and

Pat Furey, eds., *The Vatican and Homosexuality* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1988), pp. 1–10. Andrew Sullivan has drawn out the theological implications of the word “person” in “Alone Again, Naturally: The Catholic Church and the Homosexual”, *The New Republic* (November 28, 1994), pp. 47, 50, 52, 54–55.

35 The argument might return to Thomas Aquinas, who compares homosexuality with one other vice in its unnaturalness—that of lying. Animals, he says, neither lie nor lie with members of their own sex. Homosexuality, one infers, is for Thomas a lie of the body’s truth. We might today adopt the same reasoning to an opposite conclusion: heterosexual activity by gay and lesbian people is exposed when their bodies give them the lie, and coming out is the bringing into community, the semiotic offering, of the body’s truth telling. But that is a paper for another day.

36 Evdokimov, pp. 117–118, with interpretations of Paul, Chrysostom, and Cyril.

37 II Pet. 2 : 4; Mt. 9 : 15; 22 : 2.

38 Jacob of Serugh, translated as “Jacob of Serugh II” in Sebastian Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Kalamzoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1987), p. 287.

39 Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Veil of Moses*, 11. 141–151, translated in Sebastian Brock, *Studies in Syriac Spirituality*, Syrian Churches Series 13 (Poonah, India: Anita Printers, 1988), p. 95.

40 Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Faith XIV*, 1–5, in Brock, *Studies in Syriac Spirituality*, pp. 5–6.

41 Rom. 1 : 26; 11 : 24; cf. *Sexuality and the Christian Body*, pp. 3, 64–66, 178.