

REVOLUTIONARY

SEX

How the good news of
Jesus changes everything

William Taylor

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CONTENTS

The Call to Revolution.....	1
Revolutionary Sex and Creation (Genesis 1 – 2)	5
Revolutionary Sex and the Gospel (1 Corinthians 6:9–20)	25
Revolutionary Sex and Same-Gender Sex (Romans 1:18–32)	47
Singleness and Marriage and the Revolution (1 Corinthians 7:1–11)	71
Frequently Asked Questions	93
Notes	111

THE CALL TO REVOLUTION

There can be no doubt that we – living at the start of the twenty-first century in the West – find ourselves in the aftermath of a social revolution. Some have identified the roots of that revolution in the change of our culture’s attitudes to sex, which were radically altered with the advent of the contraceptive pill in the early 1960s. Joan Bakewell, who was at the forefront of the battle to change our culture, recently spoke of the mood in the 1960s: ‘The liberal mood back in the sixties was that sex was pleasurable and wholesome ... The pill allowed women to make choices for themselves. Of course that meant the risk of making the wrong choice. But we all hoped girls would grow to handle the new freedoms wisely.’¹

In reality, the roots of the social revolution are to be found much further back and long before the advent of the pill. Recently I had the opportunity to listen to Dr Mike Ovey, the Principal of Oak Hill Theological College, who was discussing the philosophers Hegel, Stirner and Kant. As Mike explains:

Hegel, writing in the nineteenth century, effectively if unintentionally destabilised the idea of the individual

REVOLUTIONARY SEX

through his stress on continuous progress in which the individual, the state and the world seek to realise themselves. His follower Max Stirner took this a stage further when he said that each individual invents or creates himself over time: we make ourselves. Earlier Kant had argued in his essay on Enlightenment, written in the eighteenth century in 1784, that we should break free from our age of innocence and grow up to maturity, with mature people being those who have become free to think for themselves and who work out their identity for themselves rather than being subject to what their masters have told them to think.²

This suggests that the social and cultural revolution of the twentieth century drew on the key ideas of the Enlightenment and of Hegel, and of others like him. Ideas drove the revolution, as they always do.

Consider what Germaine Greer, author of the groundbreaking book *The female Eunuch*, had to say in 1986: 'Human beings have an inalienable right to invent themselves.'³ This is classic Stirner–Hegel thinking. Or consider the title of Zygmunt Bauman's book on sex and relationships in the modern age, *Liquid Love*. Bauman's analysis of our Western culture is that we have become 'plastic people' for whom the contours of our identity can be shifted and changed as we wish. In other words, we are reconstructed at different times by our individual choices.⁴

Thus you and I have been brought up in a context where for someone to suggest that this or that form of sexual expression is either better or best, or is inappropriate or invalid, is tantamount

THE CALL TO REVOLUTION

to denying the fundamental rights of a human being. Who are you to suggest that my personal sexual preference is wrong? How dare you tell me that your way is better? Indeed to argue that one or another form of sexual expression might be improper has itself become in today's culture akin to immoral. Try it out for yourselves. For example, when asked, 'What are you reading at the moment?', answer, 'Oh, a book on revolutionary sex that teaches us how to enjoy sex as God intended it. It's God's intention that everybody lives his way, rather than go our own way, in this area.' We will pretty quickly find ourselves condemned.

That is why I have given this book the title *Revolutionary Sex*, for I am going to suggest that in the wake of the 1960s a counter-revolution is now required. I shall argue that since God invented sex, God knows best how sex works. It all comes down ultimately to the fact that God is our Creator and we were created purposefully in a particular way. We are *not* plastic or liquid people, who can change ourselves as we see fit. Therefore when we seek to deviate from God's perfect plan for sex, we damage both ourselves and others. There is only one place for safe sex and truly lasting deep and enjoyable sex – in the context of heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Far from God being a killjoy or a spoilsport, he ultimately knows far more about sex than you or I or even any sex therapist does. God understands sex.

I chose this title when I went to see the Hunger Games film *Catching Fire* with Katniss Everdeen. You will remember her three-finger salute. She is not going to be a pawn in the destructive power games of others. Likewise, I am hoping that this book is going to generate in us a proper Christian sense that we are now the revolutionaries who will not conform. We need

REVOLUTIONARY SEX

to argue and act against the folly of the Western world's idea that we can recreate ourselves as plastic people. We need to be clear on the extraordinary damage that the 1960s revolution has done, the cost of which some of us have borne and still feel at the deepest level. I am hoping that this short examination of God's plan for sex will equip us as godly revolutionaries to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ with greater courage and conviction to a confused world.

There is one other important introductory remark for us to be clear on: I assume that every single one of us is flawed in the area of sexual conduct and thought, myself included. I also assume that all of us have failed in this regard, myself included. As such we all have things of which we are ashamed and that we are working through in the context of Christian grace. We need to remember that the Lord Jesus loves to forgive, to redeem and to restore us, so that we can be the kind of people he made us to be.