

The Gospel, Sex, and Human Flourishing: Telling a Better Story

The last few decades have witnessed a radical and far-reaching transformation of western attitudes to sex, marriage, and gender. Caught off-guard by the speed of this cultural upheaval, Christians have often reacted defensively, rather than offering a compelling vision of their own. Many young Christians are beginning to question whether the Gospel really is good news in this area. In this session, Glynn Harrison will ask how Christians can recover their confidence in the biblical vision for flourishing in the sphere of sex and relationships. How can they revitalise a vision capable of winning the hearts and minds of a new generation? And what will that better story look like?

Glynn Harrison was formerly Professor and Head of Department of Psychiatry, University of Bristol, UK, where he was also a practicing psychiatrist. Now, as an author and speaker, he is interested in issues at the interface between biblically-based faith and psychology, neuroscience, and psychiatry, as well as wider issues of culture and Christian worldview. His most recent book *A Better Story: God, Sex and Human Flourishing* turns a critical eye to the sexual revolution.

I. The Sexual revolution

A. Overview: scale and impact

B. Hard power and soft power: the secret of the activists success

C. The scale of the apologetics challenge

2. Cultural analysis:

A. Expressive individualism

B. Compelling moral vision

C. The persuasive power of narrative

3. A Better Critique

A. Connect with their moral aspirations not yours (Paul at Areopagus, Acts 17)

B. Accept the failed promise of religious shame culture

C. Expose the failed promises of the Revolution's narrative

4. A Better Story

A. Re-imagination and cultural embodiment among Christians

B. Connect with moral aspirations for freedom, flourishing and fairness

C. Regulating sexual relationships in a pluralist culture

Suggested Readings:

1. Harrison G (2017) *A Better Story: God, Sex and Human Flourishing*. IVP/SPCK
2. <http://www.livingout.org> (this is a superb resource on same-sex attraction issues)
3. Crouch, A Sex without Bodies: the Church's response to the LGBT movement must be that matter matters (editorial, Christianity Today)
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/july-august/sex-without-bodies.html>
4. Gagnon, R. A.J 'The Bible's Surprisingly Consistent Message on a Male-Female requirement for Marriage'
http://www.eggscofe.org.uk/uploads/5/5/6/3/5563632/gagnon_on_consistent_biblical_message_on_male_and_female_marriage.pdf
5. Sanlon P (2010) *Plastic People: How Queer Theory is Changing Us*. Latimer Studies.