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“There is no crime, and therefore no sin; there is only hunger.”

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Russian Novelist.

Chapter Six

The Root Ideas of the Sexual Revolution

Insight #6: Sexual desire is not merely an itch to be scratched, it is a longing to be bonded in mind, heart, spirit and body.

The sexual revolution was a national identity crises, based upon discarded belief in God and a distorted view of human life and sexuality. After learning this, I finally realized why those of us on the committee to develop a sex education curriculum could never agree--we were seeing the whole issue from completely different perspectives. This awareness made all the difference; finally I could see. There was one central root difference from which all other ideas branched out from--whether or not God exists. Playwright Eugene O'Neill said, “Most modern plays are concerned with the relation between man and man, but that does not interest me at all. I am interested only in the relation between man and God. Anyone trying to do big work nowadays must have this big subject behind all the little subjects, or he is simply scribbling around on the surface of things.”

The “big subject behind all the little subjects” is whether or not God exists. If there is a God, then there are absolute truths and values--as given by God. But if there is no God, and if man is simply

another animal progressing up the ladder of evolution, then the nature of man is simple: body, brain and basic instincts. This explains why it has become common to hear, “Whose values? Whose morals?” While those who regard the counsels of God would say, “Why God’s morals and values, of course,” others might counter with, “Whose God?”

When belief in God was discarded, so also was the idea of absolute values. This is the idea behind Dostoyevsky’s statement at the beginning of this chapter: “There is no crime, and therefore no sin; there is only hunger.”

It is interesting that in our American public school system the secular--dismissing God--ideas were widely promoted, and yet conflicted with basic traditional American beliefs and values. The Declaration of Independence states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their *Creator* with certain Unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. . .”

Benjamin Franklin added to these basic concepts with his written testimony:

“Here is my creed. I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe. That he governs it by his providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to him is in doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion.” (Smyth, Writings of Benjamin

Franklin, 10:84)

Dismissing God, and absolute values, the ethics of sexual behavior was reduced down to animal instinct; dismissing the Adversary--or evil--the most tragic and dangerous consequences to sexual exploitation was ignored. We were not created to breed like the animals without bonding in love, doing so is hazardous to spiritual health. (More on this later.)

If mankind is simply an advanced animal and if there is no God, and if there is no afterlife, and if there is no meaning to life except to satisfy bodily needs and pleasures, then the need for integrity, kindness, consideration are *all the more important*. If this life is all that there is, then we ought to do all that we can do to live together in peace and love. However, if there is a God and we are His children, then the gift of life, intimate love and procreation are greater in scope and depth than we can ever realize, and we ought to do all that we can do to live together in peace and love.

Creationism verses Evolution

One time while I was attending a State of California school board meeting, I heard and watched a heated debate on the issue of creationism verses evolution. I was later told that this debate had been going on for many years. One side insisted that the children of California be taught the Biblical version of their heritage-- creationism-- and the other side insisted that such "fairy tales" were not a part of the educated view. Both were cemented in their theories; neither side would budge.

As I listened to the arguments on both sides, I found myself agreeing with those advocating creationism. But at the same time I was reminded that the Creator who gave us life also gave us the

right of choice, even if that choice is to not believe in Him. Through all the controversy the real issue is *not where we came from, but where we choose to go, and what we choose to become.*

The youth of America have a right to learn secular ideas, after all, they have a heavy impact on the world they live in, but they also have a right to know and consider other views--especially, their American heritage of values. They have a right to know that just as there is a Higher Power that lifts and energizes their capacity to love and value human life, so there is also a lower power that drains and deadens the capacity to love. Recently popular psychologist, M. Scott Peck, wrote a book that explores the presence of evil in our midst. He writes, "The hope is that the scientific community will realize that we cannot begin to heal human evil until we are able to look at it directly. . .It [his book] is about our dark side. . .it is the principle thesis of this book."

(People of The Lie, p.10)

We will never begin to understand man's inhumanity to man, or the dangers of exploitive sex until we recognize the undercurrents or the "brutal force" as Leo Tolstoy calls it.

The Clash of Ideas

Now we turn to the leaves of the clash of ideas between the sexual revolution and traditional American values. My studies were enlightening:

1. Finally, I understood why "abstinence" was scoffed at--it conflicted with the idea that sex is a biological need--like food, air, and water.

Recently I watched a talk show. Teenagers were being asked

very personal and intimate questions regarding their sexual practices and values. One girl stood up and said, "I think that sex should be reserved for special relationships. You should be really in love. You shouldn't have sex with just anyone."

Almost immediately a young man shot up to refute, "I don't agree. Our bodies need it, so why not do it whenever we get the chance?" The crowd applauded in approval.

This idea is the most dangerous of all. It gives an excuse to take advantage of others for a supposed bodily need, but the truth is, those who live a celibate life--without sexual intercourse--do not die. The sex drive is however, a stimulus/response control area of our identity. Like a dimmer on a light switch--we have the power to either increase or decrease these passions. With stimulation--either physically or mentally, it is increased, without stimulation it decreases and can go into somewhat of a dormant state. We have the power to control sexual expression, but we can give it the power to control us.

What a clash of ideas: that the powers of procreation are merely an itch to be scratched, or that these powers are to guide us to our soul-mates in a "one flesh" partnership!

2. I understood why the word "morality" was always rebuffed with, "Whose morality?" It conflicted with the belief that there are no absolute values--only societal conditioning and situational ethics.

I recall one conversation; the subject of "abstinence" came up. One woman said, "You're talking a moral issue; we do not have the right to impose our values on the youth; we're only supposed to educate them."

I responded, "But isn't education teaching all the alternatives?"

What's wrong with teaching abstinence as an alternative?"

She said, "Oh, wake up, we can't stop these kids from having sex! In order for them to feel good about themselves we've got to make them feel okay about what they're doing--not worse. We want to stop the guilt trips."

I countered, "They also have a right to know all their options, and abstinence is the safest and surest option of avoiding pregnancy, disease, and heartache."

"It's an option that no one chooses to take," she said.

The idea that what's popular determines what's right can tamper with the delicate mechanism called conscience. Larry McQuay, a school bus driver who molested more than two hundred children said, "Sometimes I wish I was born a hundred years ago when you could marry a twelve-year-old girl and nobody would think twice about it. Or back in the Greek culture when they had sex with boys. But in today's society that's not acceptable and I'm not a time traveler, so I can't go back into another society or another culture."

3. I finally understood why the "guilt" word had to be stamped out at all costs. Guilt was merely an inconvenience standing in the way of free sexual expression, besides it created mental disorders.

Throughout my studies of "family life" curriculum guides there was a persistent effort to make the kids feel all right with whatever sexual behavior they chose. Now I realized why--the motive was to eliminate the guilt or the pain of conscience. Students were taught, "Guilt is a negative emotion that is self-induced by rigid moral indoctrination. In order to eliminate guilt--which causes so much mental distress--you must eradicate the idea of moral absolutes. Values should be based upon what is socially acceptable."

This idea came from Jeremy Bentham who in an attempt to discard God's commandments said that what is moral is that which brings pleasure, and what is not moral is that which brings pain. Therefore, good and bad, or right and wrong are to be determined by what brings pleasure, thus the expression, "If it feels good, do it."

In his book, Principles of Morals and Legislation, Bentham wrote, "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we should do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne."

In the discussion of guilt, the traditionalist would say, "In order to reduce guilt, you must stop doing whatever you are doing to cause guilt, and be grateful for the fact that you have these guiding feelings." The secularist would say, "Guilt comes from the idea of sin--or absolute values--get rid of that idea, and you get rid of the guilt. Besides, it gets in the way of the pleasure."

4. I understood why all sexual behaviors were considered "preferences." When there are no absolute values, anything goes.

Dr. Chisholm, past president of the World Federation of Mental Health said, "The only psychological force capable of producing these perversions (inferiority, guilt and fear) is morality, the concept of right and wrong. . . Freedom from moralities means freedom to observe, to think and behave sensibly, to the advantage of the person and of the group, free from outmoded types of loyalties and from the magic fears of our ancestors. If the race is to be freed from its crippling burden of good and evil, it must be psychiatrists who take the original responsibility."

However, Dr. O. Hobart Mower, president of the American Psychological Association admitted, “By abolishing sin, the psychologists have also abolished moral restraint. As a result, personality disorders are more pervasive and baffling today.”

5. I understood “It’s the way I am, I can never change” thinking. It was a part of the idea that man is a product of hereditary and environmental conditioning--he cannot master himself; he does not choose his destiny.

This is one of the hefty issues of the debate, and again the two ideas clash. The American view is that men and women have been endowed by their Creator with free will or the right of life, and to direct that life “in the pursuit of happiness.” If the opposing view is accurate, then the case for moral discipline, or any other kind of discipline is closed. This idea has contributed to the pity-partiers of our generation who say, “This is the way I am; I can’t change. It is all Mother’s fault, after all. . .” The idea is: how can we be held responsible for our actions if we cannot overcome a dysfunctional family?

I was listening to one of our children’s friends tell the story again. I had heard it before. “My Dad was a dentist, but as soon as he came through the door at the end of the day he started drinking. He was so abusive when he was drunk! My Mom escaped the nightmare by having one affair after another. That’s why I left home when I was only fourteen; I couldn’t stand it any longer. Then I started drinking, and. . .”

“John,” I said, “I know that your childhood was bad, and I don’t mean to be insensitive, but it seems to me that you’re so busy looking back that you can’t look forward. You don’t live there anymore. You’re not a child; you’re almost thirty. You can create

the kind of life that you always wished for. What a waste it would be if you were so busy looking back that you never look forward. We have the power to create ourselves--to become whatever we want. We have the power to take charge of our own lives, and to make up for an unhappy childhood.”

“It’s not that easy,” he said. “You wouldn’t understand. You never lived through it.”

We have been given the right to life, and the power to direct that life. We have the power to create our own heaven or hell, and to choose what will or will not condition us. With Divine help, we can take control of our own lives, and create the home that we wished we had as a child. The idea that we are conditioned to be something our family and environment has mapped out for us, has created the “I can’t help it,” syndrome that is crippling lives.

6. I understood why our justice system has difficulty punishing certain sex crimes. No-control means no responsibility, and no responsibility means, “all punishment is cruel and unusual.”

Take the case of Westly Dodd. He was a child molester who admitted over and over to the police that he could not control his behavior--yet was set free again and again. After he killed a three-year-old boy, the courts ruled for the maximum penalty--death. But some thought this was cruel and unusual punishment for a man who had no control over his behavior; they tried to block the execution. Dodd announced that he would sue anyone who tried to stop it, and was put to death.

7. I finally understood--after debating this issue for hours--why the terms “normal” and “common” and “majority” were so popular, in some minds, what is popular or common

determines what's moral.

For a time I taught classes in philosophy at a nearby prison facility. It was an interesting experience; I was locked in a room with over sixty inmates and a couple of security guards. The inmates were serving terms for various reasons--some were rapists and murderers--but I actually felt fairly safe and protected. The discussion of ethics, or morals came up.

One man said, "It's all a matter of where you live. I'm in here for spousal abuse, and I admit it--I did beat on my wife, but she deserved it. If I were in another country where wife beating was considered a husband's right, there's no way I would be jailed. I just happen to live in the wrong country."

I asked, "So what you're saying is that what's socially right is what's morally right?"

"What I'm saying," he said, obviously frustrated with me, "is that there's nothing wrong with a man keeping his wife in line."

"The bottom line of your argument," I said, "is that right and wrong is determined by the society. Have you ever considered that while dehumanizing Jews was socially acceptable in Germany, it was still morally wrong? Wrong will always be wrong even if the law permits it and people praise it."

Recently Time Magazine noted that the 2.9 million member Presbyterian Church asked the denomination's General Assembly to consider abandoning traditional sanctions against sex outside of marriage. Other churches--Episcopal, Evangelical and Methodist--are also considering abandoning God's strict moral code. As one professor of Christian ethics said, "The problem is that what was thought unthinkable and even unmentionable a short time ago is now commonplace." (U.S. News and World Report, June 10, 1991, p.

60) When the voice of authority from the church joined ranks with the majority, moral virtue took a nose dive.

Interestingly, studies indicate that what people do does not necessarily reflect what they think they ought to do. According to many surveys, most Americans still believe the best way is total abstinence before marriage and absolute fidelity after. This could explain why the only churches that are gaining members are those churches that are sticking to traditional values.

8. I understood why teaching human sexuality needed to begin in kindergarten and go through high school; it takes a few hours to teach reproductive processes, but it takes years to replace family values.

In the curriculum guides that I studied, I found myself wondering why sex education instruction needed to take place from kindergarten through high school. Some concepts were repeated over and over. Now I finally understood.

Summary

I find it fascinating that we are always alarmed when children scoff at moral values, when in fact, they have been taught to do just that--scoff at moral values. The skeletal structure of ideas that have replaced God, commandments and the idea of sin, are very simple: there is no God, there are no moral absolutes, there is no sin, there is only bodily needs.

The American republic was founded upon a few philosophical ideas: the central one is that man is a child of the "Supreme Creator." It seems only fair that this idea be represented in our schools as it is in the pledge of allegiance and on our currency. How strange that some have "debunked" traditional values only to

establish values of their own.

“Those who ‘debunk’ traditional, or (as they would say) ‘sentimental’ values have in the background values of their own which they believe to be immune from the debunking process. They claim to be cutting away the parasitic growth of emotion, religious sanction, and inherited taboos, in order that ‘real’ or ‘basic’ values may emerge. . . Every appeal to pride, honour, shame or love is excluded. . . the modern situation permits and demands a new sexual morality.” C.S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man, p.41.

Just as the sexual revolution grew out of ideas and an identity crises, so the case for enlightened chastity begins with understanding our true identity. Only by knowing who we are can we capture the glorious potential of human sexuality, and the tragedy of casual sex. The next two chapters explorer’s this view.

Notes on chapter six:

1. Thomas Jefferson wrote, God “has made us moral agents. . . that we may promote the happiness of those with whom he has placed us in society, by acting honestly towards all, their rights, bodily and mental, and cherishing especially their freedom of conscience as we value our own.” (Dewey, Living Thoughts of Thomas Jefferson, p.104)
2. “We find ourselves faced with the same questions always faced. . . What view of man and human nature and the universe should we espouse? Should we base our view of man on the assumption that he is a mere material animal? Or should we endow him with a soul?”

If we give him a soul, we have to give him a Creator, and we have to give him certain fixed rules to live by, a framework within which he may exercise his reason. . . . Either man has a heritage from his God, his experience, his tradition, with which he can find standards, or he does not. If he does, he should begin to order his world and his goals to such a system. . . . If he truly does not believe that man has such a heritage, then he should continue to place his values in materialism, collectivism, centralization of power in the state, and secularism. . . . Thus, the problem always remains the same after these thousands of years. Does God exist? What is man? What is man's nature? What standards should man adhere to in this world? In the final analysis, the answer to these questions dominates our political and social thought, as well as our very existence." (George Charles Roche III, Legacy of Freedom p. 327)