

GENDER THEORY

Gender theory is a modern development and is contrary to the Christian faith. The term 'sex' relates to two categories, male and female. The majority of living beings are categorised according to the biological differences in their reproductive organs and secondary characteristics. In the 1950's the term 'gender' was introduced. This refers more to the social roles of men and women rather than biological differences. The fundamental role of the gender theory is that this social role has only a remote connection to their biological sex. In the past 'gender' would have taken for granted that there were different social roles for men and women. But with today's hyper-individualism this is considered out of kilter with modern thinking. The individual is urged not to accept a role 'imposed by society'.

The role chosen by the individual is called 'gender identity'. The individual could choose their gender identity irrespective of their biological sex. They could choose to be heterosexual, homosexual, transsexual, transgender or neutral. A transgender person is someone whose gender identity does not match his or her biological sex – the individual feels himself to be a woman although biologically a man and vice versa. A transsexual person, on the other hand is someone who has actually undergone a sex change operation to change from one sex to the other. Even the World Health Organization supports these sex change operations and even regards them as a human right. This right, according to them is called 'gender equity'.

Education programmes seek to instil in children even at the primary school level a need to consider and choose their gender while they are young. Even the onset of puberty can be halted by administering a hormonal drug for those children who think they may be transgender. They overlook the fact that early teens can often be confused about their identity including their gender. The blocking of puberty is only aggravating the situation which would have disappeared naturally anyway. When transgender people physically change their sex through an operation they often experience psychological problems and want to revert back to their original sex.

Gender Theory has its roots in the radical feminism of the 1960's and 70's. One of those feminists was Simone de Beauvoir said 'no one is born a woman, but one becomes one'. Under the influence of these ideas, radicalised

feminism is convinced that the role of the married woman as an instrument for procreation and education of offspring is merely a social role, imposed on them by society. She must be liberated from this through contraception and artificial reproduction. The radical feminist, Firestone, said that once liberated from the 'tyranny of their reproductive biology' women would be able to choose their role, irrespective of their biological sex. This kind of thinking is also an attack on the family. She believed that all forms of sexuality should be permitted and indulged in. De Beauvoir's theory coincided with the introduction of large-scale hormonal contraception in the 1960's which made possible the so-called liberation of women from their reproductive biology, thereby paving the way for the total detachment of gender from one's biological identity.

Around this time, the *controversial* encyclical 'humane Vitae' was promulgated by Pope St Paul VI. This regarded the use of artificial contraception as intrinsically evil. The fact that public opinion generally speaking accepts the detachment of gender from one's biological sex is the consequence of the almost wholesale rejection of the teaching of Humane Vitae which fuelled the sexual revolution of the 1960's.

Men and women's' bodies are designed differently because their roles are complementary in the same human nature. Neither man alone nor woman alone is capable for procreation. Complementarity is not limited however to sexual differences but psychologically men and women complement each other. From the beginning God 'made them male and female' and it is in the union of the male and female that humans uniquely reflect the image of God. 'It's not good for man to be alone' the book of Genesis teaches us. The essential aspects of masculine and feminine, of husband and wife, of father and mother are therefore all created in the image of God and form part of the order of creation. Simone Beauvoir, the radical feminist, considered women to be treated with contempt, as objects of carnal pleasures or as mothers, destined for reproduction in roles imposed on them by society. St John Paul II on the other hand sees contempt of women as a consequence of original sin which we all suffer from. Original Sin has obscured the reality of the man and woman being made in the image and likeness of God'. This image of God is obscured by advocates of the gender theory.

The detachment of gender from biological sex radically contradicts the Church's teaching that sexual relationships can only take place between a man and a woman within marriage and must always be open to procreation.

On the contrary gender theory backers encourage free choice of gender, irrespective of biological sex, and also accepts sexual activity in whichever way one pleases outside of marriage, without openness to procreation. It promotes so-called marriage between persons of the same biological sex and considers it morally acceptable for such persons to adopt children. It accepts extramarital sexual relationships, surrogate motherhood and artificial reproduction. The gender theory which has its origin in radicalised feminism, promotes the lawfulness of abortion. It employs the euphemistic term 'reproductive rights' to suggest that women facing unwanted pregnancies do not need to assume the role of a mother – viewed as a role imposed on women. Gender theory undermines the Christian faith by undermining the roles of father, mother, husband and wife. It undermines marriage and parenthood, Holy Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church. Since the catholic priest is married to his spouse, the Church, people supporting the gender theory would regard it as immaterial whether the priest was male or female.

Exposing the errors of the gender theory is most urgent. What is at stake as a consequence of this theory is not only sexual morality but the proclamation of the Christian faith itself.