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The Age of Polymorphous Perversity, Part Four

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Margaret Mead is considered one of the founders of anthropology in America. After a research visit to the Pacific Islands, Mead wrote a book in 1928 entitled *Coming of Age in Samoa*. The book, which essentially launched Mead's career as an anthropologist, argued that Samoan adolescence—unlike Western adolescence—was a time of smooth transition from childhood to adulthood because Samoans tended to enjoy casual sex for many years before they settled into marriage. The bottom line, according to Mead, was that promiscuity is healthy. History has proven, however, that Mead was a fraud. Her entire project was based on falsehood and misinformation. Five years after Mead's death in 1978, Derek Freeman published a book entitled *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* in which he challenged and refuted every one of Mead's major claims. Returning to Samoa to question the actual subjects of Mead's research, he found that the young women to whom Mead had spoken had simply lied to her about their promiscuity. Even so, the book had an enormous influence on American culture and attitudes toward sex and marriage for more than fifty years.

Another intellectual engine of the age of polymorphous perversity is Alfred Kinsey. Quite frankly, Kinsey was one of the most influential sexual deviants of the 20th century. In fact, he stands as a symbol of everything that went wrong during that period. His book, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, published in 1948, prompted a revolution by providing a pseudo-scientific cover to those who were pushing the age of polymorphous perversity. Kinsey simply pushed Margaret Mead's conclusion one step further. If Mead taught that promiscuity is healthy, Kinsey argued that perversity itself is healthy. Sexual deviance is simply to be celebrated.

Finally, we turn to consider Michel Foucault. Probably the least well-known of this trio, Foucault was a dominant influence in the American academy—a French philosopher who died after being infected with AIDS in the gay bars of San Francisco, California. Foucault, one of the dominant figures in postmodern thought, taught that sex is everything and that the only way to be liberated is to sexualize every dimension of life in the direction of polymorphous perversity. In essence, Foucault argued that sexuality is itself a modern invention and that one of modern society's central ambitions has been to institutionalize sexual repression. Though he died in 1984, Foucault is undoubtedly still one of the most influential persons on American college campuses today.

Fueled by the ideas of Margaret Mead, Alfred Kinsey, and Michel Foucault, this age of polymorphous perversity is now upon us. Moral relativism is the order of the day, and it all begs the question, Can civilization survive? The answer is, quite simply, "no." Civilization cannot survive the triumph of the age of polymorphous perversity, because the idea of polymorphous sex is hopelessly incompatible with the very notion of civilization itself. Civilization is based upon order, respect, habit, custom, and institution—all of which are rejected outright by the age of polymorphous perversity.

Looking at the history of Western civilization, William and Ariel Durant argued that one of the first achievements necessary for the establishment of civilization is the restraint of sexuality. As they put it, sexuality is like a hot river that must be banked on both sides. Sadly, what we see in the latter half of the 20th century is the un-banking of that river.

Pitirim A. Sorokin, founder of the discipline of sociology at Harvard University, argued that “Heterosexual marriage is the one fundament of civilization itself.” You simply cannot build or maintain civilization without heterosexual marriage, and without heterosexual marriage being understood as the norm. Unless heterosexual marriage is protected by law, custom, and habit, to the exclusion of every other arrangement, civilization is impossible. Sorokin made this point more than fifty years ago. Even from such a distance, he saw this age of perversity arising, and he argued that this age of rebellion would destroy civilization. Yet he also held out the hope that civilization would wake up when the issue finally came down to the preservation of marriage. Was he right?

That is the great question of our day—whether or not this civilization will indeed wake up once marriage is clearly understood to be *the* critical battleground and *the* primary target of attack.

Today, we face a cultural crisis that actually threatens to reverse civilization and to embrace barbarism. Can civilization survive under these circumstances? I would have to argue that it cannot. There is no example in the history of humankind of a civilization enduring for long when an age of polymorphous perversity is set loose.

Can we recover from this? Well, we certainly must hope and pray so. But any recovery will have to be based on a re-embrace of biblical truth. We simply will not find enough sociological capital to reverse the prevailing trends. We will not find enough legal conviction to withstand this assault from cultural revolutionaries. Nor will we find enough political momentum to halt this movement. In the end, there is only one thing that stands between this culture and absolute dissolution, and that is the fact that sex was not our idea. Human beings are creatures made by a sovereign Creator, who made us male and female for His glory, and who created the institution of marriage both for our health and for our happiness.

As J. R. R. Tolkien once said to his son Michael, “You must remember, son, that monogamy is a revealed ethic.” No one accidentally stumbles across monogamy, and this culture will not stumble onto recovery. It will have to submit itself to recovery. What is needed is a spiritual, theological and biblical recovery, one that sees gender not as some kind of evolutionary accident, but as God’s gift, part of the very goodness of God’s creation. We see God’s glory in the masculinity of the male and in the femininity of the woman. We understand gender to be a fixed category, not an accidental aberration in the evolutionary process of humanity. Given this, we must remind the culture that marriage is not merely a social contract between two (or more) people, but an arena in which the glory of God is displayed in the right ordering of one man and one woman who come together in the permanent, holy covenant of marriage.

We must refuse to separate the goods of marriage, and we must again point out that part of the essential function of marriage is procreation. Those who are able to have children must welcome children, because this is what God has instituted. Sex, procreation, marriage, and family must be woven together in a seamless garment that recognizes children as a divine gift. In this family—man, woman, and children—civilization is enriched and strengthened, and even more importantly, God’s glory is evident in the midst of His creation.

What then are we to do in order to work for recovery from this age of polymorphous perversity? First, we must fight on every front. We must fight on the legal front, the political front, the media front, the cultural front, the educational front, the psychological front, and the medical front. In each of these crucial arenas, we must bear witness to the truth. In doing so, we may be marginalized, we may be voted down, and we may be criticized, but we cannot simply surrender the field to the other side.

Second, we must bear witness to the truth. This means that we must be very careful not only to *say* the right things, but also to *show* the right things. In other words, we must make certain that our marriages and our families are a testimony to God’s intention, and that we live before the world declaring that even if insanity, irrationality, and sexual anarchy rule the world, it will not rule us. God’s glory will be shown in faithfulness wherever it is found, even in the tiny domestic picture of our seemingly insignificant families. The age of polymorphous perversity may one day become the rule of the land. The cultural revolutionaries may one day be successful beyond their wildest dreams. But so long as there remains one man and one woman united in holy marriage, receiving children as God’s gifts and ordering their family life by the Word of God, there will still be a witness—a powerful witness the world cannot ignore.

Third, we must create communities of faithful marriages and healthy families. Our churches must become communities that demonstrate the wonder of God's glory in marriage and the health holiness of God's intention in sex. We must band ourselves together so that we live this witness before the world and train our children to do the same.

Fourth, we must rescue the perishing and love the unlovely. What happens when those who give themselves to the culture of polymorphous perversity finally get sick or collapse in despair? The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is made up of sinners saved by grace—sinners who understand what sin is and who understand that Jesus Christ came to save sinners. Thus, we must be about the task of rescuing the perishing and loving the unlovely, for so also, in our own way, were we.

Let us see this trend toward sexual anarchy answered with true resolve. Let us mount a movement, not consisting so much of placards, billboards, and advertising, but of couples and families, men and women who will not bend, will not bow, and will not surrender to the culture of polymorphous perversity.

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