

What Science and History Says About the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church

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SuH1123w²

23 November 2017

Summary

This paper reports on two separate investigations. The first is a scientific and neurophysiologically based study into the development of personality and identity. A second independently conducted historical, scientific, social and theological investigation has also been carried out with the aim of discovering the reason for the contradiction between science and theology which is found to exist. Because of the adaptations that were needed to survive, and later to preserve its institutions, it is shown that the Christian Church developed a traditional doctrine which medically misdiagnoses gender and sexually variant conditions. By treating these conditions as being derived from the search for reward rather than identity, the wrong methods of management have also been applied. Considerable harm has been done since the management techniques that are needed are almost opposite to each other. Applying the incorrect techniques creates instead of relieves any trauma and distress. In place of combatting the scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people in secular society, these changes have led many sections of the Church to collude with it. That still has considerable force in societies where gender differentiation is legally or socially enforced. Today the differing approaches taken in different societies are creating schisms in the Church. A return to a doctrine is needed which removes the contradiction that the traditional one has imposed. Unless that happens the current attempts to welcome transgender and gender and sexually variant people by: *“Interpreting the existing law and guidance to permit maximum freedom within it, without changes to the law, or the doctrine of the Church”* will not succeed. When the teaching of Jesus is examined in this investigation it is found that the contradiction no longer exists. This means that the changes to the doctrine which this investigation demands do not depart from the Gospel message, they return to the teaching of Jesus himself.

This paper is available online at: Gilchrist, S. (2017): *“What Science and History Says about the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church”*:

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/239P-WhatScienceAndHistorySays.pdf>

¹ Personal Biography <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/SusanBiographyPapers.pdf>

² First issued 23 November 2017: This paper is available online at: Gilchrist, S. (2017): *“What Science and History Says About the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/239P-WhatScienceAndHistorySays.pdf>

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In November 2017 the Church of England issued new guidance on transphobic bullying for its 4,700 schools. In a document titled "*Valuing All God's Children*", the Church said youngsters should be free to "*explore the possibilities of who they might be*", including gender identity. It declares that Christian teaching should not be used to make children feel ashamed of who they are⁵.

When science and history are considered, there are three significant areas that have to be addressed. First century Roman society viewed sexual behaviour through the prism of submission and domination: any form of sexual behaviour for any purpose which challenged the masculinity and domination of any male Roman citizen in these grossly gender and socially unequal societies was condemned, and was regarded as a disordered act. That is reflected in the traditional teaching of the Christian Church, which states *that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered"*. This teaching also declares that while it is not a sin to have these feelings, any expression of them for any purpose must always be regarded as acts of grave depravity which are contrary to the natural law, and choose the sexual act to the gift of life⁶.

The first concern addressed in this document is the contradiction between the science which theology dictates, and the science that current research submits. The second concern relates to the paradigm shift in Christian teaching, where the first century condemnations of same-sex intercourse, which were based on the abuses of power, purpose and hospitality have been turned into the

³ Personal Biography <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/SusanBiographyPapers.pdf>

⁴ First issued 23 November 2017: This paper is available online at: Gilchrist, S. (2017): "*What Science and History Says About the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/239P-WhatScienceAndHistorySays.pdf>

⁵ Church of England: (2017): "*Valuing All God's Children: Guidance for Church of England schools on challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying*": Second Edition, Autumn 2017 https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%27s%20Report_0.pdf

⁶ See for example the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (2017), *Part 3 Life in Christ*. Article 2357: Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved. Article 2358: The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfil God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition. Article 2359: Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm

unvarying condemnation of the sexual act⁷. The third concern arises from the medical misdiagnoses that these doctrines create⁸.

There are two different condemnations in this Christian doctrine. The first is the allegation that such acts are *"intrinsically disordered"* and the second is the presumption that this disorder refers exclusively to the acts of sex. However it is often the abuses of power in gender and socially unequal societies which endorse permission for the extreme abuses of sex. No examination can be complete without a consideration of the interactions between power and sex⁹.

1:0: Reactions

The reactions of various groups have been predictable. The immediate response of the popular press was to ridicule and to trivialise this Church of England approach. The headline in the Sun was to say *"The skirt on the drag queen goes swish, swish, swish"*¹⁰. An earlier opinion article on gender neutral shop changing rooms the Daily Express¹¹ stated that transgender people are such a tiny minority that any rights they might have should be disregarded: because the majority may be perverts who abuse this approach. Another article published by the Daily Mail Online states *"I'm not surprised the absurd Church of England says boys can wear tiaras to school. All common sense has been lost in the gender debate"*¹². In a further article, which splashed the headline: *"Church: Let Little Boys Wear Tiaras"*, the Daily Mail quoted a conservative Christian activist who called the new guidelines: *"unkind, unloving and lacking in compassion"*. She said: *"We are all against bullying, but the Church is using these guidelines to pursue an agenda that runs counter to the Church's teaching."* The article also states that: *"schools have been told they can't use Bible as basis for gender identification"*¹³. A document published on the Anglican Mainstream Website, titled: *"Valuing All God's Children: Not What It Says on the Tin!"* states that: *"However, given how the issues are framed, VAGC is an excellent vehicle for sex rights activists to embed an agenda in church schools which is antithetical to core Christian morality."*¹⁴ Andrea Williams, Chief Executive of the Christian Legal Centre and Christian Concern has herself said: *"This case is one of a flood of cases we are encountering where teachers are finding themselves silenced or punished if they refuse to fall in line with the current transgender fad"*¹⁵.

One group: CitizenGO claims to differentiate itself from the other groups by *"seeking truth by way of reason"*. It states that it does not resort to ideological dogmas or formulas to communicate the causes on which it acts. It declares that everything CitizenGO proposes has its basis in science,

⁷ See 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>

⁸ Gilchrist, S. (2013): *"Personality Development and LGBT&T People: A New Approach"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>

⁹ For a full study of the relationships between power and sex see: 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> and 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>

¹⁰ The Sun: Monday 13 November 2017

¹¹ Daily Express 10th November 2017: *"We must stop pandering to the tiny minority that is the transgender lobby says TIM NEWARK THE news that Topshop has caved into transgender pressure and is to abandon separate men's and women's changing rooms is just another indication of a minority rights culture that has got way out of hand"*. <https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/877876/Stop-pandering-to-tiny-transgender-lobby>

¹² Daily Mail 14 November 2017: *"I'm not surprised the absurd Church of England says boys can wear tiaras to school. All common sense has been lost in the gender debate, writes A.N. WILSON"*: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-5079597/The-absurd-Church-England-says-boys-wear-tiaras.html#ixzz4yWRloWQM>

¹³ Daily Mail: 13 November 2017: See: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5075641/Let-little-boys-wear-tiaras-says-Church-England.html#ixzz4yWNdxTNw>

¹⁴ Nolland, Lisa Severine. (2017): *"Valuing All God's Children: Not What It Says on the Tin!"* <http://anglicanmainstream.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Valuing-All-Gods-Children.pdf>

¹⁵ Christian Concern. (2017) *"Christian Teacher Facing Disciplinary Hearing After Calling A Pupil born Female a Girl"*: <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-issues/education/christian-teacher-facing-disciplinary-hearing-after-calling-pupil-girl>

law, and anthropology. According to its mantra, interest groups should see that CitizenGO is “a rational organization that acts and communicates reasonably”. However it describes the guidance in “Valuing All of God’s Children” as “Nothing short of an official lie, and failure to endorse this lie can have dire consequences”. It further declares that “The guidance requires us to completely reinvent our categories of “man” and “woman” without any evidence given that they are in need of revising”¹⁶. A separate right wing group, “The English Channel” again describes this document as: “A Politically Correct Travesty”.¹⁷ The scientific work carried out by professional medical institutions is dismissed by many of these groups as the work of transgender activists¹⁸. It is argued that people who pursue these arguments are driven by emotion rather than rationality¹⁹. Much of the research work that is currently available is ignored²⁰, and the claim is frequently made, without justification, that more work needs to be done

2:0 Science

It is therefore appropriate to examine the work that has actually been undertaken²¹. Ignoring intersex people for the moment, biological sex is usually considered to be physically indicated from conception by the chromosomal differences in male and female babies²². However gender identity cannot be established before the brain is able to provide the organisation that is needed. There is a rapid and massive increase in neural capability around a median age of two years. Freud, Piaget and other psychologists considered that the time before this neurophysiological transformation was a time of seething but uncoordinated neural activity. From the points of view, both of theology and of science, the failure to adequately explain what happens during the intervening period is where the first major deficiency occurs.

There have been multitudinous studies on these issues, and these broadly break down into two camps. The first is the more recent neurophysiologically based studies on early development which examine the growth of these capabilities in terms of brain maturation and neural function. The second is the traditional social learning and psychodynamic theories which begin by considering mature brain functioning: in these theories constructs are created which seek to explain the relationships between the conscious and unconscious mind, and how learning and development takes place in early life. The neurophysiologically based analyses can be described as “bottom up” studies; which can be contrasted with the “top down” approach taken by the traditional psychodynamic and social learning theories. The second major deficiency to the present time has been the inability to provide an adequate link between the two processes. That omission is

¹⁶ CitizenGO. (2017): “Say No to the Church of England’s Transgender Trojan Horse” <http://citizengo.org/en-gb/ed/115372-church-england-transgender-trojan-horse>

¹⁷ English Channel. (2017): “Valuing All God’s Children: A Politically Correct Travesty”:

<http://www.theenglishchannel.uk/2017/11/14/valuing-all-gods-children-a-politically-correct-travesty/>

¹⁸ Gilchrist, S. (2017): “Academic Integrity”: Available online at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/SuH0516c-AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

¹⁹ Williams, Andrea, M. (2017): “Church of England Urged to Reject Call to Ban Pastoral Care of Christians with Unwanted Same-Sex Attraction”: July 3, 2017: <http://www.standardnewswire.com/news/4263312689.html>. Also:

Williams, Andrea, M. (2017): “Calling a Spade a Spade: The dangers of false Teaching and Jayne Ozanne”: Published: June 30th, 2017: <http://christianconcern.com/our-concerns/same-sex-marriage/calling-a-spade-a-spade-the-dangers-of-false-teachings-and-jayne-ozan>

²⁰ Gilchrist, S. (2015): “Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process”:

[Updating]: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>. For other descriptions see: Besser, M., Carr, S., Cohen-Kettenis, P.T., Connolly, P., De Sutter, P., Diamond, M., Di Ceglie, D. (Ch and Adol.), Higashi, Y., Jones, L., Kruijver, F.P.M., Martin, J., Playdon, Z-J., Ralph, D., Reed, T., Reid, R., Reiner, W.G., Swaab, D., Terry, T., Wilson, P. and Wylie, K. (2006) ‘Atypical Gender Development – A Review’, *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 9(1):29-44, [Accessed 15/10/2015]:

<http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/Research-Assets/atypical-gender-development.pdf> : GIRES (2006) ‘Atypical Gender Development: A critique of the review’, [Online]. [Accessed 15/10/2015]: <http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/IJT-Assets/IJTresponse.pdf>

GIRES (2012) ‘Diagnosis and Aetiology: an update’, [Online]. [Accessed 15/10/2015]: <http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/Research-Assets/Diagnosis%20and%20Aetiology%20update%202012.pdf>

²¹ Gilchrist, S. (2017): “Gender and Sexual Malpractice and Abuse in the Christian Church”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/236P-Malpractice.pdf>

²² This is just one of a number of indicators

addressed in this analysis. Because of their early origins, the development of atypical gender identities can be used to provide the link that is required.

This author has used the latest advances in neuroscience, including the contributions of mirror neurons, contagion, empathy and possessive imitation to examine how development takes place during these periods of early life²³. At birth the part of the brain responsible for perception and interpretation is in very primitive state and this study matches the advances in brain physiology to the increases in neural capability as the transition occurs. Particular emphasis is placed on examining how the contagious, innate and internally created driving forces; which dominate early development and are present from birth, come to be held in check by the restraining forces of cognitive development which can only later come into effect. The timing and nature of this transition is crucial. It is argued from this study that it is the rapid development of cognitive abilities during the neural transformation period around a median age of 2 years, which enables the core elements of personality and identity, including gender identity and sexual identity to coalesce. It also is demonstrated that 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 is created. It is further shown that the extreme contagion of the internally generated self-reinforcing and fragmented physiological development processes provides the driving forces behind them. From a statistical point of view alone it can be expected that a proportion of people with gender or sexually variant identities will be created without being driven by any external cause²⁴.

Much of this development takes place during the first four years of life and pre-natal biological triggers have been shown to play an important role²⁵. By the time a child becomes sufficiently self-aware to question what has happened, the unconscious core components of identity and personality have already been fixed in place. The conflicts which people encounter arise from the attempts to resolve what has already occurred. It is additionally demonstrated that brain plasticity (which is the ability of the brain to physically reshape itself), is structured to maximise the amount of information that can be collected during the period before the neural transformation, when it is most needed, and later to manage it so that a constancy of personality is formed.

Two types of conflict are indicated by this analysis. Identity driven conflicts arise when any key element of identity is fixed before any exploration of what it means can take place. Reward driven conflicts occur when the relevant element of identity only forms after that exploration has largely taken place. Traditional Christian doctrine and the earlier psychiatric approaches have treated the development of gender identity as being reward driven. This investigation considers it to be identity

²³ 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. (2016d): "A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-InfluencesPersonality.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2013d): "Personality Development and LGBT People: A New Approach": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>

²⁴ Gilchrist, S. (2017): "No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

²⁵ The most commonly accepted view is that the development of atypical gender identity is triggered by the response, or the lack of response of the brain to the wash of hormones that takes place about ten weeks after gestation. It is argued that this leads the brain to develop in a male or female direction and behavioural differences between male and female babies are noted from just a few hours after birth. The consequences of this are most strongly evident in the case of intersex people where previous practice had been to assign them to a particular gender, and use surgery as soon as possible after birth, to create a more visually acceptable appearance. The harm and distress this has created for such people, even when they were never made aware that this had happened to them is such that good practice with intersex children today is to delay any such surgery until children reach an age when they are able to make their own choice. The importance of this must never be underestimated. However the nature of neural development and the contagion of the development processes are at least as likely to play a significant role. The interactions between nature and nurture, including endocrinal influences is considered in detail in section 1:3 of 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> where a significant but restricted concordance is found.

driven instead. In the investigation reported here it is shown that the gender identity is just one of the core concepts of personality and identity that are created. It is demonstrated that the conflicts which are associated with the core elements of personality and gender identity are the symptom of the failure to build a coherent sense of self identity rather than the cause. The fragmented nature of early development means that outcomes can be specific in nature, so localised disturbance may occur. Gender and sexual variant people are fellow travellers in their interaction with societies and the same conflict dynamics occur: however being transgender is not an indication of sexual orientation: As wide a range of sexual orientations are found amongst transgender people as those which are found in society at large. Attempts to fight these conflicts do not succeed and measures based on acceptance must be used²⁶. Extremities of emotion and bipolarity may exist, because the conscious sense of gender identity a person aspires to is disrupted by the unconscious core gender identity that is hidden deep inside.

The results of the neuroscientific research show that the contagious internally created driving forces that are present from birth, propel development forward at all times in life, and that these are only held in check by the restraining forces of cognitive development which later come into effect. On the one hand this may lead to personality disorders being created; on the other hand it stimulates and promotes the highest achievements in life. Since these conditions are identity driven as wide a range of moral attitudes and behaviour must be encountered within the gender and sexually variant communities, as in the population at large. Therefore that those gender and sexually variant people who live true to their own identities in ways that conform to the highest standards of their own societies should be highly regarded, while those who do the reverse may be severely condemned for their acts²⁷. That contradicts the traditional teaching of the Christian church which condemns every act. Freud also affirms this moral duality in his own correspondence²⁸. Freud himself defined the distinction between identity driven and reward driven conflicts in terms of inversion and perversion, and he drew from history to show how many of the leading figures in antiquity were themselves inverted in the way he describes²⁹.

This distinction is not new. Similar arguments were made by Jeremy Bentham about 1785³⁰ and by Kertbeny in 1869³¹. However, in line with Christian teaching which regards gender and sexually

²⁶ Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/205P-ManagementTechniquesInGenderDysphoria.pdf>

²⁷ The relationship between transgender people and religion varies widely around the world. Religions range from condemning any gender-variant behaviour, to honouring transgender people as religious leaders. Views within a single religion can vary considerably. Buddhist scripture does not distinguish same-sex sexual activity from heterosexual activity. In Thai Buddhism, being katoey (an umbrella term that roughly maps to a range of identities from male to female transsexuality to male homosexuality) is seen as being part of one's karma. In Shinto, Shirabyōshi, female or transgendered kami are associated with same-sex love or gender variance. They are linked to Shinto priests of the same name, who are usually female (or occasionally transgender) and perform ritual dances in traditional men's clothing. In African religious beliefs the Akan people of Ghana for example, have a pantheon of gods that includes personifications of androgynous or transgender deities. The indigenous population of Australia have a shamanic religion, which includes a pantheon of gods, and the rainbow serpent god Ungud has been described as androgynous or transgendered. Third gender, or gender variant, spiritual intermediaries are found in many Pacific island cultures. The pre-Christian Philippines had a polytheistic religion, which included the transgender or hermaphroditic gods Bathala and Malyari, whose names mean "Man and Woman in One" and "Powerful One" respectively. Two-Spirit People is an umbrella term that is now sometimes used what were previously known as berdaches. These are indigenous North Americans who fulfil one of many mixed gender roles found traditionally among many Native Americans and Canadian First Nations communities. Two-spirit people were both respected and feared in many tribes. They frequently became practitioners of tribal medicine. Although success could bring high status they could be likely to be suspected of witchcraft in cases of failed harvest, or the death of a tribal member

²⁸ Freud, S. (1935): Letter sent in 1935 anonymously to Alfred Charles Kinsey. Also published as Historical Notes: A Letter from Freud in: *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, April, 1951, 107, No. 10, pp. 786 and 787.

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Letter_from_Freud_\(to_a_mother_of_a_homosexual\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Letter_from_Freud_(to_a_mother_of_a_homosexual))

²⁹ For an extended account see: Gilchrist, S. (2013d): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>

³⁰ Bentham, Jeremy. (1785): "Offences Against One's Self"

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/web/eresources/exhibitions/sw25/bentham/index.html> See also: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/bentham-project>

³¹ The word "Homosexuality" made its first known public appearance, when Kertbeny anonymously published the pamphlet *Paragraph 143 of the Prussian Penal Code and Its Maintenance as Paragraph 152 of the Draft of a Penal Code for the North German Confederation*.

variant conditions as the product of reward driven activities, much of the identity driven emphasis provided by these people has been disregarded. Experiential evidence has now substantiated the identity driven nature of these conditions: but full scientific confirmation has not to now been available. The results of this research affirm and substantiate the worldwide consensus of scientific opinion; which includes the great majority of professional medical and psychological institutions, who regard both gender and sexually variant identities and behaviour as naturally expected variations of the human condition, which are intrinsic to the personality created, that arise very early in development and cannot be changed either by the individual concerned or by the predations of others in subsequent life.

Significant gender expression in infants begins from about the age of three years, and from then onwards a strong differentiation occurs. However the idea that children from this age onwards can choose their gender is false because the core gender identity, which determines the place of the child in society, has already been fixed in place. Traditional psychology and psychiatry disregard the contribution which this early period makes to the development of personality and identity, and the limitation lies in the theories themselves³². By defining the development of gender and sexually variant identities as reward driven activities the evidence for this earlier process is denied. Therefore the standard explanations of the creation of gender identity presume that this develops only gradually, and exclusively through children's own understanding and interpretation of the experiences which they encounter: and that it is determined through their cognitive understanding of gender role³³. This conclusion is reversed in the research undertaken by this author, which demonstrates how a non-concordant core gender identity can be formed through the contagious nature of early development in the first years of life. This unconscious identification with a gender is expressed in terms of identity alone. It is about being who one is and it sets the direction of travel for the future developments that take place. That is why it is essential to examine the development of gender identity in transgender children, as well as those for whom development takes the expected path: for when gender identity develops in a way which is congruent with biological sex, no evidence for these early conflicts is found.

The timing is also crucial. Instead of building on the blank canvas which is predicted by the traditional theories of psychology, children build their conscious understanding of what gender means on top of an unconscious core gender identity, which has already been fixed. Some argue

This pamphlet advocated for the repeal of Prussia's sodomy laws, saying that private consensual sex acts shouldn't be subject to criminal penalties. <http://www.policy.hu/takacs/pdf-lib/TheDoubleLifeOfKertbeny.pdf>

³² Freud, Piaget and others attempted to describe early development by creating social constructs such as the ego, super-ego and id. However the relationships between these are always described in cognitive terms: that demands a level of brain organisation which is capable of handling these relationships. This in turn leads to the assumption that the traditional theories largely act on a blank canvas, and that has been the foundation of much research. The limitation therefore lies in the theories themselves. Therefore the existence and influence of the innate physiological development processes before and up to the time of the neurophysiological transition period is also denied. This is expanded on in: Gilchrist, S. (2017): "No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

³³ The standard and conventionally accepted gender studies believe that the initial concepts about gender are quite flexible. They note that children do not begin to notice and to adopt gender-stereotyped behaviour until the age of two or three. A few years later, their concept of gender becomes quite rigid. Before the age of five, children do not seem to think that gender has any permanence. A pre-school child might ask his female teacher whether she was a boy or girl when she was little, or a little boy might say that he wants to grow up to be a mummy. Toddlers think that changing clothes will also change gender. It is not until children understand that boys have penises and girls have vaginas that they know that changing clothes does not change gender. Research suggests that children's concept of gender develops gradually between the ages of three and five. Once children begin to think about gender as a stable trait, they also start to incorporate gender into their own identity. From around that time they become motivated to relate to other members of their group, and to seek out gender-related information, often becoming very strict about adhering to gender stereotypes. When they are between seven and ten years of age children become more relaxed about maintaining these gender stereotypes. This is therefore a process of self-discovery and self-awareness. These require cognitive abilities to be present. These traditional development theories presume that these processes act on a blank canvas and that gender identity is entirely created through the behaviour predicted by the social learning and psychodynamic development theories. This analysis shows that the elementary core gender identities are created by pre-cognitive processes and that the conscious allegiance to a gender identity is the result of a struggle between these unconscious and conscious conflicting demands. This unconscious identification with a gender is expressed in terms of identity alone. It is about being who one is. Crucially this unconscious identification with a gender becomes unchangeably fixed before any exploration of what belonging to that, or to any what gender may mean, can take place.

Gilchrist, S. (2017). 239P "What Science and History Says".

First Issued: 23 November 2017. Last update: 6 December 2017.

Printed: 18/12/2017 19:44

Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

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that this is because of brain differentiation in the unborn infant³⁴. Other work has demonstrated that this has become unchangeably fixed at the latest by the age of three years³⁵. At this time children have not developed sufficiently strong theories about their own minds to observe that anything seems incorrect. That does not happen until about the age of four years. This is the time when many transgender people first sense that something is wrong with the gender identity they are presumed to possess. For transgender people maintaining the allegiance to the gender identity that is expected creates lifelong struggles between these unconscious and conscious conflicting demands. Some children may immediately reject the identity they are assigned to. Others will succeed in hiding or suppressing their sense of unease until later years. A number may fight their contrary sense of identity with all their might. Some can overcompensate in the way they express their allegiance to the expected role. Contrary to general opinion, transgender people are often not men who want to become women and vice versa. Instead it is the constant attrition of the conflict that can create this desire, and the failure to meet it causes collapse. After transition, gender often ceases to be an issue and many merge invisibly into society, living normal lives that are true to their own selves.

Christian tradition ignores this development process by determining that gender identity is a God-given feature, which is fixed exclusively from birth by biological sex. Any departure from this biological identification is regarded as a falling from grace, and a rejection of God's will. Although scientific opinion regards the formation of gender identity as part of the process of personality formation, the traditional Christian doctrines consider the expression of all gender and sexually variant identities, and the subsequent self-identification, to be a consequence of pursuing inappropriate rewards and sexual desires. The medical methods for managing these identity driven and reward driven types of conflict are almost opposite to each other, and a fundamental medical and theological contradiction exists. Since the legalisation of homosexuality and the implementation of gender equality legislation, people can see for themselves that the full range of moral expression is present within these gender and sexually variant groups. Great harm can therefore be created by the medical misdiagnoses that are made. Giving children the freedom to explore their gender identity gives them the freedom to find it, not to choose it. For the great majority of children that will correspond with their biological sex. Instead of being forced into gender stereotypes they are likely to develop a greater understanding and empathy of approach.

This is the position taken for example by the British Royal College of Psychiatrists³⁶, the British Psychological Society and parallel United Kingdom organisations³⁷. All of the major medical organizations across the UK have signed a memorandum of understanding which very strongly condemns any attempt to try to 'cure' gender and sexually variant people³⁸. It includes GIRES: The Gender Identity Research and Education society³⁹. Equivalent positions are taken by the American

³⁴ The reasons for this are discussed extensively in: 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>

³⁵ See section 8 of: Gilchrist, S. (2013d): "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>

³⁶ Royal College of Psychiatrists' statement on sexual orientation http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/ps02_2014.pdf

³⁷ British Psychological Society and other organisations: Conversion Therapy: Consensus Statement. http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/conversion_therapy_final_version.pdf

³⁸ All of the major medical organizations across the UK have very strongly condemned any attempt to try to 'cure' gender and sexually variant people. In 2015 a "Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK" was issued by these health organisations. It said: "We the undersigned UK organisations wish to state that the practice of conversion therapy has no place in the modern world. It is unethical and harmful and not supported by evidence.... Sexual orientations and gender identities are not mental health disorders, although exclusion, stigma and prejudice may precipitate mental health issues for any person subjected to these abuses. Anyone accessing therapeutic help should be able to do so without fear of judgement or the threat of being pressured to change a fundamental aspect of who they are" The signatories are: UK Council for Psychotherapy, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, British Psychoanalytic Council, British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, The British Psychological Society, College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists, The Association of LGBT Doctors and Dentists, The National Counselling Society, NHS Scotland, Pink Therapy, Royal College of General Practitioners, the Scottish Government and Stonewall. Available at: <https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Memorandum-of-understanding-on-conversion-therapy.pdf>

³⁹ Gender Identity Research and Education society: <https://www.gires.org.uk/>

Psychiatric Association⁴⁰ and the American Psychological Association⁴¹. Other international mental health organizations, including the World Health Organization have followed. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health provides the consensus view⁴². All of these organisations are signatories to the WPATH standards, and regard both gender and sexually variant identities and behaviour as naturally expected variations of the human condition, which are intrinsic to the personality created, that arise very early in development and cannot be changed either by the individual concerned or by the predations of others in subsequent life. The approach which is adopted by the Church of England in its document titled “*Valuing All God’s Children*”⁴³, which provides new guidance on transphobic bullying for its 4,700 schools, is therefore affirmed, not just by the overwhelming scientific consensus which is grounded on the experiential evidence that has been accumulated by the major professional medical institutions, it is now confirmed by the results of this research. Against this viewpoint is set minority conservative organisations such as the American College of Paediatricians⁴⁴ and the might of sections of the Christian Church.

3:0 Theology and Tradition

Despite the strength of this evidence many of the groups who are seeking to preserve the traditional teaching of the Church dismiss the scientific work which is carried out by professional medical institutions as the work of revisionists and transgender activists. Some also argue that people who pursue these arguments are driven by emotion rather than rationality. The claim is frequently made that more work needs to be done, but much of the research work that is currently available is ignored. The consequence of these responses is to disregard the evidence that is available and to try to develop scientific arguments which support the traditional teaching of the Church. The consequence of disregarding the present day scientific consensus means that only two contradictory approaches are available. One approach is that gender identity cannot, or must not, be separated from biological sex. The second approach is that gender identity is exclusively determined through freedom of choice, which can be disrupted by the pressures a transgender lobby creates. These contradict each other, but the harm they create is of considerable concern in

⁴⁰ APA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Statement: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/sexual-orientation.aspx>

⁴¹ APA Policy Statements on LGBT Concerns <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/policy/>

⁴² The World Professional Association for Transgender Health represents trained professionals who have been working in this area for many decades, from all over the world. The latest WPATH Identity Recognition Statement is as follows: *The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) recognizes that, for optimal physical and mental health, persons must be able to freely express their gender identity, whether or not that identity conforms to the expectations of others. WPATH further recognizes the right of all people to identity documents consistent with their gender identity, including those documents which confer legal gender status. Such documents are essential to the ability of all people to enjoy rights and opportunities equal to those available to others; to access accommodation, education, employment, and health care; to travel; to navigate everyday transactions; and to enjoy safety. Transgender people, regardless of how they identify or appear, should enjoy the gender recognition all persons expect and deserve. Medical and other barriers to gender recognition for transgender individuals may harm physical and mental health. WPATH opposes all medical requirements that act as barriers to those wishing to change legal sex or gender markers on documents. These include requirements for diagnosis, counselling or therapy, puberty blockers, hormones, any form of surgery (including that which involves sterilization), or any other requirements for any form of clinical treatment or letters from doctors. WPATH argues that marital and parental status should not be barriers to recognition of gender change, and opposes requirements for persons to undergo periods living in their affirmed gender, or for enforced waiting or ‘cooling off’ periods after applying for a change in documents. Further, court and judicial hearings can produce psychological, as well as financial and logistical barriers to legal gender change, and may also violate personal privacy rights or needs. WPATH advocates that appropriate gender recognition should be available to transgender youth, including those who are under the age of majority, as well as to individuals who are incarcerated or institutionalized. WPATH recognizes that there is a spectrum of gender identities, and that choices of identity limited to Male or Female may be inadequate to reflect all gender identities. An option of X, NB (non-binary), or Other (as examples) should be available for individuals who so choose. WPATH urges governments to eliminate barriers to gender recognition, and to institute transparent, affordable and otherwise accessible administrative procedures affirming self-determination, when gender markers on identity documents are considered necessary. These procedures should be based in law and protect privacy.* <http://www.wpath.org/>.

⁴³ Church of England: (2017): “Valuing All God’s Children: Guidance for Church of England schools on challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying”: Second Edition, Autumn 2017 https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%27s%20Report_0.pdf

⁴⁴ American College of Paediatricians <https://www.acped.org/> : ‘Transgender’ Conditioning Is ‘Child Abuse’: <http://www.cnsnews.com/commentary/j-matt-barber/american-college-pediatricians-transgender-conditioning-child-abuse>

the present day world. They also have a particular significance in that they lead the Church to collude with the secular scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people which society creates.

That scapegoating also arises because of the social inequalities encountered in any gender divided society, and also because of the doctrines of gender complementarity adopted by the Christian Church⁴⁵. A major feature of gender complementarity comes from the way it separates the male from the female roles. Any form of gender and sexually variant behaviour which departs from the normal expectations of that society, for any purpose, challenges this distinction. The need to seek respectability and acceptance in Roman society was considered essential if Christianity was to continue to survive and bring its Gospel message to the world. However the compromises which this demanded swapped the most radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sexuality for the respectability of the Church⁴⁶. These transformations have brought the Church to collude with the secular demands of society rather than to challenge them⁴⁷. Not only has this collusion reinforced the secular prejudices of such discriminatory societies; it gave and it still gives religious legitimacy to them: one only needs to look today at the behaviour of Daesh and Boko Haram to see how extreme this can become. The persecution and slaughter of gender and sexually variant people, not just in Christianity but in Islam, Judaism and all other religions, states and cultures which have drawn their teachings from it has been enormous. In many African countries extreme penalties against homosexual behaviour are being advocated or applied⁴⁸. There is no doubt that there was a great deal of sexual abuse in first century society, where the blatant abuses of power gave permission for extreme abuses of sex. However to condemn all gender and sexually variant behaviour for the abuses of some, is akin to saying today that all members of a minority community are terrorists because some engage in terrorist acts. In the United States at the present time, senior members of the Catholic Church have been using its traditional teaching to collude with the conservative Christian right when they condemn all transgender people as invariably being in pursuit of illicit or depraved sex^{49 50}. In the United States, the legalisation of same-sex marriage by the Federal Government has resulted in a rash of mainly Southern states seeking to scapegoat transsexual people by legally enforcing them only to use toilets and bathroom facilities which correspond to the genitalia they were born with. This is irrespective of their gender identities and the transformations that they make. These concerns are compounded by the political changes that have recently taken place. For both social and theological reasons there is now an urgent need to reconsider the traditional teaching of the Church.

⁴⁵ For the development of this in the Jewish tradition see: 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>

⁴⁶ See: 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>

⁴⁷ See for example: 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>

⁴⁸ This is not just a theological point of view. In all of today's interpretations little account is taken of contrast between the privileges of power exerted in dominant societies and the oppression of submission in conquered ones: both in terms of the cultural differences that are established, and in the use and abuse of sex. Evidence of the high degree of trauma and distress that these power conflicts create is present today: it is seen with the Taliban, Islamic State and Boko Haram. In history it extends from the Christian practice of slavery in the Americas to the Empires of the ancient world. No examination of Christian theology and its attitudes to all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour can be complete without taking full account of the relationships between power and sex. Sadly, and in part because of this absence, many in Christianity, Judaism and Islam have colluded with the discrimination that has occurred.

⁴⁹ In the United States, the legalisation of same-sex marriage by the Federal Government has resulted in a rash of mainly Southern states seeking to scapegoat transsexual people by legally enforcing them only to use toilets and bathroom facilities which correspond to the genitalia they were born with. This is irrespective of their gender identities and the transformations that they make. That position was supported by Cardinal Robert Sarah, Archbishop emeritus of Conakry (Guinea) and Prefect of the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in the Catholic Church, during the address he gave to the, 12th Annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast held on Tuesday, May 17th, 2016 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Washington DC. The Cardinal's address can be seen on the link provided. Not only did the Cardinal support the movement to impose the bathroom ban, he also declared that gender identity and sexual orientation are defined by the biology of sex. [Accessed 14 June 2016]: <https://catholicprayerbreakfast.com/2016-video/>

⁵⁰ In 2014, the Southern Baptist Convention approved a resolution at its annual meeting stating that "God's design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female" and that "gender identity is determined by biological sex, not by one's self-perception." Furthermore, the resolution opposes hormone therapy, transition-related procedures, and anything else that would "alter one's bodily identity," as well as opposing government efforts to validate transgender identity. <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2250/on-transgender-identity>

One of the many positive things about the Pontificate of Pope Francis is his advocacy of the pastoral care of gender and sexually variant people. That is something which is greatly to be welcomed; however this can unintentionally cause great harm when the principles upon which it is based are wrong. A private document from the Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2000 decreed that gender reassignment procedures do not change a person's gender. It states *that "The transsexual surgical operation is so superficial and external that it does not change the personality. If the person was a male, he remains male. If she was female, she remains female."*⁵¹ In a 2008 Christmas message Pope Benedict XVI denounced gender theory, warning that it blurs the distinctions between male and female and that it could lead to the "self-destruction" of the human race. He also warned against separating the term gender from sex. He said: *"What is often expressed and understood by the term "gender" is definitively resolved in the self-emancipation of the human being from creation and the Creator": "Man wants to create himself, and to decide always and exclusively on his own about what concerns him." "This is humanity living "against truth, against the creating Spirit".* Pope Benedict directly addressed transgender issues by cautioning Catholics about *"destroying the very essence of the human creature through manipulating their God-given gender to suit their sexual choices"*⁵². This makes the presumption that the motives underlying transgender people's experiences are not about the search for identity, they are about the search for sex. It criticises their motives and it reinforces the damage that medical misdiagnoses can create. In his 2015 encyclical on the environment *"Laudato Si"*⁵³ Pope Francis wrote that men and women should acknowledge their bodies as a gift from God and not manipulate them. Also in your more recent exhortation *"Amoris Laetitia"*⁵⁴ he condemned gender ideology as an *"attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality."* Presumably this meant the idea of separating gender from sex. Pope Francis has also been quoted in a book, saying that gender theory, like nuclear weapons, is a danger to humanity⁵⁵. He has further declared that *"biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated"*.⁵⁶ A Canadian Catholic Bishop additionally upheld these perceptions when he condemned a school policy by stating: *"It is the conviction of the Catholic Church that genetically, anatomically and chromosomally, the body reveals the divine plan, and that humans are "obliged to regard [their bodies] as good and to hold [them] in honour since God has created [them]." Therefore, to attempt "gender transitioning" is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church"*⁵⁷. In August 2016 Pope Francis stated: *"Its 'terrible' children taught they can choose gender"*. He also said there were powerful institutions which funded the spread of "gender theory" in schools. He told the Polish bishops: *"Today, children are taught this at school: that everyone can choose their own sex. And why do they teach this? Because the books come from those people and institutions who give money,"* he said. *"God created man and woman; God created the world like this and we are doing the exact opposite"*⁵⁸.

⁵¹ Norton, John. (2011): "Vatican says 'sex-change' operation does not change person's gender," *Catholic News Service*, September 19, 2011. The document lists key points from the CDF's 2000 "secret" document on transsexualism. Oddly enough this statement is correct, however it is predicated on the assumption that gender identity must always match the biological sex.

⁵² Israely, Jeff: (2008): "The Pope's Christmas Condemnation of Transsexuals". *Time Magazine* Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2008 <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1868390,00.html> . Also: "Address Of His Holiness Benedict XVI To The Members Of The Roman Curia For The Traditional Exchange Of Christmas Greetings, Clementine Hall" Monday, 22 December 2008 https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20081222_curia-romana.html

⁵³ Pope Francis. (2015): "Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si" Of The Holy Father Francis On Care For Our Common Home" 24 May 2015: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

⁵⁴ Pope Francis. (2016): ""Amoris Laetitia": Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of The Holy Father Francis to Bishops, Priests and Deacons Consecrated Persons Christian Married Couples and all The Lay Faithful on Love in the Family". 19 March 2016 https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

⁵⁵ McElwee, Joshua. (2015): "Francis strongly criticizes gender theory, comparing it to nuclear arms": *National Catholic Reporter (US)* Feb. 13, 2015 <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-strongly-criticizes-gender-theory-comparing-nuclear-arms>

⁵⁶ "Amoris Laetitia", no. 56

⁵⁷ Christine Niles, Christine. (2015): "Canadian Catholic Schools Defy Archbishop on Transgender Policy" *ChurchMilitant.com* October 7, 2015 <http://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/canadian-catholic-schools-to-approve-inclusive-transgender-policy>

⁵⁸ Pope Francis (2016): "It's 'terrible' children taught they can choose gender" *Catholic Herald* 3 August 2016 <http://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/08/03/pope-francis-its-terrible-children-taught-they-can-choose-gender/>

These are statements which define psychology, not just theology. Although scientific opinion regards the formation of gender identity as part of the process of personality formation, these Christian doctrines still consider the expression of all gender and sexually variant identities and the self-identification which follows, to be a consequence of pursuing inappropriate rewards and sexual desires, they confuse gender with sex, they give excuses for the secular scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people, they do nothing to resolve the contradiction between science and theology, and they continue the medical misdiagnosis that occurs.

The presumption that gender identity is entirely determined by biology is again made in two letters to the "Times" newspaper⁵⁹ published in response to the Church of England Report "*Valuing All God's Children*", on the 15th November 2017. In one the Revd Dr Gavin Ashenden, signing himself as Missionary bishop for the Christian Episcopal Church states that: "*Sir, Your leading article (Nov 13) tells us of a 1,000 per cent increase in referrals of trans children in the past six years at the Tavistock clinic in London, suggesting a causal link between publicising gender fluidity and the increase of mental disorientation among the young. Progressive cultural values have produced the highest levels of mental distress among our young in recorded history. Melanie Phillips (Comment, Nov 14)*⁶⁰ *rightly links this ideological struggle with the clash between traditional Christianity and progressive gender politics. Her analysis, that the Church will not only lose this struggle but will destroy itself in doing so if the present leadership of the Church of England continues its allegiance to secular values, is prescient. At stake lies not only the virtues that have underlain the best parts of our culture but the mental health of our most fragile children. As a society we urgently need to reject the politicising of gender identity and exaggerated notions of fluidity. We must allow our children to be safe in the given biology of their bodies*". A second letter by Joshua Sutcliffe states: "*Sir, As the teacher suspended for "misgendering" in your news report (Nov 13) I find it very unhelpful for the CofE to be a force in normalising behaviour and policy that have potentially grave consequences for our children, and which as a result also harm the ability of Christian teachers, parents and students to live out their faith in accordance with their sincerely held belief that we are all born biologically male or female. Statistics indicate that gender confusion itself and other co-morbidities lead to self-harm and suicide, not bullying. When we embrace and promote gender confusion, without questioning it or properly addressing it, we are doing our young people a tremendous disservice and are artificially reinforcing behaviour that will dissipate in 98 per cent of cases*".

4:0: Contradiction

No one doubts the genuineness of these concerns, but that does not excuse the harm that is created by an incorrect and uninformed approach. The original research work which is reported in this paper has been undertaken by the author, in association with others, on the creation of personality and self-identity in situations where violent tribal conflict occurs. The development of gender and sexually variant identities, and the institutional responses of the Christian Church, are used as case studies to assess and to validate that approach. A key finding of this work is that the core elements of personality and identity, including gender and sexual identity coalesce at the time when the neural transformation occurs. This is before the cognitive abilities have developed sufficiently to investigate what that means, and the physiology of brain development locks these in place before children are able to interpret the results. In section 2:0 of this document it has been shown that the driving forces which propel development of these core components are concerned with the search for identity, behaviour is not involved, and among gender and sexually variant people as wide a range of moral attitudes are found as in the population at large. That contradicts

⁵⁹ The Times (2017): "*Church of England and the gender debate*": 15 November 2017 : <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/church-of-england-and-the-gender-debate-xbsf3lt3m>

⁶⁰ Melanie Phillips: (2017): "*The Church of England is sowing the seeds of its destruction: By embracing gender fluidity and gay rights, Anglican leaders are capitulating to secularism*": The Times 14 November 2017
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-church-of-england-is-sowing-the-seeds-of-its-destruction-7b3wjw87m>

the traditional teaching of the Church. The popular perception of transgender people is that these are men who want to become women, and vice versa, is false. The need is for identity instead. For these people the conflict is fought between the gender expectations that are enforced through the interaction with others, which are pitched against the gender identity felt more deeply inside. Many try to fight and suppress these feelings for much of their lives. For a time this may work and considerable gender fluidity may be encountered. However the continual attempts to fight, to change or to suppress the core sense of identity do not succeed and it is the attrition that is caused by the constancy and the insistence of these demands which leads to collapse⁶¹. That is contrary to what the traditional doctrine of the Church and the opinion of many expects. Were the doctrine of the Church to be correct, Sutcliffe and Ashenden would be right in the conclusions they reach. However the reverse is the case. Giving children the freedom to explore their sense of gender identity is not the cause of the gender confusion and distress which he describes: it is its denial of that freedom and the persecution and scapegoating that transgender people experience which causes the distress⁶². The massive rates of attempted suicide and suicide are the result⁶³. Another outcome is the inadvertent collusion of the Christian Church with the secular scapegoating which gender and sexually variant people encounter. These are not just matters of history. They are seen in the reaction expressed in the popular press to the publication of the Church of England report "*Valuing All God's Children*", and in the hostile response which this misdiagnosis creates.

In section 2:0 of this document it is shown that the medical methods for managing identity driven and reward driven types of conflict are almost opposite to each other. Therefore it is essential that the correct methods are employed. Attempts to treat these gender and sexually variant conditions as though they are driven by a goal centred desire or are a lifestyle choice prove disastrous. However one characteristic should be noted. Because they are driven by rejection and the search for identity, some relief can be gained by creating a sense of euphoria which transcends their demands. When this happens a threshold can be crossed where the conflicts seem to disappear⁶⁴. This is the approach which is taken by some religious groups, who use this to claim that a "Cure" has been found, but this relief only lasts for as long as the euphoria can be sustained. After it is lost it is not something which willpower can regain. The problem with many such groups is that any person who does not conform to their rules of behaviour may be ejected from membership. These people may also be told that God still loves them but to be practicing or non-practicing is not the real issue. The act of rejection becomes a personal attack of the self-identity of that individual and not of their practice. The hurt, guilt and self-loathing caused by this can be enormous. It is also extremely destructive because any attempt to fight or to suppress the conflict drives people even deeper into distress. Whatever opportunity had remained to re-join the group or to keep control of the conflict is either diminished or destroyed. It is notable that the letters by Gavin Ashenden and Joshua Sutcliffe,

⁶¹ This is fully discussed in: Gilchrist, S. (2015): "*Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>. Many transsexuals marry in their imposed gender role for all the right reasons and love they possess. However as age increases the drive to transition gets stronger, and if no way is found to manage these dynamics the outcome can be a total, sudden and catastrophic collapse. This can have devastating results. When gender and sexuality are in conflict it is usually gender that wins. 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. Here too crippling harm can be created by the attitudes of some religious groups who heap guilt on transsexuals who cannot follow the path they prescribe. Further attempts to fight the conflicts only act to destroy the relationships that are sought and to accelerate the demand. The trauma these create can be enormous. Many marriages break up even though the transsexual partner desperately seeks to maintain the relationship, for despite their need to transition they lose nothing of the love that is found in the relationships and commitments they have made.

⁶² The word "*Homosexuality*" made its first known public appearance, when Kertbeny anonymously published the pamphlet *Paragraph 143 of the Prussian Penal Code and Its Maintenance as Paragraph 152 of the Draft of a Penal Code for the North German Confederation*. This pamphlet advocated for the repeal of Prussia's sodomy laws, saying that private consensual sex acts shouldn't be subject to criminal penalties. <http://www.policy.hu/takacs/pdf-lib/TheDoubleLifeOfKertbeny.pdf>

⁶³ Gilchrist, S. (2017e): "*Gender and Sexual Malpractice and Abuse in the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/236P-Malpractice.pdf>

⁶⁴ For a full analysis see Gilchrist, S. 2011. "*Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality*".

together with organisations like Christian Concern take the view that on the grounds of biology alone, stereotypical male and female gender identities must be imposed on all children: otherwise confusion and distress will arise. However scientific research shows that these core gender identities have already become unchangeably fixed by the age of three years. That is well before children can examine their own minds, and make any choice. While a great majority of children do find that they identify with their biological sex, some will not, and the hurt, guilt and self-loathing that can result may have a very harmful effect.

The way in which gender identity develops is also important. In this paper it is shown that the gender identity is just one of the core concepts of personality and identity that are created. It is also demonstrated that the conflicts which are associated with the core elements of personality and gender identity are the symptom of the failure to build a coherent sense of self identity rather than the cause. This is because of the contagious nature of the driving forces and the limited neural co-ordination during the first two years of life⁶⁵. This means that for everyone the development of their own gender identity and allegiance, atypical or not, proceeds in the same way. A consequence is that transsexuals and transgender people develop a gender allegiance which is contrary or at variance to their biological sex, but this is at least as firmly held as those for whom their gender identity and allegiance follow a normal path, indeed it may be argued that the gender allegiance and identity which is felt by transsexuals should be even stronger because it has had to be fought for all along the way. The major structural changes in the brain which take place from around the age of two years physically and permanently lock these in place, so that from this time constant core elements of personality and gender identity are created⁶⁶. However a great variety of individual experiences are encountered. That degree of variation should also be expected from the contagious processes which are involved⁶⁷.

5:0: Embargos and Resistance

The Christian Church has adopted a doctrine which states that transsexuality and homosexuality are goal and not identity led conditions which are engaged in for the pursuit of lust or immoral and inappropriate sex. Within the medical professions the same presumptions, which consider these conflicts to be driven by a goal led desire are historically made, and a great deal of trauma and tragedy has been caused by the inappropriate and counterproductive treatments which have been applied⁶⁸. For as long as any Christian church continues to proclaim a doctrine which medically

⁶⁵ For more information see: Gilchrist, S. (2015): "*Personality Development and Gender: Why we should Re-Think the Process*" and: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*". Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

⁶⁶ These development processes apply equally to all of the core elements of personality and identity which are eventually created. Therefore the extent of genetic and endocrinal influences is likely to vary between them. This analysis does not preclude the influence of biologically or genetically based triggers which may be very important in setting development of in particular directions; but the contagion of the development process means that it does not require them. In regard to autism for example, genetic and/or endocrinal influences may play a very important role. In the case of gender dysphoria it would be more likely that a pre-disposition is created; and with tribal identity which distinguishes groups of people in society there may be none. A significant feature of human neural development is the long delay in the maturation of the pre-frontal cortex, which is the part of the brain that enables the cognitive processing of thought. That delay is absent in other animals and it is argued that this delay is necessary to ensure that the highest possible intellectual potentials are obtained. There is also the potential for more deviations to occur. See section 2:1: Neural Development Processes, in Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>. It is perhaps no coincidence that transgender and the other gender and sexually variant conditions appear to be more frequent among people who are the higher achievers in societies, together with the higher rates of autism in transgender people that are also found.

⁶⁷ These core elements only provide the underlying framework. The influence of brain plasticity and the bipolarity of identity driven conflicts mean that the manifestation of gender discomfort may be delayed to later life. There is a major spurt in brain plasticity at puberty. This is a time when some transsexuals become first aware of the discomfort they face. In addition to this, the bipolar nature of identity driven conflicts means that any conscious sense of alienation can also be hidden. For the full discussion see section 5 of Gilchrist, S. (2015): "*Personality Development and Gender: Why we should Re-Think the Process*": Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

⁶⁸ Aversion Therapy or Electric Shock treatment has often been applied. However these fail to deal with the real need and the consequence of this is to drive people even deeper into crisis. The reverse approach of inclusion, acceptance and transcendence, which uses the principles of inclusion to create a coherent sense of gender identity and which enables people to find a richness of life can be

misdiagnoses how gender and sexual identities develop and excludes any consideration of the relationships between power, gender and sex from its remit, the abuses and discrimination against gender and sexually variant people will continue to take place. The 2017 report of 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". On the 16th February 2017 following the decision by the General Synod not to take note of the report of the Bishops Reflection Group the Archbishops of Canterbury and York wrote a letter to members of the Church of England which restated the same position. In the later paper: "Next Steps on Human Sexuality"⁶⁹ also written by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and which was presented to the General of the Church of England on the 7th July 2017, the same constraints were again applied. Pope Francis has repeatedly stated that there can be no possibility of change to the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church.

Giving children the ability to explore their gender identity gives them the ability to find it. It does not give them the freedom to choose it. Like the consequence of the medical misdiagnoses, this enormous trauma, guilt and the high rates of attempted suicide among young transgender people is not caused by giving children the freedom to explore: it is caused by the denial of that freedom instead⁷⁰. This investigation has demonstrated that the core gender identity, which defines who one is, is irrevocably formed at the latest by the age of three years, and the momentum of the process can set a direction from birth. By the time children gain the ability to explore their own gender identities; the core gender identity is fixed for life. That identifies the place of the individual in society, and no behavioural implications are involved. No, Pope Francis, gender identity is not a choice⁷¹. There are many gender and sexually variant people who, like you, disapprove of the activities of some in these groups and what the newspapers present. These results only ask that the same moral standards that are applied to the rest of the population are also applied to gender and sexually variant people, and that the moral range and identity driven nature of these conditions is respected. There is no tolerance of inappropriate or abusive cross-gender or sexual behaviour. Enormous guilt, self-loathing and hurt has been imposed on gender and sexually variant people by a traditional Church doctrine which condemns every expression of their identity as being a disordered lifestyle choice in pursuit of immoral sex.

The contradictions between theology and science do not come from the failures of science: they come from the changes in the theology of the Church. Today science shows that these conditions are driven for the search for identity. Those gender and sexually variant people who express their identities in ways which conform to the highest moral standards should be highly regarded. People who do the opposite can be correctly condemned for their acts. There is no toleration of abusive sex. Instead of combatting the secular scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people in society, the Christian Churches have colluded with it. Today in many countries of the world severe legal penalties are still being applied. Penitence is not enough. For any organisation to put an embargo on the proper discussion of any issues which can cause such harm is hardly acceptable in any society, and the scapegoating, persecution and medical misdiagnoses of gender and sexually variant people will continue until these issues are addressed.

It would therefore be expected that the Christian Churches would take mediate steps to address these issues, however Pope Francis has repeatedly stated that, while condemning discrimination,

used to calm the conflicts that are created. See: Gilchrist, S. (2011). "Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/205P-ManagementTechniquesInGenderDysphoria.pdf>

⁶⁹ Church of England (2017): "Next Steps in Human Sexuality" GS Misc 1158: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gc-misc-1158-next-steps-on-human-sexuality.pdf>

⁷⁰ See also: Reed, Terry: (2017): "The Gender Recognition Act debate (October 2017)": <http://www.edf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Self-determination-GIRES.pdf> Access via the Equality and Diversity Forum website: <http://www.edf.org.uk/gender-identity-research-and-education-society-paper-gender-recognition-act-debate/>

⁷¹ Gilchrist, S. (2017): "No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

and giving pastoral care to gender and sexually variant people, there can be no possible change to the traditional doctrines of the Church. The Church of England is currently preparing a teaching document in which any future consideration must be confined 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”*. Such an embargo places major barriers against any proper scientific, social and historical consideration, and stops any meaningful discussion taking place.

6:0: Survival

Christianity had to survive in the first century world. Any diminution of masculine status by a male Roman citizen, for any purpose, disrupted the social order and masculine power in this grossly unequal male dominated society. That is today reflected in the traditional Christian teaching on homosexuality and gender and sexual variation, which declares that it is not a sin to have these feelings but every expression of them is invariably considered a disordered act of grave depravity always in pursuit of lustful sex. All references to the abuses of power in the present day teaching have disappeared. Instead of a doctrine which focussed on the abuses of power and the motives which led to same-sex intercourse, the condemnation has become applied to the sexual act, and the reasons for this paradigm shift are discussed elsewhere⁷². This universal condemnation of all gender and sexually variant behaviour, regardless of purpose reinforces the contradiction between science and theology, it promotes the misdiagnoses that are made, and it is alienating many in present day society from Christianity and the Christian Church.

From each of the scientific, theological and historical points of view it is demonstrated that the traditional teaching and doctrines of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation do not correspond with the teaching of Jesus, they come instead from the need to gain respectability in Roman society and to enforce the authority of the Church in later ones. The changes were required to deal with the cultural clashes and the urgent need to combat sexual abuse and gender based coercion in despotic and gender unequal societies. When the early development of Christianity is examined using these perspectives the contradiction between science and theology disappears. Conservative groups, such as GAFCON, who seek to enforce the traditional teaching of the Church on homosexuality and gender and sexual variation without taking account of these first century transformations can only restore a Christianity that met the needs of the medieval Church.

In his comment on the report *Valuing All God’s Children* for Anglican Mainstream, Martin Davies states: *“The implicit assumption underlying the report is that we can disregard what the Church has traditionally thought because we have now progressed morally and know better than our ancestors, However, the only way we could know this is if we had a vantage point outside the historical process that enabled us to see the goal to which humanity is meant to be heading and thereby allowed us to say that we have got closer to that goal than previous generations. As C S Lewis taught us, you can only talk about progress if you know where you are going. Otherwise what you think is progression may actually be walking round in a circle or even going backwards”*⁷³.

When the traditional theological teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexual variation can be tested using scientific principles, one might expect science to play a major role in any examination⁷⁴. That has not happened. The deficiencies in the scientific principles which are used by the Catholic Church are also described in a paper by this author on *“No, Pope Francis: Gender*

⁷² See section 5 of: 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>

⁷³ Davies, Martin; (2017): *“Reflections Of An Anglican Theologian”*: <https://mbarrattdavie.wordpress.com/2017/11/20/the-real-problems-with-valuing-all-gods-children/>

⁷⁴ 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>

Identity is not a Choice.⁷⁵ In the 2013 “Pilling Report”⁷⁶ prepared for the Church of England an inadequate account of the science is presented⁷⁷. As far as the author can ascertain, there was no consideration of science at all during the whole of the “Shared Conversations” process⁷⁸. Nor is there any consideration of science in the 2017 Bishop’s Reflection Group on Sexuality^{79 80}. It seems that all of these consultations have been wrapped up in the bubbles of their own theologies, without any consideration being given either to science or to what is happening in society at large. This refusal to engage is creating great damage not just in sexual and gender matters but to Christianity itself.

In addition to the scientific study a radical historical analysis has also been undertaken which seeks to take an independent approach by examining the history and development of Christianity as much as possible from the standpoints and cultures of the surrounding societies and as little as possible from the traditions and doctrines of the Church⁸¹. By removing the theological presumptions which have existed for most of the last two thousand years, new perspectives on first century Greek, Roman and Jewish societies are obtained, as well as new insights into bible texts. A study of the Gospel of Thomas has also been carried out⁸². If the Church is to be true to the Gospel message, these are issues that must be faced and addressed⁸³. Both of these approaches step outside the boundaries of Church traditions with the intention of providing the independent perspectives that Martin Davis requires.

It is impossible to know where one is going if any group refuses to acknowledge where it has been. The embargo placed on all discussion so that it can only: “*Interpret the existing law and guidance to permit maximum freedom within it, without changes to the law, or the doctrine of the Church*”, does exactly that. This refusal to wholeheartedly engage with the current advances of science, the dismissal of the scientific work carried out by professional medical institutions as the work of transgender activists, the argument that people who pursue these arguments are driven by emotion rather than rationality, and the claim which is frequently made on this basis that more work needs to be done, places a blindfold over the direction in which any future development should progress.^{84 85}

⁷⁵ Gilchrist, S. (2017): “*No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice*”. <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

⁷⁶ Pilling Report: (2013): “*Report of the House of Bishops’ Working Party on human sexuality*”, GS 1929, Nov 2013
https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling_report_gs_1929_web.pdf

⁷⁷ Cook, Chris. (2014): “*Unanswered questions on Pilling report*”: Church Times 19 September 2014:
<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2014/19-september/comment/opinion/unanswered-questions-on-pilling-report>

⁷⁸ Shared Conversations: See: Church of England (2015) Grace and Disagreement article: Grace and Disagreement Shared Conversations on Scripture, Mission and Human Sexuality: [Accessed 15/10/2015]:
<https://churchofengland.org/media/2165248/grace2.pdf> . Also: Church of England (2015) Shared Conversations Website: [Online]. [Accessed 15/10/2015]: <http://www.sharedconversations.org/>

⁷⁹ Church of England (2017): “*Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations. A Report from the House of Bishops*”: General Synod Document 2055 <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3863472/gs-2055-marriage-and-same-sex-relationships-after-the-shared-conversations-report-from-the-house-of-bishops.pdf>: See also: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/229P-GS2055.pdf>

⁸⁰ Gilchrist, S. (2017): “*What Next? Some thoughts following the rejection by the General Synod of the Church of England, of report issued by the Bishop’s Reflection Group on Sexuality*”. <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/229P-WhatNext.pdf>

⁸¹ See: 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> and

Gilchrist, S. (2016e): “*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>

⁸² 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>

⁸³ Gilchrist, S. (2014): “*Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversyAndCrisis.pdf>

⁸⁴ In the paper: “*Next Steps on Human Sexuality*” written by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, which was presented to the General of the Church of England on the 7th July 2017, the bishops have proposed two actions. The first is to create a group to “*advise dioceses on pastoral issues concerning human sexuality so that we can make explicit our commitment to show the love of Christ to all people, regardless of gender or sexual identity*”. The second action is to produce a new episcopal teaching document on human sexuality. The report identifies several working groups: Social and biological sciences, Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiological, Patristic and Historical, Liturgical, Legal and Missiological. For the first time in any such Church of England working party which deals with, or has dealt with, these issues, a limited number of gender and sexually variant people have been appointed. However the remit of the group remains

The title of this document is “*What Science and History says About the Traditional Teaching on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church*” That can only take effect if it becomes a listening Church⁸⁶. No degree of care and compassion can ever provide a resolution unless the fundamental contradiction between the results of modern science and the theology of the Church is addressed⁸⁷. In those cultures where gender roles are rigidly defined, and where gender inequality exists, the traditional teaching of the Church still has considerable force. When a Church places an embargo which prevents any possibility of change to this traditional doctrine, the contradictions between science and theology can never be considered. In societies where gender equality is promoted or practiced, the failure to address or to resolve these contradictions is destroying the credibility of Christianity and the Church. Those groups who are seeking to change the traditional doctrines are not just arguing for the full inclusion of gender and sexually variant people; or to prevent the persecution, scapegoating and medical misdiagnoses which these doctrines have created, they are arguing for a return to the teaching of Jesus and the Gospel Church.

7:0: Summary and Conclusions

This paper reports on two separate investigations. The first is a scientific and neurophysiologically based study into the development of personality and identity. A second independently conducted historical, scientific, social and theological investigation has also been carried out with the aim of discovering the reason for the contradiction between science and theology which is found to exist. Because of the adaptations that were needed to survive, and later to preserve its institutions, it is shown that the Christian Church developed a traditional doctrine which medically misdiagnoses gender and sexually variant conditions. By treating these conditions as being derived from the search for reward rather than identity, the wrong methods of management have also been applied. Considerable harm has been done since the management techniques that are needed are almost opposite to each other. Applying the incorrect techniques creates instead of relieves any trauma and distress. In place of combatting the scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people in secular society, these changes have led many sections of the Church to collude with it. That still has considerable force in societies where gender differentiation is legally or socially enforced. Today the differing approaches taken in different societies are creating schisms in the Church. A new doctrine is needed which removes the contradiction that the traditional one has imposed. Unless that happens the current attempts to welcome transgender and gender and sexually variant people by: “*Interpreting the existing law and guidance to permit maximum freedom within it, without changes to the law, or the doctrine of the Church*” will not succeed. When the teaching of Jesus is examined in this investigation it is found that the contradiction no longer exists. This means that the changes to the doctrine which this investigation demands do not depart from the Gospel message, they return to the teaching of Jesus himself.

limited, because the same embargo of “*Interpreting the existing law and guidance to permit maximum freedom within it, without changes to the law, or the doctrine of the Church*” continues to be applied.

⁸⁵ There has not been any representation or open input from gender and sexually variant people into the membership of any of the previous working parties which the Church of England has established. The complaint “*Don’t talk about us without us*” was well justified and frequently heard. See also Gilchrist, S. (2014): “*Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversyAndCrisis.pdf>

⁸⁶ These issues are addressed in the following papers: Gilchrist, S. (2017): “*Religious and Secular Scapegoating of Transgender People: and its impact on the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/238P-SecularScapegoating.pdf>; Gilchrist, S. (2017): “*Hearing without Listening: The Eunuch and the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/013B-HearingWithoutListening.pdf>; Gilchrist, S. (2017): “*Marriage, Sex and Gender*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/030B-MarriageAndGenderArticle.pdf>; 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>

⁸⁷ The results of these studies have been made available to the Church of England since before 2014: See Gilchrist, S. (2014): *Articles Offered to The Church of England for use in its Process of Shared Discussions on LGBTI Matters*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/020B-OfferedPapersIntroduction.pdf>

Gilchrist, S. (2017). 239P “*What Science and History Says*”.

First Issued: 23 November 2017. Last update: 6 December 2017.

Printed: 18/12/2017 19:44

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8:0 Selected Papers

See <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/000B-SG-SelectedPapers.pdf>

For the supporting research

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19 November 2017

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Gilchrist, S. (2017). 239P "What Science and History Says".

First Issued: 23 November 2017. Last update: 6 December 2017.

Printed: 18/12/2017 19:44

Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

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