



Euro Forum of LGBTI Christian Groups 26-27 June 2019
“It’s My Life!’ Trans Pre-Conference 2019
Session 3: Issues of Gender and Sexuality from Trans Perspectives
Susan Gilchrist



The Sibyls

The Sibyls is a UK-based confidential Christian spirituality group for transgender people, their partners and their supporters. We also welcome intersex people. The Sibyls offers companionship along the journey, and information/advocacy to churches.

sibyls.co.uk

enquiries@sibyls.co.uk



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Session 3:

Issues of Gender and Sexuality from Trans Perspectives

***This is an expanded and extended version of the presentation
given at the above conference***

Slides available on: www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/SuL0627t-EuroforumPresentation2019PartExt.pdf

Questions on www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/SuL0625a-EuroForumSession3Questions.pdf



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Welcome

We are all fellow travellers in terms of our interactions with society and while we all can agree on the goals of equal marriage, transgender, intersex and LGB people approach these from different perspectives, and gender identity and sexuality develop to a large degree independently of each other.

In these interactive workshops we hope to explore the similarities and differences so that we can develop a greater understanding of these perspectives and work more effectively together in pursuit of our common aims.



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Structure

I divide this presentation into four parts.

(Click on the title to go to the section)

1. [Introduction and Understanding](#)
2. [Relationships, including Marriage](#)
3. [Campaigns, including Campaigns for Equal Marriage](#)
4. [A little bit of theology](#)

5. [Discussion Topics on relationships and marriage](#)
6. [More Discussion Topics](#)

In all of these we will examine how gender and sexuality interact



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First of all..... A little bit about me and this topic¹

- My initial research work was into how personality and identity develops in situations where tribal violence occurs
- I expanded this into studies on how gender and sexual identities are created
- These studies have demonstrated that there is a fundamental contradiction between the diagnoses identified by science and that which is demanded by the traditional theology of the Christian Church
- Two independent studies have been conducted (1) A science based neurophysiological study on origins and (2) A social historical and theological study to find why the contradiction exists

¹ Personal biography at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/SusanBiographyPapers.pdf> Bibliography at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/bibliography.htm>



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What is our Starting Point?

- Marriage, Sex and Gender, and the relationships between them have long caused major problems in society
- This presentation considers the experiences which are encountered and the relationships involved
- Every person in such a relationship has a personal story, strong emotions are often involved and it is necessary to define the boundaries at the start.
- Previous experience has shown that careful management is required
- **A major difficulty arises because there is little agreement on the origin of these conditions. I want to examine why this disagreement occurs.**



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Part 1

Understanding

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Let us begin with my View on How Gender Identity is formed

- I note that biologically based sexual differentiation takes place before birth
- However gender differentiation depends on establishing relationships with others: That is why gender identification cannot happen before birth.
- **This means that behavioural differences at birth do not arise because a gender identity has already been created. It is the behavioural differences from birth which create the gender identity instead**
- That identity need not coincide with biological sex since considerable overlaps in what are considered male and female physiologies and psychologies are found
- Thus a male to female transsexual for example responds in a way that a woman who (maybe) has been forced to live as a man for part of her life, might expect



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What are the current disputes?

- **Three contradictory views** on the origin of the conditions are currently held
- A viewpoint which states that the core elements of both gender and sexual identities are features which arise very early in development, which do not respond to the predations of others and cannot be changed in later life (backed on a worldwide basis by the major professional medical institutions also my research)
- A viewpoint backed largely by the more radical feminist groups which argue that male to female transsexuals in particular are predatory men who seek to exert power and domination over women, who manipulate femininity to their own desires and advantage by adopting a female role
- A Christian tradition which argues that gender identity is a God-Given feature which must always align with biological sex. Any departure is an unfitting act.



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How do these disputes affect the management methods to be used?

- The first of these viewpoints describes a personality variation driven by a search for identity, the second and third describe personality disruptions or perversions² driven by reward
- The management methods required for each type are almost opposite to each other
- **What is seen by one side as compassion is almost inevitably regarded as coercion by the other**
- **It is this difference**, plus the disagreements over the origin and management of these conditions which fuel the toxic disputes which presently occur

² I use this word in the way that Freud and others intended



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How does this affect Transgender Children and others?

- I address some of the major issues about children in the paper: Gilchrist, S. (2018): “*The Safeguarding of Transgender Children*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/241P-SafeguardingTransgenderChildrenDoc.pdf>
- ***And also for everybody:*** Every person is expected to conform closely to the expected male and female stereotype in societies where gender complementarity is socially, legally and religiously enforced
- This gives men the controlling role with women the supporting act. Power imbalances lead to secular scapegoating and discrimination
- By implication transgender people demand a society where true gender equality is required both in philosophy and action because they cross the gender divide.



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Timeline and Key Features

- I want to consider these issues in two ways. First I want to examine some key features and second to place them into a timeline, which shows how development occurs.
- The key features are
 - What my research demonstrates
 - Dynamics of early development
 - How changes in the pattern of neurological development take place
 - Behavioural differences from birth
 - The magnitude and timings of key developmental stages
 - Peak periods in brain plasticity and constancies of personality and identity
 - Broader implications of core elements of personality and Identity



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Key Features: What does my research demonstrate?

- In my investigation I demonstrate that all of the physiological, neurological and psychological aspects of brain development act together to form a finely tuned system in which the maximum amount of individuality, possessiveness, intelligence and inquisitiveness, together with the minimum degree of energy expenditure are generated. Typical or atypical gender identities can therefore develop and, from a statistical point of view alone it is expected that a proportion of people who have gender or sexually variant identities must be created without the requirement for any external cause.
- It is certainly not a passive process. There are strong opposing forces involved. This tuning defines a threshold where the maximum possible degrees of individuality, possessiveness, intelligence and inquisitiveness are created.
- If this threshold is set too high these human potentials will be reduced and if it is set too low, too much disorder will occur.



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Key Features: Dynamics of Early Development

- My investigation differs from others in that it takes full account of the innate, internally generated and contagious neurophysiologically based forces which dominate early development. That is not considered in much previous work
- These dominate early development before the neural co-ordination which enables the controlling cognitive feedback forces to come into effect
- I note that *“the major difficulty in understanding early development process is not that of understanding how learning is created, it is that of understanding how these innate forces can be controlled to ensure an ordered result”*
- I reverse past approaches to psychiatry and psychology which presume that the cognitive development processes drive both learning and development at all times of life. I show instead that the innate and contagious physiological forces drive identity and development. The cognitive processes act to keep these in check.



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Key Features: Changes in the Pattern of Neurological Development

- As these innate forces dominate early development there are major changes in the patterns of learning and development most notably during the first three to four years of life. In this investigation I trace both the nature of these changes and the times when they occur.
- It goes without saying that there is an enormous amount of literature published, and research work on child development about how gender identities are formed.
- I show that the development of personality and identity is characterised by continuing and intense lifetime struggles between the inbuilt, contagious, internally focussed, feed-forward, physiological driving forces arising from reflex actions that are present from birth: which are competing against the controlling, feed-back and externally moderated processes of cognitive development, that only explode from ineffectiveness into action at a median age of around two years.



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Key Features: Behavioural differences from birth

- I have noted that biologically based sexual differentiation takes place before birth. However gender differentiation depends on establishing relationships with others: That is why gender identification cannot happen before birth, and why behavioural differences from birth create the gender identity instead
- Male and female babies on average do respond and react differently to stimuli. These include eye gaze and empathy, aggression patterns, language processing, mental rotation etc. Development also proceeds at different rates. These are sufficient for gender related tribal alliances, or in-group out-group, discrimination to take place. That only coalesces into the identification of a core gender identity once sufficient neural capabilities and interconnections have been formed.
- Among some groups all of this scientific evidence, together with the opinions of the professional medical institutions, are dismissed as bad science, and are denied



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Key Features: Magnitude and Timings

- A major feature is the massive transformation in neural co-ordination which takes place around a median age of two years. I also show that this is the time when the elemental concepts of core gender identity, which simply define a place a child holds in society, coalesce from previously disorganised thought. The process occurs far too early for masculine and feminine identities to be created.
- Children display this awareness of gender from around an age of two years. However they do not begin to develop any association with gender roles before the age of three years. From that time onwards strongly stereotyped gender roles are often adopted.
- There are huge changes in learning and development patterns over the first three to four years of life. By examining these changes I show that the usually unconscious core sense of gender identity, which simply defines where one fits in society, is fixed at the latest by the age of three years.



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Key Features: Core Concepts of Personality and Identity

- Gender Identity is one of the earliest concepts of personality and identity to be created
- Studies on transgender children show that the core sense of gender identity develops at a very early stage. There is a common belief that it is pre-natal in origin. However by matching experimental research on transgender children to the neurophysiological studies I show that this forms by coalescence from fragmented thought during the neurophysiological transformation period around the median age of two years: it is not a product of rational thought.
- This only decides the gender the child identifies with: behaviour is not involved and allegiances to gender roles only start to develop from about three years
- As this is part of normal development, other non-gender core elements of personality and identity may start to form in the same way and at the same time



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Key Features: Personality Constancies and Peak Periods in Neural Development

- A feature of early neurological development is that peak periods of “*brain plasticity*” occur throughout the brain, during which very rapid development takes place
- These occur in different brain areas at different times and the capabilities that are subsequently created depend greatly on the stimulation that has been received during those peak periods
- Where no stimulation has occurred during these peak periods, those capabilities never fully develop, or they only develop in a restricted way. An example is language development where those who only learn a language after the peak period has passed often can only speak that language in an accented form.
- By mapping the developing core senses of personality and identity I show that, in timing and nature they also occur in accordance with these peak periods. As a consequence constancies of personality and identity are formed.



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Timeline: Development Stages

- The timing of these development processes as important as their nature. This is what I want to consider next
- Based on their behavioural observations, Freud, Piaget and others observed that development took place in a number of stages
- For convenience of analysis I wish to do the equivalent. However I want to look at the neurophysiology instead
- These stages are
 1. Contagious Disorder
 2. Coalescence
 3. Creation of Order
 4. Conscious control



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Timeline: First Stage in Neural Development: Contagious Disorder

- Newly born babies possess many innate reflexes to help them develop. Learning also begins at birth. The reflex actions of possessive imitation, empathy and inquisitiveness are key elements. The more sensory input a baby receives, the more easily connections are made within the brain that differentiate these sensations. There are massive increases in the number of neural interfaces in key areas of the brain and enormous amounts of un-coordinated material is learned
- However another issue must be considered. Without the necessary cognitive abilities and the neural co-ordination that is needed to check on the direction that development is taking: it is instead the contagious momentum which drives the process. Girard and many others have shown that once development starts in a particular direction it can be difficult to stop.
- Behavioural differences drive these from birth. Creating gendered expectations for the future has little impact at this time due to the limited co-ordination of thought.



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Timeline: Second Stage: Coalescence

- The second stage is taken to be effective around a median age of two years
- At this time a neurophysiological transformation takes place. Previously separated and isolated areas of the brain become interconnected. The description that “*The brain Lights Up*” has sometimes been used. From this time onwards the brain becomes much more able to act as a co-ordinated processing unit.
- The lack of neural co-ordination during the first stage had meant that the massive amount of learning could not be processed into understanding of cause and effect
- There is an explosion in neural capabilities and cognitive abilities. The more global concepts of personality and identity, which includes the core gender identity, then coalesce from previously fragmented thought. The nature of the core gender identity that is formed by this coalescence is determined by the momentum of the process. It need not be in line with biological sex



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Timeline: Third Stage: Constancies of Personality and Identity: Creation of Order

- The time up to the neural transformation period is marked by massive increases in the number of neural pathways and interconnections. That is considered to account for the great learning capabilities that babies and young infants possess.
- However after this period there are major changes in the patterns of neural development. Instead of an increase in the number of neural pathways and interconnections there is a decrease. Those that are most used grow stronger, those that are least used die back. This is when I consider that the peak periods of neural plasticity have ended and the tuning of the brain to the environment occurs.
- As a consequence constancies of personality and identity are created. These core elements may be very basic, for example enabling people to recognise the same person in each other even after not having met for a number of years. However they also last until physical brain injury or dementia attacks the personality that is formed.



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Timeline: Fourth Stage: Theory of Mind and Conscious Control

- Children do not develop the mental capability to self-critically examine their own experiences and identify what is different, or followed an atypical path, until the age of around four years. That is the age at which many transgender children first recognise discomfort with the gender identity they are required to accept.
- This means that the earlier developmental processes are often hidden from conscious awareness until some trauma or change brings them to light. This may happen at puberty or at a later date. Once the genie has been let out of the bottle it cannot be put back.
- Children are said to have developed their own “*Theory of Mind*” once the ability to make these judgements has been formed
- Great neurological changes continue to take place throughout life, but however extensive these are, they are built on foundations that have already been laid.



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Brain Permeability and Plasticity

- These two terms describe how the brain is able to change its physical shape and configuration in order to learn from and respond to stimulations throughout life
- In this analysis I show how this enables the constancies of personality and identity to be created. However the brain always remains extremely permeable to new inputs, and it responds plastically to these external stimuli throughout life
- Massive changes therefore continue to take place and towers of self-identity are built on all that these stimuli provide.
- However a tower is only as strong as its foundations. Many transgender people make enormous efforts to endorse and build on the gender identity and role that is expected of them. However the stronger the tower becomes, the greater is the collapse when the foundations fail.



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Harm

- For transgender people much of one’s self identity is built on a foundation that society either refuses to recognise or does not expect.
- Crippling harm can be created by the attitudes of some religious or feminist groups who heap guilt on people who cannot follow the path they prescribe.
- The trauma this creates can be enormous and further attempts to fight the conflict only accelerate the demand.
- The techniques required to manage identity driven conditions are almost opposite to those required for reward driven ones and it is imperative that the correct management methods are applied³

³ Gilchrist, S. (2016): "Science and Belief. A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-PaperPersonality.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/205P-ManagementTechniquesInGenderDysphoria.pdf>



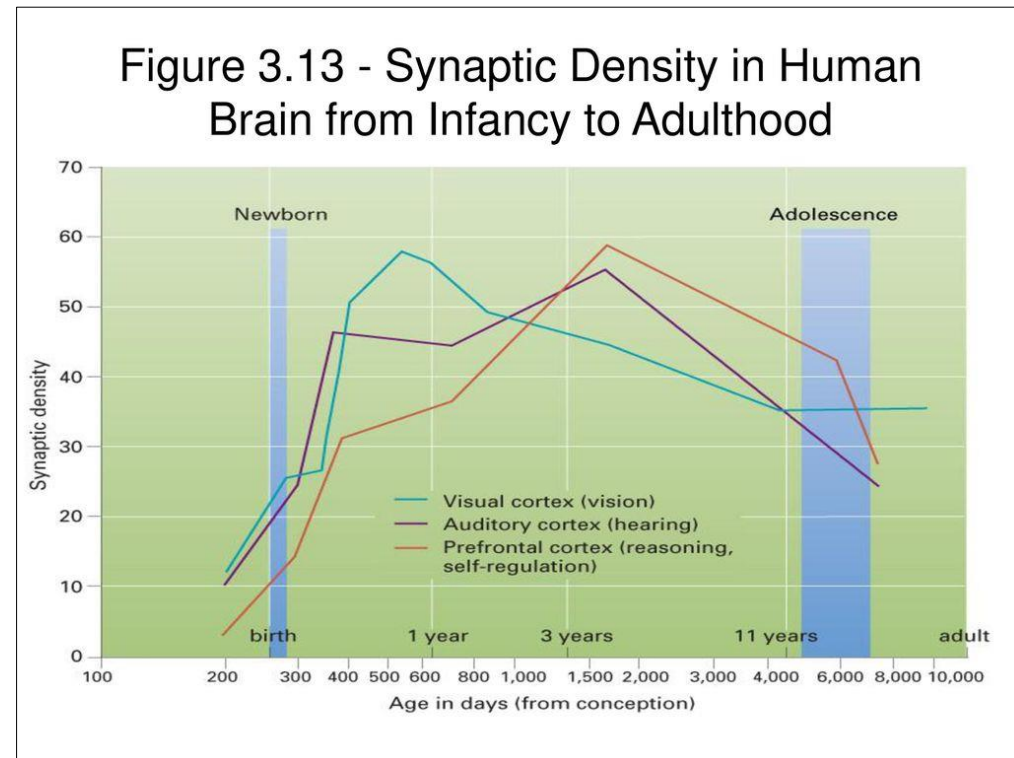
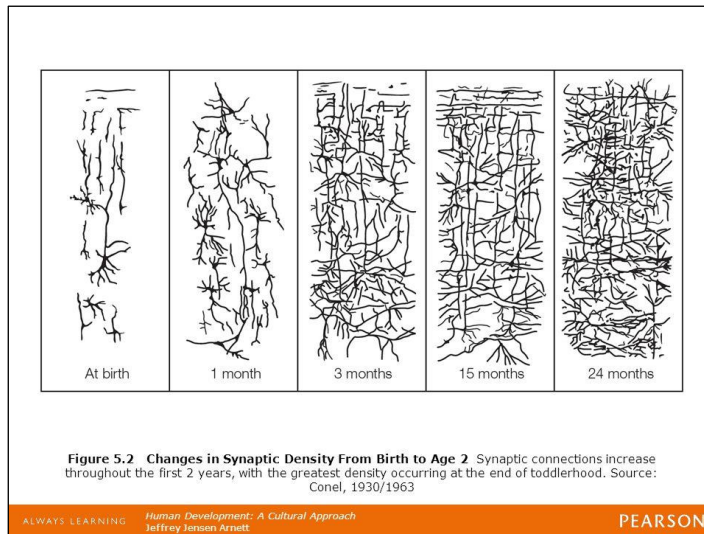
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Born Into the Wrong Body

- We have seen that biologically based sexual differentiation takes place before birth. It is the behavioural differences from birth which create the gender identity. Thus a male to female transsexual for example reacts in a way that a woman who (maybe) has been forced to live as a man for part of her life, might expect
- The sense of core gender identity coalesces around the age of two years. That has become fixed by the age of three. It is driven by the momentum of these processes so it need not be in line with biological sex
- Children only develop the skills to critically assess what is happening to them from about the age of four years. They are not aware of these previous events
- The belief that some transgender people have *“Been born into the wrong body”* eloquently describes the feelings of many although it is not physically correct

Synaptic Density





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Meeting Gender Challenges



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Meeting Gender Challenges: Disputes over Origins

- I have noted that biologically based sexual differentiation takes place before birth
- I have also noted that gender differentiation depends on establishing relationships with others. Therefore I argue that gender identification cannot happen before birth. This means that any subsequent differences which occur are moderated through behaviour for the first moments after birth
- Recent research which denies the existence and impact of “*male and female*” brains is being trumpeted as denying that any difference exists
- According to that decree all of the early differences in learning patterns I have described in my previous slides should be ignored. I show that this is not correct.
- I also demonstrate that the opposite outcome is found when these are included



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Meeting Gender Challenges: Pre Natal and Post Natal Influences

- Accepting the argument that gender differentiation begins at birth means that its development for everybody, transgender and cisgender starts in the same way
- Therefore transgender people should possess a gender identity which is as strongly held as anyone whose gender identity follows the expected path. Indeed it may be even stronger because it has had to be fought for at all times
- Recent research also identifies that differences in behaviour are relatively small in comparison with overall differences in human psychology.. That means that some male babies develop in ways which are more akin to female babies. Considerable overlap occurs..
- Behavioural differences at birth do not arise because a gender identity has already been created: Behavioural distinctions from birth create gender identity instead.



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Meeting Gender Challenges: Gender Complementarity and Transgender People

- This reliance on behavioural differences means that male to female transsexual react in harmony with women, (and vice versa). Non-binary people have an equally strong but different view of the identity they possess. .
- The intensity of the transgender search for identity together with the neural processes which lock these identities in place show that fundamental gender differences and gender complementarities must exist.
- These must be supported in the same way as gender complementarities in all types of sexual relationships. However transgender people challenge every society where gender complementarity is socially, legally and/or religiously enforced.
- Jesus did not condemn gender complementarity, but he condemned the social, religious and legal enforcement of it many times. For everybody that should apply



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Meeting Gender Challenges: The Search for Identity

- The gender complementarity which is defined by these harmonies of identity is that which is needed to ensure love, cooperation and stability inside a physically sexually differentiated society. It has nothing to do with the disputes and conflicts which arise from gender role differentiation later on.
- Both sets of arguments demonstrate that identification precedes socialisation. That means that the management methods that must be used are those of personality variation. Explanations which rely entirely on how the social roles develop can only act as overlays on what has already been formed.
- These studies confirm the viewpoint expressed on a worldwide basis by the great majority of professional medical institutions which states that that the core elements of both gender and sexual identities are features which arise very early in development, which do not respond to the predations of or recruitment by others and cannot be changed in later life. That is challenged by some groups.



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More Disputed Territory



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More Disputed Territory: Challenges and Contradictions

- At the start of this presentation I have noted that three contradictory views on the origin of transgender conditions are currently held. These are:
- A viewpoint which states that the core elements of both gender and sexual identities are features which arise very early in development, which do not respond to the predations of others and cannot be changed in later life (backed on a worldwide basis by the major professional medical institutions also my research)
- A viewpoint backed largely by the more radical feminist groups which argue that male to female transsexuals in particular are predatory men who seek to exert power and domination over women, who manipulate femininity to their own desires and advantage by adopting a female role
- A Christian tradition which argues that gender identity is a God-Given feature which must always align with biological sex. Any departure is an unfitting act.



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More Disputed Territory: Church Challenges

- This analysis challenges traditional Christian Teaching which argues that gender identity is a God given feature which must always align with biological sex
- That challenge is seen in the attack by Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in the Catholic Church, who said: *“Gender Ideology is a Luciferean Refusal’ of the Sexual Nature Given to Us by God” which “denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female”*. It is also seen in the recent church document: *““Male and Female He Created Them” Towards a Path of Dialogue On The Question Of Gender Theory In Education”* published as an official document by the Congregation For Catholic Education of the Roman Catholic Church.



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More Disputed Territory: Why is this Church Position Wrong?

- It does not contain a proper understanding of the present science
- It uses a medical diagnosis demanded by church theology rather than scientific results. Great harm can result from the misdiagnosis that this makes.
- It presumes that the adoption of “*Gender Ideology*” will lead to chaos and disorder.
- Instead of creating disorder, the innate nature of these processes, the need for a constancy of personality and identity plus the intensity of the transgender search for belonging is also a search for family. In place of attacking the values of family life, transgender people in their own ways, support the teaching of the Church
- It attacks transgender people, who challenge the social legal and religious enforcement of gender complementarity by the Christian Church. .



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More Disputed Territory: Any other Reasons why the Church Position is Wrong?

- **In many religious traditions, in a great deal of traditional psychology and psychiatry, and in the feminist based explanations for transgender conditions, the early development processes which I have described in this presentation are ignored**
- The “Gender Ideology” referred to by Church is that advocated by certain feminist groups in which these early development processes are also dismissed or ignored. These groups also campaign to dismiss any approaches that do not agree with their own agendas as *“Bad Science”*
- Therefore the inputs of the professional medical institutions, groups such as GIRES (Gender Identity Research and Education Society) The NHS Gender Identity Clinics, World Health Organisation and other groups, all of which seek to promote responsible research in this area are also ignored



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More Disputed Territory: Inadequacies of Diagnosis

- Traditional analytical and psychodynamic theories, such as those of Freud and Piaget fail to properly diagnose these conditions since they are based on presumptions and they also use constructs which presume that it is the cognitive processes themselves which drive learning and development at all times of life.
- Some radical feminist doctrines and dogmas demand that an absolute separation in their battles between men and women must be made
- The expectations of society and the social, legal and religious enforcement of gender complementarity also demand that an absolute distinction is required
- All of the analyses promoted by these groups support their own attitudes to men and women. Transgender people are not the primary focus in the diagnoses they present. Unsound diagnoses are presented which support each group’s cause



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More Disputed Territory: Feminist Attitudes

- By dismissing or ignoring these early development processes, the diagnoses which are adopted by those who pursue more radical feminist viewpoints are based entirely on symptoms of particular conditions while avoiding the cause.
- Instead of identifying these as identity driven conditions it presumes that all transgender people are driven by disruption, suspect behaviour or by a search for power and reward. Therefore a medical misdiagnosis is made.
- Only male to female transsexuals are considered; the rest, which includes the great range of transgender conditions, is almost invariably ignored.
- The plight and distress of those transgender people who desperately try to live according to the gender role that biology expects: often for many years and outwardly with great success, is disregarded.



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More Disputed Territory: Transsexuals and Feminism

- We have seen that some male babies will develop in ways which are more akin to female babies. Such people behave more in harmony with women
- By implication transgender people demand a society where true gender equality is required both in philosophy and action because we cross the gender divide
- Instead of being seen as enemies of the feminist movement transgender people should be seen as allies in the feminist cause. There are many transgender people who are very active in the feminist movement. Many cisgender feminists also recognise us as allies and they welcome us in that way.
- However some do not and instead feel that what it means to be a woman (and/or a lesbian) is under attack. As well as fiercely attacking male to female transsexuals they often irately reject female to male transsexuals because they consider that these people have betrayed their sex.



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More Disputed Territory: Misdiagnoses and Morality

- The legitimacy and integrity of transgender identities are attacked by many Christian and radical feminist groups.
- This research and the worldwide scientific consensus shows that gender and sexually variant conditions arise from the search for identity, not desire. Thus the entire range of moral attitudes and behaviours are to be found amongst gender and sexually variant people as in the community at large.
- Gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities according to the highest standards of their societies should be highly valued. Those engaged in misuse should be strongly decried
- Traditional Christian doctrines do not recognise this duality. All forms of gender and sexually variant expression are decried as a falling from Grace, which are driven by desires for inappropriate or illegitimate sex.



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More Disputed Territory: Gender and Men: Gender and Women?

- There are many books which profess to give an answer “*Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*”; “*Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps*”
- There is the obsession with brain physiology which looks at the brain structure and differences in foetal brains to argue that fundamental differences exist
- There is the religious position which argues that gender identity a God-Given feature which must always align with biological sex.
- There is the social conditioning and stereotyping arising from the different physical attributes and roles men and women occupy in society
- Before attacking transgender people the questions of: “***Gender formation for Men?***” and “***Gender formation for Women?***” should first be addressed.



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Is Anyone Listening?



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Who is listening to what we say?

- Is it those who take a viewpoint backed largely by the more radical feminist groups which argue that male to female transsexuals in particular are predatory men who seek to exert power and domination over women, who manipulate femininity to their own desires and advantage by adopting a female role?
- Is it those in the Christian tradition and Churches which argue that gender identity is a God-Given feature which must always align with biological sex: Any departure is an unfitting act.
- Is it those who pursue arguments to suit their own agendas and dismiss those who opposes them, including the professional medical institutions and the massive experiential evidence that already exists as pursuing bad science and following a fad or fashion which is being pursued by transgender activists instead?



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What is Needed?

- A not unreasonable request from all gender and sexually variant people that there should be no talk about us without us. That our experiences must be genuinely listened to, with no prejudice either way, and our voices clearly heard
- Objective views of all of the science and experiential evidence that is now available
- An openness of mind which enables questions of: “*Gender formation for Men?* and “*Gender formation for Women?*”, as well as “*Gender formation for Transgender people?*” to be fully pursued
- In religious and feminist groups who are campaigning against transgender people there is selective use of science and little evidence they are prepared to listen
- Until these happen we will always s be vilified for being ourselves



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Further Information

- I discuss some of the current arguments in the following papers
- Gilchrist, S. (2019): “*Disputes in the Development of Personal and Transgender Identities in Early Life*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-DisputesBehaviourSelfIdentity.pdf>
- Gilchrist, S. (2019): “*Divisions: Self-Declaration and Gender Variant People*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-DivisionsSelfDeclaration.pdf>



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Papers

- This presentation also draws on the following papers
- Gilchrist, S. (2017): "*No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice: It Need Not Conform to Biological sex*". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>
- Gilchrist, S. (2019): "*Issues of Gender and Sexuality from Transgender Perspectives: Extract from East and West: A Comparison of How the Apostles Interpreted the Gospel Message in Roman and Persian Cultures*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/035B-GenderAndSex.pdf>
- Gilchrist, S. (2017): "*A House Built on Sand? Attitudes to Gender and Sexual Variant Identities and Behaviour in Christianity and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/231P-HouseUponSand.pdf>



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Strategies



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REPRISE: Let us begin with my View on How Gender Identity is formed

- I note that biologically based sexual differentiation takes place before birth
- However gender differentiation depends on establishing relationships with others: That is why gender identification cannot happen before birth.
- **This means that behavioural differences at birth do not arise because a gender identity has already been created. It is the behavioural differences from birth which create the gender identity instead**
- That identity need not coincide with biological sex since considerable overlaps in what are considered male and female physiologies and psychologies are found
- Thus a male to female transsexual for example responds in a way that a woman who (maybe) has been forced to live as a man for part of her life, might expect



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REPRISE: Disputed Territory: Misdiagnoses and Morality

- The legitimacy and integrity of transgender identities are attacked by many Christian and radical feminist groups.
- This research and the worldwide scientific consensus shows that gender and sexually variant conditions arise from the search for identity, not desire. Thus the entire range of moral attitudes and behaviours are to be found amongst gender and sexually variant people as in the community at large.
- Gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities according to the highest standards of their societies should be highly valued. Those engaged in misuse should be strongly decried
- Traditional Christian doctrines do not recognise this duality. All forms of gender and sexually variant expression are decried as a falling from Grace, which are driven by desires for inappropriate or illegitimate sex.



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REPRISE: Gender Complementarity and Transgender People

- This reliance on behavioural differences means that male to female transsexual react in harmony with women, (and vice versa). Non-binary people have an equally strong but different view of the identity they possess. .
- The intensity of the transgender search for identity together with the neural processes which lock these identities in place show that fundamental gender differences and gender complementarities must exist.
- These must be supported in the same way as gender complementarities in all types of sexual relationships. However transgender people challenge every society where gender complementarity is socially, legally and/or religiously enforced.
- Jesus did not condemn gender complementarity, but he condemned the social, religious and legal enforcement of it many times. For everybody that should apply



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Approaches: Strategies

- Persuading the Christian Churches to take full account of the science involved
- Showing that the “*Gender Ideology*” they fear is equally incorrect
- Giving the assurance that family life and relationships are not under threat
- Highlighting the refusal of the more radical feminist groups to take any account of the early development processes
- Noting that this refusal applies to all aspects of gender and personality development, not just gender and sex



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Approaches: Gender Wars and Toxic disputes

- Transgender people recognise that legitimate gender expression can take many forms
- Sexual abuse is totally rejected
- The need for true gender equality also means that the social, legal and religious enforcement of it must be forbidden in every way
- That is also what Jesus taught.
- Jesus did not condemn gender complementarity but he condemned the social legal and religious enforcement of gender complementarity many times.
- And he did so in the strongest terms.



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No matter what we do, many people will not listen. With these people we must lead by example instead



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Approaches: Warfare and the Sibyls

- The lack of understanding and feminist activism among transgender people means that even in transgender communities wide divergences of views are held
- WE must recognise that, however harmful each of us believes that the other person’s views may be, the people who hold them are often genuinely committed to their own viewpoints, and they also believe that they hold the best interests of transgender people in their hearts
- However we must always condemn the misuse of science
- The Sibyls holds these tensions within its own organisation, **SO THAT THE DIFFERENCES AND DISAGREEMENTS CAN BE EXPRESSED WITH FULL FORCE.** We believe that we must do this for true reconciliation to be achieved. Therefore the views I express in this presentation should be regarded as my own personal viewpoint and not those of the Sibyls Group



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But that is Enough About my Research

Have You Any Questions?

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Part 2

Marriage and Relationships

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Relationships and Gender and Sexually Variant Behaviour

- The research confirms that as large a range of moral attitudes principles and behaviour will be found amongst the gender and sexually variant communities as that which is encountered in society at large.
- It validates those activities that are engaged in for the pursuit of love and it distinguishes them from those engaged in for the misuse of sex
- It is shown that gender identity and sexual orientation often do not coincide. As extended a range of sexual interests and orientations is also to be expected among transgender people as there is in society at large
- All of these have major impacts on marriage and romantic relationships when a transgender partner is involved.



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Gender and Sexuality

- Gender and Sexuality can go different ways. Among transgender people as wide a range of sexual orientation and interests as in the general population are found.
- This includes people who identify in binary and non-binary roles
- Some people who are in a same-sex married relationship transform this to a heterosexual relationship when one partner transitions
- Other people who were originally in a heterosexual relationship transform this to an apparent same-sex relationship when one partner transitions
- This is not the same as a same-sex relationship where only sexuality is involved
- This focus on binary matters does not mean that I disregard non-binary concerns



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Marriage and Relationships

- Relationships in marriage are profoundly affected since gender identity and sexual orientation also act independently of each other.
- Many of us are already familiar with the difficulties that can be encountered in marriages where a transgender partner is involved
- Many transgender people marry in their imposed gender role, and do so for all the right reasons and love they possess.
- However as age increases the drive gets stronger. If no way is found to manage these dynamics the outcome can be total, sudden and catastrophic collapse.
- **The adjustments which are demanded of spouses are at least as great if not greater than those on the transgender partner**



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Consequences

- This can have devastating results.
- When gender and sexuality are in conflict, sexuality is usually suppressed.
- There is the destruction of relationships and commitments through the failure to cope, even when love is as strong as ever.
- There is the blame for letting oneself down, the hurt to other people that has been caused and the guilt for the inability to conform to the edicts of others and one’s own expectations.
- Christian doctrines contradict the results of the great majority of current scientific investigations and my own research



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Female to Male Transgender Relationships and Survival Rates

- There is a dearth of research on these subjects
- One descriptive study⁴ examined the prevalence of romantic relationships in a large-scale international sample of female-to-male (FTM) transgender men, the rates that partners stay together during the gender transition of one of the partners, and the interconnections between the perceived social support from romantic relationships and the mental health of FTMs.
- Of those who were in a relationship before they decided to transition, about half reported that their relationship had been maintained. Of the relationships which did not survive after the transition, about half of FTMs reported the reason for separation was related to their transition.

⁴ Meier, S. Colton; Sharp, Carla; Michonski, Jared; Babcock, Julia C; Fitzgerald, Kara: (2013) “Romantic Relationships of Female-to-Male Transgender Men: A Descriptive Study” International Journal of Transgenderism, 14:75–85, 2013: Taylor & Francis Group: ISSN: 1553-2739 print / 1434-4599 online
DOI: 10.1080/15532739.2013.791651



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Male to Female Transgender Relationships and Survival Rates

- Similar experiences are found with male to female transsexuals. Virginia Erhardt, gives an important insight into the experiences of wives coping with their MTF partners’ gender transition⁵.
- Of the genetic males⁶ who enter treatment, approximately 50% are either married or they have been married, and about 70% have children
- Erhardt describes the wide range of experiences encountered. The book is also analysed in a paper by Bischof, Warnaar, Barajas, and Dhaliwal⁷
- Although these data have not been quantified a similar survival rate to that of female to males might be expected

⁵ Erhardt, V. (2007). Head over heels: Wives who stay with cross-dressers and transsexuals. New York: Haworth Press.

⁶ This identification is used in the research work which is being quoted: using it does not define the gender identity: its use excludes intersex conditions where genetic differences occur.

⁷ Bischof, Gary H. Warnaar, Bethany L. Barajas, Mark S. Dhaliwal, Harkiran K (2011). “Thematic Analysis of the Experiences of Wives Who Stay with Husbands who Transition Male-to-Female”. Western Michigan University Michigan Family Review, 15(1), 16-34, 2011 © Michigan Council on Family Relations



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Sexual Orientation

- In an Internet study of more than 1,000 FTMs the results indicated that transgender men may participate in a variety of sexual behaviours with all types of partners⁸. In addition, the sexual attractions of about one third of FTMs shift while they are transitioning, usually from attractions to men only, or women only, or to a more bisexual or queer orientation.
- Circumstantial evidence and Erhardt’s study suggests that an equivalent rate amongst MTF transsexuals might be expected.
- A further secular resource which is available is *“The Transgender Partner Handbook”* by Jo Green⁹

⁸ Meier, S. C., Green, J., & Dickey, I., (2010, November). “Sexual behaviors, health, and satisfaction of transgender men (FTMs) with and without hormonal and surgical modifications: Preliminary results”. In T. Lostutter (Chair), *Sexual health and functioning: Using data to inform cognitive behavioral treatments*. Symposium presented at the annual conference of the Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, San Francisco, CA. As cited in 4

⁹ Green, Jo. (2017): *“The Transgender Partner Handbook: A Guide to When Your Partner Transitions”*: Jessica Kingsley, ISBN 978 1 78592 227 5 eISBN 978 1 78450 503 5



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Impact

- These findings highlight the fact that many relationships can and do endure through a gender transition, and they emphasise the importance of close, supportive relationships during and after transition.
- The results of these studies demonstrate that from this scientific research, and from practical experience, the love and commitment which can be found in a marriage is not determined by gender identity or by sexual orientation.
- The rates at which gender and sexually variant people are murdered are much higher than those of the general population, and the rates of suicide, or attempted suicide, by transgender people are extremely high. More than four in five transgender young people have self-harmed. Also more than two in five transgender young people have attempted to take their own life¹⁰

¹⁰ Stonewall/Cambridge University (2017): “School Report (2017)” <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>



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Contradictions and Consequences

- A major conflict occurs because the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation contradicts the results of these investigations
- It also contradicts the scientific consensus, and routine experience, all of which show that the love and commitment in a marriage is not defined by gender identity or sexual orientation.
- The subverting of the boundaries suggests that the same degree of acceptance must be applied to all marriages, heterosexual, same-sex and transgender alike¹¹
- Lives are at risk when these issues are not addressed.

¹¹ Gilchrist, S. (2016): "Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church: Is it Not Time to Consider the Science?": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/226P-ConsiderScience.pdf>



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Legislation and the Church of England Position

- The United Kingdom Gender Recognition Act of 2004 determined that any transgender person who transitions and obtains a Gender Recognition Certificate must for all legal and social purposes be treated as a member of the gender they have transitioned to
- The Church of England has endorsed that position, so that anyone who has transitioned can have a full church wedding that can take place in any church.
- Such marriages are regarded in the same way as a heterosexual marriages
- Marriages between same-sex couples continue to be opposed on the grounds that marriage can only be between a man and a woman for life



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How does all of this tie up with Doctrines on Marriage?

- Much of the current campaigning focus on LGBTI issues is concerned with issues concerning the acceptability of same-sex relationships and same-sex marriage in Christianity and the Christian Church.
- For transgender people the issues are different since those who have obtained legal recognition of their gender identity through the granting of a United Kingdom Gender Recognition Certificate are already able to have a full Church of England wedding, which can also take place in a Church of England Church.
- The traditional doctrine of the Christian Church is that marriage can only be between a man and a woman for life.
- That doctrine is challenged when one person in a heterosexual marriage undergoes gender reassignment, and that should also be addressed.



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To Summarise

- Gender transition, together with the associated changes in sexual orientation, (whenever they occur), confound the principles on which the traditional teaching of the Church on marriage and on gender and sexual variant behaviour, is based
- Feminist inspired approaches are challenging the legitimacy of transgender identities
- Although the issues for transgender and LGB people are different we are fellow travellers in our relationships with society
- It is important for us to continue to have input to the development of the teaching document on sexuality which is being prepared by the Church of England
- However we must also remain free to challenge the results



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Marriage and Relationships

- For many of us it is in our relationships where the greatest degree of trauma is involved. These include:
- Relationships between friends and acquaintances
- Relationship in Families
- Relationships in marriages
- Rejection and Condemnation

All of these are major areas of concern.



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Discussion Sessions

IMPORTANT

- **These are not intended to be sessions for exploring your own concerns and relationships**
- **Share as much OR AS LITTLE information about yourself as you feel comfortable with**
- **It is the aim to build on our common experiences in ways which give each other help**

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Discussion Topics

In this section I want us to look at

- Gender and Gender awareness
- Sexuality and Sexual awareness
- Intersex, Non Binary and Other
- Marriage and Relationships
- How these interact with each other
- Finally How Gender and Sexually Variant People can support each other in facing the attacks upon us and achieving common goals



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Discussion on Gender and Gender awareness

- When did we begin to perceive our own gender?
- How has this developed over the years?
- How do others react to our own expression of it?
- How does it affect the relationships we make?
- Do we conform to or do we challenge stereotypes?
- How has the rejection/acceptance of it affected our own lives?
- Do we or others make us feel guilty about it and how do we respond when that occurs?



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Discussion on Sexuality and Sexual awareness

When did we begin to perceive our own sexuality?

- How has this developed over the years?
- How do others react to our own expression of it?
- How does it affect the relationships we make?
- Do we conform to or do we challenge stereotypes?
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Discussion on Non-binary: also Transvestism and Bisexual Issues

- Note: These are simply grouped together for convenience and no other reason
- Gender and Sexual identification takes many forms. The idea that gender and sexuality are confined to binary modes is incorrect
- There is a different end point for every individual
- Pressures of society try to create allegiances which conform to a binary mode
- How strongly does anyone who conforms to any of the categories above seek to define their positions?
- To what extent are issues of belonging and rejection involved?



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Discussion on Intersex

- What particular challenges does being intersex bring?
- To those of us who are not intersex, how well do we understand what this means?
- How can intersex people deal with the presumptions of others
- How can we best support intersex people?



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Discussion on Marriage and Relationships

- Official teaching states that marriage is only ‘Between a man and a woman for life.’
- Transgender and intersex people pose a significant challenge to that assertion.
- Is marriage limited to a man and a woman? Dare we ask what defines a man and what defines a woman?
- Are we agreed that Christian marriage, or the ideal of it, is life-long fidelity?
- What is the role of procreation in marriage?
- What do we understand by gender complementarity and is this essential to a marriage?
- Is marriage a sacrament: is the marriage ceremony a sacrament? Can transgender people’s marriages reflect the union of Christ and the Church?



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Discussion on how these interact with each other

- Having considered each of these topics, what conclusions can we reach?

How should we campaign and publically express our views?



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Part 3

Campaigning

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Church of England Background

Living in Love and Faith

- The Living in Love and Faith project is propelled by the Church’s desire to learn how relationships, marriage and sexuality fit within the bigger picture of a humanity that is liberated by Jesus Christ and infused by the Spirit to reflect the image of God in which we are created.
- Perspectives on gender, identity and sexuality are evolving and the Church wants to explore these matters by studying what the Bible, theology, history and the social and biological sciences have to say. We hope to stimulate thinking and learning that helps us to understand what it means to embody a Christian vision of living in love and faith in our culture. The project is led by the bishops because of their particular responsibility for upholding and teaching the Christian faith.



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Church of England Background

Living in Love and Faith

- There are significant concerns about this programme. The Church England *“Bishop’s Reflection Group on Sexuality”* confined any future consideration to that of: *“Interpreting the existing law and guidance to permit maximum freedom within it, without changes to the law, or the doctrine of the Church”*.
- Those of us who have sought to become involved in it have faced obscuration and had information withheld from us which would be relevant to our cause
- Despite the earnest efforts of some people within it, it appears that some parties within the programme are telling everyone they should keep to the same old policies but try harder. They either have not got the message, or are refusing to listen to it; or to accept that what is now needed is a radical new approach.



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Church of England Background

Living in Love and Faith

Actions

- Continue to maintain involvement
- Set up an independent monitoring group to report on the work of the Living in Love and Faith Project
- Launch independent campaigns on key issues

What sort of campaigns should be launched?



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Campaigning



Equal, the Campaign for Equal Marriage in the Church of England, is campaigning for a change in the teaching and practice of the Church of England to allow all couples to marry in church, regardless of their gender, sex or sexuality. This principle of equality already applies in English law and in some other churches.

The Church of England’s current official position is that only opposite-sex couples can marry in its churches. Same-gender couples cannot marry in church. They cannot even officially receive a blessing after a civil marriage. Christians who have married their same-gender partner are discriminated against in the ministry of the church, both lay and ordained.

<https://www.cofe-equal-marriage.org.uk/>



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Discussion on How Gender and Sexually Variant People can support each other in facing the attacks upon us and achieving common goals

- I believe that Equal Marriage should be the common goal for LGBTI people alike
- However LGB and TI people approach the same issue from different perspectives
- To what extent can and should TI people become involved in a campaign for equal marriage which concentrates (rightly) on same-sex relationships
- Should transgender people and organisations completely join in with the campaign?
- Or should transgender people and organisations seek to find every possible way of giving the campaign its fullest possible support?



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Part 4

Some Theological Research

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Theological Research

- I present here the main conclusions I have reached in my theological social and historical studies. A full bibliography is available at:
<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/bibliography.htm>
- Gilchrist, S. (2017): *“Condemning Sexual Abuse and Welcoming Gender and Sexually Variant People into the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/237P-ChangesInChurch.pdf>
- Gilchrist, S. (2017): *“A House Built on Sand? Attitudes to Gender and Sexual Variant Identities and Behaviour in Christianity and the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/231P-HouseUponSand.pdf>
- Gilchrist, S. (2017): *“No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice”*. <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>



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Theological Conclusions

- I show that the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexuality does not correspond with the findings on human development indicated by this neurophysiological research.
- By removing the theological presumptions on gender and sexuality, which dominated both Church and society for the last two thousand years, new insights into biblical texts are possible.
- I show that the teaching of Jesus on gender equality and gender and sexual variance would support the present day insights, and that all transgender, transsexual lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves; must all be accepted in the Christian Church.



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Theology Conclusions (continued)

- I demonstrate that the adaptations of the teaching of Jesus and the creation of doctrines which were more representative of those belonging to a gender polarised and a male dominated Greco/Roman society came from the requirement to give respectability to the Church^{12 13}.
- I establish that a paradigm shift has taken place in the Christian tradition where the first century condemnations of same-sex intercourse which had been based on the abuses of power, purpose and hospitality in society have been turned into the unchangeable condemnation of the sexual act.

¹² Gilchrist, S. (2015): “Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/022B-Deuteronomy22-5.pdf>

¹³ Gilchrist, S. (2017): “The Gospel of Thomas and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/027B-Thomas.pdf>



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Theology Conclusions (continued)

- I show that this has led to the enforcement of a strong heterosexual, gender defined and an exclusive orthodoxy within which every expression of gender and sexually variant behaviour is considered to be a mortal sin and a disordered act¹⁴.
- In present day society people can see for themselves the moral duality that is inherent to gender and sexually variant behaviour, and the love and lifetime commitments which are expressed in same sex-relationships.
- The refusal to consider even the possibility of any change or correction to the traditional doctrines of the Church, or to recognise the realities of science, or the lived experiences of gender and sexually variant people is today destroying the credibility of Christianity and the Church.

¹⁴ Gilchrist, S. (2016): “Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2016): “Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>



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Have You Any Questions?

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Part 5

More Discussion Topics

Marriage and Relationships

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SOME SCENARIOS ON MARRIAGE FOR DISCUSSION

- A couple married for 37 years where one partner is a transgender woman and lives in dual roles with her family’s support. She does not have gender recognition.
- A couple married for 8 years following the gender recognition of one of the partners, but who have been a couple for 42 years.
- A couple married in the Roman Catholic Church 25-30 years ago, one partner transitioned in 2001 but did not obtain gender recognition when this became available because they did not wish to dissolve the marriage and enter into a civil partnership which was the option until the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.



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- An elderly married couple, one of whom had had transitioned many years previously, and who did avail themselves of gender recognition – by fast track – when this became available followed by a civil partnership ceremony. Particular care was given to protecting the spouses pension rights although she has predeceased her partner.
- A married couple, one of whom lived in dual role with her spouse’s support, and then transitioned after the death of her spouse and who is still single.
- A married couple, who separated and then divorced when one of them transitioned - in some scenarios the spouse supports the transitioning partner until the point when that becomes full time.



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- A married couple, where one partner cross-dresses periodically and socially to express a part of their identity, but has no intention of transitioning. If this is a male they usually have a strong male gender identity.
- Someone who was twice married and divorced and attracted to females and who then transitions and is attracted to males.
- A married person transitions and the couple stay together but the partner who has transitioned now finds themselves attracted to someone of the opposite gender to themselves and their spouse.
- A female couple, one of whom has a transgender history and also identifies as intersex and who presents butch, and who are able to marry under the legislature of their state.



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SOME QUESTIONS ON MARRIAGE, IMPLICATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

- What are the legal issues in a marriage where the transgender spouse is not the biological parent but wishes to be registered as such?
- What are the impacts of transition on the marriage of those whose children, or some of them, are unsupportive to the transgender parent?
- What is your view on the statistics of couples who stay together or separate?
- What are the reasons why couples separate at this point?
- How essential is gender to marriage? What is your view on children who identify as transgender?
- How should we define heterosexuality and homosexuality – absolutely/seeking the complement/seeking the similar or what?



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THEOLOGY ON MARRIAGE

- Official teaching states that marriage is only ‘Between a man and a woman for life.’
- Transgender and intersex people pose a significant challenge to that assertion.
- Is marriage limited to a man and a woman? Dare we ask what defines a man and what defines a woman?
- Are we agreed that Christian marriage, or the ideal of it, is life-long fidelity?
- What is the role of procreation in marriage?
- What do you understand by gender complementarity and is this essential to a marriage?
- Is marriage a sacrament: is the marriage ceremony a sacrament? Can transgender people’s marriages reflect the union of Christ and the Church?



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***HOWEVER MUCH WE MAY BE CONCERNED ABOUT OUR OWN SITUATIONS
IN OUR MARRIAGES AND OUR RELATIONSHIPS***

THE CHALLENGES FOR SPOUSES AND PARTNERS ARE AT LEAST AS GREAT

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