

# **EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY**

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Fundamentalist-Evangelical, Pentecostal-Charismatic and other groups have operated successfully during the period after the war and have been rewarded with steadily increasing membership. But numerical increase has been matched by a qualitative depreciation of Christian faith. Even in the mid sixties Peter Berger observed that Christianity instead of creating its own values was in the service of secular values. More recent studies have shown that Civil Religion, is the American Way of Life (Will Herberg) is the real religion of the American people. Christianity, with its numerous denominations still has a provincial rôle in locating a person's particular identity in one vast religious map. Denominational boundaries may be crossed, but all must participate in the structure of the whole, the religion of American Way of Life or American Shinto, which stands above Christianity with its own set of ideas, rituals and symbols (Marty, Martin E., *A Nation of Behavers*, 1976, p.180–202). Under these circumstances the believer may continue to listen to sermons and participate in the sacraments on Sundays, but from Monday to Saturday, they become totally irrelevant to what he does.

The American scene shows that numerical growth can indeed be achieved along the lines suggested by McGavran. But it leads to a complete distortion of faith. Christian faith is reduced to a cultural religion, like Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam (as such it is also of an ideological function during national emergencies). We would do well to reject McGavran's De Nobill solution. A true confession of God is possible only by confessing also against a background. Thus it involves a revision of all the existing boundaries in the light of the Gospel of our Lord.

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(A Sri Lankan student at the University of Hull). p. 263

## Paul's Context and Ours

Wright Doyle

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*In a clear and lucid style the author portrays the social, political and religious life in Rome in Paul's day. He surveys the content of Paul's message in this disturbing context and draws some parallels between Paul's context and that of Asian Christians today. Some of our readers may feel that Paul's message was more radical in social transformation than this author suggests. Readers are invited to respond to the practical implication of Paul's Letter to the Romans for their own context. The editors welcome letters to the editor.*

(Editors)

As we try to communicate the gospel in Asia, we can be encouraged by Paul's example. In many ways, he faced a situation similar to what Christians in Asian countries encounter.

### PAUL A JEWISH CHRISTIAN

Paul was a victim of discrimination and oppression. As a Jew he belonged to a despised race. Noted for their narrow-minded bigotry, Jews elicited a hostile response wherever

they went. Judea was one of the most troublesome districts of the Roman Empire, because the people were constantly rising up in protest or rebellion. Revolutionary sparks kindled into a bonfire just shortly after Paul's death, and led to the total destruction of Jerusalem.

Even in tolerant Rome, where people from all over the known world dwelt in comparative harmony, Jews faced persecution: We first hear of Priscilla and Aquila as those who had been expelled from Rome along with all other Jews by Claudius ([Acts 38:2](#)). When Paul preached in Athens, he was accused of 'advocating *foreign* gods' ([Acts 17:18](#)). He did not belong to their culture. He brought 'strange ideas'. He was an outsider.

As a Christian, Paul faced bitter, murderous hostility from fellow Jews. In one place after another, they mobbed and beat him. This rejection by his own people nearly broke his heart, as [Romans 9:2](#) testifies. He had perverted their ancient religion and was blaspheming their God—or so they imagined. He was a traitor to the customs and traditions of his own race. He must be killed.

Whether as a Jew among Gentiles, or as a Christian among Jews, Paul encountered constant rejection. A foreigner with strange ideas, a traitor to his own people—these were the categories in which he was seen. [p. 264](#)

As a Jewish Christian, Paul was powerless. He could be beaten or imprisoned whenever a mob or a magistrate willed. His Roman citizenship brought relief at certain crucial times (notably in Jerusalem as he was about to be torn to pieces by a Roman whip). But it could not protect him from danger. He had no influential friends to get him out of prison in Caesarea ([Acts 24:26–27](#)). In the end, all he could do was exercise his right to appeal directly to Caesar in Rome. He came to Rome, then, as a prisoner. He remained in that position for at least two years, as Luke tells us at the end of Acts ([28:30](#)). Tradition holds that he was tried and then released. Within a very brief time, however, he suffered death under the persecuting wrath of Nero.

## ROME UNDER THE EMPERORS

Paul was not the only powerless person in Rome. Slaves constituted at least one third of the total population. They were bought and sold like property, which they were in legal fact. They could be beaten or killed at their master's whim. Some of them fared well in the homes of wealthy Senators, but others worked for long hours under miserable conditions in the teeming metropolis. No freedom at all, no power, no hope, unless they could somehow be sold to a better master or perhaps even bought out of slavery.

Rome—the very name conjures up images of pomp and power. For almost two hundred years, the Romans had been enlarging their empire by ruthless warfare and skilful diplomacy. They had controlled the Mediterranean basin for a hundred years by the time Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome. Everyone had to pay taxes to Caesar. Common citizens had to help soldiers carry their packs. Although local autonomy was granted in some places at certain times (Herod the Great ruled with limited freedom when Jesus was born), Roman rule meant submission to the Emperor. Any sign of rebellion brought swift and harsh reprisal, as the city clerk reminded an Ephesian mob ([Acts 19:40](#)).

Despite its noble tradition and partial success, Roman law often operated for the benefit of those who could bribe the right official ([Acts 24:26](#)). It was often a matter of 'whom you know', not whether you are in the right.

Under these circumstances, slaves like Onesimus often ran away or even revolted, and peoples like the Jews occasionally rose in violent revolution. Out of fear of offending Caesar, cautious men throughout the Empire kept quiet. The ringing eloquence of Republicans had been silenced forever. Freedom of speech almost ceased to exist as one

man [p. 265](#) after another competed in praising rulers notorious for their inefficiency or cruelty (cf. [Acts 24:2-3](#)).

Who were these Emperors?

Augustus, the first to hold total power, ordered the census which led to Jesus' parents' trip to Bethlehem. He had acquiesced in the judicial murder of freedom-loving Cicero. Thereafter, he consolidated power by waging a successful war against Mark Anthony. In one move after another, he showed that a new era had come. He accepted titles which, taken together, assumed almost the nature of deity. As the adopted son of 'deified' Julius Caesar, he was officially 'the Son of God'. Offerings and sacrifices were made to his statue, which was taken to represent his spirit. A month (our August) was named for him. The title 'Augustus' invested him with supra-human status. He was widely worshipped in both the Eastern and Western parts of the Empire. Altars were built to him, and became the focus of political loyalty. He took over the ancient position of high priest, and thus became the head of Roman religious life as well as of the state. When he died, the Roman Senate 'decreed that he should be accepted among the gods of the State'.

Augustus was followed by Tiberius, who built a special altar to him. Rome's second Emperor inspired terror by his frequent purges for treason; in these, more than one hundred nobles perished, including members of the royal family.

Gaius (nicknamed Caligula) came next. This man loved power so much that he refused to wait to be declared divine by the Senate upon his death. He deified himself. When Jews pulled down an altar built for him in Palestine, Caligula called their leaders to account. Enraged, he organized an expedition aimed at setting up a statue of himself in the Temple at Jerusalem. Only his assassination prevented the bloody confrontation that would have ensued upon such an attempt.

Out of a desire to remain on friendly terms with the quarrelsome Jews, his successor, Claudius, began his reign by rescinding the order for that ill-fated expedition. Eight years later, however, riots in Rome involving the Jews led to their expulsion from the capital by Claudius. It was at this time that Aquila and Priscilla came to Corinth from Rome ([Acts 18:2](#)). These riots may have resulted from strife between Christians and Jews, for there were already large numbers of believers in Rome.

Such disturbances accompanied Paul wherever he went as we have seen, and placed him in an unfavourable position. He could be labelled as an instigator of political unrest, a threat to the peace. At least, he was so charged in Thessalonica: 'These men who have [p. 266](#) caused trouble all over the world have now come here ... They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus' ([Acts 17:6-7](#)).

Another king! Surely this comes from calling Jesus Lord (*kurios*) in a state where only one man could properly be called lord of all the earth: Caesar. In Roman eyes, Paul was then not only a despised foreigner, but possibly a revolutionary.

Nero followed Claudius. Immediately, he laid claim to a miraculous childhood, and stressed his descent from the deified Augustus. He accepted the praise of flatterers who hailed him as Apollo incarnate because of his support for the arts.

Early in his reign, he had his rival and step-brother poisoned. His mother he first sent into exile, and then murdered. At about the time Paul made his appeal to Caesar, Nero was divorcing his wife and having her executed. Thereupon, he married his best friend's wife. Not only so, but he also revived an old law which allowed the death penalty for offending the Emperor by word or deed.

His extravagance and pride helped to make him unpopular. Some thought that he started the great fire of AD 64 in order to clear the ground for a huge palace. At any rate, he blamed the Christians for that disaster, and had many of them tortured and killed. Tradition places Paul among those martyrs.

## STOICS AND EPICUREANS

When Paul wrote Romans, what kinds of ideas influenced the public mind? The following brief summary relies heavily upon F. F. Bruce's *New Testament History*, used because of its general availability to students.

The most popular school of thought at that time was Stoicism. Stoics believed that a rational principle permeated the universe and informed all of life. This they called the *logos*. All creatures, including men, find their integration in this world-soul, which is reason. In fact, everyone has a spark of divinity in him. Thus, a Stoic poet could say of God, 'We are his offspring', as Paul quoted him in Athens. But this 'god' was not the Creator, but an impersonal, all-pervading mind.

Stoics believed also in fate. A man's destiny in life is part of the universal *logos*, the fundamental plan of the world. We cannot change our fate, but we can co-operate with it.

If life became intolerable, the Stoic could commit suicide. He believed that his soul survived death, but would be burned up the next time the universe was consumed by fire. Stoics had no linear view of p.267 history, as the Bible does. Things went around in circles throughout eternity.

Epicureans have received bad publicity from some quarters because of excesses. Their original theory called for disciplined enjoyment of the good things of life, especially food and friendship. They were total materialists. Atoms, colliding and combining by chance, formed into the world as we see it. Even the soul was material. Thus, when our body dissolves at death, our soul will too.

Epicureans urged a simple and cautious life-style, free from disturbing cares. Seek pleasure; avoid pain; do not become involved in this world's controversies, for nothing really matters. Only our senses can give us reliable information about the world, so all non-material information and ideas must be rejected out of hand.

Both Stoics and Epicureans found it difficult, in fact, to refute the Sceptics. Profound doubt pervaded the ancient world. We cannot know anything for sure, and what we do know gives precious little comfort. The best thing is either to strive to do our duty with the Stoics, or seek for personal pleasure with the Epicureans.

Epicureans and Sceptics denied the existence of the gods. Stoics 'demythologized' the ancient stories and turned them into allegories with moral lessons. But the masses flocked to temples and shrines for help and comfort in time of need.

We have already mentioned the required worship of the Emperor. This stemmed originally from filial piety, the central virtue of Rome. In his great epic telling of the founding story of Rome, Vergil makes the filial piety of Aeneas his theme. All that this ancient ancestor did was aimed at bringing his household gods to Italy.

Every home had its household gods (the *penates*), which were kept in a cupboard. Worship of them formed the centre of family life and religion. In addition, the *lares* represented the spirits of the dead, who must be honoured and feared. Any food falling on the floor had to be burned before them.

Crossroads, old trees, groves, rivers, and a multitude of other places all contained shrines where the faithful offered food or incense to express thanks for safety in travel, or requesting prosperity, children, or health. In Rome itself, tourists can still see impressive remains of imposing temples to Jupiter and other gods. Everywhere you turned, you saw a temple or an idol. Every official function opened with a sacrifice to one or more of the gods. Coins, buildings, paintings—all featured these mythical beings. Literature abounded with stories about the gods, some of whose actions caused sensitive readers to blush with shame. Even the theatre, the most popular pastime of the p. 268 day, portrayed the exploits of the gods in dramatic and often pornographic form.

All festivals were occasions for worship of some god. Lavish sacrifices were offered to his image at his temple; games, drama, markets and merry-making followed. Most of these fell at the full moon. Everyone took part. If you did not, you were considered subversive, for these festivals also celebrated the solidarity and loyalty of the people.

## MORALITY IN ROME

The capital city manifested most of the characteristics of the Empire. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, they lived in a metropolis with one million people. The rich had fled the inner city and lived in spacious homes on hills surrounding the crowded valleys. Masses of common people crowded into tenement houses four and five storeys high and jostled with each other in congested streets.

Impressive engineering brought fresh water to the city through aqueducts and supplied the heated public baths where those who could afford it spent much of their leisure time. Theatres, temples and porticoes all boasted the elegant marble and ornate design of a wealthy but decadent Empire.

From all over the Mediterranean, hopeful people flocked to the city to find their fortune. Slaves, of course, could only hope for freedom. But others could beg, steal or bargain their way to wealth and power. Each outlying district provided its own distinctive flavour. The result was a mixture of East and West, old and new. You could hear a dozen languages in those busy markets, and attend the services of dozens of different religions from all over the world.

As you might expect, morality plunged to new depths in this setting. Urban anonymity replaced corporate responsibility. No one knew where you came from or who you were, and no one cared. The old Roman family system, once the foundation of public and private virtue, crumbled. Augustus could enact legislation against adultery, but could not prevent his own daughter from breaking the law. He could censor the works of the poet Ovid, but could not keep avid readers from devouring his advice on how to seduce a virgin.

Vergil wrote of Aeneas' filial piety, and reminded the people that Rome became great through self-sacrifice and fidelity to one's ancestors. Meanwhile, his audience, including the royal family, outdid one another in extravagant living and ruthless infighting.

Homosexuality, glamorized by Plato centuries before, flaunted itself on the stage and in the best-selling poetry. These two media—drama [p. 269](#) and poetry—undid the lofty counsels of moralists like Seneca whose brother Gallio acquitted Paul in Corinth ([Acts 18:15](#)). His Epistles abound with wise and noble thoughts, but his own life was marked by luxury which undermined his credibility.

## CONTENT OF PAUL'S MESSAGE

Paul wrote his most famous Epistle to an existing church founded (probably) by Peter's Roman hearers on Pentecost Day ([Acts 2:10–11](#)). This congregation contained both Jews and Gentile converts. Their faith was being 'reported all over the world' ([Romans 1:8](#)). Paul wanted to visit them, not only to 'impart to them some spiritual gift to make them strong', but also to be encouraged by their faith. He had another hope: that they would participate with him in the evangelization of 'regions beyond' ([16:24](#)).

Thus, although Paul was convinced that they were 'full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another' ([15:14](#)), he felt a holy boldness to share with them what God had given him. We have looked briefly at *some* of Paul's context, especially the context of his letter to the church in Rome. Now let us glance at his content.



He begins by identifying with his readers, many of whom were slaves: 'Paul, a slave—of Christ Jesus' (1:1). He, too, is a slave. But, his master, Jesus Christ, was Lord of all slave-owners. In calling himself a slave, Paul dignifies all humble services and relegates all human authority to second place.

Why? Because, though the Emperor may be descended from Julius Caesar or Augustus, Paul's master, Jesus, was descended from the ancient king David. Furthermore, this Jesus, unlike any deified Caesar, rose from the dead. In this way, God showed that he is not only the son of man, but also the Son of God. He is LORD—and here Paul invests Jesus with the divine title of Israel's covenant God.

Because Jesus is LORD, he has authority to command obedience of all people everywhere. His ambassador Paul carries a commission to demand faith in and allegiance to Jesus.

What an opening! Think of the excitement among Jewish and Gentile readers alike, as Paul reminds them of their privileged position. Others may despise them as renegades and foreigners, but they are 'called to belong to Jesus Christ'. They are 'beloved by God'. In that moral cesspool they are called to be saints, 'the holy people of God' (1:7).

Philosophers might scoff at their simple faith, but Paul glories in the p. 270 gospel. After all, 'it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes', both Jew and Gentile, wise and foolish alike (1:14–16).

The degradation all around them is evidence that 'God's wrath is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness' (1:18). The philosophers claim to be wise, but their thinking has become 'futile and their foolish hearts (are) darkened'. Although they claim to be wise, they are really fools.

Idolatry and superstition arouse not only our pity, they also elicit God's anger. The stupid things people do to themselves and to each other result from false thinking and misdirected worship. Men are without excuse.

As the letter progresses, we can hear allusions to the total context of Paul's Roman readers. Jewish legalists, proud of their rich religious heritage and perhaps contemptuous of recent Gentile converts, wither under Paul's scathing *exposé* of their hypocrisy. The good things that a Gentile, as a creature of God, might do by nature, receive commendation (2:26).

Lest anyone become proud, Paul showed that 'all have sinned' and must be 'justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus' (3:23–24). The nature of faith, which brings justification, finds its best illustration in the story of Abraham who was so beloved by the Jews (chapter 4).

Christian discipleship is seen as a new slavery. This time, however, the 'slavery' to Jesus and that alone constitutes moral freedom. Jewish law forms the background for references to remarriage in chapter 7 and the basic framework for Paul's honest cry, 'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?' (7:24).

The Roman practice of adopting sons provides Paul with a striking metaphor: 'You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again, to fear, but you have received the Spirit of sonship (or *adoption*). And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father' (8:15).

All men, not only intellectuals, wonder whether the frustrations of life will, ever end, and whether this life has any meaning. Filling in the gap that Roman historians left, Paul outlines a doctrine of creation, fall, providence, and ultimate redemption that satisfies the mind and heart alike. 'In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose' (8:28). Others may accuse us, but 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' (8:31). We may be surrounded by the powers of spirits,

exposed to suffering, and threatened with death itself, but nothing 'in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (8:39). p. 271

Turning to the burning theological question of the day, the place and authority of the Old Testament, Paul explains the relationship of the Old and New Covenants (chapters 9–11). Here he appeals both to Scripture and to reason with a few metaphors added for point and power.

Practical questions must not be ignored, for Paul knows nothing of academic theology. Service in the church comes first, since the church is nothing less than the body of Christ. Submission to the state follows. What?! Submission to the Emperor? Yes—even to Nero. Like Jesus before Pilate, Paul affirms that even the most depraved ruler has no power except what has been given from above (John 19:11). With all its flaws, all its injustice, its oppression and corruption, the Roman rule must be obeyed, for the magistrate is 'God's servant' (13:4).

Turning from public morality, Paul warns his readers not to take part in the manifold vices and seductive pleasures of the debauched world around them, for Christ will return soon. At this point, someone would ask, 'How do I exist in a milieu of idolatry? Are you calling me out of the world altogether? Why, I can't even eat meat unless I eat what has been offered to idols!'

Unlike many arm-chair theologians, Paul hastens to grapple with this vital issue, and gives sane advice. Let every man follow his conscience, living for the Lord. At the same time, let us not do anything that causes another brother to fall into sin through our example. Above all, in secondary matters, let love and mutual acceptance prevail.

Paul closes this masterpiece of contextualized theology with a return to his own concerns: his missionary trip to Spain; the offering for needy Christians in Jerusalem (they call it 'social action' today); danger from the religious establishment in Jerusalem which might prevent him from realizing his plan to visit Rome.

Finally, Paul 'personalizes' his theology even further by sending greetings to believers in Rome from himself and his fellow-workers. A sombre note comes in the form of a warning to 'watch out for those who cause divisions ... Keep away from them' (16:17).

## PAUL'S CONTEXT AND OURS

Perceptive readers will already have observed that Paul's Roman readers faced a context similar to ours in Asia. By way of summary, let me just mention some common elements:

Authoritarian or even tyrannical governments, riddled with corruption and often hostile to Christians. p. 272

Suspicious neighbours who believe Christians to be peddlers of a foreign religion, traitors to their traditional culture, or even dangerous revolutionaries.

Proud intellectuals, educated in logic and reason but ignorant of the power of the one true God, contemptuous of Christians and intolerant of our faith.

Idolatrous masses, enslaved to superstition, fear, and false worship—a pervasive presence of demons.

Crowded cities, overflowing with hordes of common people trying desperately to earn a living in the face of exploitation and corruption.

Debased morals, assaulting the conscience through every medium of art and entertainment.

A small and outcast church, divided by controversies over theology and practice, powerless, persecuted, but faithful to her Saviour through it all.

What would Paul say to those living under unjust governments? Would he countenance throwing off the yoke of foreign domination or of internal oppression? How



could the one who submitted to Roman rule under the Caesars favour church involvement in revolution? Surely, Paul would urge believers to obey their rulers, even unjust ones. He would remind us that our hope is in heaven, not on earth. He would not appreciate the churches which spend most of their energy on political and social reform. The kingdom of God which he preached was not 'meat and drink' (bound up with life on this earth) but 'righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'.

Paul could sympathize with Christians who are hated by their own people. He could not even return to Jerusalem without asking for prayer that he would be protected from his countrymen. To him, however, acceptance by Christ meant far more than rejection by mere men. He would urge us to rejoice at all times in the Lord, and to wait for Christ to return and bring our true identity to light—our position as the sons of God.

To the sophisticated unbeliever, Paul would press the claims of Christ as both reasonable and satisfying. Whatever unbelievers might think, the gospel was the power of God unto salvation for those who believe. He would advise us to show the folly of unbelief and the evidence for our faith, never shrinking in shame before the intellectual.

He too was surrounded by masses of superstitious idolators. He knew the agony of soul that being in such an environment could create. He would remind us to call all men everywhere to repent, and to point them to the only true and living God. For atheists and idolators [p.273](#) alike, he would use the powerful weapon of Christ's resurrection from the dead to elicit faith.

On the other hand, he would never approve of trying to change the gospel to make it more palatable to non-believers. I doubt whether he would even agree with much that we do today to conform to contemporary modes of worship. Anything to do with idolatry he would shun, especially if our actions might cause a brother with less knowledge to sin (This issue pertains directly to the matter of ancestor-worship, of course). The man who preached Jesus as Lord in Caesar's capital would, I suspect, question our excessive subservience to earthly rulers (would he bow to an image of Augustus, as Chinese bow to a statue of Sun Yat-sen?).

In some parts of Asia, Christians come mostly from the middle and upper classes. Paul, on the contrary, identified with lower strata of society. His churches had slaves as well as slave-owners as members. He worked hard with his own hands, living simply in the major cities of the Empire among the common people. He would challenge our church to forsake our comfort and ease and plunge into fellowship with the poor and downtrodden. He would not respect theologians who never leave the classroom to debate in the marketplace.

Our churches reflect the current debasement of morals. Paul would call us back to purity, whatever the cost. He would challenge us to avoid temptations coming from the media, and to transform our surroundings by the power of a changed life and a life-changing gospel.

How he would weep over our disunity! With reminders that Christ—not Calvin, Luther, Wesley or any other great man—was crucified for us, he would beg us to accept one another, and not to think more highly of ourselves (and our church traditions) than we ought to think. 'Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves'. 'If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone'. A church ever in danger of being persecuted cannot afford to fall apart by division. Equally, he would warn us not to co-operate with those who have betrayed the faith he preached.

We could go on. Let us close as Paul does. He had begun his letter by affirming, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes ...' ([1:16](#)).

He concludes on the same triumphant note:

‘Now to him who is able to establish you by my Gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all [p. 274](#) nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen!’

**For further reading:**

Besides introductions to the standard commentaries on Romans, one may find information about Paul’s context, as well as full bibliographies, in the following works:

1. F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972.
2. C. N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, Oxford, 1939.
3. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford, 1970.

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# **The Human Couple A Biblical Perspective**

C. René Padilla

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To speak of the human couple is to speak of a fundamental factor in every interpersonal relationship: sexual duality. Sexuality (in its masculine and feminine forms) is part of the very essence of the human being and inevitably conditions the way in which we relate to each other. God did not create asexual human beings; he created the man and the woman. And he designed each one in such a way that in their mutual relationship they would discover the meaning of their own sexuality. The human couple provides the necessary context in which man will understand the meaning of his masculinity and woman her femininity.

In this study I will attempt to define that man-woman relationship from a biblical perspective. In the first part, we will see the couple in the context of creation; in the second, in that of sin; and in the third, in that of redemption.

## **I. THE HUMAN COUPLE IN CREATION**

### *The Image of God*

The whole creation account in the first chapter of Genesis is characterized by an admirable sobriety. Without elaboration or embellishment it lists the acts of creation through which, step by step, God prepares the scenario for human life. All that God does