

# Christian Communities, Transgender People, and Celtic Traditions

Susan Gilchrist

25 September 2021



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## ***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

***Susan Gilchrist***

**A SERIES OF ANNOTATED PRESENTATIONS**

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(INITIAL PRESENTATION FIRST GIVEN 25 SEPTEMBER 2021)**

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***YOU MAY COMBINE SECTIONS OF IT INTO SINGLE PRESENTATIONS  
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## ***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

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### ***PART 1: THE CELTIC CHURCH AND THE FIRST MILLENNIUM***

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## JOURNEY

- The title given to these presentations is that of *Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions*". However, this examination takes us on a journey circling round the Roman Empire, which does not begin with the Irish Celtic Church.
- From the beginning Christianity did not just spread west into the Roman Empire. It also spread Eastwards into a much more gender equal Parthian, Zoroastrian, and Persian cultures. Both traditions created their own attributes. The Irish Celtic Church was formed much later under the influence of Palladius (AD 408-431), and Patrick. It adopted many of the precepts of Brehon Law, which applied in the more gender equal Irish society.
- The Irish Celtic Church drew inspiration from the Desert Father fathers in Egypt, which had embraced asceticism, and a type of communal (Pachomian<sup>1</sup>) monasticism which drew on the Parthian<sup>2</sup>, or Sassanid Church of the East, before the Roman Church<sup>3</sup>.

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## COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

- Even before England's conversion was complete, the conversion of mainland Europe from Ireland began. Columbanus with 12 companions left Bangor in Ireland for France. After the monastery they established at Luxeuil, they founded another monastery in Gaul, and a third among the Lombards in Italy. His companion, Gall, ventured into Switzerland and reinvigorated a stagnating church. Many others embraced the same mission. It is believed that some 70 monasteries were created.
- Much of Northern Europe was evangelised by Irish Monks, following certain traditions which can be traced back to the Sassanid or Ancient Church of the East.
- In this account we follow some of that journey. We begin with by considering Irish Christianity, before moving on this Church of the East. Then we examine how attitudes to gender and sexually variant people developed in various parts of the Church.

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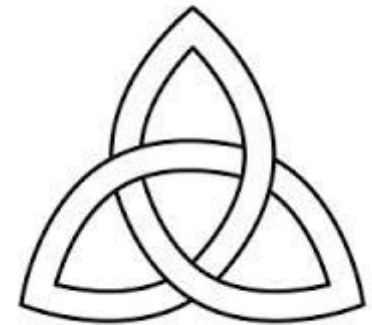
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## BACKGROUND

- When I started to put together material for a Sibyls Purley Chase Weekend on the 24<sup>th</sup>. to the 26<sup>th</sup>. September in 2021, I typed the keywords, Celtic, Christianity and transsexuality into my internet browser and found almost nothing.
- Tacitus however wrote: *“Among these last is shown a grove of immemorial sanctity. A priest in female attire has the charge of it. But the deities are described in Roman language as Castor and Pollux. Such, indeed, are the attributes of the divinity, the name being Alcis”*<sup>4</sup>.





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## CLOTHING

- Although Celtic women generally wore long “*bog dresses*” and men wore “*trews*”, dress could be interchangeable<sup>5</sup>. In some sources, Druid priests are said to wear voluminous garments.
- However, it is more the known close interaction with other European cultures which leads to the impression that Druid priests cross dressed. In this gender diverse role, they could belong to the shamanic traditions which transcend gender, and through the powers that this gave, bring greater healing to the world<sup>6</sup>.



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## GENDER TRANSFORMATIONS

- There are few stories about gender change, and nothing to match the severe threats of gender transformation made by Middle Eastern Goddess cults against males who could not sexually perform, or who offended the cults.
- One story in the Welsh Mabinogion describes two brothers who are turned first into deer, then into boar, and then into wolves and back into humans. In each case, one of the boys is made a male of the species and the other becomes a female: then they have children together<sup>7</sup>.
- In Celtic and other traditions, gender fluidity and transformations, were a recognised part of a shaman's shapeshifting role<sup>8</sup>.



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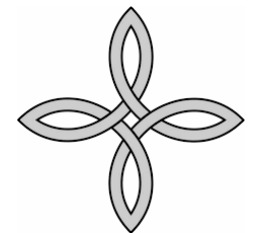
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## TRANSSEXUALITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY

- Although we can find little about transsexuality in the Celtic literature, and little more about homosexuality, both of these have one thing in common
- They disrupt the “*Good Order*” of any society where gender discrimination is practiced. or gender complementarity is socially and legally enforced
- The privileges of power in these grossly gender unequal and enslaving society also gives permission for the abuses of sex
- In societies where full gender equality is practiced, the opposite can occur
- Therefore, in total contrast to the condemnations in discriminatory societies, the contribution that gender variant people make can be treated with great respect



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## DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION

- Thus, there are three things we must carefully examine
- Condemnations in socially, gender and sexually discriminatory societies because the privilege of power gives permission for the abuses of sex
- Condemnations in all societies which arise directly from irresponsibility and the craving of sex
- Condemnations that arise because gender and sexually variant behaviour, regardless of moral values, disrupts the “*Good Order*” of any society where gender discrimination is practiced, or even where parity of esteem is granted, gender complementarity is socially and legally enforced

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## CULTURE AND LAW

- Ancient Ireland was governed by a code described as the Brehon Law. The Brehon Law was a system well ahead of its time. It was all about equality and democracy and was based on a complex system of fines instead of corporal punishment. It covered everything from matters of commerce, crime, healthcare, the ownership of property to marital and family law, and equal rights<sup>9</sup>.
- It is claimed that in the fifth century, St. Patrick distilled these laws down to five volumes, removing and discarding those which did not fit with Christian doctrine. These tomes were known collectively as the *Senchas Mór*<sup>10</sup>. This did not alter the cultures found.
- Women were entitled to enter all the same professions as men; they could be Druids, poets, physicians, lawgivers, teachers, warriors, leaders, even Queens. The mythological stories are littered with such references to women of power

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## LIFESTYLE

- Christianity in Ireland developed on the basis of equality of the sexes.
- The Celtic church took inspiration from the asceticism of the “*Desert Fathers*”<sup>11</sup>. In both male and female lives of the period, the normal course of events remained as it was in earlier times. The Solitary life of a hermit was greatly valued but it was not accompanied with the total asceticism and withdrawal that one might expect.<sup>12</sup>
- Although the disciplinary codes for monks and nuns were severe, monks, clerics, and nuns interacted in close proximity on account of friendship, collaboration, and mutual support and such arrangements neither scandalised nor puzzled the redactors<sup>13</sup>.



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## ANAM CARA

- A further tradition that was handed down was that of the “*Anam Cara*”<sup>14</sup>
- This is a Gaelic phrase which is often loosely translated as 'Soulmate'. 'Anam' is the Gaelic word for 'soul', while 'Cara' translates from Gaelic to friend. Thus, its literal meaning is 'Soul Friend'.
- Descriptions vary. Generally, it is a term sometimes used to designate someone with whom one has a feeling of deep and natural affinity, friendship, love, intimacy, sexuality, and/or compatibility. By connecting with someone and being completely open with them, both souls begin to flow together.
- This person would always accept the ‘real’ you and see your inner beauty and light.



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## EXAMPLES OF CLOSE SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS

- Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and Saint Malachy, the Abbot and the archbishop of Armagh are understood to have had a passionate loving relationship. After Malachy died, they exchanged clothes. Malachy was buried in Bernard's habit. Bernard put on Malachy's habit to lead the funeral and wore it until his own death five years later. Bernard was buried beside Malachy, again in Malachy's habit. Malachy (1094-1148) became the first native born Irish saint to be canonized.
- St Brigid's "Anam Cara" was another nun called Darlughdach. Their relationships were so close that they are both reputed to have slept in the same bed
- From a very early date, services of *Adelphopoiesis*<sup>15</sup>, (literally 'brother-making') were carried out in the Eastern Christian tradition to unite two people of the same sex (normally men) in a church-recognized relationship



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## HISTORY OF RELATIONSHIPS

- Relationships between two men, affirmed in these services of Adelphopoiesis carried out by the early Eastern Church broadly matched the sexual relationships expected in first century Rabbinic partnerships in the “Pairs” culture in Judaism at the time.
- Reasons for condemning male same-sex intercourse are seen in the Canons (or decrees) of the Councils of Elvira and of Ancyra in the years 306 and 314. The Canons of the Council of Ancyra condemn only bestiality, those of the Council of Elvira condemn sexual abuse of boys, neither refer to consensual same-sex acts<sup>16</sup>.
- For lay people, these Canons, and Church doctrine had the effect of prohibiting anal same-sex penetration, but they did not prohibit any other same-sex act. Encouraged by Irish monks during the latter part of the first millennium, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne republished the Canons of the Council of Ancyra several times,<sup>17</sup>

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## AELRED AND LOVE

- Writing around 1160, Aelred, who was the Cistercian Abbot of Rievaulx, encouraged his monks to express their love for each other, not only through their thoughts, but also physically, individually, and passionately<sup>18</sup>.
- He used the example of Jesus and John for his guidance when he declared that:
- *“Jesus himself, in everything like us, patient and compassionate with others in every matter, transfigured this sort of love through the expression of his own love. for he allowed only one - not all - to recline on his breast as a sign of his special love; and the closer they were, the more copiously did the secrets of their heavenly marriage impart the sweet smell of their spiritual chrism to their love”.*<sup>19</sup>

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## AELRED ON SAME SEX INTERCOURSE

- Nevertheless, Aelred was equally strongly opposed to same-sex intercourse.
- In all his works he treats same-sex and opposite-sex attraction as equally possible and equally dangerous to the oath of celibacy.
- Consistent with these outlooks, are the values Aelred places on all such relationships when they are given in love<sup>20</sup>.
- He uses the words “*heavenly marriage*” to describe the relationship between Jesus and John
- He describes the concept of “*spiritual marriage*”, and his teachings may expose some of the contradictions that today exist<sup>21</sup>.

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## EQUALITY

- The relationship between Saints Sergius and Bacchus early in the Eastern Christian Church is an example of a closely bonded relationship<sup>22</sup>.
- Gender does not appear to be an issue in the Irish Celtic Church, neither does there appear to be any direct teaching on homosexuality and its relationship to Christianity by any Celtic writer or saint
- There is nothing akin to homosexuality as people inside or outside the LGBT+ community describe it today.
- What there is however is a much greater equality between the sexes in the Celtic cultures... And the condemnation of sexual abuse

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## THEOLOGY

- The Celtic Churches only had the Vulgate, Jerome's Latin translation of the bible. Jerome translates the passage, which some modern bibles use to condemn homosexuality with the Latin words "*masculorum concubitoribus*." This implies male on male concubinage, where a dominant male penetrates a subservient male.
- That was the culture in Jerome's day... also in the Greco-Roman and in the Jewish cultures of Jesus' own time.
- In the Celtic Church and tradition, homosexual behaviour, same-sex attraction, and gender transformations were things that happened, but they do not seem to have been issues of concern... And none of these went against the scriptures they read.

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## PENANCES

- Little or no discussion about gender transformation or homosexuality is found in the Irish Celtic Church. However, that is not because this did not exist, for condemnations of such sexual improprieties are found in the monastic penitential texts<sup>23</sup>.
- The monastic penances required for same-sex intercourse and heterosexual intercourse are broadly comparable to each other, and they are milder than the penances applied to bestiality and abuse.
- In the Celtic Church and Celtic traditions, homosexual behaviour, same-sex attraction, and gender transformation were things that happened, but they do not seem to have been issues of concern.
- We next need to consider the nature of society and the wider Church.

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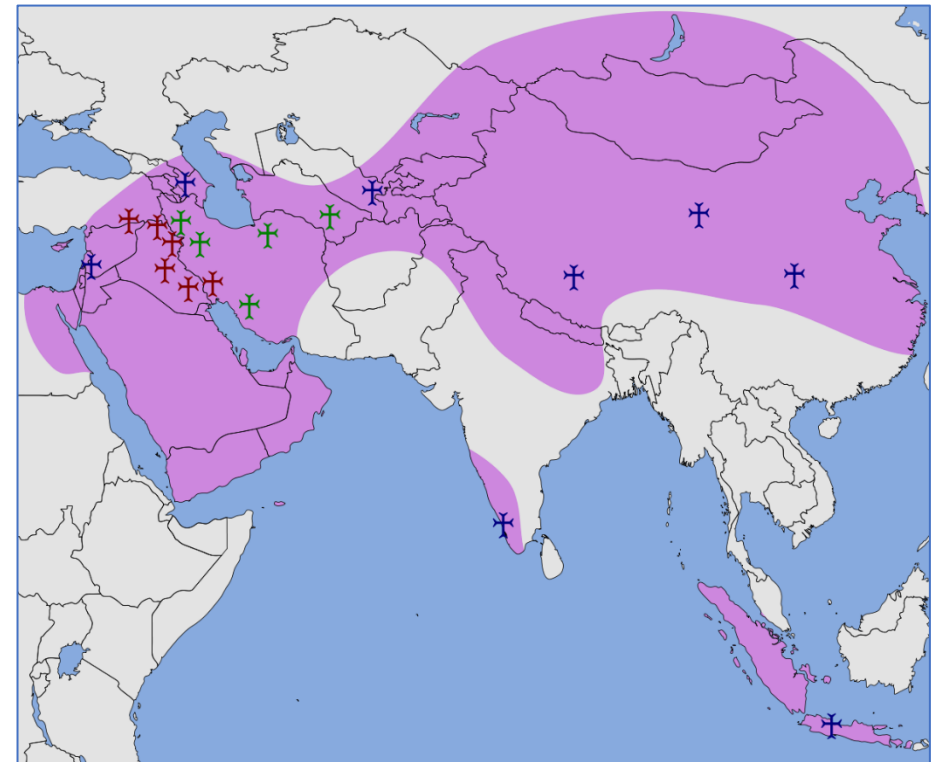
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## MAP OF AREA COVERED BY FOUR CHURCHES OF THE EAST, CIRCA 500 CE

- The Pentarchy was a model of Church independence and authority formulated around 500 CE. The exercise of independent and exclusive authority, previously present in the earlier Hellenistic-Christian organisation of each Church, was separate from the Roman Church.
- This map shows the area covered by the 4 Eastern Churches in the Pentarchy, circa 500CE. Only modern Greece such as the Balkans and Crete is under the jurisdiction of the Holy See of Rome<sup>24</sup>.



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## SASSANID CHURCH OF THE EAST

- It is sometimes forgotten that from the outset Christianity spread East into a much more gender-equal Zoroastrian culture, as well as into the Roman Empire where gross discrimination took place. That difference had a profound impact on what has occurred.
- From the West there was the vast missionary work that the Irish monks engaged in. Missionaries from Ireland went to Europe and voyaged for America. Much of Northern Europe was evangelised by the Irish Celtic Church. The Sassanid<sup>25</sup> Church of the East evangelised much of Asia<sup>26</sup>. (From now will simply use the term Church of the East)
- By the end of the first millennium this Church of the East had become far larger and more widespread than the Roman or Western Church. The Celtic Church and the Church of the East both developed their theologies in societies where much greater gender fairness, and equality of status between men and women occurred<sup>27</sup>.



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## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CELTIC AND ROMAN CHUCHES

- It is also important to remember that Celtic Christianity is only a variation of Roman Christianity. The Irish Celtic Church never sought to separate itself from the Roman Church. From 641 the authority of Rome was always respected, and unity sought.
- However, the Irish Celtic Church and the Sassanid or the Ancient, Church of the East developed in societies where power was less centralised and where much greater gender equality was practised. This led to theological differences between the different groups.
- The Council of Chalcedon was called in 451 in attempts to resolve these and other differences, but that resulted in power struggles and continuation of the disputes
- By 1400 the Ancient Church of the East, which was once far larger than the Roman Church had largely gone, and clashes were decided in favour of the Roman Church.

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## DISPUTED AREAS BETWEEN THE WESTERN AND CHURCH OF THE EAST

- Much of the theology concerned the nature of heaven and the order in which events are said to have occurred. The Western Church identified heaven as being inside space and time, so these orders of precedence... or what came from what, were important. The Church of the East saw heaven as outside space and time: the arguments were no longer relevant, and disputes focussed on what doctrines of the Trinity meant.
- In the Church of the East the emphasis on asceticism was justified on the grounds of commitment to the teaching of Jesus, rather than the avoidance of sex. A cenobitic or communal form of ascetic monasticism, involving full engagement with society, combined with periods of severe withdrawal, was a feature in these churches<sup>28</sup>.
- These will be considered later. Here we will examine how attitudes to gender and sexuality differed in the Roman Church, Celtic Christianity, and the Church of the East

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## AUTHORITY AND CONTROL: THE PENTARCHY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE 565 CE

- The emperor Justinian established the pentarchy in attempting to bring the different Churches under Roman control. Justinian excluded churches outside the empire, such as the then-flourishing Sassanid Church of the East, (not shown) which was seen as heretical.
- Inside the empire they only recognized those who accepted the Chalcedonian decrees, regarding as illegitimate the non-Chalcedonian claimants of Alexandria and Antioch (orange and dark blue)<sup>29</sup>. The Ethiopian Church is also excluded,



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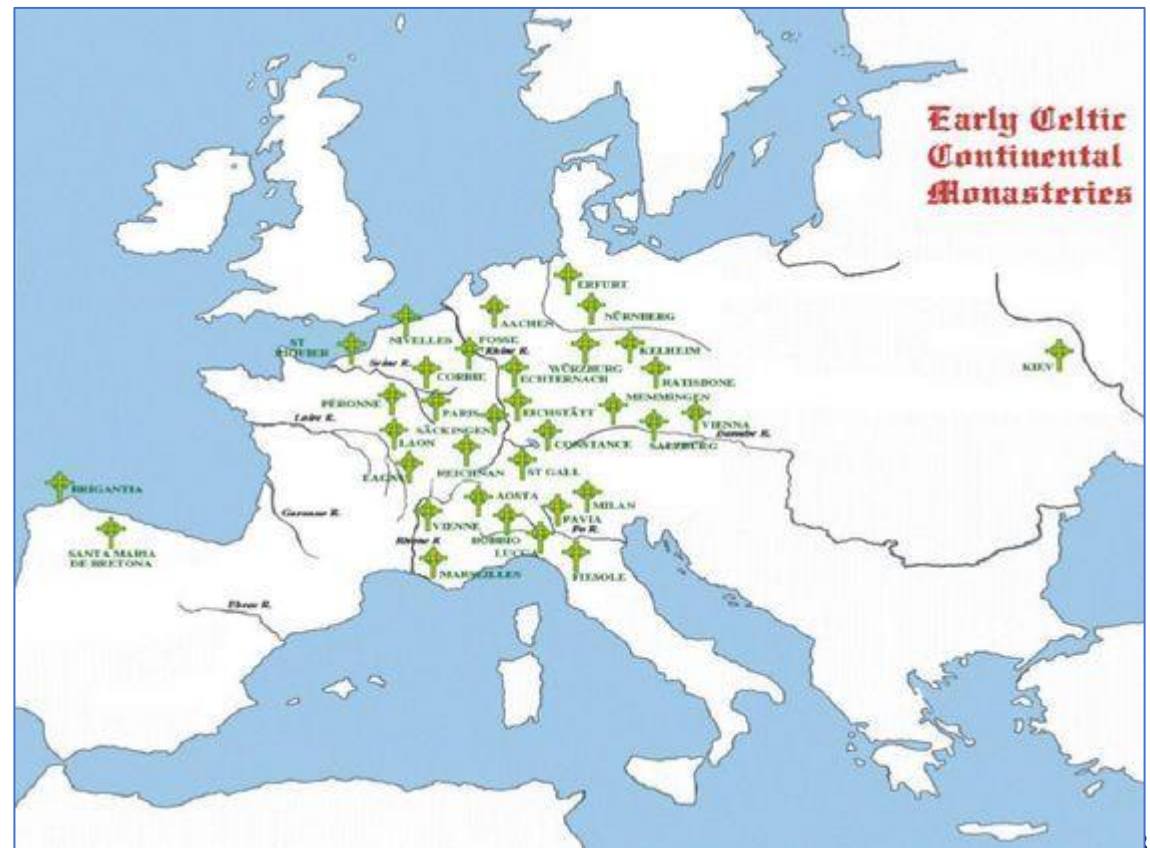
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## CLOSING THE CIRCLE: IRISH FOUNDED CELTIC MONASTERIES IN EUROPE

- From Ireland Christianity was then brought back to the European continent by the Irish abbot St. Columbanus in Holland, Germany, and Switzerland. Many other Irish missionaries spread the word across the continent, in the Rhine Valley, Sweden, Russia and Italy, where important Abbeys were established. such as those at Gall Altomünster, Bobbio, Luxeil and elsewhere.



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## GENDER CONFLICTS

- The Nestorian conflict was one of the major conflicts in the Roman Church. It centred on whether the Virgin Mary should be called “*The Mother of God*” or the “*Mother of Christ*”. The Roman, or Western Church, insisted on the former. Nestorius and the Church of the East on the latter. There was another important difference.
- In both cases women were required to atone for the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden. In the Western Church women’s lives had to be lived in penance for the fall: therefore, full atonement could only be achieved after a woman had died<sup>30</sup>.
- In the Church of the East that atonement had already been made when “*Mary said yes*” to bearing the Christ Child. So, in the Church of the East, and the Irish Church, unlike in the Roman Western Church, both men and women had an equality of esteem and status during their earthly lives<sup>31</sup>.

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## WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE ROMAN CHURCH?

- Unlike the Church of the East, the Roman Church developed inside a grossly gender divided and gender discriminatory enslaving society
- The freedom of a male citizen to engage as penetrator in male same-sex intercourse with a male of lesser status was a privilege of that dominant Roman society. For all other people in these grossly gender, socially unequal and enslaving societies male same-sex intercourse was an intrinsically disordered and disruptive act.
- For the Early Roman Church to survive in this type of environment it had to treat the ruling authorities by offering them respect. That exonerated the institutional structures of Roman society but not the population from its abuses of power.
- Even when Early Church was totally and unequivocally condemning the abuses of sex!



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## CONDEMNATIONS OF FEMININITY AND SEX IN THE ROMAN CHURCH

- In the Roman Church, by the fourth century, redemption for women on earth could only be gained by motherhood and childbirth, or the denial of all femininity<sup>32</sup>
- A male priesthood was assumed and in place of the prominent role which had been the prerogative of women within the early Church they were only offered a secondary and a subservient role
- Although the cult of Mariology put women on a pedestal and the Virgin Mary was given a very exalted status as an intercessor and mediator, this confined her to these roles
- Thus, gender equality in the Roman Church was at the discretion of the male and on the terms which the male decides. A call to a form of priestly celibacy was adopted which required not just the denial of every sexual act, but also all thoughts of sex

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## DISORDERED ACTS

- The gender equality in the Celtic Churches should also be contrasted with the vituperations against women in the Roman Church. Gregory of Nyssa wrote in great detail about the life of his sister Macrina. After he referred to her as a woman, he then asked himself the question: *“if indeed she should be styled woman, for I do not know whether it is fitting to designate her by her sex”*
- Tertullian writes: *“Do you not know that you are Eve? The judgment of God upon this sex lives on in this age; therefore, necessarily the guilt should live on also. You are the gateway of the devil; you are the one, who unseals the curse of that tree”*
- Enforcing these gender stereotypes means that inside this grossly gender and socially unequal society, any expression of gender or sexually variant behaviour, regardless of purity of motive or intention, may be considered a grossly disordered or disruptive act.



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## GENDER COMPLEMENTARITY

- Nevertheless, the Roman church held Adam and Eve equally responsible for the “*Fall*” in the Garden of Eden... Eve for believing the serpent and Adam for agreeing to it.
- Jesus did not condemn gender complementarity although he condemned the social, religious, and legal enforcement of it many times
- The argument for the social religious and legal enforcement of gender complementarity made by the Roman Church is based on protections against sexual abuse, identifying different social roles for men and women, and the protection of family life
- However, the perceptions that gender and sexually variant people threaten these values are based on enforcement and on medically and socially incorrect presumptions... and we shall see why this is later in this account.

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## GENDER DISCRIMINATION

- In the Irish Celtic Church, the three major Saints Patrick, Brigid and Colmcille were given equal status and given equal recognition of the work they carried out. In Sassanid, Persian and Zoroastrian cultures, the same type of equality occurred
- Both groups maintained the Judean tradition where loving, committed, and responsible same-sex relationships were expected. Male same-sex intercourse was condemned for abuses of power and there was no condemnation of any other same sex loving acts
- In contrast to this, the expression of any loving same-sex relationship attacked the “*Good Order*” in the grossly gender divided and unequal Roman empire.
- In such cultures, gender discrimination... or the enforcement of gender complementarity leads, regardless of motive, leads to the condemnation of every same sex loving act.

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## DAVID AND JONATHAN

- The relationship between David and Jonathan has been the subject of major contentions in Christianity. The question is always about how “sexy” their love for each other was<sup>33</sup>.
- Many try to prove that this was a purely platonic relationship but the wording of the descriptions in the Bible suggests that the condemnation of David for “*having exceeded*” is about intercourse and the exercise of power, rather than abuses of sex<sup>34</sup>.
- If it was publicly known, as the Bible suggests, that David had penetrated Jonathan, his domination over Jonathan would have destroyed Jonathan’s birth-right and his future authority as a King of Israel: It condemns male same-sex intercourse, but no other act.
- David would have to be eliminated for honour to be restored. Saul’s fervent attempts to hunt David down to kill him, suggest that this was about honour, rather than evils of sex

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## CONDEMNATIONS OF POWER AND SEX

- Leviticus 20:13 states *“If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.”*
- We have seen that when same-sex intercourse takes place between two male citizens in the grossly unequal Roman society, it is the penetrated partner who is condemned because he has desecrated his citizenship by engaging in this act.
- When same-sex intercourse takes place in subservient societies, such as Judaism, it is the penetrator who is condemned because of his abuse of power and sex.
- Both parties are condemned. This also condemns consensual male same sex intercourse<sup>35</sup>.

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## IMPLEMENTATION

- The anatomically carefully crafted wording of this passage makes it clear that this is only about male on male same-sex intercourse. It condemns abuses of power in these acts<sup>36</sup>
- The condemnation did not apply to any boy under the age of nine years and one day. That horrifies many, but it is well written up in the Jewish Talmudic literature. This was the age at which a boy was considered to have begun puberty. Before it a boy was “*Not a male*” and the prohibitions of Leviticus 20:13 and 18:22 did not apply<sup>37</sup>.
- Under Jewish Law the consensual act had to be observed by a third party, who was obliged to warn the participants, only if they continued, could the law come into effect. There is no evidence of the penalty ever being implemented in Old Testament times<sup>38</sup>.
- Again, this concerns domination and honour in these societies, rather than evils of sex.

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## INTERPRETATIONS

- This age restriction is difficult to understand. Perhaps the best way to look at it is in the context of pederasty. In the ancient world, sexual stimulation between one mature man and a younger man was an accepted, and often regarded as an educational practice. In Greece the upper age limit was set by the ability of the younger man to grow a beard. Something similar may happen here although the age limit is lower and set by the age when puberty is reached. It is even more horrendous when intercourse with a girl is considered. Here the lower limit was three years. Before this age it was (incorrectly) believed that the hymen would grow back, so no permanent damage occurred.
- There are many other passages in the Bible, including those of Jesus, which reject this callous practice. These Leviticus passages are also interpreted as supporting procreation and protecting family life<sup>39</sup> but it is a notable feature of First Century Rabbinic Judaism that the focus was almost entirely on the horrors of same-sex intercourse and little else<sup>40</sup>.

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## DEUTERONOMY 22:5

- A bible passage: often of greatest concern to transgender people is Deuteronomy 22:5, which states *“A woman shall not wear a man's apparel, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does such things is abhorrent to the Lord your God”*.
- There have been many Old and New Testament interpretations put on this passage. Not one of them takes it literally. All of them define some ulterior motive, including deception, preventing women carrying the weapons of war, condemning cross-dressing for prostitution and foreign religious practice etc. Again, we see that the reasons for this are over power, abuse, and gender inequality rather than the sexual act<sup>41</sup>.
- For the full analysis see: Gilchrist, S. (2015e): *“Deuteronomy 22:5 and its Impact on Gender and Sexual Variation in the Christian Church”*<sup>42</sup> For Old Testament analyses see: Gilchrist, S: (2013g): *“Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church”*<sup>43</sup>

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## PAUL'S CONDEMNATIONS

- Paul, well-educated Hellenic Jew, responsible for enforcing the doctrines of the Temple authorities, was writing against the background of the *“Pairs”* culture in Judaism where responsible same-sex relationships given in love were accepted.
- In the Avot de-Rabbi Hathan for example, it is recommended that these partnerships should be between people with whom one can *“Eat and drink, read and study, sleep, and share secrets of the Torah and personal secrets”*<sup>44</sup>.
- Another instance attributes part of the failure of the Jewish revolt and fall of the Temple in AD 70 to plague of diphtheria, sent as punishment by God for a *“Lack of Respect”*. Diphtheria is normally spread by droplets in the respiratory tract: potentially by oral sex. These and Paul's own condemnations are about the *“Lack of respect”*, also honour, and the abuses of power that give rise to abuses of sex, not about every same sex act.<sup>45</sup>



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## CONTINUITY

- Paul's primary focus is on condemning all forms of gratuitous and unjustified sex. His inventing of the word "*Arsenokoitai*", uses this first century understanding of Leviticus, which effectively condemns the abuses of power which give rise to the abuses of sex.
- Christianity did not at first seek to separate itself from Jewish traditions and Jesus did not condemn loving same-sex relationships, so a continuity can be expected.
- Far from rejecting same sex loving relationships, the Jews like the Greeks, encouraged their expression for the depth of understanding, the robustness of discussion, the sense of purpose and the strength of commitment they brought
- That is unlike present day Christianity which ignores these abuses of honour and power, and regardless of purpose applies an absolute condemnation to every same-sex act.

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## WHAT DO WE MAKE OF THIS?

- Most of the present-day interpretations of Leviticus presume that the condemnations of same-sex intercourse were about the evils of sex.
- Yet if we look at Leviticus from the perspective of first century Rabbinic Judaism, we see almost nothing in their interpretations about any direct condemnation of sex.
- Instead, we see interpretations of Leviticus that are almost totally focussed on power and subjection and domination in these grossly unequal, despotic, and enslaving societies. Consistently in the bible we find a moral duality where all sexual relationships given in love are highly valued but those for the purposes of abuse are severely condemned.
- This indicates that the total banning of male same-sex intercourse in Leviticus 20:13 and 18:22, does not ban any loving same-sex relationship, or any loving same-sex act.

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## SOCIETY

- The Gospel message was delivered by Jesus in Judea under the domination of the Roman Empire, and presented in a despotic, grossly gender and socially unequal, and enslaving Roman society.
- How it is received depends on the social and cultural values of the recipient society. We have seen that from the outset, there were profound differences both in its interpretation and in its expression in the strongly gender divided Roman Empire and in the much more gender equal Celtic, Persian and Zoroastrian worlds.
- Now, the challenge is to interpret the same Gospel message in societies and churches, not just in cultures where full gender equality is obtained, but also in those cultures where total parity of esteem is maintained, but where gender complementarity is socially, legally, or religiously enforced. These differences cause problems in the Church.

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## QUESTIONS

- Today in Christian tradition Sodomy is regarded as a grave sin, which condemns same-sex intercourse, regardless of purpose, and as a totally depraved act. Some groups equate this to homosexuality, some expand its condemnation to include oral sex. However, all of the descriptions in the bible condemn Sodom for its wickedness or abuses of honour, power and faithfulness which permit the abuses of sex.
- In this account we have seen that Leviticus 20:13 should be seen to condemn abuses of honour and power. How should be this be understood today, and in the Celtic Church?
- Both the Church of the East and the Roman Church expected women to atone for the sins of Eve. For the Church of the East that atonement had already taken place when *“Mary said yes”* to bearing the Christ Child. However, for the Roman Church women still had to atone for this during their earthly lives. What are the consequences?



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***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

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***PART 2: PARADIGM SHIFTS IN CHRISTIAN TEACHING***

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## POWER AND TRANSFORMATION

- During the first millennium, Christianity in the Roman Empire underwent a wholesale transformation from a powerless populist movement subject to the abuses of power and sex inflicted on it by a despotic culture, to a dominant secular and religious establishment which claimed authority over kings and emperors, and control over people's lives.
- In Judaism, people who engaged in gender and same-sex relationships which were given in love and conformed to the highest moral standards of society could be highly regarded. However, those who sought to break these rules through inappropriate sexual activity and immoral behaviour were very strongly censured for these acts.
- That changed when from the 11<sup>th</sup> Century the Church adopted Aquinas' teaching which has had the effect of liberalising sexual expressions within marriage, but condemned all sexual relationships outside marriage as generators of lust and inappropriate acts<sup>46</sup>

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## SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE AUTHORITARIAN CHURCH

- Before this change, and by the end of the first millennium an epidemic of sexual abuse had taken place among clergy and religious in the Roman Church. That was very clearly described by Peter Damian, but the response of the Church was to do too little, too late, and attempts were made to minimise what had occurred<sup>47</sup>.
- Also, at this time the Roman Church had achieved a secular dominance which claimed authority over Emperors and Kings: Pomp, luxury, and its exercise of power also became the hallmark of many in the hierarchy of this Church. Matters came to a head with the Cathar Revolt 1209–1229. This was violently suppressed by the Roman Church.
- We have seen that there were major differences over attitudes to gender and sexuality between the Celtic Church, the Church of the East with the Roman Church. The Cathars sought to import gender equality. We will consider the consequences next.

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## THE CATHARS

- Cathar doctrine identified two classes of people. Those, who Bernard of Clairvaux called the “*Perfecti*”, and the “*Credentes*”
- *Perfecti* were drawn from all walks of life and counted aristocrats, merchants, and peasants among their number. The *Perfecti* were not clerics in any way, but were lay members who had become ‘*adepts*’ in the teaching, and whose role was that of aiding the ordinary members achieve the rewards of belief and practice
- The *Credentes*, or believers, filled most of the movement. They were not expected to adopt the austere lifestyle of the *Perfecti*, but by their example to seek God.
- There were major differences over theology, but what began in the mid-twelfth century as a pious Cathar movement, became an anti-clerical protest, against the sacraments and corruption of the Roman Church. That is what I will mainly consider in this presentation.



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## BELIEFS

- A key element in Cathar theology is understood to be a dualism where one God was entirely good and dwelt in a condition of pure Spirit and Light, while the other, identified with Satan/Lucifer who, as "*the prince of this world*" was entirely evil. However, the only information now available comes from the condemnations by the Cathar's opponents and the nature of this theology is a subject of dispute<sup>48</sup>
- The Cathars assigned more importance to the role of Mary Magdalene in the spread of early Christianity than the Roman Church. Her vital role as a teacher contributed to the Cathar belief that women could serve as spiritual leaders. They supported a gender equality that undermined the whole principle of gender then held by the Roman Church
- The spirit was of utmost importance to the Cathars. It was believed to be immaterial and sexless. For these virtues, the *Perfecti* were regarded as "trans-material", or spiritualized angels by their followers.

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## SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

- *Perfecti* were expected to follow a lifestyle of extreme austerity and renunciation of the world which included abstaining from eating meat and avoiding all sexual contact. Cathar doctrine varied according to place and time. However, one practice that was universal in nearly all the polemics concerning this movement is that they endorsed chastity and rejected marriage.
- Taking the instructions that Jesus gave to his disciples, the *Perfecti* travelled in same-sex pairs across much of Europe to spread the Gospel Message. For Bernard of Clairvaux the real danger in the Cathar practice of celibacy was their co-habitation with women, which he considered leads to fornication and inappropriate acts.
- A second qualification in Cathar theology is that the rejection of sex and reproduction applied principally to *Perfecti*. Ordinary believers or *Credentes* were not expected to remain celibate, though it would be desirable if they did so.

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## CONDEMNATION

- Denunciations of the Cathar's approach to gender and sex took two forms
- The first was to try to discredit the celibacy embraced by the Cathars by presenting it as sleazy and easily broken because of gender equality and their doctrines... which involved close interactions between men and women, with the temptations it brought
- The second was the condemnation by the Church of every same sex loving act. Instead of only male same-sex intercourse and its abuses of power being condemned, the condemnation by the Roman Church became extended to every act. These were exclusively seen by Aquinas and others, as progenitors of lust and inappropriate sex.
- Initial denunciations of Cathar theology do not seem to have had the same high priority in the Roman Church as its denunciations of sex, although theology was a major concern<sup>49</sup>

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## DISPUTES

- In addition to the Cathar belief in dualism, there was also a belief in reincarnation. The Cathars believed that one would be repeatedly reincarnated until people commit to the self-denial of the material world. This meant that a man could be reincarnated as a woman and vice versa, thus rendering the gender discrimination in the Roman church meaningless and contributing to the true transcendence of gender in its beliefs.
- Cathar beliefs were expunged from Christian tradition by the massacres, the pogroms of the Inquisition and other attacks, which took place during and after the Cathar defeat
- By far the greatest long-lasting dispute arose because of the differences in attitude to gender and sexuality held in common by the Celtic church, the Church of the East, including the Cathars on the one hand, and by the Roman church on the other. As noted, there were very serious differences over theology, but that is of less concern here.

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## BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

- Earlier we have seen the close nature of the relationships between Bernard and Malachy, Bishop of Armagh.
- Bernard died some 50 years before the Cathar Revolt. This was at a time when the Roman Church was trying to assuage the Cathars by preaching rather than war.
- Despite his severe condemnation of the Cathars for unnamed heresies<sup>50</sup>, he also shared some Cathar beliefs. His relationship with Malachy would not have raised eyebrows within the Cathar movement.
- Bernard also played the leading role in developing the cult of the Virgin Mary as Mother of God, which many historians have seen as an attempt to counter the leaderships of women in new movements - notably those of the troubadours and the Cathars<sup>51</sup>.

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## MORE OF BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

- Although theologically conservative, Bernard strongly supported Hildegard of Bingen and other prominent women of the time. To Hildegard, he was a protector. He encouraged and supported her, even among his fellow Cistercian monks.
- After visiting the Cathar territories, Bernard's main impression seems to be the contrast between the piety of the Cathars and the shameless corruption in his own Church.
- The Knights Templar, an order of fighting Cistercian monks, which he helped institute and promoted, to fight in the Jerusalem Crusades, played an important role in crushing the Cathars in the Albigensian Crusade after his death.
- Despite any sympathies he may have had for the Cathar movement, Bernard was happy to see those whom he considered to be Christian heretics physically destroyed.

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## ROLES OF WOMEN

- The Nestorian conflicts of around 450 AD which were ostensibly about whether the Virgin Mary should be called the “*Mother of God*” or the “*Mother of Christ*” reflected a much deeper division between the roles expected of women in more gender equal societies, including the Celtic Churches and the Church of the East, against the roles imposed on women in a divided and unequal Roman society and Church.
- Jesus did not condemn gender complementarity. However, he condemned the social and legal enforcement of it many times. For Paul there was no Jew or Greek, no male and female,” *for all one in Christ Jesus...*” yet both Peter and Paul enforced a gender complementary to gain respect for, and to ensure the survival of the Roman Church
- Although the cult of Mariology, as fostered by Bernard gave women a very high status it also reinforced the gender complementarity imposed by the Roman Church.

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## AQUINAS

- Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) was an Italian friar in the Dominican Order. This order was established to counter heresy and corruption in the Church.
- Aquinas was the father of a school of thought described as “*Natural Law*” which drew on some of the teachings of Aristotle and on the principles of reason... But where they differed, reason was always trumped by the theology of the Roman Church.
- His condemnations of same-sex intercourse focussed entirely on the sexual act, and on the activities which supported it. Contrary to Cathar perceptions and chastity, these activities were perceived without exception to be in pursuit of lust and immoral sex.
- Aquinas was strongly attacked by Luther and others for denying the abuses of power by the hierarchy of the Institutional Church, which gave permission for abuses of sex.



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## TURNING POINT

- It might be argued that the defeat of the Cathar Revolt marked a major change in the teaching of the Church
- The enforcement of gender complementarity, as distinct from the acceptance of it, meant and means that regardless of motives, any departure from the sexually and gender-based stereotypes created by it are intrinsically disordered and disruptive acts.
- The changes in teaching put forward by Aquinas, which transformed the condemnation of same-sex relationships, including intercourse, from the condemnation of their abuse into to the condemnation of the acts, destroyed the moral duality found in Judaism and in Christianity during much of the first millennium. It classified all such behaviour as sexual perversions or disruptions, and it denies modern scientific understandings which identify these as personality variations that search for identity, not desires of sex.

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## PRESSURES

- Sexual and gender abuse is rampant in almost every society. That is even more true of the despotic, grossly gender unequal and enslaving societies of the first century world. These pressures were very strongly felt in Judea under Roman rule, and sexual abuse was also rampant in the Christian Church towards the end of the first millennium.
- What is absolutely clear is that there must be no compromise whatever in efforts to combat this sexual abuse, but the danger of enforcing this imperative is that it leads to the condemnation of all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour regardless of purpose, on the presumption that the motives are always those of the abuses of power and sex. The idea that some people may engage in gender and sexually variant behaviour because of their search for identity and to express their love, care, and compassion for each other can cease to seem credible: so that all awareness of the existence of these people, and the credibility of their motives becomes totally lost.

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## ARTICLE 2357 CATECHISM OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

- The results of these changes are seen in the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church
- “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<sup>52</sup>.
- 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 choose 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”.

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## CONSEQUENCES

- It is this total denial which transforms our understanding of all gender and sexually variant relationships from medical diagnoses of personality variations to a diagnosis that considers them as disruptions or perversions instead<sup>53</sup>.
- It attacks the current worldwide professional medical consensus which identifies these conditions as personality variations, where people who live true to their identities can live to the highest moral standards that society expects. It is an inwardly focussed search for identity which poses no threat, and it is not about behaviour or sex
- Other religious doctrines, together with certain gender-critical feminist groups, define these conditions as personality disruptions or perversions. The driving forces behind these are associated with behaviour and desire. Predation can therefore be feared, with the search for immoral behaviour and inappropriate sex.

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## MANAGEMENT

- The two major reasons cited for prohibiting all gender and sexually variant behaviour is that they disrupt the good order of gender divided societies and can attack family life.
- These may be true. Many transgender people enter traditional heterosexual marriages for all the right reasons and the love they impart. Also, in the hope that such commitments will resolve the conflicts they face. Sadly, it does not. The tension often increases with age, and the disruption and trauma can be enormous when it comes to collapse
- That is why all the world authorities and professional institutions advocate an affirmative approach to managing these conditions. By encouraging self-acceptance and self-esteem much of this trauma can be avoided. Then the appropriate lifestyle decisions can be made. This conflict is entirely about finding one's own identity. When that is found in time and managed correctly there is greater opportunity and no threat to family life.

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## CHOICE OR NO CHOICE?

- Misdiagnosing these conditions can cause great harm, since the methods of management are almost opposite to each other.
- Diagnosing these conditions as perversions or disruptions leads to the presumption that transgender and sexually variant people are making a choice
- That does not conform to the experience of many transgender people who spend a lifetime desperately trying to conform to what biology and others expect of them until attrition and exhaustion brings collapse.
- One of the worst features of this misdiagnosis is the presumption of choice. That is why conversion therapies which attempt to change a person's gender identity or sexual orientation can have such a devastating effect.

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## HARM

- These are just some of the reasons why the harm that created can be enormous when the incorrect diagnoses and management methods are applied.
- All the main Professional Medical Institutions in the United Kingdom have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU2) which contains strong condemnations of the principles of conversion therapy. The scientific consensus also makes these points<sup>54</sup>,
- However, among gender-critical feminist groups and conservative theologians the existence of this document is not even acknowledged, and the consensus is ignored.
- That is why the traditional teaching of the Christian Churches on gender and sexual variation must be re-visited, for the transformations which took place during the first millennium are dismissed and the advances gained in current science are ignored.

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## PARADIGM SHIFT

- These changes have created a paradigm shift in Christian teaching from condemning the abuses of power which gave permission for abuses of sex, to one that ignores power and only condemns the sexual acts, regardless of the real purpose or intention of the acts.
- The intimate relationships between Bernard and Malachy and Aelred's advice to his monks would have been possible before Aquinas and the Cathar Revolt, but not after it.
- The massacres of the Cathars in the Albigensian Crusade and the role of the Inquisition exterminated the Cathars and enforced the current doctrine of the Roman Church.
- This departed from the Judean tradition where loving, committed, and responsible same-sex relationships were accepted. Male same-sex intercourse was strongly condemned for abuses of power. There was no condemnation of any other same sex loving acts.



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## QUESTIONS

- We have seen that during the first millennium, Christianity in the Roman Empire underwent a complete transformation from a powerless populist movement subject to the abuses of power and sex inflicted on it, to a dominant secular and religious establishment which claimed authority over kings and emperors, and control over people's lives.
- The doctrines of Mariology are known to originate from Eastern Christianity. There was a dispute over whether Mary should be called the "*Mother of God*" or the "*Mother of Christ*". Bernard of Clairvaux strongly promoted the doctrines of Mariology in the Roman Church. How might these have been adapted to suit the Roman Church?
- How do the different attitudes to gender and sexuality affect the acceptance of gender and sexually variant behaviour in the Church? Does this paradigm shift make the Church more, or less able to deal with its own internal sexual abuse?



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***PART 3: MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS***

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## HISTORY

- In the previous presentations we have seen that a paradigm shift took place in Christian teaching around, or just after the end of the first millennium, from teaching which condemned the abuses of power that gave permission for the abuses of sex to one which regardless of purpose extended its condemnation to every same sex loving act.
- That destroyed a previous symmetry which could accept all same-sex and heterosexual loving, committed, faithful, and responsible relationships, while condemning those which involved abusive, irresponsible, and gratuitous sexual acts.
- In the Bible and in first century Judaism male same-sex intercourse is the only illegal act. Same-sex marriage was anathema because of the gross gender inequalities in these societies... In this third presentation we consider these prohibitions and relate them to their acceptances in the present-day world.

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## CONTEXT

- This presentation is in two parts. In the first part we will consider, from a mainly social and theological perspective how relationships developed in Christianity from the time of the early Church to the present day.
- In the second part, from a secular and scientific perspective, we will consider the present-day understandings about how gender identities and sexual identities develop: most notably how these are treated by gender-critical feminist groups.
- Although each group approaches these issues in totally different ways, they come to a common understanding which diagnoses transgender conditions as personality disruptions, driven by maybe sublimated sexual desires while the professional institutions diagnose these as personality variations driven by the search for identity instead. In this presentation we consider some of the issues involved.

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## JESUS ON MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS

- The approach Jesus took to marriage is laid out in Mark 10:6-9 *“At the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” So, they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate”.*
- On divorce Jesus states in Matthew 19:8-9, *“Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.*
- Jesus said in Luke 25:30: *“But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection”.*

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## MARRIAGE TO EACH OTHER

- Attitudes to marriage between men and women have varied according to circumstances and time. Although Jesus states that matrimony is God given and holy, it was not instituted by him, and it was not a sacrament of the Church<sup>55</sup>
- Marriage was a civil agreement until the Council of Trent, held between 1545 and 1563<sup>56</sup>. Up until this period, marriage was considered a private contract between two people. They would make a pledge to each other and, from that moment on, they were considered married. This pledge could take place anywhere; it did not have to occur in a church and neither the church nor the state were involved.
- Augustine held that marriage did not exist in Heaven. For Jerome, marriage was only made necessary because of the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden. It was created as a means of regulating sexual abuse, a second-best option, and not a sacramental act.

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## TRANSFORMATIONS OF SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

- During the twelfth century the Roman Church began to take more control of the process of marriage. That coincided with the paradigm shift in its teaching from one which condemned the abuses of power which gave permission for the abuses of sex to another which regardless of purpose extended its condemnation to every same sex loving act.
- For the Cathars the treatment of marriage as if it was being made a sacrament of the Church was seen as the slavery of the soul to a corrupt organisation. The Cathars were said to prefer informal arrangements, but this did not imply that debauchery occurred.
- In sexual areas the crucial disputes which the early Celtic Church, The Church of the East and the Cathar movement had with the Roman Church is a theology which could affirm loving, committed, and responsible same-sex relationships against the theology of the Roman Church, which did not... and condemned every same sex loving act.

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## COMMITMENTS OF MARRIAGE

- That is why current theological arguments state that marriage is a committed and faithful relationship between a man and a woman for life. No other relationship is allowed
- However, this teaching only becomes exclusive once the present-day doctrines of the Church which condemns all same sex loving acts, regardless of purpose, are applied.
- We have seen that responsible and loving same sex relationships were welcomed in first century Jewish society; and nowhere does Jesus condemn loving-same sex acts.
- Despite this, all male same-sex intercourse was condemned in Judaism because of the abuses of power and depravities it allowed. There were many strong and loving male same-sex relationships formed during the first millennium. The term “*spiritual marriage*” was used by some for these since intercourse was a prohibited act.



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## FIRST CENTURY RELATIONSHIPS

- Jewish learning took place as a didactic process where pairs of students and Rabbis taught, studied, and argued together. The more intimate the relationship the more depth and insight was obtained. In a society where same sex loving and responsible relationships were accepted, very strong bonds and partnerships could be formed
- The same was true for much of the first century Mediterranean world. In Greek tradition unconsummated male same sex love was considered as the highest form of love. Gender was not debated, and the distinctions on male same sex relationships were made between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex.
- We will also see that the relationships between two men, affirmed in services of Adelphopoiesis carried out by the early Christian Church matched the sexual relationships expected in first century Rabbinic partnerships in Judaism at the time

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## MARRIAGE TO THE CHURCH

- In Christian tradition the accepted form of marriage is that of the marriage between a man and a woman. However, a parallel is seen in monastic customs when the introduction of someone into a monastic community, notably a nun takes the form of a marriage service, when she is married to Christ
- That call to celibacy and devotion to delivering the Gospel Message is similarly seen in the concept of the “*Solitary Ones*” in the Church of the East where men and women would be brides or bridegrooms of Christ and make commitments of celibacy which transcend all gender and sex.
- Jesus placed the call of devotion to the Gospel message above the loyalties of family life. For Paul “*It was better for men and women to marry than burn*”. Nevertheless, family life and marriage are very highly valued in Judaism and the Christian Church.

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## SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE

- The early Christian and medieval practice of “*spiritual marriage*”, in which two partners mutually and voluntarily relinquish sexual activity for reasons of piety, plays an important role in the development of Christian relationships<sup>57</sup>
- The term “*spiritual marriage*” has been used in many ways. We have seen that Aelred used it when describing the relationships between Jesus and John. In early Christianity it could be applied to the relationships between Saints Sergius and Bacchus, Bernard of Clairvaux and Malachy of Armagh, Brigid and Darlughdach, and others.
- These same-sex relationships provided a continuity between Jewish and Christian traditions. Comparisons can be made with Christian ceremonies of Adelphopoiesis, and the Jewish Rabbinic partnerships for example of Rav and Rabbi Samuel in the third century, and Rabbi Jonathan and Rashi in the eleventh<sup>58</sup>

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## ADELPHOPOIESIS

- From a very early date, close relationships between two people of the same sex (normally men) were solemnised in the services of *Adelphopoiesis* or “*Brother Making*” by the Eastern Christian Church
- Modern interpretations deduce that the rite of Adelphopoiesis was used in many ways, such as for the formation of permanent pacts between leaders of nations, or between religious brothers, or alternatively to formalise relationships for adoption purposes<sup>59 60</sup>.
- Their acceptability depended on the Christian endorsement of same-sex relationships given in love. When that was rejected, their religious legitimacy was attacked.
- To understand their role and purpose, we first need to examine what these relationships meant during the first millennium, not in doctrines of the present-day world.

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## APPROACH

- Evidence for the existence of these ceremonies from the fourth century onwards is also available. Liturgies for services of Adelphopoiesis from the 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards exist. Their contexts match those of Byzantine marriages, except for the exchanging of rings and the final “*Crowning*” act<sup>61</sup>
- The relationships blessed in services of Adelphopoiesis were not full marriages. They were more akin to betrothal. When a couple is betrothed, they are held accountable to the laws against adultery and all the religious, social and kinship relationships are enforced. Terms like cross-mother instead of mother-in-law could be used<sup>62</sup>.
- This means that if we are to understand the role and purpose of Adelphopoiesis we also need to look at the origins, original purpose, and reasons for these services as well as the paradigm shift in Christian teaching which occurred after the failure of the Cathar revolt, and their development ever since.

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## BETHROTHAL, INTERCOURSE AND MARRIAGE

- As a wife was regarded as the property of her husband, betrothal in biblical times was implemented by purchasing her, through paying the bride price to her father.
- If any loving same sex relationship between two men was to be accepted, it had to be between two people as equals. The idea that these relationships could be regarded as same-sex marriages was very strongly rejected in Jewish custom and law
- Same sex intercourse, including consensual intercourse was condemned for the same reason: since in any gender unequal society, both the imbalances of power and the enforcement of gender stereotypes are applied.
- Brother making ceremonies allows sibling taboos to be enforced. Adelphopoiesis may bless a celibate spiritual marriage of love between two people of the same sex.

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## EARLY UNDERSTANDING

- Claudia Rapp<sup>63</sup> finds that the origins of the ceremony for Adelphopoiesis or “brother-making” are to be found in early monasticism. She also finds that in the Adelphopoiesis relationship, there is clear documentation of the Church’s “*sanctioning and sanctifying*” of homoaffective relationships with the avoidance of penetrative sex.
- A 7th-century hagiography of St Symeon perceives two men, Symeon and John to be “*The Pure Bridegrooms of Christ*,” Where typically one would expect female novitiates to be called the “*Brides of Christ*”, a gender-transcending relationship is evoked<sup>64</sup>.
- The Rule of John for the Monastery of St. John (12th Century) argues that the spiritual bond between two brothers was stronger than the material bond between husband and wife. In the “*Life of Mary the Younger*”, the bond is seen as being akin to marriage

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## ADELPHOPOIESIS AND SAME SEX LOVE

- In the life of St. Cyril of Philea (12th Century) these relationships, which always involved unconsummated love, were identified as the highest form of intimate relationship. That corresponds with earlier statements by the Greek and Jewish sages in the first century world.
- The emperor Basil I, for example is understood to have entered into this type of same sex relationship. Elsewhere in the literature, other examples are cited<sup>65</sup>
- Relationships of Adelphopoiesis were affirmed in the Cathar strongholds in Southern France. These approved the creation of households and same sex loving acts<sup>66</sup>
- Similar, though secular arrangements continued in Southern France after they were condemned by the Christian Church. Going under the name of affrèment, the corresponding homoaffective relationships continued to be endorsed<sup>67</sup>



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## THE FRIEND

- Modern interpretations deduce that the rite of Adelphopoiesis was used in many ways, such as in the formation of permanent pacts between leaders of nations, or between religious brothers, or alternatively to formalise relationships for adoption purposes<sup>68</sup>.
- Later “*Brother making*” ceremonies were found in the history of the Catholic Church until the 14th century and in the Eastern Orthodox Church until the early 20th century. They are considered to affirm kinship bonding and “*blood brotherhoods*” with emphasis on friendship and the avoidance of romance and sex.
- Although the ceremonies were used to represent many things, including kinship and adoption, they also marked the formalisation of certain sexual relationships that were true to those encountered in the first century Jewish partnerships, also in the spiritual marriages which, during the first millennium, took place in the Christian Church.

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## SPIRITUAL MARRIAGES AND GENDER

- Spiritual marriages were not bounded by gender. As Luke 25:30 says, the Children of the Resurrection “*are equal onto angels*”. Equivalent relationships between men and men, women and women, and men and women existed during the first millennium in various branches of the Christian Church
- Heterosexually married monks and nuns who had taken these vows of celibacy were formally recognised in the Church of the East, and they may have existed in the Irish Celtic church<sup>69</sup>. This pattern continued until Babai the Great expelled the married monks from the monasteries, including Egypt, between 551 and 628<sup>70</sup>
- The Irish Celtic Church took inspiration from Egypt and the Desert Fathers, and these married relationships would have been known to that Church<sup>71</sup>.

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## SEXUAL AND SPIRITUAL MARRIAGES

- As we have seen, the approach Jesus took to marriage is laid out in Mark 10:6-9 *“At the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” So, they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate”*.
- Nowhere in his teaching does Jesus condemn loving same-sex relationships. Nor does he challenge the first century Jewish acceptance of responsible same sex loving acts. Instead of this, his relationship with the *“beloved disciple”* in the Gospel of John, supports a culture which can accept and to respect these relationships and acts.
- The demand by Jesus for total commitment to the gospel message and avoiding the impediments of family life also demanded a celibacy which avoided all reproductive acts. This applied to everyone, and it is not about avoiding depravities of sex.

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## RELATIONSHIPS

- Apart for the universal call for celibacy, there is nothing in principle against the celebration of close same sex relationships given in love. Male same-sex intercourse remained problematic because of its association with the abuses of power and sex.
- The correspondence not just between Bernard and Malachy, St Simeon, St Cyril, and others, attests to the presence of many homoerotic relationships during the first millennium in the Christian Church. St Anselm as Archbishop of Canterbury prohibited the publication of a decree by the Second Lateran Council in 1139, condemning homosexuality; advising the Council that it was widespread, stating that few were embarrassed by it, and that none were ever aware that the Church considered it a serious matter<sup>72</sup>.
- Aelred's treatise on Spiritual Friendship is also a treatise on spiritual love. The same patterns of acceptance were also reflected in the Celtic Church.

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## SODOMY

- During the first millennium sodomy was associated more with wickedness, power, and sexual abuse, rather than sexual acts<sup>73</sup>. Earlier we saw that Leviticus 20:13 condemns consensual male same sex intercourse in despotic societies for the same reasons.
- Ezekiel gives a long account of the wickedness of Sodom... Arrogance, gluttony and unconcerned about God (Ezekiel 16:48-50): Detestable religious acts (Ezekiel 16:48-50): Uncharitable towards strangers (Genesis 19): Power and rape (Judges 19:22): Rejecting God (Amos 4 and Jeremiah 23:13-14)
- Jesus condemns Sodom for the same abuses in Matthew 11:20-24 and Matthew 10:11-15. The sexual sins of sodomy, cited in Genesis are not about homosexuality or consenting sex. All of these passages are about the abuses of power and same-sex rape...

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## MALE SAME-SEX INTERCOURSE AND SODOMY

- In today's Christian tradition, that definition of Sodomy has been transformed., Sodomy is now regarded as a grave sexual sin. Regardless of purpose it condemns all same-sex intercourse, and it defines it as a totally depraved act. Some groups adapt this to condemn homosexuality, some expand its condemnation to include oral sex.
- Yet in the Bible we find the condemnations of Sodom are about wickedness, debauchery, and abuse of sex. All gender and sexually variant behaviour, regardless of purpose, is also condemned; as it disrupts the "*Good order*" in societies where gender discrimination occurs, and where gender complementary is doctrinally, socially, or legally enforced.
- Earlier in this account we have also seen that Leviticus 18: 22 and 20:13 condemns consensual male same-sex intercourse because of the abuses of power in the enslaving and grossly discriminatory societies of the first century world.

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## ATTITUDES TO MALE SAME SEX INTERCOURSE

- Centurions were not allowed to interact with local women and their slaves (as concubini)<sup>74</sup> had to provide sexual comfort instead<sup>75</sup>. However, the relationship the Centurion in the Gospel had with the Jewish nation and his slave was marked by love.
- On this basis of faith and love Jesus healed the Centurion's slave. The Centurion was praised. *"When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith'".* No comment on or condemnation of any same-sex relationship was made<sup>76</sup>
- We have seen that the primary reason for condemning male same-sex intercourse was because of the abuses of power in these grossly unequal, despotic, and enslaving societies. The relationship between the centurion and slave is here taken to be one of love and mutual respect. For Jesus the strong probability of same-sex intercourse in this relationship did not lead to an absolute condemnation of the act<sup>77</sup>.

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## SAME SEX AND HETEROSEXUAL MARRIAGE

- Jesus placed very high values on heterosexual marriage when he said: *“For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”*
- In the teaching of Jesus there is no condemnation of loving, faithful, and responsible same-sex relationships. The experiences of the first millennium, and today, show that parallel same-sex relationships having the same depths of commitment can be made. That awareness was destroyed by the end of the first millennium through the paradigm shift in Christian Teaching which, with no exception, condemned all such acts.
- The use of the word marriage is not new. During the first millennium it was used to describe both same-sex and heterosexual relationships as marriages when these same covenanted, chaste and lifetime bonds of fidelity and faithfulness were made.



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## STRENGTH OF SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS

- We have seen that under the “Pairs” culture in Judaism intimate male relationships were encouraged. That became expressed in Rabbinic partnerships also in Chavruta partnerships where pairs of students studied biblical and Jewish texts<sup>78</sup>. The word chavruta, like marriage, became used in the singular to describe two people in a relationship. It is known that bonds stronger than heterosexual marriage could be formed<sup>79</sup>
- In the life of St. Cyril of Philea (12th Century) these relationships, which always involved unconsummated love, were seen as the highest form of intimate relationship.
- The social and scientific analysed in the resource book produced for the Church of England Living in Love and Faith Programme demonstrate that heterosexual and same sex couples living in married life have identical outcomes in the quality, commitment, and stability of their relationships. We must examine theology to see why they are condemned.

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## JEWISH ATTITUDES TO SAME SEX MARRIAGE

- There is little reference to same-sex marriage within the Jewish literature, however the Talmud teaches against it: Chullin 92a, says that *“the nations of the world, however sinful, corrupt, or perverse, still have the merit of at least three behaviours, one of which is they do not write a ketubah (marriage contract) for two males.”*
- In a commentary on Genesis Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi Joseph, *“The generation of the Flood was not wiped out until they wrote marriage documents for the union of a man to a male or to an animal.”* (Gen Rabbah 26:5; Lev Rabbah 23:9).
- Same-sex marriage was anathema to the first Century Jewish teachers. However, it is also notable that their real objection is to the writing of a marriage contract, for that would have the consequence of diminishing the status of at least one of the partners to that of a woman<sup>80</sup>.

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## THE NEW COVENANT

- In Matthew 5:17 it is stated that Jesus Christ came to fulfil the Law of Moses and create a New Covenant between God and his people. The old covenant was written in stone, but the new covenant is written on our hearts<sup>81</sup>. In the teaching of Jesus, the Jewish doctrines based on the letter of the law are now to be interpreted in the light of love and the intention of the acts
- Ideals of Christian society are summed up by Paul in Galatians 3: 26-28 where he states: *“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”*.
- So, in this truly equal society where all the abuses of power and sex are absent, there should be no condemnation of any loving, responsible, committed, and faithful sexual act.

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## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR GENDER AND SEXUALLY VARIANT PEOPLE?

- In this account it is shown that in first century Judaism, a moral duality is encountered whereby people who engage in gender variant, transgender and same-sex relationships which are given in love and conform to the highest moral standards of society should be highly regarded. However, those who seek to break these rules through inappropriate sexual activity, abuses and immoral behaviour are very strongly censured for these acts
- Thus, as with Paul in Galatians 3:28 all transgender, transsexual, heterosexual, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people who seek to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves; must be accepted in their own right<sup>82</sup>. All sexual behaviour is governed by purity of intention.
- When the influences of honour, power and abuse are absent there is no automatic condemnation of any same-sex act of sex. There is no toleration of abusive sex.

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## INEQUALITY

- Sexual moralities are not the only thing to be considered. We have noted that same-sex marriage was anathema in first century Judaism. With other first century grossly unequal societies it reduced the status of the penetrated citizen to that of a woman instead.
- Even the slightest suspicion that Jesus and John had same-sex intercourse would have created power inequalities in these ancient societies... and that would be disastrous for the Church. This action still disrupts the social order in all societies where gender complementary is socially, legally, culturally, or religiously imposed.
- Today, accepting same-sex intercourse, homosexuality or transsexuality remains anathema in societies where the same divisions between men and women continue to be enforced. The opposite is true in societies where complete gender equality, as Paul describes it, is achieved, or aspired to. This dispute creates schisms in the Church.

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## STALEMATE

- There are only two ways to challenge the traditional teaching of a Church which condemns all gender and sexually variant behaviour, regardless of motive as intrinsically disordered, and acts of grave depravity in pursuit of illicit sex.
- These are experiential evidence and science. The centuries of criminalisation and condemnation has meant that access to experiential evidence has been denied, and the scientific evidence was not then available. Therefore, a stalemate occurred until the 1960's when legalisation and return of the freedom to express loving same-sex relationships resulted in a revolution in outlook.
- Today, same sex marriage has been legalised in many societies where gender and sexual equality is practiced, and strong laws to prevent any form of discrimination including the protection of gender and sexually variant people are in place.

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## FULL CIRCLE

- Since their introduction in 2005 the Church of England has allowed its priests to enter United Kingdom civil partnerships. However, it teaches that *“sexual intercourse, as an expression of faithful intimacy, properly belongs within [heterosexual] marriage exclusively”*. *Sexual relationships outside heterosexual marriage are regarded as falling short of God’s purposes for human beings*<sup>83</sup>.
- Therefore, it expects its priests to treat these as celibate relationships in partnerships which are comparable to these endorsed in first century rabbinic partnerships and in early ceremonies of Adelphopoiesis conducted by the Christian Church.
- Male same-sex intercourse was prohibited in history for several reasons: devotion to the Gospel message, misuses of power and abuses of sex. All these prohibitions are about distractions or the abuses of sex. Nowhere does Jesus condemn this sexual act.

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## MARRIAGE

- We have seen that Jesus did not institute the act of marriage. The term was only employed to define a civil contract until the Council of Trent between 1545 and 1563<sup>84</sup>.
- The term “*Spiritual Marriage*” was used during the first millennium to define loving same-sex relationships in which male same-sex intercourse was the only act that was absolutely prohibited, because of abuses of power and sex. These and similar relations were blessed in services of Adelphopoiesis in parts of the early Church.
- Science and experience have demonstrated that heterosexual and same sex couples living in married life have identical outcomes in the quality, commitment, and stability of their relationships. The refusal of sections of the Christian Church to bless or to recognise the strength and sincerity in these same-sex relationships as having same integrity as heterosexual marriage, to people outside it, is attacking the credibility of the Church.



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## DOGMAS

- The dogma contained in the Church statement that “*sexual intercourse, as an expression of faithful intimacy, properly belongs within [heterosexual] marriage exclusively*” denies the equality of relationships that people and society are now able to see, which for the last sixty years has been confirmed in the extensive clinical and experiential evidence gained in societies where these relationships can be expressed.
- The second part of this statement that “*Sexual relationships outside heterosexual marriage are regarded as falling short of God’s purposes for human beings*” may presumably be taken to refer to children and procreation, yet the call of Jesus was one of commitment to the Gospel message through the denial of family life.
- There is also a second non-religious element to these arguments which we must consider. That is the approach taken by gender-critical groups.

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## SECULAR APPROACHES

- These disagreements create toxic conflicts where on the one hand traditional Christian teaching and gender critical-feminist groups see transgender and sexually variant conditions as personality disruptions having maybe sublimated motives of desire and sex.
- But on the other hand, the understanding of world authorities and professional institutions identifies these conditions as personality variations which are driven by the rejection of what is wrong, and are concerned with the search for identity, and not of sex.
- The motives and methods of management are almost opposite to each other. That has profound consequences. The first is seen to be driven by motives of behaviour, desire, and sex, which can be used to promote fears of predation, and allegations that male to female transsexuals are potential threats. The second seeks identity, it rejects what is wrong, it is internally focussed, does not attack others, and is about being yourself.

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## CONSEQUENCES

- The motives and management methods for each interpretation are in total opposition. This creates fierce disputes: for what one side sees as coercion and enforcement, must almost by definition, be interpreted as compassion and understanding by the other.
- The Professional Institutions diagnose transgender conditions as personality variations that are *“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”*.
- Professional approaches, which give children the freedom to explore their sense of gender identity give them the ability to find it<sup>85</sup>. They do not give them the freedom to choose it, are anathema to gender-critical groups and to others who diagnose these as perversions instead. For these groups giving this freedom of exploration simply feeds the desires of perversion and disruption, and that leads to a runaway drive.

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## WATCHFUL WAITING

- An approach often adopted is “*Watchful Waiting*”, which encourages transgender children to find ways to conform to the gender identity expected of them and to refuse any irreversible changes, before they make an adult decision about the path to adopt.
- Regardless of any diagnosis that approach must be absolutely correct. The concern is about its implementation, and this is where the dispute gets hot.
- Treating these as personality disruptions involves an open choice based on behaviour and desire, which can be freely made after adult status is reached. Treating these as personality variations is instead one of suppressing or fighting a deep-seated core sense of gender identity, often from infancy, until attrition and exhaustion forces a decision to be made. Transgender children may be determined to transition at a very early stage. Thus, it is crucial that the correct methods of management and compassion are applied.

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## GENDER IDENTITY

- Most modern definitions identify two components.
- The first is what is called the “*Core Gender Identity*”. This is a deep seated and often unconscious sense of personality and belonging. It becomes embedded at the latest by the age of three years and it is considered very difficult, if not impossible, to change after that. The professional institutions and the world authorities almost universally regard it as a personality variation, which precedes any identification with the gender role.
- The second is the “*Gender Role Identity*”. This is the sense of gender that is created through social awareness and the stereotypical expectations of gender expected by others in society. It does not become strongly expressed until about the age of three years. It acts as an overlay on what has already been formed, therefore any departure from the normal expectations must now be managed as personality disruptions instead.

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## FORMATION

- We have seen that the professional institutions identify gender identity as one of the core elements of personality: it is among the first to be created and it forms very early in life. However, it requires interaction with others, so it cannot form before birth.
- Although on average pre-and post-natal male and female physiologies, such as neural maturation rates, endocrines, and aggression profiles differ significantly, major overlaps occur. The interactions mean that the core gender identity usually but not always follows biological sex. It provides the foundation on which all future developments occur<sup>86 87</sup>.
- From birth it is also shown to be a strongly pro-active process, and that major neural transformations lock this in place by the age of three years<sup>88</sup>. These processes are discussed in detail in later presentations. This means that gender identity, not biological sex, becomes the primary marker to use for all social interactions that take place.

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## HIDDEN CONFLICTS

- This examination treats the development of gender identity in the same way as other core elements of personality and identity. It applies to all people, men, and women alike
- For most people both the core gender identity and the gender role identity are in harmony with that expected by the biological sex, therefore no awareness of any conflict, or even the possibility of any conflict, is expected to exist
- Transgender people can from infancy reject all identification with the biological sex when both the core gender identity and the gender role identity conflict with biological sex.
- The major conflicts occur when the gender role identity aligns with biological sex, but the core gender identity does not. Fighting these battles does not succeed, since this attacks the foundation upon which the sense of selfhood is built; and that can lead to collapse.

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## GENDER EXPRESSION IN TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

- This means that the overall expression of gender identity in transgender people is a combination of two potentially conflicting elements: Therefore, gender expression can vary widely depending upon how the battle lines are drawn at any particular time.
- For significant numbers of transgender people there are periods when all conflict seems to disappear, and identification aligns with that of the gender role. At other times intense trauma and potentially overwhelming drives to reject the gender role appear.
- The trigger which releases these conflicts may have little to do with gender. It may be depression which leads to the loss of hope of fulfilment in the expected gender role.
- It can also spring into conscious awareness at any time. For some it is already present from earliest memories, for others that may happen when puberty occurs.



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## GENDER CRITICAL DIFFICULTIES

- This approach, which matches that of the professional institutions, is unlike the gender-critical groups who argue that gender identity must be dictated by biological sex.
- Their argument, that gender identity is merely a social construct, which is determined entirely by association with the gender role, means that the prior existence of the core gender identity and all of the neurological and psychological processes associated with its development during the first crucial three years, must all be denied.
- There is also a contradiction in these approaches. If the approach of the professional institutions is considered to be correct, then the precepts upon which all gender-critical feminism is based are invalidated. If the approach of gender-critical feminists is assumed to be correct, then transgender conditions must be regarded as perversions or disruptions, and the depth and reality of transgender conditions is also denied.

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## PROOF

- This denial means that the onus is on gender-critical groups to prove their arguments.
- However only an alternative explanation is offered. Gender-critical groups provide an explanation of autogynephilic transsexuality which identifies sexual identity (expressed in terms of sexual orientation) as a personality variation, in line with the advances in science and knowledge of the last sixty years: but defines male to female transsexuality as a perversion or disruption of male homosexuality. This means that all of the parallel advances in the understanding of transgender conditions are instead denied.
- The approach adopted by the professional institutions, including the clinical and experiential evidence collated by world authorities is also ignored, or is dismissed by those in the gender-critical movement as the partisan work of “*transgender activists*”, who also present their own approach as “*The only credible approach*”

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## EXPERIENTIAL EVIDENCE

- No argument which claims to have a scientific basis can ever be justified unless experiential evidence or testing and research proves its viability.
- The adoption of autogynephilic theories by gender-critical groups is hardly surprising since they support their mantra that gender identity is purely a social construct, and that this is identified entirely with the gender role. However, the theory was already being challenged as being out of date and incorrect by many others working in the field.
- This theory was only developed for male to female transsexuals. It ignores female to male transsexuals. No equivalent autogynephilic parallels for these people have been identified. It also fails to deal adequately with non-binary roles, and it does not provide adequate explanations for the wide range of transgender conditions that exist.

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## MISDIAGNOSES

- The theory associates transgender conditions with sexual motives, including behaviour and desire, instead of identification and rejection. This allows people to identify all male to female transsexuals as potential threats to women in society.
- The neurological advances during the first three years are further ignored. The activating forces that are due to gene expression (not directly by genes) and the influence of endocrinal (or hormonal) elements are similarly disregarded or denied<sup>89</sup>
- Perhaps more importantly, autogynephilic theories do not match the lived experiences of transgender people. There is a great deal of anger among transgender people over an incorrect diagnosis being imposed upon them for the purpose of preserving a gender-critical approach, instead of protecting transgender people's lives.

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## DISPUTES

- At the heart of the argument are the disputes about how gender identity is created. Using the gender entitlement identified by the professional institutions and world authorities, it is possible for someone who is male to identify with women from the moment of birth, have a sense of identity and an outlook, behaviour and lifestyle which is in harmony with women, who respects women, and who fights throughout life as assiduously and strongly as any woman for the protection and security of her safety and gender-based rights.
- Applying the same gender entitlement to the second explanation of autogynephilic transsexuality, where sexuality and sexual orientation is still treated as a personality variation but transsexuality which is treated either as a paraphilia, perversion, disruption, or sublimation, turns the same transsexual with precisely the same outlook, from an ally into an opponent, who is then perceived to be erasing women's identities and attacking their hard-won sex-based rights.

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## SAFETY AND ROLE

- It is impossible to underestimate the need to ensure the safety and security of women against male abuses and attacks: That must be an overwhelming priority. However, the enormous pressures that this creates and the imperative need to protect women against mainly male attacks, abuses, and sexual violations, as seen in the “*Me too*” movement means that absolute standards of objectivity and impartiality must still be applied.
- It should be noted that all of these arguments are entirely about the existence of the core gender identity and the sense of belonging it creates. Gender-critical groups who deny the existence of the core gender identity may presume that transgender people seek gender stereotypes or sexual gratification, but transgender people search for identity instead, and there should be no dispute with any feminist group over the gender role. For many years, large numbers of male to female transexuals have held leading positions in the feminist movements and also have a proud history of fighting for women’s rights.

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## ACCEPTANCE

- Today, for the most part, transgender people are well accepted in the United Kingdom. Most people, including many feminists are happy to accept the statement that “*Trans women are women*”, because they find that they integrate seamlessly into society in that role. Gender-critical groups cannot accept this definition because they define women exclusively in terms of their reproductive organs or biological sex.
- Many gender-critical feminist groups claim that they welcome transgender people, but there is a fundamental contradiction between the quality of the welcome they give and their approach which leads people to believe that male to female transsexuals threaten women’s identities and are at least as prone as all males to engage in predation, sexual abuse, and physical attacks. However, there is no unanimity in the feminist movements as to how male to female transsexuals should be treated, and gender-critical feminists represent only a minority in the various feminist groups<sup>90</sup>.

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## ARGUMENTS

- For most people, feminism advocates social, political, economic, and intellectual equality for women and men. It defines a political perspective. This is distinct from sex or gender: it is about equality and rights. For most feminists the creation of gender identity as a collective social experience, determined entirely by engagement with the gender role.
- Various explanations are put forward to explain transgender conditions. For some it is an attempt to exert power over women. Gender-critical groups go one step further by denying the existence of gender identity as a meaningful element. They define biological sex as the determining role: and use the work of Judith Butler to justify their arguments.
- Although Butler had argued that gender identity was created entirely by performing the gender role, this was not her argument<sup>91</sup>. In later presentations I show why I join forces with Judith Butler using my own, and her own, criticisms of the gender critical approach.



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## STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

- Although gender critical groups approach the issue of gender and sexually variant relationships come to the same results.
- Both identify transgender conditions as personality disruptions driven by maybe hidden or sublimated sexual behaviours and desires, and as diversions to a biologically or religiously decreed course, where threats of predation can be applied
- While gender-critical groups only identify transgender conditions as perversions or disruption to an original course. The tradition Church teaching identifies both gender and sexually variant conditions in the same way
- Each group may use the secular and religious arguments of the other to justify their positions, and that is why they are considered together considered at this point.

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## OBJECTIVITY

- These highlight profound differences which demand a full analysis of all of the viewpoints involved and require a totally objective approach. That has not happened.
- The approach adopted by the professional institutions, including the clinical and experiential evidence collated by world authorities is ignored or is dismissed by those in the gender-critical movement as the partisan work of “*transgender activists*”, and who present their own approach as “*The only credible approach*”
- By refusing to consider even the possibility of change to the traditional teaching of the Church, and by dismissing the viewpoints of the professional institutions, groups like GAFCON and conservative evangelical churches also ignore the paradigm shift that took place around the end of the first millennium and are following the doctrines of a medieval Church. We will return to these matters in more detail in later presentations.

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## THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

- The evidence shows that the expressions of loving same-sex relationships were an accepted feature during the first millennium in the Christian Church. All these prohibited same-sex intercourse but celebrated expressions of same-sex love.
- There was a continuity between these partnerships and the intimate relationships encountered in Rabbinic Partnerships
- The relationships were expressed in the Church in various ways, as “*Soul Friend*”, “*Anam Cara*” or “*Spiritual Marriage*”, and affirmed in services of “*Adelphopoiesis*”.
- Their legitimacy disappeared when Christian doctrine prohibited the expression of any loving same-sex act. Christian viewpoints today deny their religious significance and consider them to affirm only adoptions, covenanted friendships, or community acts.

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## IMAGINE

- Imagine what a convert would have found when joining the early Celtic Church
- He or she would have known about the acceptance of gender and sexually variant relationships in his or her own society, and the duties of responsible sex.
- He or she would have learned about the story of David and Jonathan, and applied the same criteria as in Judaism, which accepted loving same-sex acts.
- He or she would have read about the relationship between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple in the Gospel of John and saw how this represented a continuity between the Old and New Testament, in the endorsement of loving same sex acts.
- He or she would be totally puzzled by a Church which later condemned every such act.

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## QUESTIONS

- Current definitions in certain Christian traditions define marriage as a committed and faithful relationship between a man and a woman for life. No other relationship is allowed. Experience in today's society, and in this account, and in first century Judaism show that similarly committed and faithful arrangements between same-sex couples can also be made. Should same sex relationships be accepted and blessed in the same way as marriage between a man and a woman in the Christian Church?
- Promiscuity and power abuse were rife in these grossly unequal societies and condemned by the Church. In Rome, same-sex intercourse between heterosexual men, normally where the penetrator was a citizen and the penetrated was a boy or slave was an accepted means of providing gratification with no reproductive effects. In Greece, sexual stimulation by an older man on a youth was considered an "*educative practice*" for the youth. How do you deal with situations like these?



***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

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***PART 4: REFORMATION AND CONDEMNATION***

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## PROTESTANT REFORMATION

- There was a time interval of almost 300 years between the crushing of the Cathar Revolt in 1229, and 1517 when Luther published his Ninety-five Theses, which provided the foundation of the Protestant Reformation.
- The criminalisation, persecution, and suppression of all same-sex activities during the intervening 300 years meant that all awareness of the moral duality encountered in the first millennium had disappeared and the teaching of the Church, which Aquinas had advocated, was unchallenged by the reformers themselves<sup>92</sup>.
- The effect was to greatly increase attacks on gender and sexually variant people. Now they were lumped together with disreputable people who took part in sexual abuse, as now described in the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church,

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## PROTESTANT CONDEMNATIONS

- Therefore, the condemnation is made to apply to every type of same sex relationship, loving or not. This included spiritual marriages, endorsed in the first millennium by the Christian church.
- In two of his later works, Luther expressed antagonistic, violent views towards Jews and called for the burnings of their synagogues and their expulsion. His rhetoric was not just directed at Jews but also towards Roman Catholics, Anabaptists, and nontrinitarian Christians<sup>93</sup>.
- Other reformers, including Knox, Calvin, Zwingli, etc took a similarly hostile approach. Luther did attack Aquinas for absolving the Roman church for its complicity in sexual abuse, but none could challenge what was now the accepted teaching of this Church.



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## AN UNFINISHED REFORMATION

- Although the Protestant Reformation had addressed many abuses, the failure to address the paradigm shift in Christian teachings has been profound. Attitudes changed
- From the statement by St Anselm at the end of the first Millennium advising the Second Lateran Council that homosexuality was widespread, that few were embarrassed by it, and that none were ever aware that the Church considered it a serious matter.
- To present statements that *“homosexuality is an enormous sin”*, or *“all homosexuals will go to hell”* (NIV Bible), together with the abuses, the social and legal condemnations of homosexual behaviour, the persecutions, and the death penalty in parts of the world.
- The transformation has severe consequences. For more details of how the reformers acted, see: [Gilchrist, S. \(2013a\)](#): *“An Unfinished Reformation”*<sup>94</sup>.

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## COLLUSION

- People often think of gender or sexually variant behaviour in terms of sexual abuse.
- However, any form of gender and sexually variant behaviour regardless of motive has the potential to disrupt the “*good order*” of any gender divided or gender discriminatory society regardless of motives or religious belief
- Defining all forms of gender and sexual loving behaviour as perversions or disruptions has brought the Church to collude with the secular demands of society rather than to challenge them.
- Not only has this collusion reinforced the secular prejudices of such discriminatory societies; it gave, and it still gives religious legitimacy to them. The harm that has been created is enormous. “*Wall toppling*” or stoning is still used to kill LGBT people today.

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## DISASTERS

- One only needs to look today at the behaviour of Isis, the Taliban, 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 applied
- Because of their size and variety of their inputs, many churches, and other organisations, have become captive to this scapegoating, and maybe unintentionally, cause great harm through the condemnations they make.

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## MISCONCEPTIONS

- It is essential to note is that many people in the Christian Churches genuinely believe that all gender and sexually variant behaviour is invariably a falling from Grace, and acts of depravity which search for gratification, instead of fulfilment of life
- In this account we trace the development of Christianity from its Jewish roots to present day life. We saw that a paradigm shift has occurred around the end of the first millennium where the condemnation of all gender and sexually variant people, which condemned abuses of honour, power and sex turned into condemning all sexual acts
- That has created a medical misdiagnosis where these conditions are considered as perversions or disruptions, instead of personality variations. Many people who follow this teaching of the Church genuinely believe that they are helping transgender people, but the methods of management oppose each other... resulting in these harmful effects.

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## CURRENT ATTITUDES

- Today the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church seek to welcome gender and sexually variant people into the fellowship of the Church
- But, along with gender-critical groups, they fundamentally misdiagnose the situation when they allege that gender identities and sexual orientation are matters of choice
- Life becomes a torment for many gender and sexually variant people, since their first realities are often those of desperately fighting to conform to the expectations of others before attrition and exhaustion makes them follow what their identities dictate.
- That trauma will not cease until the Christian Churches and gender critical movements come to recognise, in line with the professional institutions, that these are personality variations, they are not the disruptions which tradition dictates.

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## SECULAR CHALLENGES AND ATTACKS

- Transgender people currently find themselves under attack from two quarters. The first is from Christian misdiagnoses. The second is from gender-critical feminist groups.
- Most men and women are happy to accept male to female transsexuals as women, because they find that they integrate seamlessly into society in that role. However, gender-critical groups do not. For these groups the definition of “*a woman*” is exclusively determined by biological sex. Attempts are made to prove that all male to female transsexuals as are as likely, if not more likely, to predate on any woman, and subject them to sexual abuse and attacks. Women’s identities are also seen to be under attack.
- Both the Christian Churches and gender-critical feminist groups misdiagnose male to female transsexuals as perversions or disruptions, and in the same way. We consider the latter next in this presentation as they can collude with each other in any attacks.

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## GENDER CRITICAL APPROACHES

- Many feminist movements believe the development of gender identity is solely the result of socially generated and collective experiences. These are driven entirely by interaction with others, so gender identity is exclusively defined by the gender role.
- Gender-critical groups further argue that gender is a socially created illusion, driven by ill-defined sexual motives, so that in any true sense, gender identity cannot exist.
- People interpret this viewpoint in different ways. Some may adopt it from hurt that has been caused to them by others, others may recognise that there are also more deep-seated elements, but for the safety of women these must be blocked or suppressed.
- For many the imposition of any deeper sense of gender identity, including transgender identity, is an expression of male power over women, and thus must be denied.

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## CONSEQUENCES

- In the previous presentation we saw that motives and management methods for each version are in total opposition: so that what one side sees as coercion and enforcement, must almost by definition, be interpreted as compassion and understanding by the other.
- The Professional Institutions diagnose transgender conditions as personality variations that are *“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”*.
- Professional approaches, which give children the freedom to explore their sense of gender identity give them the ability to find it... they do not give them the freedom to choose it<sup>95</sup>, are anathema to gender-critical groups and to others who diagnose these as perversions instead. For these groups giving this freedom of exploration simply feeds the desires of perversion and disruption, and that leads to a runaway drive.



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## INTERPRETATIONS

- Confining definitions of gender identity to the gender role alone forces people to identify the motives of male to female transsexuals in certain ways. Some state that male to female transsexuals are males who cannot compete successfully as men in male society, and as women they want to exert power over women instead<sup>96</sup>. For others, it is the drive for a femininity which enforces gender stereotypes, and that must be denied.
- However, drives for power or femininity or do not provide these driving forces. Differing rates of neural maturation and different aggression patterns between men and women provide them instead. Pre-natal variations, such as gene expression (not genes), endocrines, neural maturation rates, aggression potentials etc permit initial triggers.
- Both gender and sexual identities are secondary characteristics, which need interaction with others to form, so neither can be created before birth.

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## GENDER AND BIOLOGY

- Although typical male and female patterns of behaviour on average differ greatly considerable overlap occurs. For most people behaviour and biology agree with each other, so that the only awareness that people have is the deep-seated nature and the hidden but high levels of intensity of belonging to a particular gender that are created.
- The great majority form core gender identities which match biological sex, but some do not. The massive transformations in neural capabilities before the age of three years then lock these in place so continuities of identity are created
- The same processes apply to everyone. For transgender people this harmony is broken, and the result is often a continuing and irreconcilable conflict which may be felt from the earliest years. For gender-critical groups to sustain their arguments all of these processes, with the intense levels of conflict with their gender roles, must be denied.

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## ATTRITION AND ALIENATION

- For many transgender people, even if they could not at first put a name to it, the discomfort with gender identity has been present from their earliest memories.
- Attempts to suppress or deny this often catastrophically fail, since there is nothing to replace this identity, and that leaves a vacuum inside. The more this is fought the stronger it becomes. That is also why methods of management appropriate to personality variations and not disruptions must be applied
- It is also why approaches such as “*Conversion Therapy*” or “*Reparative Therapy*” are so disastrous, for they simply reinforce what transgender people have been trying to do for themselves, without success often for many years, and the guilt that is heaped on transgender people when that fails can be enormous, not least because of the misdiagnosis that has been applied.

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## QUESTIONS

- We have considered the consequences of misdiagnosing transgender conditions and gender and sexually variant conditions more generally. Some transsexuals describe themselves as having been “born into the wrong body, but that is a consequence of life’s experience and a sense of belonging, rather than a reference to biological sex.
- How do you counteract claims by gender-critical groups who try to impose a “*Gender ideology*” on transgender people when they incorrectly state that transgender people really do believe that they change biological sex?
- In this section we have seen that misdiagnosing transgender conditions can be catastrophic. How do you conduct an educational programme both inside religious organisations and within society to ensure that the correct diagnoses are made?



***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

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***PART 5: REDISCOVERY***

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## STALEMATE

- Despite interventions by Bentham, Kertbeny, Freud and others, many philosophers, psychiatrists, and practitioners until the 1960's still saw gender and sexually variant behaviour as a sexually motivated perversion or a choice.
- From a Christian point of view there was no incentive to change or re-examine its doctrines, since the continued criminalisation and suppression of all gender and sexually variant behaviour prevented the moral duality being re-discovered.
- That all changed when in the UK same-sex intercourse between consenting adults (in private) was no longer a criminal offence. Those who were prepared to, could see the moral duality being expressed in the ways that gender and sexually variant people could live their lives. A second, and equally important input came from a greater scientific understanding of the origin and nature of these conditions.

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## TRANSFORMATION

- A consequence of these is that attitudes to gender and sexually variant behaviour have changed dramatically since the 1960s and 1970s. Legislation in the United Kingdom, including the 2004 Gender Recognition Act, the 2010 Equality Act, and the Equal Marriage Act of 2013 ensures that full inclusion and equality is legally enforced
- It is now easy to distinguish between two people of the same sex who have a strong heterosexual friendship from those in a loving same-sex partnership by affection alone
- Instead of condemning all gender and sexually variant behaviour as intrinsically disordered sexual acts of grave depravity, these conditions are now regarded by all the major professional institutions on a worldwide basis as natural personality variations within the normal range of development, where people can live their lives in ways that are true to their own identities, and to the highest moral standards that society expects.

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## PERSONALITY VARIATIONS AND DISRUPTIONS

- These transformations also mean that all the major professional medical organisations consider sexual orientation and gender identity to be personality variations that are *“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”*.
- Diagnosing these instead as personality disorders, disruptions or perversions presumes that the driving forces behind them are based on the opposing motives of behaviour and sexual desire. That diagnosis has become the traditional teaching of the Church.
- Unlike the professional institutions, gender-critical groups argue that gender identity does not exist. They consider transgender conditions to be perversions of male homosexuality, thus they misdiagnose them in the same way as the Christian Church.



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## DIAGNOSES

- The identification of these as personality variations means that the search is for self-esteem and self-identity. It is not about behaviour or sexual activity, and they do not harm or threaten anybody else
- This is why the moral duality is encountered. This requires that people who engage in transgender and same-sex relationships which are given in love and conform to the highest moral standards of society should be highly regarded. However, those who seek to break these rules through inappropriate sexual activity and immoral behaviour should very strongly censured for these acts
- Attempt to fight these conflicts do not succeed. All the major professional medical institutions adopt an affirmative approach. This is completely opposite to what gender-critical feminist groups expect... and what they prescribe can be perceived as a threat

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## PERSONALITY VARIATIONS

- Making the correct diagnosis is essential for the motives and methods of management are almost opposite to each other
- If gender and sexually variant conditions are regarded as personality variations, then the driving forces behind them are the search for identity and rejection of what is wrong. Many encounter this discomfort from a very early stage and may describe themselves as “*Being born into the wrong body*”. This is not a biological definition: it is a description of what their earliest memories and experience provides.
- Methods of management should be the same as those associated with personality variations, such as that related to depression... many fight their assigned identities until attrition destroys the efforts they have made

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## OUTCOMES

- This misrepresenting of all gender and sexually variant people is serious
- Trans people are angry because of the enforcement of a diagnosis which presents them as potential predators, which does not match the realities of their existence, treats them as a threat and which they know from their own experiences to be incorrect.
- The demand for the acceptance of same-sex marriage is and, from this perspective must be opposed by those who believe that all gender and sexually variant people are engaged in perversion or disruption, together with sinful sex.
- The reverse applies when these conditions are perceived as personality variations... for that means taking on board all the faithfulness, love, commitment, and union of identities which every heterosexual marriage should expect

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## DISPUTES

- When the contrasts are so great, none of these quarrels can be properly resolved until a way is found to calm the toxic disputes
- To prove their point gender-critical groups must ignore or disregard the impacts of the massive changes in neurological and cognitive capabilities, with the transformations in social interactions, which take place during the first three years of life
- Science and religious dogmas are being used to prove political or social agendas. Conflicting material from the professional institutions and world authorities is ignored<sup>97</sup>
- My own analysis of the situation can be found at [Gilchrist, S. \(2021a\)](#): “*Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People*”<sup>98</sup>:

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## DIFFERENCES

- Traditional Church teaching diagnoses all gender and sexually variant behaviour as perversions or disruptions which are a falling from grace and acts of grave depravity which choose sexual gratification in place of the gift of life.
- Gender critical feminist groups accept sexual orientations as personality variations but consider male to female transsexuality as a perversion of male homosexuality in their attempts to prove that no fundamental sense of gender identity exists
- The professional institutions and word authorities diagnose both conditions as personality variations which arise very early development which cannot be changed either by the person concerned or the predations of others in later life.
- The experiences of today replicate and rediscover those of the first century world.

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## VULNERABILITY

- There are two completely contrasting attitudes found in today's Christian approaches'
- In societies where gender equality is practiced, and experience demonstrates the integrities of loving committed and faithful same-sex relationships, the acceptance of gender and sexually variant people is often complete. Many churches fully accept the validity of same sex marriages and bless these relationships. The reverse occurs in other societies, where gender complementary is socially, legally, or religiously enforced, where traditional teaching is applied, and where access to experiential evidence is denied.
- For most people, it seems natural that gender identity should follow biological sex, since the core gender identity is created before any conscious awareness occurs. This means that gender and sexually variant people become very vulnerable to attack when the understandings of science are dismissed and access to experiential evidence is denied.

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## ACTION

- It is essential that a fully researched and objective view is taken, with no interference of dogma and prejudice when the consequences of misdiagnosing transgender conditions are so great. However, the arguments are now characterised by insults and abuse.
- Unfortunately, dogmas and theology intrude. Gender-critical groups defy or deny the massive neurological advances and changes during the first three years to prove that gender identity is purely a social construct. Also, by misdiagnosing these as personality disruptions, instead of personality variations when the experiences are almost opposite: and that should be readily observed in any informed approach. A similar problem arises when theological arguments are used to defy or deny the same criteria and advances in understanding within the Christian Church.
- The dangers are real. We consider some of these in the following presentations.

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## QUESTIONS

- The transformation in attitudes to gender and sexually variant people has been dramatic. This is largely brought about today by greater scientific and medical understanding, with the everyday experience of how transgender people, and gender and sexually variant people live their lives. Amongst some groups, including sections of the Christian church there is a reluctance to engage in these discoveries and issues. How can the refusal to engage be addressed?
- It has been seen that the condemnation of same-sex intercourse is brought about at least in part through the gender stereotypes and abuses encountered in gender discriminatory and socially divided societies. In societies where true gender equality is sought or practiced the absolute prohibition no longer takes effect. However, that is not the case in societies where gender discrimination or complementarity is socially and legally enforced. The consequences can be very serious. How can this be addressed?



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## ***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

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### ***PART 6: LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH***

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## LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH PROGRAMME (LLF): AIMS

- In November 2020 the Church of England launched the LLF programme intending to engage in church-wide learning together, to listen to one another, and listening to God as part of discerning a way forward for the Church of England in relation to matters of identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage.
- In the foreword to the LLF Resource book the Archbishops of Canterbury and York stated: *“As soon as we begin to consider questions of sexual identity and behaviour, we need to acknowledge the huge damage and hurt that has been caused where talk of truth, holiness and discipleship has been wielded harshly and not ministered as a healing balm... We have caused, and continue to cause, hurt and unnecessary suffering. For such acts, each of us, and the Church collectively, should be deeply ashamed and repentant. As archbishops, we are personally very sorry where we have contributed to this”*

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## LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH PROGRAMME: TERMS OF REFERENCE

- The aim, as the archbishops stated, was to provide radical new Christian inclusion in the Church. This, as they said, must be founded in Scripture, in reason, in tradition, in theology and the Christian faith *as the Church of England has received it*. It must be based on good, healthy, flourishing relationships, and in a proper 21st century understanding of being human and of being sexual.
- An additional Pastoral Advisory Group (PAG) were set up by the archbishops at the same time. LLF's remit was to examine the existing Anglican doctrine in the light of pressing pastoral concerns; PAG's remit was to provide pastoral guidance to meet those concerns *without changing Anglican doctrine*.
- That is where the major limitation occurs: instead of giving opportunities to consider the changes during the first millennium, it bases its arguments and the Christian faith as the *"Church of England has received it"* on the work of Aquinas and the medieval church.

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## LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH PROGRAMME: RESTRICTIONS

- It should be noted that I have always been a strong supporter of the LLF programme.
- The aim the programme states is not to give answers but to engage in church-wide learning together, and to listen to God as part of discerning a way forward for the Church of England in relation to matters of identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage
- Where it has the potential to succeed is in bringing awareness of the reality of all gender and sexually variant people's, lives, beliefs, and aspirations, to ministers, congregations, and lay people in the church, instead of myths and lies.
- But for that to happen this listening must consider all aspects of theology, not just those elements which are as "*The Church of England has received it...*" For this ignores many of the changes during the first millennium in favour of a medieval church.

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## LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH PROGRAMME: LIMITATIONS

- I have made all of my research available to the LLF programme. However, I declined an invitation to be formally involved because of the limitations I saw being imposed<sup>99</sup>.
- It would also be fair to say that the process has not gone smoothly. The Rev Dr Christina Beardsley who represented transgender people on the LLF co-ordinating group, and Sara Gillingham, who represented intersex people, resigned because of communication difficulties with theology groups at a relatively early stage. The Rev Alex Clare-Young who replaced Tina Beardsley has since written about the difficulties he found<sup>100</sup>
- While I know that my own work on the science has been welcomed, and I commend the LLF enabling officer and others for their efforts, I have no evidence that my theological arguments have been considered by any theology group. Despite requests I understand that no theologian who specialises in trans issues was invited to join any theology group.

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## CONTINUITY

- The early Christians never sought to separate from Judaism or to set up a new religion. Therefore, we must expect a continuity between attitudes adopted in first century Judaism and those in the early Christian Church
- In this analysis we have seen that first century Judaism endorsed loving committed and faithful same sex relationships. The only prohibited act in the bible and first century Judaism was male same-sex intercourse on the grounds of abuses and power and sex.
- That continuity is absent in the doctrines and theology presented in the LLF resource book and in the traditional theology of the Church. Instead, the teaching as presented by Aquinas is projected back into the first century world. This is then used to try to justify the current teaching of the Church... Let us take an example.

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## MATTHEW 19:12

- In Matthew 19:12 Jesus declares that: *“There are eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it”*
- In this passage Jesus is expanding on Isaiah 56:4-5. *“For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters”.*
- Today that passage is taken to refer exclusively to voluntary celibacy for the sake of the Gospel message. However, it caused enormous difficulties for the early church.

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## IMPLICATIONS

- The modern reading ignores the widespread endorsement of the act of self-castration as an expression of supreme religious devotion, and the ubiquitous presence of the self-castrated priests of the Goddess cults in Palestine and the first century world.
- Jesus had expanded the statement in Isaiah to declare that those who have instead made themselves eunuchs for the “*Kingdom of heaven’s sake*” are fully accepted into the same fold.
- The statement by Jesus was also very direct, many took it literally and the practice of self-castration occurred well into the Islamic period in parts of the Church <sup>101 102 103 104</sup>.
- Thus, for transgender people and those who had made themselves eunuchs, all that matters is their devotion to the mission of Jesus and to the Gospel message... And this is regardless of any gender transitions or physical changes they may need to make.



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## OUTCOMES

- An equivalent argument on circumcision is made by St Paul's in Romans 2:27-29<sup>105</sup>. A corresponding argument is also made in Saying 53 in the Gospel of Thomas: *"His disciples said to him: 'Is circumcision beneficial, or not? He said to them: If it were beneficial, their father would beget them circumcised from their mother, but the true circumcision in the spirit has prevailed over everything'"*.<sup>106</sup>
- In Matthew 19:12 Jesus included those who had self-castrated as well as those castrated by others. Thus, as it is with the transgressive body of the eunuch in the New Testament which symbolizes the Kingdom of God, and who is charged with bringing its mission to the world, then all transgender people<sup>107 108</sup>, who use the breadth and range of their experiences to embrace and enrich the ideals of their lives, and the Christian Gospel, may engage in these same priestly acts. (Acts 8:26-40)

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## NEGLECT

- There were profound changes in the Christian Church during the first millennium, from a socially powerless church which was the victim of the abuses of power in a dominant society which gave permission for the abuses of sex, into a dominant church which by the end of the first millennium had become the controller of It.
- Little of this is reflected in the resources provided for the LLF programme, not only in relation to eunuchs, but in other parts of the material. For example, the LLF book recognises that there was a physical intensity in certain of the friendships of Jesus
- However, it disregards the evidence from the pairs culture in first century Judaism, with its acceptance of responsible same sex loving acts, also in the wider ancient world where moral distinctions were not made on gender terms but between the noble pursuit of love, and the carnal abuse of sex.

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## MORE ON LEVITICUS 20:13

- Earlier in this account we have seen that Leviticus 18: 22 and 20:13 condemns consensual male same-sex intercourse because of the abuses of honour and power in the enslaving and grossly discriminatory societies of the first century world.
- In the LLF book (p287) it is stated that *“Some have argued that some form of coercion or violence must lie behind the prohibition, but this is not immediately apparent in the text”*. The book states that these laws in Leviticus were meant to create a safe space that protected the more vulnerable and enabled the household to flourish as a whole<sup>109</sup>.
- The condemnations cited in the LLF book are primarily understood to deal with family responsibilities and the protection of family life<sup>110</sup>. Any suggestion that honour killing, and power inequalities might be involved are totally absent in the book.

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## SODOM AND JUDGES

- The story of Sodom in Genesis 19 is discussed in page 283 of the LLF book. It concludes that this story is about honour, violence, power, and the distortion of sex for evil ends.
- The story about the Levite in Judges is about the rape of his concubine by men from another tribe. The next morning, the Levite takes her home, dismembers her, and sends her body parts as a summons to war. The war will wipe out the tribe whose men are responsible for the rape.
- The LLF Book states that behind both texts, the spectre of male-on-male sexual violence is raised as a possibility so taboo that it is never actualised in the text itself yet remains as a testimony to the danger of power struggles. The book concludes that these passages are about threats to masculinity not power. It disregards all other issues of honour, inequality and the inter-tribal abuses of power, hospitality, and sex.

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## AGAPĒ

- A further challenge to traditional viewpoints appears in John 21:15-17 where Jesus uses the word “*agapē*” on the first two occasions, when he asks Peter if he loves him, to which he receives an affirmative but uncommitted response. However, Peter is enthusiastic when, on the third occasion, Jesus uses the word “*phileo*” instead.
- The word “*agapē*” is a direct transliteration of the Hebrew word “*ahabà*”, where it is used in many ways, including passionate sexual contexts to describe committed, faithful, and responsible love between two people<sup>111</sup>. *Phileo* describes an emotional connection or affection that goes beyond acquaintances or casual friendships, without motives of sex.
- One interpretation suggests that, while both Peter and the “*beloved disciple*” (presumed to be John) both loved Jesus, they did so in different ways... Note that this should not be automatically taken to be a “gay” relationship, as very different cultural values applied. We should look at how this word has been used.

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## INTERPRETATION

- The word *agapē* or *ahabà*, is used in passages such as Genesis 34:1-4, Judges 16:4:15, Jeremiah 2:20-25, Jeremiah 2:33, Hosea 4:18 and Hosea 9:1, to describe acts of non-marital sexual love. Passages such as Genesis 24:67, Judges 14:16, 1 Samuel 18:20-21, and 1 Kings 11:1-3 deal with married sexual love. Genesis 29, Deuteronomy 21:15, 1 Samuel 1:4-5, 2 Chronicles 11:21 use the word to describe acts of sexual attraction. The Song of Solomon uses it to describe the outpouring of love in a sexual context. The same word is also used to describe the relationship between David and Jonathan
- The LLF book does not mention the word “*ahabà*”, when discussing the statement by David “*that your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women*” (2 Samuel 1.26). Although the book states in page 180 that this word can be used in many ways<sup>112</sup> the LLF book argues that the only justifiable use is that of strong attraction in the absence of all romance or sex. That is in line with the modern definition of the word.

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## CURRENT INTERPRETATIONS

- In modern interpretations the word *agapē*, is used to represent the fatherly love of God for humans, as well as the human reciprocal love for God. In Scripture, the transcendent agape love is the highest form of love and is contrasted with eros, or erotic love, and philia, or brotherly love.
- In John 3:16, a verse that is often described as a summary of the Gospel message, agape is the word used for the love that moved God to send his only son for the world's redemption<sup>113</sup>. It necessarily extends to the love of one's fellow humans, as the reciprocal love between God and humans is also expressed in one's unselfish love of others<sup>114</sup>.
- Many of the incidences where "*ahabà*" is used are descriptions of romantic relationships. In current Christian usage *agapē* defines a divine love without romance and sex. But loving same-sex relations occurred in Judaism with intercourse the only prohibited act.

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## CHANGES IN MEANING

- Of course, the meaning of words can change with time. In the Epistles, Paul compared marriage between men and women to that of Christ and his Church<sup>115</sup>.
- The standard Christian interpretations argue that both phileo and agape have no sexual content. This is indicated in paragraph 3 of the encyclical letter on Christian Love, “*Deus Caritas Est*”, by Pope Benedict. Here, agape is described as. “*Ascending Love*” and eros as “*Descending Love*”<sup>116</sup>. By failing to take account of these changes Pope Benedict forces a New Testament meaning onto an Old Testament word.
- Current theology is used to justify that imposition. Thus, the changes in theology which had occurred in the first millennium are ignored and the continuities between Jewish and Christian attitudes to gender and sexuality are destroyed



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## USE IN THE LLF RESOURCE BOOK

- The same approach is taken in the LLF interpretation given to 1 Samuel 20.30 in the story of David and Jonathan *“Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness?”* The LLF book notes that: *“There are several ways to read Saul’s words. They could be a reflection of his anger at Jonathan’s choice of his enemy as a friend, which he would consider both an insult and a wilful refusal of family obligations. They could be an accusation, in a traditional patriarchal culture, of a romantic attachment between the two men, which Saul would consider shameful”*.
- That wording throughout the Old Testament is taken to mean sexual violation. This involves sexual intercourse, not romantic attachments, and there is no reference in the resource book to the dangers of honour killings and the abuses of power in these grossly unequal societies which give rise to abuses of sex.

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## OTHER COMMENTS: PROFESSOR DAIRMAID McCULLOCH

- The constant attempts in the LLF book to prove that the relationship between David and Jonathan was a “*Covenanted Friendship*” without any sexual content is also taken up by Professor Dairmaid McCulloch, Emeritus Professor of the History of the Church and Fellow of St Cross College and of Campion Hall in the University of Oxford. He is also the author of the acclaimed book “*A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*” and a scholar of great international repute<sup>117</sup>.
- He writes: “At page 180 [in the Resource book], they will be spared from the danger of encountering any exceeding (sexual arousal) at all, since LLF disingenuously cuts off the quotation from the verse before getting there. Moreover, that excision occurs precisely in one of the many spotlight text-boxes deployed by LLF in order to discuss a specific crux: in this case the subject of the box is the conundrum of just how sexy David and Jonathan’s friendship was”<sup>118</sup>

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## OTHER COMMENTS: PROFESSOR HELEN KING

- The absence of key elements of history, notably in regard to relevant changes during the first millennium is also noted by Professor Helen King: Helen King is a British classical scholar and advocate for the medical humanities. She is Professor Emerita of Classical Studies at the Open University. She was previously Professor of the History of Classical Medicine and Head of the Department of Classics at the University of Reading
- She writes: *“The absence of history from the LLF book seems very odd when, from the outset, there was a History Thematic Working Group. The bland picture of nothing changing until the 1960s is wrong, and dangerous.... I am not sure what else I could have done during the life of LLF to promote history and to challenge the false impressions being given about progress, about change, and about the past,”*

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## OTHER COMMENTS: SARA GILLINGHAM

- Sara Gillingham was asked to represent intersex people on the Co-ordinating group of the LLF Process. Like Rev Dr Christina Beardsley she resigned part way through the process because of the way she considered she was being treated. She has since left the Church of England
- She writes *“We have created an institution that seeks power and authority but is failing to critically analyse its own privilege... Theologically I was forever put in a position where I had to legitimate my bodily existence drawing on scripture, for I was repeatedly told God made us either male or female, so therefore I must be inherently ‘disordered’ as a result of the Fall. I could draw upon scripture and theological writings on eunuchs, but the reality is I have never questioned that I was born other than like everyone else, in the image of God”*<sup>119</sup>

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## OTHER COMMENTS: ALEX CLARE-YOUNG

- Alex Clare-Young represented transgender people on the LLF co-ordinating group Alex Clare-Young is a transmasculine non-binary Minister of the United Reformed Church.
- In an article on *“Living in love and faith? The construction of contemporary texts of terror”*<sup>120</sup> Alex writes: *“I draw on theory around identity, dialogue, and safety, as well as my own lived experience, to examine the creation of, and responses to, texts of terror in three elements of the construction of and response to Living in Love and Faith (2020). Firstly, I highlight the unequal power dynamics of the LLF process’ membership. Secondly, I critique the use, by Christian Concern, of personalizing argument as a tool wielded against both theology and the individuals whose identities they critique. Finally, I argue that a paradigmatic shift is necessary if LGBTQ+ people are to live in hope, rather than fear”.*

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## THE NEXT STEPS GROUP

- Following the publication of the Living in Love and Faith resources, the Church of England has set up a “*Next Steps*” group to oversee the implementation of the programme. The members of the group are all bishops in the Church of England.
- They are, Bishop of London, the Rt Rev and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally (Chair), Bishop of Fulham, the Rt Rev Jonathan Baker, Bishop of Grantham, the Rt Rev Nick Chamberlain, Bishop of Sherborne, the Rt Rev Karen Gorham, Bishop of Ripon, the Rt Rev Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, Bishop of Warrington, the Rt Rev Bev Mason, Bishop of Truro, the Rt Rev Philip Mounstephen, Bishop of Bradwell, the Rt Rev Dr John Perumbalath, Bishop of Maidstone, the Rt Rev Rod Thomas<sup>121</sup>.
- Importantly, the Bishops state that they are committed to learning using the resources and to listening to what is emerging as worshipping communities across their dioceses

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## INTERACTIONS WITH THE GENDER-CRITICAL FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

- Transgender people are currently the victims of a toxic conflict between those who agree with the Professional Medical Institutions who regard transgender conditions as personality variations within the normal range of development, against the gender-critical feminist groups, and also Church traditions, which see the condition as a personality disruption, paraphilia, or a perversion of male homosexuality, to be more precise.
- We have seen that both the motives and methods of management are almost opposite to each other, and great harm can be done when the wrong diagnosis is made. Will the Bishops now listen to transgender voices and those which science and history presents?
- The current response of the “Next Steps” group has now been to set up a working party to reconsider gender identity and transition<sup>122</sup>, without any thought of considering the changes in theology which have caused the wrong diagnoses to be made<sup>123</sup>.



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## TRADITIONAL TEACHING

- It is useful to be reminded about how the traditional teaching on homosexuality and gender and sexually variant relationships is justified in the Christian Church
- In the Catechism of the RC Church: *“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”*.<sup>124</sup>
- 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 choose 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”*.



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## FAILURE

- The howling gap in the Living in Love and Faith programme is the failure to deal with the paradigm shift and the dramatic changes which took place in the first millennium
- The aim, as stated by the archbishops, was to provide radical new Christian inclusion in the Church. This, they said, must be founded in Scripture, in reason, in tradition, in theology and the Christian faith “*as the Church of England has received it*”.
- It might be argued that the terms of reference: “*as the Church of England has received it*” set by the bishops precluded any consideration of the changes in the first millennium.
- By relying on tradition and by ignoring these key changes, just as though they did not happen, imposes doctrines and conclusions which do not reflect or express what Jesus taught. **Instead, they are the doctrines and disciplines of a medieval Church.**

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## IMPARTIALITY

- In their foreword the archbishops promised that the LLF programme should offer up ways of creating radical new inclusion for LGBT people in the Church of England
- An enormous amount of work has gone into the impartial examination of the scientific, social, historical, and experiential evidence available. I commend all those who have been involved in these elements and regard this as world class work
- Regrettably I do not find the same degree of impartiality in the theological studies. I also note that despite being requested, as I understand there was little or no representation of scientific, social historic and experiential expertise on the theology groups. When world recognised experts also challenge this impartiality there must be serious concern. I conclude that a book and programme which presents itself as an impartial study is instead pursuing an agenda which defends the traditional teaching of the Church.

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## CONSEQUENCES

- Given the fact that the traditional Church teaching is based in tradition, the Church's interpretations of Scripture, and not the words of Jesus, it is surely inexcusable that the changes in Christian understanding during the first millennium are so ignored.
- In their introduction to the Living in Love and Faith programme, the archbishops said; *"We have caused, and continue to cause, hurt and unnecessary suffering. For such acts, each of us, and the Church collectively, should be deeply ashamed and repentant. As archbishops, we are personally very sorry where we have contributed to this"*
- Many have welcomed Pope Francis', welcome for LGBTI people but, whatever the intention, for as long as both Churches continue to misdiagnose these conditions, the condemnations will continue, and these statements become mere platitudes instead.

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## QUESTIONS

- A major objective of the Living in Love on Faith Programme is to create understanding and acceptance for gender and sexually variant people in place of myths, hatred and lies. A great deal of high-quality material has been created for this purpose, stories of individual experiences are available on video and in the book, and study material for individual churches and others to use have been provided. Many of these are of great value. Have you participated in any of these and how useful and informative have you found the courses and/or the LLF resources to be?
- In their foreword to the LLF Resource book the Archbishops of Canterbury and York stated: *“As soon as we begin to consider questions of sexual identity and behaviour, we need to acknowledge the huge damage and hurt that has been caused where talk of truth, holiness and discipleship has been wielded harshly and not ministered as a healing balm”*. With this theology how well can the LLF programme succeed in its aim?



***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

***Susan Gilchrist***

***PART 7: ATTACKS***

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## CONTEXT

- Present day attacks on transgender people come mainly from two quarters, one is from traditional Christian interpretations of theology, the second is the attacks by mainly gender-critical groups
- Both groups may believe that they are supporting transgender people according to their own precepts. That is why total objectivity and impartiality is required in any analysis
- Both approaches interact strongly with each other, and that is why they are considered together in this presentation
- In it I begin by considering mainly religious issues. I then go on to consider from a scientific and secular point of view how gender identity develops for all people, including transgender people, and the interactions which occur.

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## CHALLENGES FROM GHANA

- In 2021 the Ghanaian parliament has put forward a bill which claims to promote “proper family values”. Gay sex is already punishable in the West African nation with a prison term of three years. The bill seeks to increase jail terms to up to a decade and force some to undergo “*conversion therapy*”, where attempts are made to change people's sexuality. It also makes cross-dressing and public displays of same-sex affection punishable by fines or detention, and it makes the distribution of material deemed pro-LGBT by news organisations or websites illegal. The bill is supported by the Anglican Bishops in Ghana.
- The Archbishop of Canterbury has said he is “*gravely concerned*” by the proposed law in Ghana, which would impose harsh penalties on the LGBT community but for as long as the Church which he represents continues to diagnose gender and sexually variant conditions as personality disruptions, his moral condemnations are lost<sup>125</sup>.

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## POPE FRANCIS

- The contradictions between the theological and scientific perspectives were brought to light in a Press Conference which followed a visit of Pope Francis to Georgia<sup>126</sup>. In it a reporter asked Pope Francis: *“What would you say to someone who has struggled with their sexuality for years and feels that there is truly a problem of biology, that his aspect doesn't correspond to what he or she feels is their sexual identity”*
- In his reply: Pope Francis said: *“I have accompanied people with homosexual tendencies, I have also met homosexual persons, accompanied them, brought them closer to the Lord, as an apostle, and I have never abandoned them.... What I said is that wickedness which today is done in the indoctrination of gender theory... One thing is that a person has this tendency, this condition and even changes their sex, but it's another thing to teach this in line in schools in order to change the mentality. This is what I call ideological colonization”*.



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## STATEMENTS

- In August 2016 Pope Francis also stated: *“Its ‘terrible’ children taught they can choose gender”*<sup>127</sup>. He also said there were powerful institutions which funded the spread of *“gender theory”* in schools. He told 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”*. Pope Francis has also been quoted in a book, saying that *“gender theory”*, like nuclear weapons, is a danger to humanity<sup>128</sup>. Pope Benedict had previously 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 choice”*.<sup>129</sup>
- As one might expect Pope Francis is defending the traditional teaching of the Church by identifying transgender conditions, and gender and sexually variant conditions, as personality disruptions instead of personality variations<sup>130</sup>. Any moral duality is ignored.

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## CONTRADICTIONS

- Pope Francis is also citing traditional Church teaching which sees these as disruptions of the divine law. Both the Catholic Church and the gender-critical movements see these being driven by behaviour and desire, where predation and dangers to others are involved. These involve choice and only become established much later in life<sup>131</sup>.
- However, the professional institutions see these conditions as personality variations, the core elements of which become essentially unchangeable very early in life. They see these searching for identity and the rejection of what is wrong: It is not a choice<sup>132</sup>.
- The motives and management methods for each interpretation are in total opposition. This creates fierce disputes: for what one side sees as coercion and enforcement, must almost by definition, be interpreted as compassion and understanding by the other. This is why it is essential for the correct diagnosis to be made.

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## GENDER IDEOLOGY

- Professional approaches which give children the freedom to explore their sense of gender identity give them the ability to find it. They do not give them the freedom to choose it.
- Pope Francis instead interprets “*gender ideology*” as giving children that freedom of choice. What Pope Francis is condemning is not just a false “*gender ideology*”. He is also ignoring the clinically accepted methods of management and the treatment of personality variations which are recognised throughout the world
- These take an affirmative approach which enables people to discover self-identity, self-respect, and self-esteem, and to develop strategies needed to deal with them... and not approaches based on denial and suppression, which leads to the imposition of trauma, guilt, and the desperation which destroys many lives.

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## PROFESSIONAL APPROACHES

- The American Psychiatric Association regards affirmative treatment and management as the only legitimate approach for managing transgender conditions.
- This same viewpoint is taken, for example by the British Royal College of Psychiatrists, the British Psychological Society, and parallel United Kingdom organisations. Corresponding positions are taken by the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association who have released statements which are equally as strong.
- Each of the major medical organizations across the UK has signed a memorandum of understanding which very strongly condemns any attempt to try to '*cure*' gender and sexually variant people, and that is endorsed on a worldwide basis<sup>133</sup>.

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## WORLDWIDE CONSENSUS

- Other international organizations, including the World Health Organization have followed. All of these are signatories to the World Professional Association for Transgender Health standards, which provides the consensus view.
- We have seen that, giving children the ability to explore their gender identity enables them to find it. It does not give the freedom to choose it. While a great majority of children do find that they identify with their biological sex, a minority will not, and the hurt, guilt and self-loathing created may have a very harmful effect. The great trauma, guilt, and the high rates of attempted suicide in young transgender people is not caused by giving children freedom to explore it: it is caused by its denial instead.
- That rings alarms in those who take the opposite view, I examine these in: Gilchrist, S. (2018c): *“The Safeguarding of Transgender Children”*<sup>134</sup> also in Gilchrist, S. (2017). *“No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice, it need not follow biological sex”*<sup>135</sup>.

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## MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS

- Regardless of any diagnosis, any affirmative approach must be adequately tested before undertaking any medical, surgical, or other life changing physical intervention<sup>136</sup>. Not to do so is unacceptable on any grounds.
- The administration of puberty delaying hormones is a topic that is hotly contested and depends on the diagnosis that is made. Those who consider that these conditions are personality disruptions argue that nothing should be administered before people are able to make an informed choice, around the age of eighteen years.
- Those who regard these conditions as personality variations argue that these may be administered at an earlier stage to calm the trauma and rejection that often has existed from early childhood, also to delay irreversible actions, and to keep the options for successful transition open so that a fully considered decision can be made.

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## GENDER OR SEX?

- At the heart of this dispute is the disagreement over the origins and nature of gender identity. The gender-critical groups argue that it is a social construct and deny that any deep-seated gender identity exists. The Professional Institutions, World Authorities and the clinical consensus instead argue that the core or basic elements lie at the heart of the personality that is created, and it is one of the first elements of personality to be formed. Conflicting methods of management are required.
- The stages in gender identification are important. Children first become aware of gender around the age of two years, but they do not start to form strong gender stereotypes or respond to social implications until around the age of three years. However, children do not develop an adequate “*Theory of Mind*”<sup>137</sup> until about the age of four years. This enables children to “*stand outside themselves*” and to examine what has occurred. It also means that previous development stages are hidden from view

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## AWARENESS

- For most people there is no awareness of these earlier processes, and no perceptions of these early conflicts between gender identity and what the body expects. Gender identity is presumed to be determined entirely through social constructs arising from associating with the gender role, therefore the earlier development processes are hidden or ignored. This means that the gender-critical movements can use this lack of awareness to deny that any meaningful changes occur during the first three years.
- Some transgender people describe themselves as “*Being Born Into the wrong Body*” but this is a product of experience and earliest memories. Few if any believe that we literally change biological sex. Terms like “*Gender reassignment*” are usually used. This is a product of initial development processes, where a profound sense of identity is created before later behavioural implications come into effect. It also means that the forces which drive early development are those of gender and not sex<sup>138</sup>.



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## GENE EXPRESSION

- Males have XY chromosomes, Females have XX chromosomes, but to be effective, genes must be switched on.
- That is why genes alone are not sufficient. People With Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome develop physically as females, they integrate fully into society as women, but have XY chromosomes, and they may not discover that something is unusual until menstruation fails to occur. Babies born with cloacal exoplasty but who are immediately reassigned to a more cosmetically conventional gender appearance often experience considerable discomfort with the gender identity assigned to them: even when they are completely unaware that this had occurred.
- This indicates that there are other conditioning factors which lead to the development of gender identities. These include endocrines and different neural maturation rates. Now surgery is often deferred until the child decides<sup>139</sup>

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## EARLY NEURAL DEVELOPMENT

- The development of gender or sexual identities requires interaction with others. This means that neither identity can form before birth. However, studies on masculinity and femininity, show that considerable overlap occurs even though male and female attitudes on average, including on aggression, respond very different ways.<sup>140 141</sup>
- Since the 1960's, neurological studies have shown that early development takes place in a very strongly pro-active, contagious, and self-reinforcing manner. This is to the extent that *"the foremost challenge to be explained is not about how learning develops but about but how this process can be controlled and inhibited for constructive effect"*<sup>142</sup>
- The contagion and the self-reinforcing nature of these early forces mean that once development starts in a particular direction it can be difficult to stop. Girard, Dawkins, Gallese, and others showed from the 1960's onwards that the momentum created is so great that only a small trigger is required, and the evidence for this may later be lost<sup>143</sup>

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## NEURAL MATURATION

- The pre-frontal cortex, the part of the brain primarily responsible for reasoning and understanding is very primitive at birth. The number of neural connections within it grow rapidly from a small value to reach a peak around the age of three years. Those which are most used grow stronger, those which are least used die back. The total number of neural connections<sup>144</sup> drops to about half this peak value when adulthood is reached
- Up to the age of about two years there are key peak periods of neural development. Capabilities which are not stimulated at the peak time become permanently lost. In my own work I show that the same applies to personality and identity, therefore core gender identities for everyone first form during these peaks, and the same way, so that future changeability is lost<sup>145</sup>. By mapping the endocrinal, physiological, and psychological changes over these first three to four years I show that the creation of the core gender identity is a dynamic process, and that it need not follow biological sex.

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## TRANSFORMATION IN NEURAL CAPABILITIES

- This is not a steady process. Around the age of one and a half to two years a rapid and wide-ranging transformation in neural co-ordination and reasoning abilities takes place.
- It has been described by various investigators as the time when the brain “*lights up*”. Neural activity, which was previously localised in nature rapidly spreads, distant areas of the brain become connected, and networks between the two hemispheres develop.
- There is an explosion in language abilities and cognitive capacity. Before this time, the pre-frontal cortex of the brain had been in a relatively undeveloped state; but that rapidly changes: Significantly, for the first time, the pre-frontal cortex of the brain can start to function effectively as a single co-ordinating unit. The existence of a close correlation between the development of language capabilities and a child’s first awareness of what gender means has been noted by different key investigators.

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## COGNITION AND CONTINUITY

- The major changes in neural processing during these early years, the peak periods of neural development, the rapid growth of the neural interconnections and their subsequent pruning, together with the knowledge that to have the greatest effect, the cognitive and mental advances must also coincide with these early peak periods, all describe a brain which is tuning itself to its environment.
- Babies learn enormous amounts before the transformation in cognitive capabilities around the age of one and a half to two years. That is likely to explain the later changes in learning abilities since cognition gives abilities to reason between cause and effect
- What is most notable is that all of these transformations are age dependent. This provides a basic continuity of personality and identity which, unless dementia or physical brain injury intervenes, lasts for life, and is created by the age of three years.

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## TUNING AND OPTIMISATION

- Development during the first three to four years is therefore characterised by the intense and continuing struggles between the inbuilt, contagious, internally focussed, feed-forward and physiologically driven forces which dominate in infancy against the controlling, feed-back and externally moderated processes of cognitive development which take over control in later life.
- In my own research I show that all the physiological, neurological, and psychological aspects of brain development act together at this time to form a finely tuned system in which the maximum amount of individuality, possessiveness, intelligence, and inquisitiveness, together with the minimum degree of energy expenditure are generated. Typical or atypical gender identities can therefore develop and, from a statistical point of view alone it is expected that a proportion of people who have gender or sexually variant identities must be created without requiring any external cause.

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## GENDER AND BIOLOGY

- Although typical male and female patterns of behaviour on average differ greatly considerable overlap occurs. For most people behaviour and biology agree with each other, so that the only awareness that people have is the deep-seated nature and the hidden but high levels of intensity of belonging to a particular gender that are created.
- The great majority form core gender identities which match biological sex, but some do not. The massive transformations in neural capabilities before the age of three years then lock these in place so continuities of identity and personality are created
- The same processes apply to everyone. For transgender people this harmony is broken, and the result is often a continuing and irreconcilable conflict which may be felt from the earliest years. For gender-critical groups to sustain their arguments all of these processes, with the intense levels of conflict that creates, must be denied.

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## BIPOLARITY AND TRANSITION REGRET

- This is an area where there is the greatest contention. The professional gender identity clinics use their statistics to report very low rates of transition regret, while gender-critical groups, usually citing individual examples claim that these are very high<sup>146</sup>.
- One area which I believe has not been properly addressed is the strongly bipolar nature of the conflicts. Attempts to fight or suppress these conflicts fail for the reasons I describe, but many or most male to female transsexuals fight desperately against this drive. It is often driven by conviction that *“I ought to be a woman”*: That only translates into *“I want to be a woman”* when these battles are lost. When transition is complete it is not *“being a woman”* that is important, it is the ability to be oneself.
- I use own experience to say that a threshold can be crossed when the conflict seems to disappear. But it never goes away; and may explode with greater force in later years<sup>147</sup>.



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## RIPPON

- The denial that any changes of significance occur during the first three to four years can be seen in the book the: *“The Gendered Brain: The new Neuroscience that shatters the myth of the female brain”*: Gina Rippon, a prominent neuroscientist, argues that unchanging patterns of cognitive processing, social conditioning and passive interactions with others drive development forward from birth<sup>148</sup>
- She dismisses the significance of the early neural changes and the transformations in early learning abilities as *“Whack a mole Myths...”* She states that these are untruths which, as they are so often repeated, people come to believe they are correct.
- Her argument is that the great and lifelong ability for the brain to mould, tune, and reshape itself to fit current conditions does create strongly gendered brains, but that this relies entirely on the social conditioning factors which are active throughout life<sup>149</sup>

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## INTERPRETATION

- Rippon only considers transgender people in passing. Her recognition that the brain becomes a strongly gendered structure and that the motives are about identity, not about sublimated sexual attractions are welcome
- However, as a self-avowed radical feminist, and along with others, such as Cordelia Fine<sup>150</sup>, Rippon endorses the argument that gender identities are determined by social conditioning alone. For most gender-critical feminists, who's views align with Freud, that process starts to take effect from about the age of three years. Rippon tries instead to prove that the same processes deliver the driving forces from birth.
- Many of Rippon's arguments are directed against Simon Baron-Cohen<sup>151</sup> and others. However, the major concern with gender-critical feminist views is that the existence of the core gender identity and the transformations in early learning patterns are denied.

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## INTERACTIONS

- The identification of the “*Core Gender Identity*” as a separate entity arises from the work of Stoller, Money and others in the Johns Hopkins University in the 1960’s. It does not have behavioural implications. Since then, it has been a mainstay of virtually all clinical, medical, and psychological work on how atypical gender identities are formed.
- Their work showed that it had become unchangeable at the latest by the age of three years. However, children do not start to enforce gendered expectations before about this age of three years. From that time onwards the “*Gender Role Identity*” is created, and very strong gender stereotypes may then be formed.
- This means that the gender role identity is an overlay on what has already been created. The overall expression of gender identity combines the two. Thus, the reality of the core gender identity and the early shifts in learning patterns must never be denied.

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## IMPACTS

- The development of the core gender identity is through fragmented and strongly proactive processes. Therefore, different end-stages are reached for every individual. The social pressures which had forced development into a binary trajectory are now much less evident, and many transgender people today identify with a non-binary role<sup>152</sup>.
- For transgender people the core gender identity departs from that predicted by biology, but the gender role identity may not. Many may desperately try to identify with the gender role expected of them. This means that there may be large swings in gender expression and conflicts may only erupt into consciousness after a threshold has been crossed<sup>153</sup>. That can happen during puberty or at any other time.
- Gender-critical groups interpret this pattern simply as gender fluidity. By denying the existence of the core gender identity they also deny the conflicts that exist.

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## CHALLENGES

- People challenge gender stereotypes for many reasons. The professional institutions identify transgender conditions as personality variations which involve the rejection of what is wrong and the search for identity. Gender-critical groups have strange bedfellows in the traditional teaching of the Christian Church.
- For Christian and gender-critical groups transgender conditions are exclusively identified with disturbances to the gender role. The motives are understood to be sexually determined behaviours and desires. They are also diagnosed as personality disruptions, and existence of the core gender identity is denied or ignored.
- Accepting the existence of the core gender identity can considerably strengthen feminist arguments. There are no behavioural implications, and it enables transgender people, and others to argue feminist points of view from a stronger base.

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## PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER AND BIOLOGY

- A common understanding states that the core gender identity is the personal sense of one's own gender. It usually correlates with, but it can also contradict, a person's assigned sex. The identification with the gender role typically matches the core gender identity, but that too is not always right, so gender identity may not follow biological sex.
- Most people are totally unaware of these issues as they happen so early in life. The centuries of criminalisation and condemnation have also hidden all of the experiential evidence... Only the experiential evidence gained from the 1960s brings them to light.
- Pope Francis states that *“biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated ... It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality”*. So, gender follows biological sex<sup>154 155</sup>.

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## ARMAGEDDON

- If Pope Francis was correct in his assumption that children and adults could freely choose their gender, then his fears of an “*Armageddon*” might have more foundation.
- However, the development of gender identity is a strong proactive process where firm and stable gender identities are created, which support family values and family life.
- The intensity of the trauma, often from early childhood, which transgender people face is a measure of the strength, constancy, stability, and intensity of the core gender identities for everyone that are created.
- Doctrines which state that gender identity must follow biology, and that gender variant behaviour always rejects Christian values, greatly increase the trauma that occurs.

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## CHURCH RESPONSES

- The Roman Catholic arguments against the scientific consensus are perhaps best seen in letters by Bishops written to their congregations in the United States. These are by the Most Rev. Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington in “*A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology*”<sup>156</sup>. ([Burbidge 2021](#))
- And another from the Catholic Diocese of Marquette<sup>157</sup> The Marquette Diocese states that “*a person who publicly identifies as a different gender than his or her biological sex or has attempted ‘gender transitioning’ may not be baptized, confirmed, or received into full communion in the church, unless the person has repented*” ([Marquette 2021](#)) .
- These arguments rely on the statement by Pope Francis that “*Gender ideology*” means “*people can choose their gender*”. It does not: exploring it only allows children to find it, for the core elements form very early in life: It does not always follow biological sex<sup>158</sup>.



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## ARLINGTON CONCLUSIONS

- The Arlington letter concludes that the (Roman Catholic) Church teaches that a person is created male or female. No one *“is” transgender*
- It states that to affirm someone in an identity is at odds with biological sex or to affirm a person's desired *“transition”* is to mislead that person. It involves speaking and interacting with that person in an untruthful manner.
- The faithful should avoid using *“gender-affirming”* terms or pronouns that convey approval of or reinforce the person's rejection of the truth (sic.) It states that. *“It is not harsh or judgmental to decline to use such language”*. Under no circumstances should parents seek *“gender-affirming” therapy* for their children...
- There are other elements to consider in this Arlington letter. We should look at a key section in more detail.

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## ARLINGTON LETTER

- The Arlington letter says *“Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to claims that “gender transition” will resolve their difficulties. Long-term studies show “higher rates of mortality, suicidal behaviour and psychiatric morbidity in gender-transitioned individuals compared to the general population.” In addition, studies show that children and adolescents diagnosed with gender dysphoria have high rates of comorbid mental health disorders, such as depression or anxiety, are three to four times more likely to be on the autism spectrum and are more likely to have suffered from adverse childhood events, including unresolved loss or trauma or abuse. Psychotherapeutic treatments that incorporate “ongoing therapeutic work ... to address unresolved trauma and loss, the maintenance of subjective well-being, and the development of the self,” along with established treatments addressing suicidal ideation are appropriate interventions. Gender transition is not the solution”*<sup>159</sup>.

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## COMMENTARY

- The key question to ask about the allegations in this Arlington letter is whether the trauma arises because people are transgender as the letter implies, or if it is caused by the persecution, vilification, and rejection that transgender people face?
- A major meta-study covering a systematic review of all peer-reviewed articles in English between 1991 and June 2017 assessing the effect of gender transition on transgender well-being found that 97 percent of the studies showed that stresses due to gender dysphoria are relieved. Not one of these studies concluded that gender transition causes overall harm<sup>160</sup>
- Thus, the Arlington letter transfers blame from the perpetrator to the victim. This suggests the collusion of Church in the secular scapegoating of transgender people. The letter also cites many of the arguments used by gender-critical feminist groups.

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## GENDER-CRITICAL VIEWPOINTS

- Transgender people are and have been subjected to a great deal of persecution and vilification. These are well documented in many reports<sup>161</sup>. Although all the evidence shows that gender reassignment resolves the distress caused by transgender conditions, it does not remove the continued trauma created by still-continuing attacks.
- The same conclusions are confirmed in a mass of other studies published elsewhere<sup>162</sup>.
- As with the traditional Christian doctrine, the misdiagnosis of transgender conditions by gender-critical groups as personality disruptions, leads to the conclusion that these conditions are driven by subverted behaviour and desire.
- Thus, every male to female transsexual is deemed to threaten women's identities and their safety by the exercise of male aggression, sexual impulses, and predatory attacks

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## ABUSE AND MORALITY

- When we traced the history of Christianity in the earlier presentations, we saw that a moral duality existed in first century Judaism where people who engage in transgender and same-sex relationships given in love and conform to the highest moral standards of society should be highly regarded. However, those who to break these rules by immoral behaviour and inappropriate sexual acts must be very strongly censured instead.
- Women have been victims of social, sexual and gender discrimination for millennia. Identifying transgender people as being driven by perversions, paraphilias, or disruptions, which share the same motives of behaviour and desire, puts them in the same category as anyone who might pursue sexual or social abuse.
- We saw why the knowledge of that moral duality was destroyed in Christian traditions, In the gender-critical perceptions, its existence is also denied

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## REALITY OF GENDER IDENTITY

- Gender critical groups argue that there is no innate, or deep-seated sense of gender identity. Using the work of Judith Butler in the 1990's<sup>163</sup>. Its creation is stated to be entirely due to “*performative acts*”, which is a product of social conditioning alone.
- For other groups, gender awareness begins from the time when a baby starts to separate the self from the other. That is at a very early stage. For most babies gender awareness (in terms of difference) is evident by the age of two years, but children do not start to react to or adopt its social implications until at least three years.
- This means that for gender-critical groups the massive changes and advances in neurological development during the first three years are ignored<sup>164</sup>. That throws all arguments back into 1960's Freudian psychodynamics, when up to three years of age was believed to be a time of seething emotions where little constructive occurs.

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## TRANSGENDER TREND WEBSITE

- Despite the current evidence, and the advances in understanding that have taken place, Transgender Trend states on its 2020 website that: *“There is no scientific basis for the idea of innate deeply-held sense of gender”*<sup>165 166</sup>
- On the advice given to schools on the *“Impact of Teaching Gender Identity to Children”* Transgender Trend states *“Transgender organisations such as Gendered Intelligence<sup>167</sup>, GIRES<sup>168</sup> and Allsorts Youth Project<sup>169</sup> deliver training for teachers and PSHE classes for children in schools. Their teaching is backed by no credible science but has been adopted by government, the NHS, schools, and therapists.*
- The site also alleges that: *“Changing gender is presented as synonymous with changing sex”*<sup>170</sup>. That statement is categorically rejected by transgender people who see any surgical or hormonal intervention as gender affirmation procedures instead.

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## AUTOGYNEPHILIC TRANSSEXUALITY

- *Autogynephilic transsexuality*<sup>171</sup> was a theory put forward by Dr Ray Blanchard in the 1980's and 1990's
- Blanchard proposed that male-to-female transsexuals are either sexually attracted exclusively to men (homosexual) or are sexually attracted primarily to the thought or image of themselves as female (autogynephilic), and that autogynephilic transsexuals seek "sex reassignment" to actualize their autogynephilic desires
- According to this theory sexual orientations are personality variations, and transgender identities are perversions of male homosexuality (the word paraphilia is used)<sup>172</sup>
- Despite being rejected by many mainstream workers; this is the theory which gender-critical feminists use to justify the arguments they make<sup>173</sup>



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## CONTRADICTION

- Autogynephilic theories for transsexuality fit the dogmas defined by gender-critical groups for they presume that no sense of gender identity can develop until the social implications are first understood and are responded to.
- They also hide this fundamental contradiction inherent to gender critical theory<sup>174</sup>.
- If it is accepted in line with professional studies, that an elementary core gender identity arises very early in life and that this is effectively fixed by the age of three years, then the gender-critical feminist approach is invalidated.
- If instead the gender-critical approach is taken to be correct, transgender conditions must then be diagnosed as perversions. paraphilias or disruptions, and the depth of transgender identities is denied.

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## PROBLEMS

- There are various problems with autogynephilic theories. The theories presume transsexuality has a sexual motivation with a personality disruption, while professional studies identify it as the search for identity and a personality variation instead.
- Blanchard only considered male-to-female transsexuals. This theory ignores female to male transsexuals and no equivalent paraphilia for these people has been identified.
- The theory also fails to deal with non-binary roles. and it does not provide adequate explanations for the wide range of transgender conditions that exist.
- It associates transgender conditions with sexual motives, including behaviour and desire, instead of identification and rejection. This identifies all male to female transsexuals as potential threats to women in society.

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## DISCONNECTIONS

- The theories also presume that sexual orientation is determined by genetic factors, and that homosexuality is a personality variation. Transgender conditions are disruptions of this. However, the activating forces are due to gene expression (not directly by genes) and the influence of endocrinal (or hormonal) elements are disregarded or denied<sup>175</sup>
- This autogynephilic theory at the time it was being applied was regarded as outdated and incorrect by other clinicians in the field. The clinic which promoted it was shut down in a hotly contended dispute
- Perhaps more importantly, autogynephilic theories do not match the lived experiences of transgender people. There is a great deal of anger among transgender people over an incorrect diagnosis being imposed upon them for the purpose of preserving a gender-critical approach, instead of protecting transgender people's lives.

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## OBJECTIVITY

- If science is to be used correctly it is essential that all viewpoints are considered
- Therefore, it would be expected that the approaches adopted by the Professional Institutions, World Authorities, WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health) and clinical authorities, would be properly considered, but the existence of these and the arguments they make are dismissed or ignored<sup>176</sup>.
- There is no reference to the “*Memorandum of Understanding*” produced or endorsed by all of the major Professional Institutions in the United Kingdom which condemns “*Conversion Therapy*”. The existence of this memorandum is also totally ignored<sup>177</sup>
- Support groups such as Stonewall<sup>178</sup>, GIRES<sup>179</sup> and others who support the approaches adopted by the professional institutions are virulently condemned.

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## RESEARCH

- Objective research needs experiential evidence to prove it. This is an essential element in validating any study. That must be questioned in this gender-critical approach.<sup>180</sup>
- The use by gender-critical groups of a seminal paper by Joel et al<sup>181</sup> in attempts to prove that gender identity is purely a social construct is directly contradicted by Joel in another paper, written by Joel, Swaab et al, and by other leading researchers who are working directly in the field<sup>182 183 184 185 186</sup>.
- The use of another influential paper by Dhejne and others<sup>187 188 189</sup> in attempts to prove that male to female transsexuals continue have the same propensity to violently attack women as all males, also that the trauma faced by these people arises because they are the agents for their own misfortunes... instead of the persecution and vilification of others, is also vociferously denounced by Dhejne, the lead author of the paper.<sup>190</sup>

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## STATISTICS

- Gender-critical groups attempt to use statistics to prove that male to female activities engage in sexual abuses at the same rate as the overall male population
- This is done by taking the distribution of people in prison for sex offences who claim to be transgender and extrapolating this figure to assume that the proportion of those in prison can be extrapolated to include the whole transgender population.
- Individual cases are highlighted to emphasise the perceived dangers. However, this ignores demographics, incentives, lack of statistical significance, changes in attitudes during the years, errors, and the inconsistencies in extrapolation. This has been challenged in many quarters. Broader studies do not support these claimed results<sup>191</sup>

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## CAMPAIGNS

- The “*Stonewall*” reports documenting discrimination against transgender people, including children, are dismissed as propaganda by gender-critical groups, even though the same results are replicated in many other worldwide studies<sup>192</sup>
- Perhaps the most serious and significant criticism of the gender-critical movements comes from Professor Judith Butler who, in her 1990’s book, provided much of the initial inspiration for the gender-critical approach<sup>193</sup>.
- In a 2021 article in the Guardian newspaper<sup>194</sup> she says: “*The anti-gender movement is not a conservative position with a clear set of principles. No, as a fascist trend, it mobilizes a range of rhetorical strategies from across the political spectrum to maximize the fear of infiltration and destruction that comes from a diverse set of economic and social forces. It does not strive for consistency, for its incoherence is part of its power*”.

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## CLINICAL INPUTS

- These comments by Butler are extremely strong, and it would be good to read her complete article. That can be accessed here: ([Butler 2021](#)). An alternative way of examining these issues is to look at the clinical inputs
- We have already seen that gender critical feminist groups accept sexual orientations as personality variations but consider male to female transsexuality as a perversion of male homosexuality. The professional institutions and word authorities diagnose both conditions as personality variations which arise very early development and cannot be changed either by the person concerned or the predations of others in later life
- Great harm can occur if the wrong management method is applied. The mass of clinical and professional evidence that is available is dismissed by gender-critical groups as the work of “*transgender activists*” and its influence is denied<sup>195</sup>.



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## RECRUITMENT AND REGRET

- For most people the intuitive expectation is that gender identity should conform to biological sex; and that any departure from this is either because of predations, the engagement in sexual abuse or the rewards of inappropriate sex.
- A major allegation made against the use of an affirmative approach by the gender identity clinics and transgender people is that of predation and enlistment to the cause
- Gender identity clinics all report low rates of regret after gender reassignment surgery, but gender critical groups cite very high rates, with individual cases highlighted<sup>196</sup>
- When what one side sees as compassion and understanding is invariably interpreted by the other as coercion and enforcement, and when these early development processes are dismissed or ignored, transgender people come under strong attack.

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## IDENTIFICATION

- At the heart of this dispute is the disagreement over the origins and nature of gender identity. The gender-critical groups argue that it is a social construct and deny that any deep-seated gender identity exists.
- We have seen that the Professional Institutions, World Authorities, and the clinical consensus argue that the core or basic elements lie at the heart of the personality that is created and it is one of the first elements of personality to be formed.
- Using this gender entitlement, it is possible for someone who is male to identify with women from the moment of birth, have a sense of identity and an outlook, behaviour and lifestyle which is in harmony with women, who respects women, and who fights throughout life as assiduously and strongly as any woman for the protection and security of her safety and gender-based rights.

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## DISAGREEMENT

- Applying the same gender entitlement to the second explanation of autogynephilic transsexuality, where sexuality and sexual orientation is still treated as a personality variation but transsexuality which is treated either as a paraphilia, perversion, disruption, or sublimation, turns the same transsexual with precisely the same outlook, from an ally into an opponent, who is then perceived to be erasing women's identities and attacking their hard-won sex-based rights.
- We have seen that if it is accepted that an elementary core gender identity arises very early in life and is effectively fixed by the age of three years, then the gender-critical feminist approach is invalidated. If the gender-critical approach is accepted, then transgender conditions must be diagnosed as perversions. paraphilias or disruptions. Transgender people can then be presented as potential predators, threats to women's safety, pursuing sexual motives, and the reality of transgender identities is denied.

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## SOME PERCEPTIONS: BORN INTO THE WRONG BODY?

- Transgender people may describe themselves as being ‘*born into the wrong body*’, It describes the sense of being trapped in the wrong gender; but this is a truth of memory and experience. Few, if any, believe that we literally change biological sex<sup>197</sup>.
- For all transgender people the search is for identity and the rejection of what is wrong, it is not about behaviour or sexual desire
- The allegation that “*changing gender presentation is synonymous with changing sex*” is a fiction imposed on transgender people by opponents, and by gender critical groups
- Most people consider trans women to be women because of the ways we interact with society, and how we share common interests and concerns. This high degree of acceptance is far more important than any condemnation based on biological sex.

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## ATTACKS

- In June 2021, the Hungarian parliament voted overwhelmingly to eliminate from public schools all teaching related to “*homosexuality and gender change*”, associating LGBTQI rights and education with paedophilia and totalitarian cultural politics.
- In late May 2021, Danish MPs passed a resolution against “*excessive activism*” in academic research environments, including gender studies, race theory, postcolonial and immigration studies in their list of culprits.
- In December 2020, the supreme court in Romania struck down a law that would have forbidden the teaching of “*gender identity theory*” but the dispute still rages on.
- Trans-free spaces in Poland have been declared by over 100 authorities eager to purify Poland of corrosive cultural influences from the US and the UK.

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## MORE ATTACKS

- Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul convention in March 2021 sent shudders through the EU, since one of its main objections was the inclusion of protections for women and children against violence, and this "*problem*" was linked to the foreign word, "*gender*".
- In recent years the attacks on so-called "*gender ideology*" have grown throughout the world, dominating public debate, stoked by electronic networks, and backed by extensive right wing Catholic and evangelical organizations.
- As Butler notes, although they are not always in accord, these groups concur that the traditional family is under attack, that children in the classroom are being indoctrinated to become homosexuals, and that "*gender*" is a dangerous, if not diabolical, ideology threatening to destroy families, local cultures, civilization, and even "*man*" himself.

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## ANTI-GENDER MOVEMENTS

- The anti-gender ideology movement crosses borders, linking organizations in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and east Asia.
- Butler indicates that opposition to “*gender*” is voiced by governments as diverse as Macron’s France and Duda’s Poland, it circulates in right wing parties in Italy, it shows up on major electoral platforms in Costa Rica and Colombia, boisterously proclaimed by Bolsonaro in Brazil, and responsible for closing gender studies in several places, including the European University in Budapest in 2017 before it relocated to Vienna.
- Butler also notes that these reactionary flames have been fanned by the Vatican, which has proclaimed “*gender ideology*” “*diabolical*”, calling it a form of “*colonizing imperialism*” originating in the north and raising fears about the “*inculcation*” of “*gender ideology*” in the schools.

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## UNITED STATES

- Transgender people have been under assault from many angles in the United States. In the past year a record-breaking number of anti-transgender bills have been filed, and more have passed than in the past ten years combined<sup>198 199</sup>
- Attacks by the Roman Catholic Bishops in the United States, as exemplified in the Arlington letter, combined with those of the gender-critical movements, conservative evangelicals, and the far right, are being used to discredit the identities of transgender people and give support to the secular scapegoating that also exists<sup>200</sup>.
- I believe that justification for these condemnations is made using partisan applications of science to “*prove*” a particular cause. For details, see: Gilchrist, S. (2021a): “*Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People*”:<sup>201</sup> and also Gilchrist, S. (2017e): “*Gender and Sexual Malpractice and Abuse in the Christian Church*”:<sup>202</sup>



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## OVERVIEW

- The “*sexual orientation gender identity complex*” lies at the heart of the personality that is created. It provides an initial and basic foundation on which self-identity is based.
- Since sexual identity and gender identity depend on interaction with others neither can form before birth. However evolutionary, physiological, endocrinal, and temperamental, including differences in patterns of aggression provide pre-natal effects
- Gene expression rather than chromosomal composition is the trigger which determines the direction the development of both gender and sexual identities take. A spike in testosterone levels in male babies at the time of birth may give the trigger needed<sup>203</sup>
- Finely tuned physiological, neurological, and psychological facets of brain development create an underlying constancy of personality and identity during the first three years.

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## TRANSGENDER FEMINISM

- Although Butler only considers the gender role, she is resolute about respecting the gender identities that are created. She treats transgender conditions as personality variations rather than disruptions from an original course.
- Accepting the existence of the core gender identity can considerably strengthen Butler's arguments. There are no behavioural implications, and it enables transgender people, and others to argue feminist points of view from a stronger base.
- Many male to female transsexuals have proud histories of supporting feminist movements, many use Butler's work, and have taken leading roles. Contrary to the attacks made on male to female transsexuals which state that they attack their sex-based rights and erase the identities of women, male to female transsexuals affirm the identities of all women through their advocacy of women's gender-based rights.

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## AGENDAS

- There are clear agendas being pursued by various groups
- For gender-critical feminists any suggestion that the repulsive discrimination against women is due to any innate gender difference must be denied: so that gender identity must only be a product of the gender role and is created by social conditioning alone.
- The traditional teaching of the Christian Church since the 12<sup>th</sup> Century regards all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour without exception to be a disruption of the divine order, a falling from grace and the pursuit of improper acts
- To maintain these positions both groups misdiagnose transgender conditions as perversions or disruptions driven by behaviours and desires that are seen to threaten others and attack family life. This can have a very harmful effect.

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## CONVERSION THERAPY

- Attempting to treat transgender identities and homosexuality as though they are perversions, and the results of reward driven desires or lifestyle choices fail because there is no previous sense of gender identity to restore. That leaves a vacuum inside.
- Because there is a bipolar element to these conflicts and because these conditions are driven by rejection rather than desire, some relief can be gained for a time by creating a sense of euphoria which transcends their demands
- This is the approach taken by some religious groups who claim that a “*Cure*” has been found, but that only lasts for as long as the euphoria can be sustained. After this is lost it is not something that willpower can regain for attempts to fight their conflicts simply reinforce the demand.

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## REJECTION

- The problem with many such groups is that anyone who does not conform to their rules of behaviour may be ejected from membership. It is also extremely destructive since their attempts to fight or suppress the conflict drives people deeper into distress
- These people may be told that God still loves them but to be practicing or non-practicing is not the real issue. These acts of rejection become a personal attack of the self-identity of that individual and not of their practice. Whatever opportunity there might once have been to re-join the Church or group, or to keep personal control of their conflict, is either diminished or destroyed.
- The hurt, guilt and self-loathing caused by this can be enormous: this is why making the correct medical diagnosis is so important.

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## MANAGEMENT METHODS

- Defining all forms of loving gender and sexual behaviour as perversions or disruptions has brought the Church to collude with the secular demands of society rather than to challenge them.
- Not only has this collusion reinforced the secular prejudices of such discriminatory societies; it gave, and it still gives religious legitimacy to them. The harm that has been created is enormous. Today transgender people are coming under increasing attack.
- Fighting or suppressing this deep-seated sense of identity leads to the imposition of trauma, guilt, and the desperation which destroys many lives. Taking an affirmative approach enables people to discover self-identity, self-respect, and self-esteem: to develop strategies needed to deal with them, and to make informed and considered decisions about how to live their lives<sup>204</sup>

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## QUESTIONS

- This analysis identifies two elements in the formation of gender identity. The first is the “*Core Gender Identity*”. This is a deep-seated sense of belonging, without behavioural influences being involved. The second is the “*Gender Role Identity*” where social experiences drive the identification that takes place. Transgender issues arise when the core gender identity contradicts the biological sex. However, when no such conflicts arise, people will be totally unaware of the existence of the core gender identity or its effects. Most gender studies and feminist approaches consider that gender identification is confined to the gender role alone. This has led to the attacks and the misdiagnoses of transgender conditions. How should these misconceptions be addressed?
- Gender-critical groups and conservative religious groups both misdiagnose transgender conditions as personality disruptions, for different reasons but in the same way. What are the harms created by this collusion and how should that be addressed?



***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

***Susan Gilchrist***

***PART 8: CURRENT DISAGREEMENTS***

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## ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE BY GENDER-CRITICAL GROUPS,

- A feature of these groups is that many of them very strongly deny that they are transphobic and that they welcome transgender people into their ranks. Debbie Hayton, who is herself transgender, is a prominent campaigner for the gender-critical cause
- A major fear among amongst many women, and not just gender-critical feminists, is that giving male to female transsexuals, greater degrees of acceptance, notably the ability to self-identify, will result in hordes of males, intent on sexual abuse invading women's spaces, and reinforcing the attacks and discrimination that all women face<sup>205</sup>.
- Like those in some religious organisations, many passionately and genuinely believe that they are acting in the best interests of transgender people. These concerns must be taken very seriously, but it does not justify the misdiagnosis that occurs. That level of concern is expressed in the condemnations that Judith Butler makes.

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## BUTLER'S ARGUMENTS

- In her 2021 Guardian article, Judith Butler argues: *“It is not easy to fully reconstruct the arguments used by the anti-gender ideology movement because they do not hold themselves to standards of consistency or coherence. They assemble and launch incendiary claims to defeat what they see as “gender ideology” or “gender studies” by any rhetorical means necessary. For instance, they object to “gender” because it putatively denies biological sex or because it undermines the natural or divine character of the heteronormative family”*
- *“The anti-gender movement is not a conservative position with a clear set of principles. No, as a fascist trend, it mobilizes a range of rhetorical strategies from across the political spectrum to maximize the fear of infiltration and destruction that comes from a diverse set of economic and social forces. It does not strive for consistency, for its incoherence is part of its power”.*

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## CONFLICT

- It is useful to remind ourselves of the conflicts which currently being fought.
- The professional Institutions and world authorities identify gender and sexual variations as personality variations which form and become unalterable very early in life. The core gender identity forms first: this gives a sense of belonging alone. It precedes the gender role identity, and later forms in response to expected roles in society. Incongruences in the former must be managed as personality variations; driven by searches for identity; and rejecting what is wrong. Disturbances in the latter arise from maybe unconscious or sublimated desires, and these must be treated as personality disruptions instead.
- Gender-critical groups refuse to separate the elements and associate the formation of gender identities entirely with the gender role. The management methods totally differ from each other. That contributes greatly to the toxic nature of the conflicts that occur.

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## EARLY FORMATION

- For the great majority of people, the core gender identity and gender role identity will be in harmony. The same processes apply to everyone. For the majority of people, apart from the firmness with which the sense of gender identity is held, there will be no perception whatever of the core gender identity, for this is created before conscious awareness occurs. Contrary to this, the severe attrition, intensity, and strength of the conflicts transgender people face arise because incongruence occurs.
- Pre-natal influences, such as gene expression (not genes), endocrines, differing neural maturation rates, aggression potentials may provide triggers but both gender and sexual identities need interaction with others to form and neither can form before birth. Although typical male and female patterns can differ greatly considerable overlap occurs. The great majority form core gender identities which match biological sex, but some do not. Massive neural advances in the first three years lock these in place.

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## CONSEQUENCES

- Instead of challenging the arguments and views of the professional institutions, gender-critical groups but not most feminists... as is seen on social media, ridicule opposing arguments, dismiss them as the work of “*transgender activists*”, and claim their own analysis gives “*the only credible approach*”. Science is used in attempts to prove that all male to female transsexuals are potentially as great threats to women as every male. Also, that unless disruption occurs gender identity is determined by biological sex.
- Such arguments have been justified by Freudian psychodynamics, where development before the age of three was believed to be a time of seething feelings and little structure was created. Butler perceived that earlier non-directly gender related forces were active, which preceded the creation of the gender role. Traditionally development of gender identity was only believed to start from this age: but that is only the gender role. For gender-critical groups to justify their arguments, all early elements must be denied.

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## EVIDENCE

- In the previous presentations, I have shown how distortions of science in key papers, including that by Joel et al<sup>206</sup> are used in attempts to prove that gender identity is purely a social construct. I show how a biased analysis of another influential paper by Dhejne et al<sup>207 208 209</sup>, and how questionable statistics are used in attempts to prove that male to female transsexuals continue have the same propensity to violently attack women as all males<sup>210</sup>. This includes the allegation that the trauma faced by transgender people arises because they themselves produce their own misfortunes. All of these views are vociferously denounced by the lead authors of these papers. They are also directly contradicted in other publications, see for example the review paper by Joel, Swaab, et al, and those of other researchers who are working directly in the field<sup>211 212 213 214 215</sup>.
- In the rest of this presentation, I will compare Butler's comments with the approach taken by gender-critical groups in the United Kingdom, and with my own work.

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## OBJECTIVITY

- Although most people are simply unaware of the massive neural changes and transformations in cognitive processes during early development, the gender-critical movements actively deny their effects. That unawareness has a profound effect.
- Arguments by gender-critical groups that more scientific study is needed cannot be justified, for their own dogmas demand that the already existing science is ignored.
- In the previous presentation, we have already seen that the defamation of clinical experiences, the disregard of the approaches of the professional institutions, including the Memorandum of Understanding, the deriding the support groups who endorse the work of these institutions, the dismissal of responsible research as the work of “*transgender activists*” and the attacks on the personal integrities of people supporting this work, also preclude any objective approach.

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## DISMISSAL OF EVIDENCE

- It is entirely appropriate for any group to use scientific evidence to justify its approach. Nevertheless, it is important that without exception, all disagreements and arguments are fully analysed, criticised, and subjected to full academic scrutiny. What is most important is impartiality and objectivity. That has not occurred... In the first section of this particular presentation, I will consider gender-critical approaches, in the second section Christian concerns, and in the third section, the impact these have.
- Impartiality is even more crucial when the great majority of the population do not have any awareness of the processes in early development, and it is perfectly reasonable to presume that, unless a disruption occurs, gender identity must follow biological sex. When that belief is already accepted, as Butler argues: It is only necessary for gender-critical groups to set objectives which discredit the approaches of the professional institutions, dismiss the experiential evidence, and deny the clinical research.



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## SECTION 1: REFORM OF THE 2004 UNITED KINGDOM GENDER RECOGNITION ACT

- The 2004 United Kingdom Gender Recognition act enabled transexual people to change their legally assigned gender and their birth certificates, so that for all social purposes, with some key exceptions they may marry and be fully accepted in that role.
- In 2004 transgender people were considered as suffering from a medical condition called “*Gender dysphoria*”. This was then understood as disturbance or disorder. Today transgender conditions are considered as personality variations within the normal range of development. While the requirement for a medical diagnosis could previously be argued for; for these reasons the same arguments cannot be justified today.
- The reform of the Gender Recognition Act proposed removing this diagnosis. It was also made clear that there would be no change to the protections against abuse for all women through any reform of the act. These are instead in the 2010 Equality Act.

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## FEARS OF INVASION

- The 2010 Equality Act had already allowed for the principle of self-declaration. This identifies “*gender reassignment*” as a protected characteristic. Anyone who states that they are seeking gender reassignment is protected by it, they do not need to show proof of intention or medical assessment. Therefore, the proposed recommendations for reform of the 2004 Gender Recognition Act are limited in effect
- Unfortunately, that is not the impression created by campaigning groups. Reform of the Gender Recognition Act is presented as a charter for unreformed males to destroy the privacy of women and invade women’s spaces intent on sexual abuse
- The protections offered under the 2010 Equality Act are ignored. The route to gender reassignment is presented as if it were a “*cafeteria style*” approach. This raises unjustifiable alarm for no invasions have occurred under the 2010 Equality Act<sup>216</sup>. Also, no invasions have occurred in countries where the reform has already been introduced.

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## CONTRADICTION

- In all these cases we see confirmation of Butler's arguments that gender critical groups *"mobilize a range of rhetorical strategies from across the political spectrum to maximize the fear of infiltration and destruction"* for everyone in society... not just in the groups.
- Gender critical groups also face a contradiction since their arguments are invalidated if gender identity lies at the core of the personality that is created, or if its core elements are established before identification with the gender role takes place
- Adopting autogynephilic theories of transsexuality resolves this contradiction: for these argue that male to female transsexuality is a perversion or disruption of male homosexuality driven by sublimated sex. The methods of management of personality variations and disruptions are almost opposite to one another. For those people who look, these are easy to see, and different clinical practices are involved

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## PROPOSALS FOR REFORM OF THE GENDER RECOGNITION ACT

- Transgender people are angry because this theory and its pursuit do not correspond to the realities of their own experiences, it identifies them as potential predators, is discredited by mainstream clinicians, and it continues to be pursued to preserve the gender-critical approach
- In 2017, Minister for Equalities Justine Greening outlined proposed reforms to the Gender Recognition Act to de-medicalise the process, with the principle of self-identification included. One of Greening's successors, Penny Mordaunt, affirmed that the consultation on the Gender Recognition Act would come from the starting place that *"transgender women are women"*
- Most people identify men and women through the ways in which people integrate into society. Many people now see that male to female transsexuals integrate seamlessly into society as women and have a proud history of fighting for women's rights.

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## DENIAL AND BEHAVIOUR

- Studies and surveys also show that a large majority of women fully accept transgender women as women, and as allies in a common cause<sup>217</sup>. That creates more disputes because gender-critical groups deny this definition. As well as denying gender, they declare that men and women must exclusively be defined by their biological sex.
- Motives are also important. Professional institutions diagnose these conditions as personality variations, where the drives are for identity and the rejection of what is wrong. Gender critical groups define these as being driven by behaviours and desires
- Advances in understanding have transformed attitudes to all gender and sexually variant people from a situation where all gender and sexually variant behaviour regardless of motive was subject to very severe penalties, including death, to one where full gender equality and same-sex marriages are accepted today.

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## FALSE BELIEFS

- A threshold is crossed when science begins to be manipulated to attempt to prove a particular dogma, doctrine, or objective, instead of taking an objective approach
- When it succeeds it creates false realities which people can be persuaded to believe in. When this is established, it gives grounds for greater falsehoods to be created. These arise from fears of the other, rather than the realities which an opposing side enacts.
- That occurs in the imposition of a so-called “*gender ideology*” enforced on transgender people by Pope Francis and the gender-critical groups. This alleges that transgender believe they “*change biological sex*”, or “*choose gender*” when it is far from the truth.
- The worst possible response is for transgender people to respond with equally virulent attacks for that simply increases the false belief that has already been created.

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## ESCALATION

- This cycle of misinformation is repeated with growing intensity, creating self-reinforcing patterns of abuse and toxicity, which results in tribal violence in many parts of the world
- This is of even greater concern when governments become involved in promoting the same strategies. In the previous sections we see how this is used to justify extreme attacks on transgender people and gender and sexually variant people more generally.
- A standoff is presently being encountered between the present United Kingdom Conservative government and the United Kingdom Women and Equalities Parliamentary Select Committee. Since taking office the present United Kingdom Government has disbanded key consultative groups which could advise them on transgender and LGBT issues, and government ministers have failed to liaise with the Women and Equalities Parliamentary select committee.

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## STANDOFF

- The current standoff relates both to the reform of the Gender Recognition Act and the proposals to introduce legislation to ban conversion therapy
- A Parliamentary Report published by the Women and Equalities Committee on the 21 December 2021 declared that the gender recognition process is urgently in need of reform, that the failure to reform it is causing real distress, and it strongly criticised the government for its failures to act on the process<sup>218</sup>
- In a further article in the Guardian, Caroline Noakes MP, a Conservative Member of Parliament and the Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee asks: *“Why am I being abused for trying to improve the gender recognition process?”*<sup>219</sup>
- There is also concern about bias in the consultation papers issued by the government



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## DOCUMENTS

- On the 16<sup>th</sup>. July 2020, shortly before a key parliamentary debate on gender recognition, unannounced changes were made to the briefing paper on “*Gender Recognition and The Rights of Transgender People*”, (number 08969) in the House of Commons Library. In this new revised document virtually all reference to the protection of transgender children against bullying in schools was left out. Instead of regarding the correct application of hormone therapy as reversible, assertions alleging the dangers of it were made. Both changes were in line with the demands of gender-critical groups<sup>220</sup>
- On the 3 July 2018, the UK Government Equalities Office (GEO) had previously launched a public consultation on reforming the 2004 Gender Recognition Act<sup>221</sup>. The results were analysed by Nottingham Trent University. They showed a clear majority in favour of adopting self-identification and reform of the act. The results were also checked against skewing by actions of pressure groups. No distortions were found

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## OUTCOMES

- On the 22 September 2020 The Minister for Women and Equalities, Elizabeth Truss, issued a written statement to parliament saying: *“it is the Government’s view that the balance struck in [the Gender Recognition Act (GRA)] is correct, in that there are proper checks and balances in the system and also support for people who want to change their legal sex.”*<sup>222</sup> She made it clear that the Government will not change the criteria in the GRA for legal gender recognition, meaning that a system based on self-identification is not being introduced<sup>223</sup>.
- Other than to make the process simpler, there was a great deal of anger about the refusal to implement any change. In a letter to the Chair of the Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee<sup>224</sup>, Liz Truss, the government minister for Equalities defended this refusal by saying that *“The consultation was just that, a consultation to gain further insight, and not a referendum on what changes should be made”*.<sup>225</sup>

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## EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REMIT

- As a quasi-statutory non-departmental public body established by the Equality Act 2006, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) operates independently<sup>226</sup>. It aims to be an expert and authoritative organisation that is a centre of excellence for evidence, analysis and equality and human rights law.
- That demands it must take a truly objective attitude. This means it must take account of gender critical viewpoints, but it must also take full account of the viewpoints of the professional institutions, worldwide authorities, the full range of scientific analysis, experiential evidence, clinical, medical, and psychological expertise.
- That demands the full assertion of the independence of the EHRC from government and other bodies, and that it presents a comprehensive and impartial account of the understandings that exist.

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## ANALYSING THE EHRC APPROACH

- If we are to further examine the approach that the Equality and Human Rights Commission has taken, there are three key EHRC documents to consider: these are:
- Morgan, H., Lamprinakou, C., Fuller, F., Albakri, M.: (2020): *“Attitudes to Transgender People August 2020”*: Equality and Human Rights Commission”: Published August 2020<sup>227</sup>
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022): *“Response submitted to UK Government consultation: Banning conversion therapy”*: 26 January 2022<sup>228</sup>
- EHRC (2022): *“Protecting people from sex and gender reassignment discrimination”* EHRC 4 April 2022<sup>229</sup> ([EHRC 2022](#))

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## TRANSFORMATION

- On the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published two statements asking government bodies to hold back civil rights reforms affecting trans people. One was sent to the Scottish Cabinet, telling them to pause plans for reforming the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) for transgender people alone, citing the "*polarised debate*", and a lack of "*detailed consideration*" of the issues<sup>230</sup>. This is also despite the latest Scottish Government Reports<sup>231</sup>
- Two years beforehand, before the present chair was installed by the Conservative and Unionist party, the EHRC had issued documents which directly contradicted its present statements. These had contained clear recommendations in favour of reform of the GRA and recommended that current regulations should be greatly reduced<sup>232</sup>.
- This transformation raises further serious questions about the impact of political appointments on the impartiality of the Commission and the objectivity of its approach.

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## ALLEGED LACK OF EVIDENCE

- The current 2022 EHRC statement now declares *“Given the documented lack of evidence about conversion therapy in relation to being transgender, recent attention and litigation on the implications of medical and surgical transition, and the ongoing NHS-commissioned independent review of gender identity services for children and young people led by Dr Hilary Cass OBE, we consider that these matters require further careful and detailed consideration before legislative proposals are finalised and the implications of them can be fully understood”*.
- This EHRC statement is unequivocally condemned by almost every group involved in the care of transgender people<sup>233</sup>. Details of these condemnations and the evidence available is given in the notes to these presentations. The great majority of this evidence comes from academic sources, world authorities, professional bodies, clinical and experimental evidence, which the gender critical groups dismiss or ignore<sup>234</sup>.

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## ATTITUDES TO TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

- In 2020, the previous EHRC report on “*Attitudes to Transgender People*”, showed that on the whole transgender people are well received in the United Kingdom. About three in four (76%) respondents said that prejudice against transgender people was always or mostly wrong. A further 17% thought it was sometimes wrong while 5% said it was rarely or never wrong.
- However, it only takes a minority of the population to attack. A Stonewall report showed that in one year, 41% of transgender people have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity<sup>235</sup>. These figures are not unique, they are replicated in numerous studies carried out by many organisations on a worldwide basis.
- Neither of these 2 reports contradict. They survey different populations. Even though transgender people are mostly well accepted; they stay one of the most vilified groups.



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## EHRC DEFINITION OF TRANSGENDER

- In 2011 the EHRC had endorsed its own description of “*transgender*”. It said: “*People who are transgender have gone through all or part of a process (including thoughts or actions) to change the sex they were described as at birth to the gender they identify with or intend to. This might include by changing their name, wearing different clothes, taking hormones, or having gender reassignment surgery*”<sup>236</sup>.
- Note that this describes a journey, not an identity. There is nothing about whether transgender conditions arise because of personality variations or disruptions. That is crucial in any definition because it fixes the management methods that must be applied
- It also presumes that the only valid end goal of the process is gender reassignment. That is totally out of date. Many transgender people now identify as non-binary... and management methods appropriate to personality variations must also be employed.



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## NON-BINARY TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

- Today many transgender people are refusing to accept or identify themselves with a male or female binary gender identity or role. However, as we have seen, the current advice given by the EHRC refuses to define transgender, or to acknowledge the validity of non-binary gender identities. The gender-critical feminist groups deny the existence of any fundamental sense of gender identity, or of being transgender, by defining all gender variant identities and behaviour as disruptions or disturbances of sex.
- The Public Sector Equality Duty of the UK Equalities and Human Rights Commission, requires the EHRC to ensure that government and public bodies, eliminate discrimination, advance equality for people with protected characteristics and foster good relations for those who do not<sup>237</sup>.
- In the Equality Act all actions must be individually justified. Excluding everyone from a resource if some people abuse it or by appearance or identity, is not justified in the act.

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## PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

- The current Equality Act states that the Protected characteristic of gender reassignment applies to anyone who is *“proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process or part of a process to reassign their sex”*. There is no requirement for a trans person to have any kind of medical supervision or intervention in order to be protected from this gender reassignment discrimination. A trans person is protected from the moment he or she makes that declaration.
- That is harmful for many transgender people fight never-ending battles between their allegiance to the identity they possess, and their loyalty to the love and commitments they have made. To keep this intact, the first requirement is to create self-acceptance and self-esteem so that conflicts do not explode, and catastrophic collapse occurs. This is the approach the professional institutions adopt. As it stands the current Equality Act requires people seeking this outcome to lie, to be given the protection they need.

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## IDENTIFYING TRANSGENDER

- It should also be easy to tell transgender people apart from others who cross dress or present in the opposite gender. For transgender people the motive is the search for identity and the rejection of what is wrong.
- For most people, defining this term this is relatively simple. Someone who is transgender is someone who has a gender identity which does not conform in whole or in part to that expected by the biological sex
- For gender-critical groups gender identity is presented as a social construct driven by sublimated sexual motives. Therefore, the existence of any transgender or innate or deep-seated gender identity is denied. Under the newly issued EHRC submission on conversion therapy, transgender identities are still not recognised, and in its advice, non-binary people are specifically excluded from the protection of the act<sup>238</sup>.

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## DEFICIENCIES

- Some of these problems are in part due to the legal definitions involved. In the Equality Act 2010, being a man or a woman, is defined as being a male or a female of any age (Equality Act 2010, Section 11 Equality Act 2010, Section 212 (1)). Therefore, according to how gender-critical groups interpret this legislation, biology exclusively determines what is a man or woman. No other is allowed.
- However, most people identify men and women through the ways in which people integrate into society. Many people now see that male to female transsexuals integrate seamlessly into society as women and have a proud history of fighting for the rights of all women. The statement that “*Transgender women are women*” is the definition that many people, including many feminists and transgender people, are happy to use
- Thus: “*Transgender women are not women*”, for gender-critical groups, and the EHRC.

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## UPDATING THE EQUALITY ACT

- Another problem with the 2004 Gender Recognition Act and the 2010 Equality Act is that they only recognise binary roles. Gender reassignment is at one pole, biology and sex is at the other. The word “*transgender*” is used to describe someone on a journey between the poles. Under the Act’s binary remit, no other definition can be used.
- That restriction is no justification for the EHRC or anyone to deny the reality of transgender identities, or to refuse the protection of anyone’s human rights because the condition is not listed as a protected characteristic under the 2010 Equality Act. Yet that is implied by the exclusions in the current EHRC advice.
- If the Equality Act is to meet present needs, then in addition to race, religion, etc, both sexuality and gender identity should be protected characteristics under the act.

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## 2010 UK EQUALITY ACT PROVISIONS

- Major contentions arise because of the rights of access the Equality Act in its present form gives to transgender people to access single-sex spaces, including toilets, refuges, and other areas<sup>239</sup>.
- Section 370 of the act states; *“A provider can deliver separate services for men and women where providing a combined service would not be as effective. A provider can deliver separate services for men and women in different ways or to a different extent where providing a combined service would not be as effective and it would not be reasonably practicable to provide the service otherwise than as a separate service provided differently for each sex. In each case such provision has to be justified”*
- The official guidance to the 2010 Equality Act makes it perfectly clear that access to these spaces must be made on a case-by-case basis, be objectively justified, and be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim<sup>240 241</sup>

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## CURRENT EHRC INTERPRETATION OF THE 2010 EQUALITY ACT

- Despite recent advances, the current EHRC interpretation still states that: “*you are not protected from discrimination unless you propose to change your gender or have done so*”. According to this EHRC directive, you are only protected from discrimination under the 2010 Equality Act if someone who acts against you, thinks you are transsexual, or that you are connected to a transsexual person.
- This new advice states that anybody who seeks to enter spaces usually reserved for women, and is assumed to be a man, is not protected by the Equality Act. However intersex people are covered... by the protected characteristics of disability or sex<sup>242</sup>.
- Thus, you are only protected from discrimination if you genuinely are seeking complete gender reassignment, or someone rightly or wrongly believes you to be transsexual. This means that all non-binary people are excluded from the protection of the act.

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## EXAMPLES 1

- The current EHRC advice gives several examples where it states discrimination would be legally allowed
- Example 1: A community centre has separate male and female toilets. It conducts a survey in which some service users say that they would not use the centre if the toilets were open to members of the opposite biological sex, for reasons of privacy and dignity or because of their religious belief. It decides to introduce an additional gender-neutral toilet. It puts up signs telling all users that they may use either the toilet for their biological sex or to use the gender-neutral toilet if they feel more comfortable doing so.
- The practical effect of this would be to require all male to female transsexuals to use either male toilets or disabled toilets, regardless of their appearance, possession of a gender recognition certificate, or the innocence or appropriateness of their behaviour.



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## EXAMPLES 2

- Example 2: A women's clothes shop has changing areas for customers to try on garments in cubicles. The shop decides that it is not necessary to exclude trans women as the privacy and decency of all users can be assured by the provision of those separate cubicles. However, the advice also permits trans women to be excluded where it is most likely to be *“proportionate to exclude, modify or limit their access where a service provider has limited resources and physical space to alter the way the service is provided”...“in the presence of someone they perceive as male”*.
- Such a requirement is understandable in a public changing area where people change together, but this advice provides no incentive to provide such facilities.
- Also, this advice makes it clear that people are allowed to discriminate against all transgender women on perception alone.

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## OBJECTIVITY

- The original guidance to the 2010 Equality Act makes it perfectly clear that access to single sex spaces must be on a case-by-case basis, objectively justified, and that providing a single-sex service is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim<sup>243</sup>
- What constitutes an objective justification depends greatly on whether you understand, and... in line with the world authorities and professional institutions... that gender and sexually variant conditions are *“personality variations which arise very early development and cannot be changed either by the person concerned or the predations of others in later life”* or personality disruptions, where fears of predation are fostered and attacks on women’s identities are presumed. The latter is claimed to be correct by gender-critical groups, who argue that no other credible explanation exists.
- The two examples cited, and others, are blanket condemnations of all members of a group for the alleged abuses of some, and are based on peer group opinion alone

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## LEGALITY

- No advice is acceptable if it is only based on the views of one pressure group. Objective justification requires a full and impartial assessment of all the evidence available. Discrimination by perception is still unlawful, even if any peer group or other organisation who is doing it innocently believes it is following the correct path. Nor can discrimination against a whole group be justified for the claimed abuses by some.
- Any condemnation of a whole group for the alleged abuses of some, which is based on peer group opinion alone is unlikely to satisfy the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act. The only other escape route is to argue, as is done, is that all non-binary transgender activity or condition is not subject to human rights protection under the Act.
- Discriminating against transgender people on the grounds of identity is the same as discrimination on race, religion, etc. Laws should never be used for this purpose.

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## PROTECTIONS

- It is hardly necessary to describe the gross and sickening abuses and discrimination that all women face. Identifying as women also makes transgender women subject to these, and even more vulnerable to the attacks and abuses that all women face. Therefore, the issues concern women's safety and the side that trans women are on.
- The current protections in the 2010 Equality Act, protect all women; trans women included. They require objective reasons to be given for any exclusion and are based on abuse, not identity. The government has said that these protections will not be changed, and no trans person I know would wish to see these protections reduced. The only changes that trans people would like to see relate to transition. Gender-critical groups who make the claims that trans women want all restrictions abolished, that they attack women's identities, and that they impose the same threats to women as all males, are allegations which insert much of the venom into the present disputes.

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## SENSITIVITIES

- These are issues where enormous sensitivities are involved. While the advice given in the current EHRC document seems reasonable and logical, it ignores the attempts by gender-critical groups to force a diagnosis of autogynephilic transsexuality which has been discredited by most clinicians onto transgender people<sup>244</sup>.
- This theory presumes a personality disruption and sexual motivation. It ignores female to male transsexuals. No equivalent paraphilia for these people has been identified. It also fails to deal with non-binary roles, and it does not provide adequate explanations for the wide range of transgender conditions that exist. It does not match the lived experiences of transgender people. There is a great deal of anger among transgender people over an incorrect diagnosis being imposed upon them with the aim of preserving a gender-critical approach, instead of protecting transgender people's lives.

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## WITHDRAWAL

- I conclude that this EHRC advice is based entirely on the views of those in gender-critical feminist movements who regard transgender conditions as personality disruptions driven by behaviour and desire. Nowhere in it do I find any representations of the views of the professional institutions who regard transgender conditions as personality variations driven by the search for identity and rejection of what is wrong. The motives and methods of management are almost opposite to each other, and considerable harm will occur if this advice is pursued.
- The refusal to provide any meaningful definition of a transgender person, the fears created by the consequent obscuration, and advice which excludes all members of one group for the unproven abuses of some, leads to the scapegoating of all transgender people, and is not acceptable on any terms. I conclude therefore that all of this advice and also, the submission on conversion therapy should immediately be withdrawn.

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## EHRC RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON BANNING CONVERSION THEORY

- This response includes the following statements: *“The consultation document contains no clear definition of what will amount to “conversion therapy” caught by its proposals, nor of the meaning of “transgender” – a term which has no clear legal meaning, is potentially wider than the concept of gender reassignment in current UK law and is understood by different people in different ways”. This is of particular importance given the lack of evidence about conversion therapy in relation to being transgender.*
- *Given this, we recommend that legislation should initially focus on banning conversion therapy attempting to change a person’s sexual orientation, where the evidence and impacts are clearer. Legislation to ban conversion therapy attempting to change a person to or from being transgender should follow, once more detailed and evidence-based proposals are available which can be properly scrutinised<sup>245</sup>.*

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## DUTY OF CARE

- As a quasi-statutory body whose remit is the protection of human rights for all people, it is essential that the EHRC takes a fully researched and totally impartial approach<sup>246</sup>.
- It seems that experiential evidence is being dismissed in these EHRC statements and policies, as well as the scientific consensus adopted by world authorities, and the viewpoints of the professional institutions in pursuit of a gender-critical approach<sup>247</sup>
- Other concerns arise from the ending of government consultative committees on LGBT matters, and standoffs with the Women and Equalities Parliamentary committee<sup>248</sup>.
- The interpretation in this current EHRC guidance excluding all non-binary transgender people regardless of motive, from the protections of the Equality Act, is a failure of the duty of care that anyone seeking protection of their human rights must expect.



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## DEFICIENCIES

- Because it is a quasi-statutory body with a duty to protect equality and human rights, one would have thought that establishing these definitions using clear and objective analysis would be the responsibility of the EHRC itself<sup>249</sup>. Therefore, it is astonishing that the EHRC attempts to place the blame for failing to define the terms “*transgender*” and “*conversion therapy*” on the government consultation process.
- To state that the term “*transgender*” is a “*term which has no clear legal meaning, is potentially wider than the concept of gender reassignment in current UK law and is understood by different people in different ways*”, then to judge it without declaring their working definition allows for obscuration and the misrepresentation of facts
- To my mind, these statements are also major failures of the duty of care required of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the protecting of human rights.

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## USE OF EVIDENCE

- The quasi-statutory nature of the EHRC<sup>250</sup> means that it is crucial for us to challenge the statements which the EHRC has presented to the public consultation on banning conversion therapy. The first repeatedly states: *“Given the documented lack of evidence about conversion therapy in relation to being transgender”*. Using this it argues that the ban on conversion therapy be delayed for transgender people, but that a ban on conversion therapy for lesbian and gay people should immediately proceed<sup>251</sup>.
- The EHRC response also notes that a key element of the evidence base underpinning the current proposals on conversion therapy is the UK Government’s 2017 National LGBT survey<sup>252</sup>. However, a recent government paper *“The prevalence of conversion therapy in the UK”*, published on the 29<sup>th</sup>. October 2021<sup>253</sup> today alleges that there are significant deficiencies in the conclusions of that 2017 survey. The EHRC currently advises caution in using its results. That also seems evident in its submission<sup>254</sup>

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## HISTORY

- It should be noted that this 2017 survey strongly advocated major reform of the Gender Recognition Act and banning of conversion therapies. A government action plan was created. This was strongly supported by the EHRC at the time, but under the present administration that plan was abandoned, and the planned reforms of the Gender Recognition Act are not now to take place.
- The UK government consultation document on “*Conversion Therapy: An Evidence Assessment and Quantitative Study*” commissioned from Coventry University and published on the 29 October 2021<sup>255</sup> is cited only once in the EHRC submission<sup>256</sup>. This states that “*Given the lack of evidence that conversion therapy is effective in changing a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity, its statistical association with negative health outcomes, and the evidence of risk of powerful community and belief*”, demands that the individual is able to give “*informed consent*”, by knowing its implications.

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## EVIDENCE

- However, note that the statement about “*lack of evidence*” in the original report can now be read in the present EHRC response to have an opposite meaning to that which the original statement described. The EHRC presents little evidence. No documentation is cited in the submissions which would prove its allegation that: “*Given the documented lack of evidence about conversion therapy in relation to being transgender*” is correct.
- Nor does allegation this sit well with condemnations by the Royal College of Psychiatrists<sup>257</sup>, the Memorandum of Understanding issued by all the other major United Kingdom professional institutions concerned with transgender matters<sup>258</sup>, the condemnation by the American Psychiatric Association<sup>259</sup>, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health<sup>260</sup> the World Health Organisation<sup>261</sup>, The UN Committee on Human Rights<sup>262</sup> and others<sup>263</sup>, all of whom assert that applying conversion therapy to transgender people is not only ineffective: it can have serious harmful effects.

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## RESEARCH

- The same paper by Coventry University, commissioned by the Government on “*An assessment of the evidence on conversion therapy for sexual orientation and gender identity*”<sup>264</sup> states that the main evidence from research programmes on conversion therapy for gender identity comes only from 4 studies, 3 from the USA and 1 systematic review of international evidence.
- This paper comments on the limitations of existing studies on all forms of conversion therapy, however it agrees that this is the highest possible, given the moral and ethical problems of engaging in truly randomised trials and blind based studies.
- Despite these limitations the report by Coventry University shows that there is a great deal of evidence to highlight the potential harm that conversion therapy can cause<sup>265</sup>.

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## EXPERIENTIAL AND OTHER EVIDENCE

- I have already described how evidence and science is being used in a partisan way in the previous parts of these presentations, and at the start of this part.
- In addition to this research, there is also a mass of clinical and experiential evidence gathered by clinicians, support groups, religious groups, and others who confirm its harmful effects. For a comprehensive review of this evidence see Gilchrist, S. (2021a): *“Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People”*<sup>266</sup>. Also Gilchrist, S. (2020b): *“Responsibility in Transgender Disputes”*<sup>267</sup>:
- Hundreds of religious leaders, including Desmond Tutu and the Chief Rabbi in the UK have called for a total ban on transgender, lesbian, and gay conversion therapy<sup>268</sup>. A recent letter from senior religious leaders following the government’s decision not to proceed with the ban on conversion therapy makes the same point.

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## GLOBAL INTERFAITH COMMISSION 21-22 MARCH 2022

- The 2022 Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT Lives Conference was held in the prestigious Locarno Suite of the Foreign Office. It was attended by over 150 senior religious leaders, academics, and lay leaders from around the world with the help of the Foreign Office to agree some Safeguarding Principles to Protect LGBT+ Lives.
- The conference looked at how this can be done this legally, before then receiving clear evidence of the harm LGBT+ people suffer in cultures and settings that are hostile to them. The principles were announced at 6:30pm on Tuesday 22 March after an Act of Commitment led by the Dean of St Paul's<sup>269</sup>.
- The commission issued a clear statement confirming the need to avoid harm and ban all forms of conversion therapy for all lesbian, gay and transgender people<sup>270</sup>.



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## OUTCRY

- The universal condemnation of the EHRC submission on the banning of conversion therapy, and the raising of awareness of evidence from other sources, had almost certainly meant until the recent government statements denying it, that the banning of conversion therapy for transgender people would be included in the forthcoming bill<sup>271</sup>
- In a letter sent to Jayne Ozanne, the director of the Ozanne Foundation on the 2 March 2022, the Member of Parliament and Equalities minister Mike Freer said that a conversion therapy ban would cover religious practices and all LGBT+ people.
- Government proposals, he said, mean that people “*will still be able to access support and counsel from religious leaders*”, but that any activity “*carried out with the intention of changing a person’s sexual orientation or changing them from or to being transgender will be captured*”. There is still the issue of what “*informed consent*” means.



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## MORE SOURCES

- The Ozanne foundation has published another report by senior legal counsel on recommendations on effectively legislating for a UK ban on Conversion Therapy<sup>272</sup>
- The HRC Foundation has published a survey confirming the crushing condemnation of this practice by the major professional organisations on a worldwide basis<sup>273 274</sup>
- There are many books and articles available where transgender people write about their experiences.
- One book is *“This is my Body: Hearing the theology of Transgender Christians”*. This is particularly relevant to these presentations. Further books in this series provide guidance about supporting transgender people in a Christian context<sup>275</sup>. Other books include: *“Trans Britain: Our Journey from the Shadows”* and *“Heaven Come Down: The story of a transgender disciple”*<sup>276</sup>. Full bibliographies are available elsewhere<sup>277</sup>.

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## WHERE DOES THIS ALLEGATION COME FROM?

- To find the source for these allegations it is necessary to look at certain feminist organisations and gender-critical groups. Transgender Trend<sup>278</sup> Woman's Place<sup>279</sup> and the LGB Alliance<sup>280</sup> are three of the most prominent organisations.
- All endorse the theory of autogynephilic transsexuality to explain the condition. This identifies transsexuality as a perversion or disruption of male homosexuality. Therefore, homosexuality is considered a personality variation and transsexuality a personality disruption. With this theory, transsexuality is then amenable to conversion therapy, but homosexuality is not. And this is the justification their attacks.
- Both autogynephilic theorists and gender-critical feminists believe that gender identity forms by social conditioning alone. That confines their analyses to the development of the gender role. The prior existence of the core gender identity is denied. Therefore, crucial features which occur in the first three years are ignored.

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## AGGRAVATION

- In a June 2020 report, the European Commission classified the legal procedures for gender recognition of 28 European countries into 5 categories based on the barriers to access. The Gender Recognition Act 2004 came second from bottom with "*intrusive medical requirements*", which lag behind international human rights standards<sup>281</sup>.
- The United Kingdom is a member of the Council of Europe, which is responsible for overseeing the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights. When the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe met in January 2022, it singled out a small collection of countries, Russia, Turkey, Poland, Hungary, and the United Kingdom, as the most inhospitable to LGBTI rights.<sup>282</sup>
- This is also when the government public consultation on legally banning all forms of conversion therapy to change gender identity or sexual orientation was taking place<sup>283</sup>

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## CAMPAIGNS

- The quiet withdrawal of documents and their replacement with ones more amenable to gender-critical approaches, the refusal to proceed with reform of the Gender Recognition act, the standoff and disregard of the views of the Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee<sup>284</sup>, the disbanding of LGBTI consultative groups and the selective nature of the evidence produced by the EHRC, all strongly suggest that a campaign is being mounted by the present UK government
- As the government Equalities Minister Liz Truss has power to make appointments to the independent UK Equality and Human Rights Commission. She has since made appointments of people who endorse the legitimacy of gender critical beliefs<sup>285</sup>
- As great a concern as any transgender matter, is the apparent manipulation of science, evidence, and public opinion to enforce any unequal human rights documentation or any partisan approach.

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## ACADEMIC INPUTS

- One of the most prominent academic advocates for gender-critical theories is Kathleen Stock, formerly professor of Philosophy at Surrey University<sup>286</sup>. I examine her approach in my other writing<sup>287</sup> and her condemnation of Stonewall in separate literature<sup>288 289</sup>. While she has every right in academic circles to present a gender-critical argument, I believe, with 600 other academics, that her performance on social media goes far beyond academic probity and it presents a closed mind which seeks to discredit any other view<sup>290</sup>.
- Another prominent campaigner for the gender-critical viewpoint is Debbie Hayton<sup>291</sup>, herself a male to female transsexual. I observe that Debbie has caused a great deal of anger among transgender people by dismissing Stonewall<sup>292</sup> and fellow transgender people who disagree with her as the actions of mobs, activists, and by her ridiculing of personal integrities of those who hold any opposing view<sup>293</sup>.

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## RESPONSES

- Predictably Kathleen Stock and Debbie Hayton have reacted to these statements, and those by Butler, by denying that the United Kingdom is following any fascist trend<sup>294</sup>. However fascist trends develop through the creation of false realities which are built on the selective use of science and or on a partisan or populist approach.
- That pattern is now seen in the disregard of the approaches of professional and world authorities, ignoring the UK Memorandum of Understanding, discounting of clinical experiences, deriding the support groups who endorse the work of these institutions, dismissal of responsible research as the work of “*transgender activists*”, attacks on people’s integrities, impacts of the massive changes in neurological and cognitive capabilities, with the transformations in social interactions in the first three years of life.
- Sadly, these absences also appear in the recent EHRC documents and advice.

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## EXPERIENCES

- I accept Debbie Hayton's attempts to get male to female transsexuals accepted in the gender-critical feminist movements, but there is a very strong contrast between the degree of acceptance that is given and the virulence of these attacks.
- This is not just about the definition of women as "*adult biological females*" or the use of the word "*women*", it is about the differences in motives that each diagnosis expects.
- When transgender conditions are treated as personality variations, gender identities for everybody form the same way. The great majority develop core gender identities that are in harmony with the biological sex, but some do not. This demands a total respect for every person's experience and rights including the right to privacy, and to separate treatment, where needed, over matters which concern biology and sex. It does not support a blanket condemnation of everyone on the grounds of biological sex.

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## FEMINIST CHALLENGES

- Many radical feminist groups and individuals interpret transgender conditions as perversions or disruptions of sexual desires. Gender-critical groups go a step further by viewing gender identity either as a purely socially learned construct, nothing more than an ill-defined idea, or being synonymous with sex<sup>295</sup>.
- Autogynephilic theories continue this approach by regarding sexual identity as a personality variation, but male to male transsexuality as a perversion or disruption of an original course. In common with other groups, this identifies transgender objectives in terms of enforcing of power over women where subverted sexual motives are the driving forces, and where women's identities are placed under threat<sup>296</sup>.
- To justify this approach gender-critical groups must deny or disprove any changes in neural maturation patterns, and how gender identity forms in the first three years of life.



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## WOMEN'S FEARS AND RIGHTS

- What must be an absolute priority is the safety of all women, including their protection against violence, abuse, and discrimination. Evidence of these abuses, and the lack of confidence in the police and the courts abound. Actions by groupings such as those be the “*Me Too*” movement have become very valuable tools in exposing some of these abuses, but that may still only expose the tip of the iceberg that exists.
- It should not be in the least surprising that many women are suspicious of the motives of male to female transsexuals who seek to integrate fully as women into society. The concerns expressed by groups such as “*A Woman’s Place*” and “*Fair Play for Women*” including the arguments and theories they put forward must be taken very seriously, but that also demands that such arguments can survive detailed scientific scrutiny.
- There should be no place any approach which promotes a partisan view.

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## CURRENT EHRC ADVICE

- We have seen that the most recent EHRC statement on “*Protecting people from sex and gender reassignment discrimination*”<sup>297</sup>, published on the 4 April 2022 does not alter the protective legislation already in the 2010 Equality Act, but it changes its effect.
- The advice given in the 2010 Equality act adopted the starting point that transgender people were genuine in their attempts to respect women’s identities and integrate seamlessly into society. Thus, the advice given with this act condemned abusive and inappropriate behaviour: it did not presume that all transgender people are a threat.
- The current advice now implies a blanket point of view that all transgender people are potential threats. People may now be more easily excluded just because they are transgender, or look transgender, and those with Gender Recognition Certificates are also denied the protections offered to them in the 2004 Gender Recognition Act<sup>298</sup>.

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## CONSEQUENCES

- The reasons the present Government gives for refusing to include transgender people in its legislation on the banning of conversion therapy are set out in the current EHRC statements where it says: *“we recommend that legislation should initially focus on banning conversion therapy attempting to change a person’s sexual orientation, where the evidence and impacts are clearer. Legislation to ban conversion therapy attempting to change a person to or from being transgender should follow, once more detailed and evidence-based proposals are available which can be properly scrutinised”<sup>299</sup>.*
- This statement cannot be justified when the massive amount of evidence already available is denied or ignored. I consider that the Government should without delay proceed to banning conversion therapy for transgender people. Also, that present EHRC submission on conversion therapy and its advice on transgender people be instantly withdrawn and substituted with those where objective assessments are made.

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## CONCERNS

- Any policy which excludes every transgender person from the protection of any Act for the alleged abuses of some or identity should never be in any Act. That should apply to abuses alone. I believe that excluding by identity is not lawful in the 2010 Equality Act.
- In my own experience of reconciliation work in divided societies, I find that much discrimination is mistakenly carried out by ordinary decent people on presumptions of false belief. I do not seek to discredit the genuineness of anyone's approach
- Therefore, it is crucial that all approaches, including gender-critical approaches are fully, fairly, and impartially examined. Universities and academic institutions are bastions of free speech, but they are also guardians of scholarship and objectivity, thus their role must be call out any approaches based on the manipulation of science, personal attacks, and abuse. It includes statements any Prime Minister makes<sup>300</sup>

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## USAGE

- Probably the most pressing concern is over how the current advice is used. Clearly those who regard transgender conditions to be the product of personality disruptions, with fears of predation will take a very different approach from those who consider them to be personality variations, where there are not
- A key issue relates to access to spaces normally reserved for either sex. Their advice now states that anybody who seeks to enter spaces usually reserved for women, and is assumed to be a man, is not protected by the Equality Act. However, intersex people alone are included... but by the protected characteristics of disability or sex<sup>301</sup>.
- The advice given by the EHRC makes it clear that non-binary transgender people do not come under any protected characteristic. It is my conclusion that the EHRC believes that its duty is only to protect protected characteristics, not all human rights.

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## WARNINGS

- In her 2021 Guardian Article Butler wrote: *“The anti-gender movement is not a conservative position with a clear set of principles. No, as a fascist trend, it mobilizes a range of rhetorical strategies from across the political spectrum to maximize the fear of infiltration.... It does not strive for consistency, for its incoherence is part of its power”*.
- I believe that the present UK government has realised Butlers fears through its actions and its support of organisations who I argue, have used selective evidence, ignored expert advice, spread misinformation by misrepresenting research, used misdiagnoses, created unnecessary fears by ignoring protections for women that already exist, and by rubbishing or ridiculing views and personal integrities those who disagree with them,
- In June 2022 the UK government had intended to host an international conference on these issues. Given its present record, that would have been a cause for concern<sup>302</sup>

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## IMPACTS

- The promotion of any theory which presents transgender people as potential predators, and dangers to women's identities, not just by disregarding, but also with the active rubbing of the approaches of the professional institutions and other groups who disagree, and who present the opposite view of transgender people as allies and fellow travellers in the fight for women's rights, must not be accepted in any circumstances.
- The obscuration and fears created by the EHRC documentation and by gender-critical feminist groups, including the refusal of the EHRC to identify the meaning of transgender in any way which is now recognised in medical science, together with the creation of unsubstantiated fears of hordes of abusive males being granted unrestricted access to women's spaces, creates unwarranted concerns. It heightens the very real fears of sexual attacks, together with the coercions and the abuses which all women face. It is I believe, irresponsible, and it creates alarm in the way that Butler describes.

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## IMPACTS

- There are enormous advances in cognitive and neural development from the moment of birth however children do not become socially aware until about three years. For gender-critical groups who define gender identity purely as social constructs the influences of any prior developments, including the core gender identity, must be denied. Gender identity is alleged to be formed by the gender role alone. The partisan use of science, the disregard of the scientific consensus agreed by the professional institutions, using a dogma that no other credible solution exists, fundamentally denies any objective or scientific approach.
- Gender-critical groups identify transgender conditions as personality disruptions with underlying sexual motives, the professional institutions and world authorities define them as personality variations where the drive is for identity. Motives and methods of management are almost opposite to each other. The gender critical advice denies responsibility, for great harm can be done when the wrong methods are applied.



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## IMPACTS

- Enormous, changes and advances in the understanding, acceptability and nature of gender and sexually variant conditions have taken place from the 1960's onwards when all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour was subject to severe social and legal sanctions, often with catastrophic results, to today's acceptance of all loving and responsible gender and sexually variant behaviour, resulting in the endorsement of same-sex marriages in many parts of the world
- Treating male homosexuality as a personality variation allows all of the scientific and experiential advances in this understanding since the 1960's of gender and sexual variation to be accepted. Treating transsexuality as a perversion or a personality disruption, not only misdiagnoses transsexuality; it means that all these advances gained since the 1960's, together with the massive amount of existing evidence which condemns this approach is denied. Unchecked, it leads to the creation of false realities and to the scapegoating of transgender people by society, and by the Church, with horrific results.

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## FAILURES

- I believe that the failures I have outlined in the approach of the United Kingdom Equality and Human Rights commission do not just betray transgender people, they are the failures of the very body whose remit is to provide Equality and Human Rights protection for all of us, no matter what the issues that concern us may be.
- It is an absolute duty of the EHRC to produce totally impartial documents. I can find little evidence that it has taken heed of anything other than gender-critical views.
- I also believe it is evident that government intervention has caused the EHRC to produce a report which is intended to satisfy the government's own political and social agendas in regard to conversion therapy and transgender people. That I consider is a betrayal by this government at the highest level. It is also a betrayal of the international obligations which this country is expected to respect.

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## SECTION 2: CHRISTIAN APPROACHES

- In this examination I have paid particular attention to the attitudes of the Christian Churches and other religious organisations to gender and sexually variant people, since these impose more barriers of theology and divine providence on any objective approach
- In Part 2, it is shown that a moral duality was encountered in First Century Judaism, whereby people who engage in transgender and same-sex relationships which are given in love and conform to the highest moral standards of society would be highly regarded. However, those who seek to break these rules through inappropriate sexual activity and immoral behaviour were very strongly censured for these acts.
- Also, in Part 2 we traced the development of Christianity from its Jewish roots to present day life. We saw that a paradigm shift has occurred around the end of the first millennium where the condemnation of gender and sexually variant behaviour, which condemned the abuses of honour, power, and sex, turned the condemnation of all sexual acts

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## CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES

- In common with gender-critical feminist groups, this paradigm shift has led many Christian groups to misdiagnose all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour as perversions or disruptions from what is seen as the original divinely ordained course
- We have also seen in Part 7, that attempts to suppress or deny this often catastrophically fail, since there is nothing to replace this identity, and that leaves a vacuum inside. The more this is fought the stronger it becomes. That is also why methods of management appropriate to personality variations and not disruptions must be applied
- It is also why approaches such as “*Conversion Therapy*” or “*Reparative Therapy*” are so disastrous, for they simply reinforce what people, often for many years, have been trying to do for themselves, without success. The guilt felt when that fails can be enormous, not least because of the misdiagnosis that for centuries has been applied

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## CRIMINALISATION AND SUPPRESSION

- The denial of experiential evidence by centuries of criminalisation and condemnation meant that this teaching could not be challenged. That only changed in the 1960's with the legalisation of homosexuality. From that time people could see for themselves the full range of behaviour. In Parts 1-5 we saw the transformations that have occurred.
- For many religious groups religious dogmas often take precedence over science and experience. The effect of the paradigm shift means that the current traditional church doctrine is the doctrine of a mediaeval Church. Pope Francis shows great empathy to transgender people, but his continuing misdiagnoses means that his American Bishops use this misdiagnosis to erase transgender identities... and demand they repent.
- Many Christian groups and Churches advocate conversion therapy for all gender and sexually variant people in the genuine and sincere belief that this approach is correct.

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## CURRENT CONDEMNATIONS

- A large number of Christian groups, churches and countries today accept this traditional Church teaching, which condemns, without exception all gender and sexually variant behaviour, regardless of purpose, as intrinsically disordered, acts of grave depravity and a falling from grace, which pursues inappropriate sex and unacceptable acts.
- Paragraph 6 in the EHRC submission on conversion therapy states: *“Encouraging people to comply with religious doctrine that requires refraining from certain types of sexual activity should not fall within the definition of conversion therapy either”*<sup>303</sup> and Paragraph 28 states: *“This offence should not capture communication such as casual conversations, exchanges of views or private prayer”*<sup>304</sup>.
- The EHRC submission states that all of these practices should be excepted from any prohibition under the banner of *“informed consent”*.

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## EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONVERSION THERAPY BILL

- Under the 2010 Equality Act it is not necessary for discrimination to be intentional to be unlawful. The problem with these exclusions is that the practice of conversion therapy is usually carried out in a religious context with genuine intent where private prayer, which focuses on *“getting rid of this evil”*, is often used as the primary means of attack.
- Obtaining *“informed consent”* is going to be very difficult when people are already conditioned by Christian doctrine to believe that these activities are fearfully sinful, and unlikely to be easily convinced that conversion therapies are harmful acts
- Adopting any EHRC recommendations which argue for total exclusion of these elements in any legislation, would give a carte blanche for the same conversion therapy practices to continue, and greatly damage the effectiveness of the act.



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## FAILURE AND AVOIDANCE

- In the last 70 years there have been many advances in the understanding of how gender and sexual identities develop. I consider that the failure to take full note of these advances are major evasions of responsibility by the Christian Church
- I also believe that the Church of England's attempts to resolve these differences through its policy of "*good disagreement*" has become a way of avoiding these impacts of science and the severe consequences that misdiagnosing these conditions create.
- That avoidance is illustrated in part 6, where I discuss the Church of England Living in Love and Faith Programme. The brief set by the archbishops, demanded that it only considered theology: "*as the Church of England has received it*". The 2017 report of the Church England "*Bishop's Reflection Group on Sexuality*" confined any change 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*"<sup>305</sup>.



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## CONSEQUENCES OF AVOIDANCE

- This brief prohibits the essential re-examination of theology! The outcomes from the Living in Love and Faith Programme are a book and a set of resources which very fully reflect the latest understandings of gender and sexuality. These include stories and study material, which very completely emphasise the strength and stability of these relationships and need for the full inclusion of LGBTI people in the Christian Church.
- Yet set against this in the resource material is a theology which in essence reflects the theology as developed by the medieval church. As I describe in part six of these presentations, the inadequate use of history and sociology in the LLF programme, the brief that was set, and the hurt and the serious concerns of those LGBTI people who actually took part in its production, do not suggest the creation of an objective or impartial approach. The same misdiagnosis of transgender conditions, which rely on an identical theology, are expressed by Pope Francis in the Roman Catholic Church.

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## CHURCH APOLOGIES

- In the LLF book foreword, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York said: *“As soon as we begin to consider questions of sexual identity and behaviour, we need to acknowledge the huge damage and hurt that has been caused where talk of truth, holiness and discipleship has been wielded harshly and not ministered as a healing balm... We have caused, and continue to cause, hurt and unnecessary suffering. For such acts, each of us, and the Church collectively, should be deeply ashamed and repentant. As archbishops, we are personally very sorry where we have contributed to this”*
- Sadly, the Archbishops are entirely correct about the hurt that has been caused by these toxic disputes. Until the middle of the last century the development of gender identity was attributed exclusively to the gender role. From the 1960's onwards it was realised that an underlying core gender identity was first created. This gave a sense of belonging alone. Expected behaviour, motives and management methods are almost opposite to each other. Apologies are insufficient. This demands a rethink of Church doctrines and roles.

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## CHALLENGES FROM GHANA

- In part 7 of these presentations, we noted that in 2021 the Ghanaian parliament put forward a bill which claims to promote “*proper family values*”. It seeks to increase jail terms to up to a decade and force some to undergo “*conversion therapy*”, where attempts are made to change people's sexuality. It also makes cross-dressing and public displays of same-sex affection punishable by fines or detention, and it makes the distribution of material deemed pro-LGBT by news organisations or websites illegal.
- In the light of his welcome to LGBT people, and his frankly worded apology in the foreword to the LLF book, what can the Archbishop of Canterbury meaningfully say to the Anglican Bishops in Ghana who support this bill, or to the Global Anglican Futures Movement (GAFCON)<sup>306</sup>, when the Church of England itself refuses to consider any changes to a doctrine which GAFCON supports, and upon which the traditional Christian condemnations of all gender and sexually variant people are based?

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## SCAPEGOATING

- People challenge gender for many reasons. For transgender people, it is the search for identity and the rejection of what is wrong. Some Christian Churches and those who reject transgender identities interpret this instead as desire driven sexually motivated behaviour where dangers of predation, perversion, and power over others are presumed.
- As in Ghana, this second identification has led the Christian Church to collude with, and often to lead, the secular scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people in society.
- From the end of the first millennium, driven by the Inquisition, extreme penalties have been applied. I have described some of these in parts 4 and 6 of these presentations. How serious these can become is seen when Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, blames the war in Ukraine in part on pressure to accept gay pride parades. Putin has condemned “*gender freedoms*” in the same way<sup>307</sup>.

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## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

- There have many reports on gender and sexuality prepared by the Church of England. All of them are based on theology *“as the Church of England has received it”*, which is broadly in harmony with that of the Roman Catholic Church
- None of them have succeed in creating a satisfactory outcome. Sadly, all of the efforts that have been put into the LLF programme are unlikely to succeed, because exactly the same constraint: *“as the Church of England has received it”* was put into its brief.
- At a meeting held on 24 March 2022, the Church of England House of Bishops *“reviewed attempts to explore questions of gender identity and transition and agreed to seek and commission an appropriate group to take this work forward.”*<sup>308</sup>
- There will be no resolution before both Churches reconsider the doctrines they teach.

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## ACTIONS

- Today many Christian Churches and feminist groups proclaim that they fully welcome transgender people and that they support full inclusion in their organisation or group.
- However, there cannot be any true inclusion, when that acclaim is considered alongside their refusals to reconsider their Christian doctrines or their gender theories, when these identify all gender and sexually variant people, in the case of the Christian churches... or for gender-critical movements, transgender people only, as potential predators driven by sexual motives, and which attack family values. Approaches which, Pope Francis<sup>309</sup> (and Vladimir Putin<sup>310</sup>) asserts, identify transgender people as engaging in actions that create threats which are equated to a nuclear attack.
- There can be little hope of resolution when tactics such as the defiance of science, the hurling of abuse, and the discrediting of experiences are used to promote these views.

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## PART 3: STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

- Both gender-critical movements and the traditional teaching of the Christian Church, criticise or condemn transgender people in the same way.
- Both consider all forms of gender variant behaviour to be personality disruptions that are driven by potentially sublimated sexually based motives of behaviour and desire. Although these groups may recognise that actual abuses may only be carried out by a small minority, they place all male to female transgender people in the same category as all males, who are counted as potential predators, intent on sexual abuse.
- Both groups use science to try to justify their positions. As with gender-critical movements, religious campaigns also often descend into personal attacks and to the discrediting or rubbishing of all other views, as is observed in the reactions to the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith Programme, and elsewhere<sup>311</sup>



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## IMPACT AND FALSE REALITY

- Clearly correctly diagnosing transgender conditions, (and gender and sexually variant conditions more generally) is far more important than just matters of gender or sex.
- Gender-critical groups very strongly assert that they are not transphobic and that they fully accept all transgender people, (under their own terms), into their ranks. Debbie Hayton is a very strong advocate for this point of view
- However, if these groups are to succeed in maintaining that position, they must be able to justify it. I have examined the arguments they put forward as completely and as objectively as I can. I find the disregard of key evidence, the use of a discredited theory, the ridiculing of the approaches of professional institutions, clinicians and world authorities are all primed to create “*false realities*” which fall far below the standards of any professional approach.



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## TRANSFORMATIONS

- The first “*false reality*” does not need to be created because it is already present in the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. We saw this came from the paradigm shift in Christian teaching near the end of the first millennium, because of the adoption of a traditional Church teaching that condemns all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour, regardless of motive, as acts of grave depravity driven by desires of sex.
- It is easy to create other “*false realities*”. For most people the normal expectation is that gender identity should follow biological sex. However, for transgender people the discord between the core gender identity and what biology expects leads to inescapable conflicts. In people whose core gender identity conforms to what biology expects the only evidence for the core gender identity lies in the security of gender that every person possesses. This sense of certainty makes it hard for others to understand the trauma that transgender people.

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## CONSEQUENCES

- This lack of awareness means that gender-critical groups only need to discredit or deny the advances in understanding since the 1960's about how gender identities develop, and to launch campaigns to discredit or dismiss the experiential evidence that now exists. I believe that further false realities have been created by gender-critical groups.
- The first of these is the misrepresentation of proposals to reform the 2004 Gender recognition act to persuade the general public that all protection of women's rights will disappear and that women will face massive increases in abusive attacks.
- The second is the disregard of the views of the professional institutions, together with the adoption of a discredited theory, to convince the same public that transgender conditions are personality perversions or disruptions driven by underlying sexual motives, with the increased fears of predation that this creates.

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## FALSE REALITIES

- The third is the attempts to use existing scientific papers to prove that male to female transsexuals pose the same or a greater threat to women's safety as would every rampant male, despite contrary evidence and the objections of authors concerned.
- The fourth is created by the abuse and personal attacks associated with the statements that the gender-critical approach is the only credible approach
- This is a conflict where the professional institutions regard gender and sexually variant conditions as *"naturally expected variations of the human condition, intrinsic to the personality created, arising very early in development and cannot be changed either by the individual concerned or by the predations of others in subsequent life"*. while gender-critical groups consider them to be *"personality disruptions driven by sexual motives which attack women's identities, and where threats of predation occur"*.

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## CONSEQUENCES

- Diagnosing transgender conditions as personality variations in line with the professional institutions, means recognising an inwardly focussed search for identity and the rejection of what is wrong, it poses no threat to anyone, and it is not about behaviour or sex.
- Gender-critical feminist groups, who pursue diagnoses of personality variations identify the driving forces behind them with behaviour, attacks on women's identities and sexual desires. The fears this creates among women of predation, abuse, and immoral sex, with the vilification and scapegoating that transgender people already face, are greatly increased by strong gender-critical attacks.
- The methods of management are almost opposite to each other. Great harm can be done when the wrong one is used. The current EHRC advice allows people to discriminate against transgender people on a populist vote. Expertise and science are denied.

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## GOVERNMENT REVIEW

- In April 2022 the United Kingdom Government Minister for Health announced an urgent enquiry into the provision of treatment of transgender children<sup>312</sup>.
- He told MPs that services in this area were too affirmative and narrow, and *"bordering on ideological"*. He compared some approaches to that of the sexual *"Child grooming in Rotherham"* and further stated that the *"overly affirmative approach where people just accept what a child says, almost automatically, and then start talking about things like puberty blockers - that's not in the interest of the child at all"*
- Whatever their point of view, nobody should tolerate such an allegation. The Minister is echoing allegations made by gender-critical groups. The motives and methods of management are almost opposite to each other, that is why making the correct diagnosis is so important, and any review must take a totally objective and independent approach

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## DISREGARD OF EVIDENCE

- We have seen that the worldwide scientific consensus and the professional institutions all identify transgender conditions as personality variations driven by the search for identity and the rejection of what is wrong.
- We have also seen that the gender-critical groups are determined to identify transgender conditions as personality disruptions, driven by maybe sublimated sexual motives of behaviour and desire. It is clear that the UK Government agrees with this approach.
- Instead of conducting an impartial analysis the gender-critical groups reject the clinical, scientific and research evidence by condemning it as the work of “*transgender activists*” and present their own view as “*the only credible approach*”. The Government says it needs more evidence... Instead of making incorrect allegations and denying it, the UK Government should look objectively and impartially at the evidence that already exists

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## CRITICISMS

- Perhaps the most serious and significant criticism of the gender-critical movements comes from Professor Judith Butler who, in her 1990's book, provided much of the initial inspiration for the gender-critical approach<sup>313</sup>.
- In her 2021 Guardian article, Judith Butler argues: *"It is not easy to fully reconstruct the arguments used by the anti-gender ideology movement because they do not hold themselves to standards of consistency or coherence. They assemble and launch incendiary claims to defeat what they see as "gender ideology" or "gender studies" by any rhetorical means necessary. For instance, they object to "gender" because it putatively denies biological sex or because it undermines the natural or divine character of the heteronormative family.*

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## DISCREDITING

- Butler also argues: *“The anti-gender movement is not a conservative position with a clear set of principles. No, as a fascist trend, it mobilizes a range of rhetorical strategies from across the political spectrum to maximize the fear of infiltration and destruction that comes from a diverse set of economic and social forces. It does not strive for consistency, for its incoherence is part of its power”*.
- This ridiculing, manipulation, and disregard of the approaches, adopted by clinicians and the professional institutions, I believe is seen in this United Kingdom gender-critical approach. Sadly, I find its consequences are reflected in the EHRC submissions
- While transgender people are well received in sections of society others are subjected to severe abuse. The Stonewall reports on this abuse are replicated in almost all other studies, and there is no justification for its vilification by gender-critical groups<sup>314 315</sup>.



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## OBJECTIVES

- Therefore, it is necessary to ask what are the underlying reasons for the adoption of this gender-critical approach? And the attempts of its supporters to persuade the general public that this is the only credible one, so for that reason it must be correct?
- A fundamental tenet of radical feminism is that gender identity is socially constructed collective experience, although different feminists (first, second and third generation) express this in different ways. Many think that male to female transsexuals, (maybe unconsciously) seek to exert power over women, though others disagree. Therefore, no one who has ever lived as a man can become a true feminist because they have never encountered the oppression that women face for the whole of their lives<sup>316</sup>.
- From some, including the gender-critical groups, all biological males must be treated as potential sexual predators. Only surgical conversion makes women safe from attack.

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## ENTITLEMENT

- At the heart of this dispute are these feminist dogmas and the disagreement over the origins and nature of gender identity. The gender-critical groups argue that it is a social construct and deny that any deep-seated gender identity exists.
- We have seen that the Professional Institutions, World Authorities, and the scientific and clinical consensus argue that the core or basic elements lie at the heart of the personality that is created and is one of the first elements of personality to be formed.
- Using this professional gender entitlement, it is possible for someone who is male to identify with women from the moment of birth, have a sense of identity and an outlook, behaviour and lifestyle which is in harmony with women, who respects women, and who fights throughout life as assiduously and strongly as any woman for the protection and security of her safety and gender-based rights.

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## OPPOSITION

- Applying the same gender entitlement to the second explanation of autogynephilic transsexuality, where sexuality and sexual orientation is still treated as a personality variation but transsexuality which is treated either as a paraphilia, perversion, disruption, or sublimation, turns the same transsexual with precisely the same outlook, from an ally into an opponent, who is then perceived to be erasing women's identities and attacking their hard-won sex-based rights.
- We have seen that there is a fundamental contradiction inherent to gender critical theory. If it is accepted in line with professional studies, that an elementary core gender identity arises very early in life and that this is effectively fixed by the age of three years, then the gender-critical feminist approach is invalidated. If instead the gender-critical approach is taken to be correct, transgender conditions must then be diagnosed as perversions, paraphilias, or disruptions. So, the motives of transgender people are misrepresented, and the depth of transgender identities is denied.

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## DENIALS OF SCIENCE

- For many centuries gender identity has presumed to be divinely decided by biology or entirely created through social interactions and the social expectations of the role.
- Largely as a result of the work with transgender children in the 1960' and 1970's it was discovered that a prior sense of belonging, called the core gender identity, had already been created. Therefore, the identification with the gender role, or the gender role identity is an overlay on what had already been formed.
- Since that time an enormous amount of research has been carried out into the sexuality/gender identity complex at pre-natal and immediately post-natal levels as any handbook on sexuality, neurology, and psychiatry can demonstrate<sup>317</sup>.
- In the current EHRC advice, all of this knowledge is shunned, denied, or ignored.

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## VICTIMS OR AGGRESSORS

- Many transgender people feel very angry about the ways they are being mis-represented by gender critical and other radical feminist groups. There have been many protests and campaigns mounted against those who support their views, these include holding rallies and denying permission to host meetings in various venues.
- However, for most people in society it seems natural to presume that gender identity should follow biological sex. This can instil a false perception that transgender people are the aggressors in these disputes through seeking power over women and that they attack women's identities, when the reverse is the case.
- Promoting or inciting provocations plays entirely into the hands of gender-critical feminist groups because it seems to promote the rightness of their cause. Protests must be carefully managed by transgender people to ensure that this does not occur.

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## BUTLER'S COMMENTS

- Judith Butler argued that behavioural manifestations are present prior to the existence of gender identity and a sexed body, (rather than the other way round). However, she questioned the pre-existence of any group of gender-based characteristics prior to the enforcement of a gender role<sup>318</sup>. For Butler then, gender identity is epheremal and a socially learned performative act. It is clear that she is describing the gender role<sup>319</sup>
- However, Butler treats transgender conditions as personality variations, not as disruptions, and the presence of earlier non-gendered behavioural manifestations, which may lead onwards to the creation of the core gender identity, or gender core, and then on to the gender role, are provided for, and not denied<sup>320</sup>.
- The strength and seriousness of Butler's condemnations of gender-critical ideologies in her Guardian article measures how much these movements misrepresent her views<sup>321</sup>.

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## CURRENT ISSUES

- Today a moral duality is encountered whereby people who engage in transgender and same-sex relationships which are given in love and conform to the highest moral standards of society should be highly regarded. However, those who seek to break these rules through immoral behaviour should be very strongly censured for their acts
- Accepting the existence of the core gender identity can considerably strengthen feminist arguments. for it enables transgender people and all women to argue feminist points of view from a stronger base, with no need to conform to a gender role
- The motives and management methods for each diagnosis are in total opposition. This creates fierce disputes: for what one side sees as coercion and enforcement, must almost by definition, be interpreted as compassion and understanding by the other. Therefore, it is essential for the correct diagnosis to be made.

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## OVERVIEWS: GENDER IDENTITY AS A CORE ELEMENT OF PERSONALITY

- At the heart of this dispute is the argument about gender identity and how it is created.
- The professional institutions identify gender identity as a core element of personality: it is one of the first to be created and it forms very early in life. However, it requires interaction with others, so it cannot form before birth. Although on average pre- and post-natal male and female physiologies, such as neural maturation rates, endocrines, and aggression profiles can differ significantly, considerable overlap occurs. Therefore, the core gender identity will usually, but not always follow biological sex<sup>322 323</sup>.
- It is also shown to be a strongly pro-active process and neural transformations lock this in place by the age of three years. It forms the foundation on which all future development occurs. This means that gender identity, not biological sex, becomes the primary marker to use for all social interactions that take place.



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## GENDER IDENTITY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

- Gender-critical groups argue that gender identity is purely a social construct created, through relationships with others: it may be seen as an illusory indefinable concept, and it is determined entirely through association with the gender role. These groups identify biological sex as the primary marker for social interactions. All of the earlier processes identified by the professional institutions, and examined in this study, are ignored.
- These disputes have profound effects on the management methods that are required. The professional institutions identify the core gender identity as a personality variation which is fixed very early in life. Therefore, giving all children scope to explore their gender identity gives them the opportunities to find it, not to choose it. The same processes apply to everyone. After exploration the great majority do find a secure gender identity which is in line with their biological sex, but some do not, and the stress and attrition created by this gender incongruence can destroy transgender lives<sup>324</sup>.

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## TRANSGENDER CHILDREN

- It is hardly surprising that these disagreements come to a head when children's development is considered.
- We have seen that gender identity is made up from two components, the core gender identity which describes an often-hidden deep seated sense of belonging and is the first to be formed. This must be treated as a personality variation, and it becomes fixed very early in life. The second is the gender role identity where disturbances must be treated as personality disruptions. This acts like an overlay on what has already been formed.
- Transgender children often report having discomfort with their gender identities from their earliest memories. Much distress is often created for transgender children by gender-critical groups who only recognise the gender role, since the existence and impact of the core gender identity; together with required access to early treatment is denied.

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## “GENDER IDEOLOGY”

- Gender-critical groups, Christian Churches, and others, who identify transgender conditions as personality disruptions incorrectly assert that professional institutions and “*transgender activists*” teach a “*gender ideology*” which states that “*gender identity is a choice*”. In place of identifying these conditions as the search for identity and the rejection of what is wrong, the underlying driving forces are instead associated with behaviour, power, and sexual desire, which create runaway drives with dreadful results.
- Butler condemns some of these allegations as incendiary claims made to defeat what these groups see as “*gender ideology*” or “*gender studies*” by any rhetorical means necessary. They object to “*gender*” because it putatively denies biological sex or because it undermines the natural or divine character of the heteronormative family, and they mobilize a range of rhetorical strategies from across the political spectrum to maximize the fear of infiltration and destruction by transgender people’s attacks.

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## POPE FRANCIS

- Pope Francis was no less voluble in his own comments. In August 2016 he stated: *“Its ‘terrible’ children taught they can choose gender”*<sup>325</sup>. He also said there were powerful institutions which funded the *spread of “gender theory”* in schools. He told 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”*. Pope Francis has also been quoted in a book, saying that *“gender theory”*, like nuclear weapons, is a danger to humanity <sup>326 327</sup>.
- Paradoxically Pope Francis is totally right to condemn *“gender ideology”*: It has nothing to do with the professional institutions and world authorities. It has everything to do with the misdiagnoses of transgender conditions as personality disruptions, and its incorrect definition and its indiscriminate use contributes greatly to the harm that is caused.

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## AFFIRMATIVE APPROACHES

- The different approaches to managing personality variations and personality disruptions are well known. With transgender conditions the same techniques as those applied to any personality variation should be used.
- Fighting or suppressing this deep-seated sense of identity leads to the imposition of trauma, guilt, and the desperation which destroys many lives. Taking an affirmative approach enables people to discover self-identity, self-respect, and self-esteem: to develop strategies needed to deal with them, and to make informed and considered decisions about how to live their lives<sup>328</sup>
- Today, affirmative approaches are the only ones recommended by the world authorities and professional institutions. We have also seen the enormous damage by the imposed denials which conversion therapy creates. It is also needed to combat the vitriol, guilt, and misdiagnoses imposed by these Christian, social and gender critical attacks.

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## RELIGIOUS CONTRADICTIONS

- Attitudes to gender and sexually variant people have been totally transformed in societies where gender equality is espoused, and when people can see for themselves how gender and sexually variant people live their lives.
- Pope Francis is, I believe, very genuine and sincere in the pastoral care and welcome which he offers to all gender and sexually variant people, yet he and the Vatican still affirm traditional Church teaching which identifies these as personality disruptions, choices, falling from grace, and expression in same-sex marriages a sinful activity<sup>329</sup>.
- Despite the profundity of the apology by the archbishops and their stated desire to create a radical new inclusion in the Church of England, the brief for the LLF process, which prevents consideration of any change to the traditional teaching “*as the CoE has received it*”, repeats the same attacks, and eliminates the value of much sincere work.

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## GENDER CONTRADICTIONS

- The same contradictions are also found amongst numbers of radical feminist groups
- In announcing a government sponsored conference (now cancelled) the Minister for Equalities Liz Truss, said: *“The Government is committed to ensuring that LGBT people can be safe and free to live their lives as they wish, here at home and supporting them around the world. These events will be the next important step to ensuring we build a world where it is truly “Safe to Be Me””*.<sup>330 331</sup>
- Yet the current EHRC advice, whose board is appointed by Liz Truss, refuses to define transgender identities, ignores non-binary people, identifies gender identity only by the gender role, claims more evidence is needed, ignores that which already exists, and states that all transgender people, including those who have a Gender Recognition Certificate can be excluded from any single-sex space by a popular vote.

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## SCAPEGOATING OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

- There is absolutely no doubt that the equality, safety and security and the protection of all women against sexual and other abuse must always be an overwhelming priority.
- In earlier presentations we saw a moral duality existed in first century Judaism and in Christianity for much of the first millennium where loving same-sex relationships were accepted, while those involving sexual or other abuses were severely condemned. That moral duality was lost near the end of the first millennium when all forms of same-sex relationships became condemned as progenitors of abusive or disordered sexual acts.
- The consequence was the collusion of the Church in the secular scapegoating of all gender and sexually variant people. The current EHRC advice gives a charter for the secular scapegoating to continue, and the intensities of the present attacks on LGBT people on the grounds of alleged abuses shows that this must be a serious concern



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## RESOLUTION

- There can be no hope of resolution unless these prevarications and avoidances are immediately addressed.
- For the Christian churches I argue that this requires a radical re-examination of their own theologies, which considers changes during the first millennium, and continuity from Jewish tradition, instead of using theologies developed for a medieval Church.
- For governments and other organisations that means taking objective views of all of the science available to the best of their ability, and not by following any group who may be promoting partisan views. In this respect any possible government or ministerial intervention which affects the views of any organisation appointed to be a watchdog for Equalities and Human Rights must be of particular concern, for that does not just affect transgender people, it affects the liberties of us all.

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## QUESTIONS

- These are toxic disputes between two opposing viewpoints. One group identifies transgender conditions as personality variations, the other as personality disruptions. The methods of management are almost opposite to each other. Approaches which are identified as compassionate by one side are almost inevitably seen to be coercive by the other. How can we calm these warring factions?
- The Church of England adopts a policy of “*Good Disagreement*”, but this may be used to avoid facing up to difficult decisions. Has the LLF process helped or hindered the ability to find the right solution by demanding that there can be no change to traditional Church teaching. How can the Churches move forward in any discernment process?
- Questions have been raised about the possibility of Government interference in decisions of the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission. What are the dangers?



***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

***Susan Gilchrist***

***PART 9: WHAT HAS CHRISTIANITY LOST?***

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## SCOPE

- Christianity, as we understand it today, is mostly dependent on how it developed in the Roman Empire. Here we will consider its development in the much more gender equal Celtic, Persian and Eastern Societies, including the historical changes in attitudes to women and their effects on attitudes to authority and theology of the church.
- Next, we will use John's Gospel and the Apocryphal Gospel of Thomas to examine the quarrels and the differences in approaches and in theologies adopted by the Ancient or Sassanid Church of the East and the Roman Church. In the following sections we will consider how these traditional approaches have diverged from the first century Jewish understandings, and the consequences which result.
- Finally, we will consider how these changes have affected our understanding, and the approaches we should take to gender and sexually variant people in the today's world.

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## SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Sexual relationships between men and men, and between men and women, were treated very differently in the ancient Mediterranean world.
- Discussion of the morality of sexual relationships same sex was always about those between two men. Women were rarely if ever considered. The moral distinction was drawn between men who engaged in these relationships for the moral pursuit of love, and men who instead pursued the carnal abuse of sex. That created a moral duality where men who engaged in loving same-sex relationships would be highly valued while men who used them for abusive purposes would be severely condemned for their acts.
- Sexual relationships between men and women did not matter because the men were always right. Instead, gender discrimination mattered, and any idea of equality of relationships between and women was anathema, in this grossly unequal world.

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## MALE SAME-SEX INTERCOURSE

- This was always problematic in these gender unequal societies. Same-sex intercourse between two adult male citizens was discouraged because the act of penetration was considered as the exertion of the power one citizen over another, reducing the other to the status of a woman, so desecrating citizen's rights. When the penetrated partner was a slave, not a citizen, or a member of a subservient society, no such restrictions applied.
- Male same-sex intercourse was used to humiliate a beaten enemy, and to enforce subjection or domination in a gender unequal world.
- The very specific wording of Leviticus 18: 22 and 20:13 makes it clear that the condemnation of same-sex intercourse also applied to consensual sex. Also, only male anal penetration was condemned. That was because of abuses of power and sex<sup>332</sup>. No other same-sex act in the Bible is condemned<sup>333</sup>.

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## CELTIC CHRISTIANITY

- In the first of these presentations, we considered Irish Celtic Christianity... but that is only one section part of a much broader association of churches. The description of Celtic Christianity can also be applied to much of Northern Europe. Equivalent doctrines were found in the Sassanid Church of the East, in Egypt and in North Africa, where the Desert Fathers were the most influential group.
- Broadly it may be said that this type of Christianity inhabited almost all areas outside or on the periphery of the Roman Empire while Roman Christianity filled all areas within it.
- In our earlier presentations we saw that sexual attitudes embraced a Judean tradition where loving, committed, and responsible same-sex relationships could be encountered. All male same-sex intercourse was condemned for the abuses of power and honour, and there was no condemnation of any other same sex loving acts

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## SOCIAL INFLUENCES

- A feature of Christianity has always been its readiness to adapt its doctrines to suit the local cultures. When we considered Irish society governed by Brehon law in part one of these presentations, we saw a society where women were entitled to enter all the same professions as men; they could be Druids, poets, physicians, lawgivers, teachers, warriors, leaders, even Queens.
- That was in stark contrast to the patristic Roman Christianity, where men had supremacy in public life and women had to do penance for the sins of Eve in their earthly roles.
- Mainland Britain was the place where the two cultures came into contact. At the Synod of Whitby, held between 663 and 664, ostensibly to agree on certain practices such as the date of Easter, the Synod established the Roman Christianity as the norm in Northumbria and on effectively from then in Britain as a whole.



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## CHANGES IN BRITAIN

- Much more than the Christian dating of Easter was affected by these British changes
- Michael Mitton writes: *"We find, then, in the Celtic church an impressive acceptance of the feminine. It is desperately sad to recognise how this was lost after the Synod of Whitby" Had we been allowed to pursue the natural faith that the Spirit of God first breathed upon this land, which contained a far more just attitude to women than was experienced elsewhere, then our shameful history of repression of women may not have developed...we would also have had a far healthier attitude to sexuality generally, affirming the masculine and feminine within ourselves and within our communities"*<sup>334</sup>
- Celtic Christianity was a grounded Christianity, grounded in all of these things, including the love of nature, the warmth of relationships and the care for the world. It has much more to offer in the message of the Gospel it brings

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## THE INDIAN CHURCH

- In their descriptions of the early Indian Church, Thomas Aykara and John B. Chethimattam state that: *“The apostle [Thomas] would not have met the challenges faced by missionaries in the Greek, Roman, and Jewish world: Saint. Paul had to fight the Judaisers on the one hand and the highly developed philosophical ideas of the Greeks on the other. Against the Jews he had to show how Christ’s salvific work marked a complete break with the legalistic approach of Judaic religion while against the Greeks he had to show that the Cross of Christ which was foolishness for them was God’s wisdom ... In India St. Thomas did not have any such special challenges to meet’*
- According to stories in the *“Acts of Thomas”* it is in the nature of the ministry of Thomas that no compromises were made with those in authority, and no compromises with the teaching of Jesus were made.<sup>335</sup>

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## ROLES OF WOMEN

- The most striking thing about the role of women in the life and teaching of Jesus is that they are always present. And the continual testimony to the presence of women amongst the followers of Jesus, including his serious teaching and treatment of them is a break with tradition which has been described as without any precedent in contemporary Judaism. Of all the founders of religions and religious sects, Jesus stands alone as the one who did not discriminate against women in any way<sup>336</sup>.
- In parts 1 to 3 of this presentation we have seen that a paradigm shift has taken place in Christian teaching, from a first century moral duality where loving and responsible same-sex relationships were fully accepted, to one which condemned the expressions of any same-sex relationship regardless of purpose, as immoral and depraved acts
- Recognising cultural changes is clearly vital, and essential to the mission of the Church.

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## SOCIAL CHALLENGES

- There is also no doubt that the challenge that Jesus mounted to the Jewish authorities was uncompromising in the extreme. See Matthew Chapter 23, and for example verse 33: *“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape the sentence of hell?”*
- In India, St Thomas, by reputation challenged the authorities in an equivalent way, through diverting the money a king had given him to build a palace to support the poor instead. The story itself may or may not be true, but the point is clearly made<sup>337</sup>
- However, by contrast, Peter and Paul exonerated the Roman authorities from equivalent attacks, by demanding that they are given respect.
- See for example Romans 13: 1-7, and verse 1: *“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God”.*

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## PRAGMATISM

- There is little question that the early Church in Rome had to adopt a pragmatic approach to survive. Nevertheless, Jesus did so himself when he declared “*Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, unto God the Things that are God’s*” (Mark 12:17). Problems arise when pragmatic compromises turn into doctrines instead.
- Around AD 50 Paul was recalled to Jerusalem for an urgent conference to discuss the teaching of the Church. Peter summarised the outcome in Acts 15. “*It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood*”
- The event was ostensibly about the need for circumcision but there may be more to it than this. In AD 52 St Thomas went to India. All accounts indicate that it was an unwilling departure, and some say that he was sold into slavery to achieve this.

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## DIFFERENCES IN APPROACH

- By this time Christianity had spread east into a much more gender equal Persian society and India as well as into the Roman Empire. Thomas Aykara and John B. Chethimattam describe the differences in the approaches that were needed.
- There were significant divergences in the attitudes to celibacy, gender, and sex. The emphasis on asceticism and *“The Solitary Ones”* suggest that the Church of the East maintained an approach closer to the teaching of Jesus, which called for these attributes as a total commitment to spreading the Gospel message, whereas the Roman Church focussed on the avoidance and rejection of sex.
- The Cathar movement had its origins in Eastern Christianity. Although its theology may be highly suspect, its gender equality, its parity of esteem, and its support of the teaching and ministry of women, later threatened a gender discriminatory Roman Church.

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## VARIATIONS

- Therefore, the presumption that there is a single model to describe how Christianity developed during the first millennium is wide off the mark. That is clearly seen in the large differences between the Roman, Indian, Celtic and Jewish Churches
- St. Patrick accepted the previous existing Brehon Law as a model for Irish society. He removed only the sections he felt were incompatible with Christianity, leaving other values including attitudes to gender equality and same-sex relationships largely intact.
- Women in the Roman Church were expected to do penances for the sins of Eve during their earthly lives. However, in the Sassanid Church of the East, that atonement had already been made when “*Mary said yes*” to bearing the Christ.
- The efforts by Peter and Paul to give respect to the Roman culture and the authorities can be contrasted with the radical approach that Jesus took.

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## BELOVED DISCIPLE

- The Gospel of John contains another mystery. Who was the “*Beloved Disciple*” and what was his role?
- One answer to this requires us to recognise the moral duality in first century Judaism where those people who engaged in same-sex relationships which were given and received in love could be highly regarded while those who engaged in these activities for abuse or immoral purposes would be severely condemned for their acts. The only sexual act totally prohibited in first Century Judaism, was male same-sex intercourse.
- In these presentations we have seen that the overwhelming first century reason for its condemnation, and the horror of it in these massively discriminatory, enslaving, and despotic societies, was of its use to exert power and domination of one person over another, which also gave permission for the abuses of sex<sup>338</sup>.



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## JEWISH EDUCATION

- Little or nothing is known about the childhood of Jesus, apart from knowing he had brothers. It is assumed that he learned a trade, but what his education was is unknown.
- The importance of education is stressed in the Talmud. This states that children should begin school at six. Elementary school learning was regarded as compulsory by the time of Simeon ben Shetah, as early as 75 BCE and the education of older boys and men in a “*beit midrash*” goes back to the Second Temple period.
- The city of Sepphoris was six kilometres North-West of Nazareth. Following the Jewish revolt in 132–135, many Jewish refugees from Judea settled there, turning it into a centre of Jewish religious and spiritual life. Before that time, it was known as a very Jewish City. One would assume that there would be plenty of high-quality educational opportunities available for any Jewish boy.

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## DIDACTIC LEARNING

- We have also seen that under the “*Pairs*” culture in Judaism intimate male relationships were encouraged. That became expressed in Rabbinic and Chavruta partnerships where pairs of students studied biblical and Jewish texts<sup>339</sup>. The word chavruta, like marriage, became used in the singular to describe two people in a relationship. It is known that bonds stronger than heterosexual marriage could be formed<sup>340</sup> The obvious question to ask is who the sparring partner of Jesus was?
- Around 190 AD, Polycrates of Ephesus gives us a description of the Apostle John: “*and there was also John, who rested upon the breast of the Lord, who became a priest who wore the plate, both martyr and teacher; he sleeps in Ephesus*”.
- The relationship between Jesus and John in John’s Gospel matches entirely the type of relationships encountered in Rabbinic partnerships in the “*pairs*” culture of the time<sup>341</sup>

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## RELIABILITY

- Some of the greatest theological conversations ever reported between Jesus and women are found in John's Gospel; Jesus has a theological discussion with the Samaritan woman in which he reveals his identity as the long-awaited Messiah; He has a searching talk with Martha concerning the resurrection; He chooses to send the message of his resurrection to his disciples through Mary Magdalene
- In the Gospel of Thomas, on the one hand we may have a raw account of the sayings of Jesus. On the other hand, in the Gospel of John the intensities of relationships created by the pairs culture, chavruta or rabbinic partnerships and the didactic teaching in first century Judaism may give us a representation and a theological understanding of the teaching of Jesus, which is far greater than anyone might otherwise expect.
- John's Gospel was greatly regarded in the Church of the East and the Irish Celtic Church

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## GAY GOSPEL?

- In common with much of the first Century Middle Eastern world, acceptability was not determined on a gender basis, it was made between “*the noble pursuit of love, and the carnal abuse of sex*”. Discussion was always about love between two men... women did not count. Apart from male same-sex intercourse, responsible sexual relationships given in love between two men were accepted in these cultures<sup>342</sup>, provided there was free consent, true equality, and that they were loving, and caring acts<sup>343</sup>.
- Homosexuality, as we understand it today conflates the issues of love and sex. Engaging in these intimate relationships between any two men was regarded as routine in the first century world. And in the first century “*homosexuality*” would not be understood.
- Therefore, the Gospel of John is not a “*Gay Gospel*” although it tells us much about how all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people should be treated in today’s world.

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## PROVENANCE

- This examination reaches some radical conclusions, which must be presented as a hypothesis at this stage<sup>344 345</sup>. I examine these further in:
- Gilchrist, S. (20\*\*): *“The Gospel of Thomas: Its Origins and Consequences for Understandings of Theology, Gender and Sex in the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/027B-ThomasAnalysis.pdf>
- Gilchrist, S. (20\*\*): *“East and West: A Comparison of How the Apostles Interpreted the Gospel Message in Roman and Persian Cultures”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/035B-EastAndWest.pdf>
- However, this means we must look in more detail at the provenance of the Gospel of Thomas and how it relates to the Gospel of John. I examine this in the following slides.

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## THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

- In section one we saw how comparable doctrines developed during the first millennium in the Irish Christian Church, in the Eastern and Byzantine Church, in Cathar theologies and in Spiritual Marriages, and how these were continuations of the Jewish tradition
- The Gospel of Thomas is an early Christian Gospel comprising 114 sayings and parables of Jesus organized into a simple list. It has no narrative structure and says virtually nothing about Jesus' life, his death, or his resurrection. It challenges ideas that heaven is found in place or time, and that the divinity of Jesus can be described in those simple terms. Many consider it to be a "*gnostic gospel*" of secret knowledge, and of late date.
- Thus, unlike the canonical Gospels which claim to give a historical account of the ministry of Jesus, the Gospel of Thomas is a list of sayings alone. We should consider what is missing from this Gospel, and whatever insights there may be in this Gospel's account.

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## BACKGROUND

- Tradition says the Apostle Thomas made a collection of the sayings of Jesus, and scholars posit a list of these existed in the form of a “*Q source*”. The Gospel of Thomas contains a list of sayings attributed to Jesus without intervening narrative. The majority of the sayings and parables reported in Thomas are present in the accepted (canonical) texts. There may be other additions. Scholars have proposed a date as early as 60 AD or as late as 140 A.D. Many elements suggest an early date.
- It might be useful to look at some of these sayings. Sayings 21 and 61 in the Gospel present Mary Magdalene and Salome as wise confidants of Jesus, while the disciples are presented as those stumbling to understand. Saying 22 in the Gospel of Thomas makes it clear that there should be no difference in treatment between men and women.
- The same everyday principles of equality were held in Zoroastrianism: thus, we should consider how Christianity adapted to meet these different cultural demands<sup>346</sup>.

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## COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM AD 51

- We already know that Paul was urgently recalled from Rome to Jerusalem to discuss disagreements within the Church. As it is reported the issue was ostensibly about circumcision, however it is suggested that much broader issues are involved<sup>347</sup>. These affected how Christianity was presented in different parts of the world.
- Jewish Christians under James demanded that all converts must keep all of the commands of the Torah, Paul did not. There was also some disagreement among the Apostles. Early literature describes Peter being uncomfortable with women in leadership roles, while Paul's treatment of women was exemplary... but only at a personal level.
- The way that Christianity could be presented in the Sassanid Church of the East would not have worked in the Roman Church. Paul's argument with Peter in Antioch over Jews and Gentiles eating together after the Council suggest that Paul was being checked up on, and the forced departure of Thomas to India, implies that major disputes took place.



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## DISAGREEMENTS

- There is textual evidence for these disagreements. In Thomas, Peter is demoted to the role of *“Wise Messenger”*, instead of being, as in the Canonical Gospels; *“The Rock upon the Church is built”*. Also, in place of being the Doubter in the Canonical Gospels, Thomas becomes the supreme confidant instead
- Paul’s statement in Galatians 3:28: *“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”*, could, and should have, found its full expression: not just within the Church, but also in society around it.
- The most obvious attack on the commitment of Thomas comes in the Gospel of John where Thomas the Apostle is given a dramatic role and spoken part. Thomas is the only character in the Gospel who is described as unbelieving. Various commentators note that other verses in the Gospel may also challenge the Thomasine position.

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## TOTAL EQUALITY

- In the ancient Middle Eastern world gender transformations and their threats, metaphorical or not were used as political and social weapons to manipulate people in society. To “*Make Mary Male*” in saying 114 in Thomas was to give her full equality with all the male apostles, in social roles, in public and private ministry, and in every other act<sup>348</sup>
- It is notable that Jesus did not condemn gender complementarity, However, he condemned the social, religious, and legal enforcement of it many times. That lack of condemnation should be contrasted with the repeated statements of Peter, Paul and early church leaders who instead socially and religiously enforced, it to ensure the survival of the early Christian movement, and to give it social respect.
- For Thomas there was no place in the Gospel message where the submission of women and the legal enforcement of gender complementarity could be accepted acts.

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## GOSPELS OF THOMAS AND JOHN

- Based on its content, context, and structure, some argue that at least the core elements of the Gospel of Thomas were written at a very early date.
- It has also been noted by various investigators that several verses in the Gospel of John can be best understood as responses to a Thomasine community and its beliefs. It is also noted that the Gospel of John deliberately seeks to provide an addition or a counterbalance to the material which the Gospel of Thomas presents.
- The first verse in Chapter 1 of John reads *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”*.

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## RESURRECTION ISSUES

- Verse 14 in Chapter 1 of John's Gospel states: *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"* This stresses the physical reality of the resurrection, also John's full acceptance of that physical reality in ways that are absent from Thomas. The story of *"Doubting Thomas"* in John's Gospel rams home this point.
- However, Verse 1 Chapter 1 in John's Gospel reflects the metaphysical truth of the Gospel message in ways which are also present in Thomas. Both Gospels were highly regarded in the Eastern tradition and the thoughts of Thomas about the spirit and body are not so different from those which John presents
- These features suggest that the text of Thomas already existed and had a following before John's Gospel was written, and that John reacts to the arguments they present.

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## GNOSIS

- In common with Jewish practice of the time, the teaching of Jesus was cabalistic. This demands that the teaching is understood within a culture but not outside it. That requires interpretation which his disciples asked for many times
- Thomas is often called a “*Gnostic Gospel*”. Gnosis refers to knowledge based on personal perception. In a religious context it is a secret mystical knowledge involving direct participation with the divine. Possession alone is sufficient for salvation. While John talks about the “*Light of the World*”, Thomas talks about “*The Light Within*.”
- Many the sayings in Thomas are found elsewhere in synoptic gospels. In Thomas they are often in simple forms and unburdened with explicit interpretation. Other sayings have strong affinities with other early Jewish wisdom theologians. All of these sayings demand action in the expression of Christian Love, and not on “*gnosis*” or belief alone.

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## REQUIREMENT FOR ACTION

- That need for action might best be illustrated in sayings 96 and 97... In saying 96, *“Jesus says: “The kingdom of the Father is like a woman. She took a little bit of yeast. She hid it in dough and made it into huge loaves of bread. Whoever has ears should hear”*. Corresponding Texts are in Matthew 13:33 and Luke 13:20-21.
- In Saying 97, *“Jesus says: “The kingdom of the Father is like a woman who is carrying a jar filled with flour. While she was walking on the way, very distant from home, the handle of the jar broke, and the flour leaked out on the path. But she did not know it; she had not noticed a problem. When she reached her house, she put the jar down on the floor and found it empty.”* This saying is not in the Canonical Gospels. While Saying 96 says the Kingdom will grow if it is leavened, saying 97 states it will die in you if it is ignored. Taken together therefore it is not a belief in the words, it is the continuing commitment to the leavening, or fulfilment of the Gospel message that is required.

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## ADDITIONS

- If we are to properly understand the Gospel of Thomas, we must look backwards into what Jewish experience, theology and tradition describes, instead of forwards into gnostic literature, which often romances what Christianity would do.
- Although Christian Gnostic influences are present to a limited extent, notably in the introduction, there are none of the fantasies usually associated with Christian Gnosticism. However, there are references to the spiritualities and Gnosés of Jewish tradition. If later additions to the Gospel have been made, they appear to follow the same pattern.
- Prominent in the Gospel is its advocacy for gender equality and the roles of women. It sometimes been argued that these are anachronistic later additions (notably saying 114 “*to make Mary male*”). However, an early date, and its closeness to the lifetime of Thomas make the addition of anything which did not endorse his viewpoint unlikely<sup>349</sup>

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## BODILY RESURRECTION

- John, in his Gospel, matter-of-factly presents a bodily resurrection as if this is a sine qua non of the Christian faith. In contrast, the insights that Thomas gives about the spirit and body are more nuanced. For Thomas, the resurrection of Jesus seems to be more of a cognitive event of spiritual attainment.
- If the Gospel of Thomas is purely reporting the sayings of Jesus, then Thomas is only reporting on his earthly ministry. This could only include the expectations of Jesus, and no account of the resurrection would be included. The apparently disparaging portrayal in the "*Doubting Thomas*" story in John's Gospel may either be a full condemnation, or just a reproach, which does not censure Thomas outright, but is an improving gloss.
- However bodily resurrection is not excluded. Thomas accepts it on the basis of proof, and John's Gospel was regarded as the most important in the Church of the East.



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## SURVIVAL

- Christianity was faced with two major challenges when it moved from its Jewish background into the different cultures of the first century world
- The first was the Jewish requirement for circumcision. The Council of Jerusalem decided it was no longer obligatory. Paul argued that circumcision no longer meant any physical act, only a spiritual practice<sup>350</sup>. Thomas in Saying 53 reports Jesus taking the same approach<sup>351</sup>
- The second was about the survival of the Church and the roles of women in society. Evidence from the early Church Fathers suggests that Peter was uncomfortable with women in leadership roles. Paul's treatment of women individually was exemplary, but he also required them to conform to Roman social expectations to obtain respectability, and for the survival of the Church. Thomas was free from these constraints.

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## IMPRESSIONS

- There are two overriding impressions which come from this study
- The first comes from the nature of the sayings in the Gospel of Thomas. Those which duplicate sayings in the Synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are almost always presented in more basic forms. Some of the sayings relate to Judea before the death of James the Just, or before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. These imply an early date. Other sayings, not in the Synoptic Gospels, reflect Jewish wisdom teaching, instead of later Christian traditions. The teaching of Jesus was cabalistic, implying that it was intended to be understood within Jewish culture, but not outside it.
- Thomas may be a “*Gnostic Gospel*”, but it looks back into Jewish traditions, which Jesus would have known and applied. If there are later additions, none of them have broken the pattern described.

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## MORE IMPRESSIONS

- The second overriding impression is the emphasis on gender equality, and how much Jesus celebrated and valued the roles of women, as the Gospel of Thomas presents.
- We have already seen that Sayings 21 and 61 in the Gospel of Thomas present Mary Magdalene and Salome as wise confidants of Jesus, while the disciples are presented as those stumbling to understand. Saying 22 makes it clear that there should be no difference in treatment between men and women, or denial of their identities or roles.
- Saying 114 states: *“Simon Peter said to them: Let Mary [Magdalene] go away from us, for women are not worthy of life.” Jesus said: “Look, I will draw her in so as to make her male, so that she too may become a living male spirit, similar to you. (But I say to you): Every woman who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven”*

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## EQUALITY

- We have seen that Jesus did not condemn gender complementarity. He supported it. However, he condemned the social, religious, and legal enforcement of it many times. Saying 114 in the Gospel of Thomas reinforces that condemnation.
- A major feature of gender complementarity or gender divided society comes from the way it separates the male from the female roles. Any form of gender and sexually variant behaviour, regardless of motives which departs from the usual expectations challenges this distinction and attacks the “*Good order*” of that society.
- To “*Make Mary and all women male*” is not to deny or change sex. It gives women full and equal access to power, status, a soul<sup>352</sup>, and to all roles occupied by men in society, including equality in ministry, leadership, preaching, and teaching in the Church. It reveals a gender equality taught by Jesus that is appropriate to the present-day world.

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## CONTINUITY

- Four centuries later in Ireland, the demands for gender equality were essentially the same as those in the Gospel of Thomas. In the Irish Celtic Church, they gave women and men equality of status and entitlement to the same teaching, preaching and leadership roles
- Again, some 1200 years later, exactly the same principles of gender equality, which also gave women equality of status and entitlement to the same teaching, preaching and leadership roles as men, were core principles of the Cathar Revolt.
- In 1298 the distinguished East Syriac scholar Abdisho bar Brika<sup>353</sup> wrote in his *“Book of the Pearl”*<sup>354</sup> that the East Syriac Christians had *“never changed their faith and preserved it as they had received it from the apostles, and are called Nestorians unjustly, especially since Nestorius was not their patriarch and did not understand their language”*<sup>355</sup>

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## CELIBACY

- We find two reasons for the advocacy of celibacy within the Christian tradition. The first is because of devotion and commitment to spreading the Gospel Message as taught by Jesus, and the second is the avoidance of the abuses and attractions of sex
- By the fourth century, that demand for avoidance and denial in the Roman Church was associated with the Fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden. Sex itself became a measure of that failure and the condemnation was not just about the avoidance of sexual acts but involved the denial of all thoughts of sex.
- Early descriptions of the Church of the East contain similar contributions, but the major focus was on “*The Solitary*” ones, where the clear reason for pursuing celibacy was their devotion to the Gospel Message. Thus, acts of devotion in the Church of the East were characterised by sometimes extreme asceticism, instead of the disgust of sex.

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## CONDEMNATIONS OF SAME-SEX INTERCOURSE

- Earlier we also saw in our investigation of first century Jewish Society that the reasons for forbidding same-sex intercourse in Leviticus almost exclusively condemned the abuses of power that give rise to abuses of sex. Paul a Hellenistic Jew would have been aware of this and his use of Leviticus in this context covers all forms of abusive sex.
- We have also seen that Jerome in the Vulgate; his Latin translation of the Bible, took the same approach. By re-publishing the Canons of the Council of Ancyra, Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Emperor adopted the same interpretation. In all these understandings the condemnations of same-sex intercourse are about sexual abuse not the sexual act.
- The same understanding within the Irish Celtic Church and others, that this is about abuse, together with the acceptance of loving same-sex relationships in Spiritual Marriages and Anam Cara again affirm that it is the abuse that is condemned, not the act.

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## PAUL'S CHALLENGE

- In their descriptions of the early Indian Church, we previously saw that in Thomas Aykara and John B. Chethimattam, identified some of the theological challenges that Paul, unlike Thomas, had to face in bringing Christianity into the Greek and Roman words.
- Paul had to face equally strong social challenges in seeking acceptance of Christianity in the Greek and Roman worlds. Crucially we must decide whether all of Paul's condemnations were needed for the early Church to survive and to gain respect in Roman society or were something fundamental to the teaching that Jesus presents<sup>356</sup>.
- Paul did accept compromise. In 1 Corinthians 9:20 he states *"To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law.* Thomas never mentions Paul, although Paul's later teaching confronts what Thomas presents.



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## CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS

- Paul's condemnations must also be judged in the light of his actions. At a personal level his treatment of women is exemplary, with full support for women in teaching, preaching and leadership roles. Yet in his behavioural condemnations he imposes a strict social and legal gender complementarity on these Christian Communities. This matches the subjection of women to male authority in a deeply gender unequal Roman society.
- There is a stark contradiction between these two perspectives. Paul's initial teaching in the Roman Empire, which led to his urgent recall to Jerusalem for the Apostolic Council in AD51, was perceived to contribute to the difficulties encountered at the time when Christianity was being carried to the Jewish, Gentile, Roman and Persian worlds.
- Although the Council relaxed some of the Jewish restrictions on Gentile converts it exposed the need to adjust to very different cultures, and that caused a major dispute.

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## WHAT'S THE PLAN?

- There is little doubt about the importance of women in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church. As teachers, preachers, witnesses, and leaders, they played crucial roles. It is also absolutely clear in the Gospel of Thomas that Thomas gives women this same status, and that this was the reason for his dispute with the other Apostles<sup>357</sup>
- We also know that Paul also recognised women's importance and gave similarly strong support to women in their teaching, preaching and leadership roles. However, instead of siding with Thomas, Peter and Paul worked together to bring Christianity to the Roman world. They both spent time together before the Apostolic Council. It appears that some form of agreement was reached, but Peter at times found Paul difficult to understand!<sup>358</sup>.
- The command of Jesus to "*Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's*" meant that Christianity had to work within society to change it, so adaptations had to be made.

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## WHAT DID THE COUNCIL SAY?

- Although we no access to the Council's decisions, we might infer some instead
- The first requires that there should be no revolutionary change to the social order in Roman society. The need is to work for change within it, so continuity is to be sought.
- The second is to gain the respect of the authorities and Roman people. This need for respect resounds through the Epistles and Letters of Peter and Paul. It may be argued for in the statement of Jesus "*Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's*", but that does not correspond with the severity of Jesus' own attacks on the Jewish authorities, and his refusal to discriminate against women in any way
- The third is to avoid any direct confrontation with Roman culture in areas which do not immediately impact on the Gospel Message. The issue of slavery is a case in point.

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## CONSTRAINTS

- A further issue at the time was that the Christian movement still had not separated itself from Judaism. It accepted Jesus as the Messiah but otherwise it considered itself to be a Jewish sect
- Jesus had also said that he had come to fulfil all the Law and the Prophets, not to replace them. Jewish society was a strongly matriarchal society, but distinctly separate gender roles were enforced and the submission of women to men was required. Because of these there would have been very strong pressure to develop Christian doctrines on gender complementarity and gender equality using the principles which Jewish law dictates.
- What seems to be clear that this is a decision the Council reached. Peter was happy with it, Paul abided by it, but the inconsistencies in his teaching, and his argument with Peter and others at Antioch, could infer that he was concerned.

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## SUBMISSION

- The major problem with this is that there is absolutely no evidence that Jesus tolerated the submission of women. The opposite is true.
- Earlier we noted that the most striking thing about the role of women in the life and teaching of Jesus is that they are always present. And the continual testimony to the presence of women amongst the followers of Jesus, including his serious teaching and treatment of them is a break with tradition which has been described as without any precedent in contemporary Judaism. Of all the founders of religions and religious sects, Jesus stands alone as the one who did not discriminate against women in any way<sup>359</sup>.
- The one thing that could justify this teaching of Peter and Paul as presented in the Epistles or Letters is either that of giving way to traditional precepts of the Jewish Law, or the need to defer, compromise, or adapt this teaching to ensure the survival of the Church<sup>360</sup>.

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## UNCERTAINTY

- For a powerless church in a powerful, patriarchal, and despotic society, maybe a deferral was the only choice. However, enforcing any deferral would be disastrous in societies where greater gender equality already existed... as in the Church of the East or Sassanid Church... and Thomas's attacks on Peter imply that no settlement was reached.
- This meant that in place of attacking Roman Institutions and customs in a grossly discriminatory and enslaving Roman World, the Christian Gospel is instead to be spread through the example and actions of its followers, the purity of their behaviour (as seen in Roman culture): with care and compassion for everyone: men, women and poor alike.
- A further difficulty is that no outcome is specified. It could be the enforcement of a gender complementarity which reflects the structures and expectations of Roman society, or the complete gender equality that Thomas expects.

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## CULTURAL IMPACTS

- Despite these, it is still difficult to match Paul's regressive teaching on the enforcement of gender complementarity and the submission of women, with his support for them in their teaching, preaching and leadership roles. Most commentators explain this by treating some of the texts as later additions, which do not reflect Paul's teaching and concerns<sup>361</sup>
- Moreover, the theology that Peter and Paul (or replacements) as we have it, relies entirely on maintaining the Jewish Law and traditions, where similar forms of subjection and segregation of women were applied. We noted that although Jesus accepted gender complementarity, he condemned its legal enforcement, and the subjection of women many times. This denunciation by Jesus and the impact of the New Covenant is ignored.
- As with slavery, Peter and Paul did not attack these social conventions in any way. We have seen that at this may reflect the need for unity and a pragmatic approach<sup>362</sup>.

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## IMPLEMENTATION

- Although both Peter and Paul did take the same united approach, each presents different ideas on the outcomes that should be sought.
- Paul describes his ideal of a Christian community in Galatians 3:28: *“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”*, How this is reached may be best seen in the story of the runaway slave.
- Paul does not condemn slavery, indeed in his letter to Philemon he requires that the runaway slave be returned to his master, at the same time telling Philemon that there is no place for slavery in any Christian Community. Equally all other social divisions described in Galatians disappear so *“all are as one in Christ Jesus”*, Thus, Paul’s vision supports the gender equality required by Thomas, which demands full parity between men and women, including in teaching, preaching and leadership roles in the Christian Church.



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## SHORTFALL

- Like Paul, Peter also tells Christian women to submit to their husbands. In addition, he tells women to refrain from wearing makeup and fancy clothing, in order to be models of propriety and righteousness in Roman society, and to convince their husbands of the virtue of their Christian behaviour, and so win their unbelieving husbands over to Christ<sup>363</sup>
- For Peter the teaching of Jesus meant that both women and men are given equal esteem. However, this still maintained the social structures in Jewish society, where women remained under the authority of men. Peter was known to be unhappy with women as leaders, so this took gender complementarity and Jewish values into the Christian world.
- Unlike Paul, Peter seems to have considered this form of gender complementarity to be an end in itself. A consequence of this is that a pragmatic approach which may have been needed for its survival had been transformed into doctrines of the Church.

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## THEMES

- Three different themes therefore seem to be emerging. The first, most usually associated with Peter, relies on carrying over the Jewish traditions into the Roman and Christian worlds. This gives men and women equal esteem: but the esteem given to women is that of guardians of the home and of family life. Men are the heads of the family and guardians of public interactions. Only men should engage in leadership and public roles.
- Peter and Paul, both endorsed gender complementarity in their constant exhortations to the Christian communities to seek respectability in Roman society. However, for Paul this was only a step towards seeking the ideal Christian society where *“there is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”*, and the barriers of enforced gender complementarity are swept away<sup>364</sup>.
- For Thomas and a gender equal society. There could be no such compromise or delay.

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## STRATEGIES

- In place of attacking the authorities, Paul instead encourages the Churches, to become beacons of light, and witnesses to the full Christian inclusion and welcome that Jesus teaches, in the darkness of a despotic and unheeding world.
- Whether Paul willingly concurred with the decisions of the Apostolic Council is a moot point. The decision by Peter and members of the Jerusalem Church to come up to Antioch after the Council, and the argument which took place between Peter and Paul suggest that there was some doubt.
- For Thomas, implementing such a decision would be a disaster, since the subjection of women to men and the denial of opportunities to women would have destroyed the equality of opportunities and the greater gender equality already practised in the Persian and Zoroastrian worlds.

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## AUTHENTICITY

- A major problem is that all the texts we have come with strong agendas attached
- Thomas, in the Gospel of Thomas, is clearly attacking Peter and the other disciples for their failure to implement in full, as he understands it, the teaching that Jesus presents.
- Most scholars believe that Paul only wrote seven of the Pauline epistles, Galatians, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philemon, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians. The remaining epistles, namely Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, are widely regarded as pseudepigraphal, that is, not written by Paul but are presented in Paul's name
- Pursuing these agendas means that would be pressure to attribute to Paul, a teaching, not of Paul's, which confirms the accepted doctrines of the Roman church<sup>365</sup>.

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## INTERPRETATION

- Thus, care is needed in any interpretation. The first and second Epistles to Timothy and Titus today by common consent are not considered to be written by Paul. As a consequence, these attempt to put into Paul's name a doctrine of the early Roman Church.
- The furore over whether Mary should be called "*The Mother of Christ*" or the "*Mother of God*" at the time of Nestorius probably reflects disagreement in the attitudes to women in the different churches.
- There is a world of difference between any teaching or strategy which is needed to ensure the survival of the Church in a potentially hostile society, and one which truly represents the doctrines of the Church. Paul gets a bad press because his teaching is presented in a way that identifies gender complementarity and the submission of women as goals to be sought. Not steps to his vision of the total inclusion that Jesus presents.

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## DISAGREEMENT

- We have seen that Thomas's forced departure to India and the strength of his comments, suggest an intense conflict: and one where no agreement was reached. Different trajectories were then pursued by the Western Church, and the Sassanid Church of the East<sup>366</sup>.
- These divisions occurred at a time when women were already taking major teaching, preaching and leadership roles in all of the Churches, including the Roman Church. That seems to have lasted to some degree until the time of Tertullian, (155 - c 220 AD)<sup>367</sup>, although these pressures were increasing from an early date<sup>368</sup>. From that time onwards women were denied all teaching, preaching and leadership roles in the Roman Church.
- On women, Tertullian writes: *"Do you not know that you are Eve? The judgment of God upon this sex lives on in this age; therefore, necessarily the guilt should live on also. You are the gateway of the devil; you are the one, who unseals the curse of that tree"*

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## CONDEMNATIONS OF WOMEN

- Sadly, Tertullian was not alone in his condemnations. Many others contributed to the disparagement of women's identities and femininity in the Roman Church. Although technically both men and women were considered equally to blame for the fall of Adam women had to do penance for the sins of Eve throughout their earthly lives
- Unlike the Roman Church, the Sassanid Church of the East did not face these issues. This came to a head in the Cathar Revolt when the inequitable treatment of women in the Roman Church was challenged by gender equalities from the Church of the East.
- 1 Timothy 2:15, claims that Paul states “*Yet she [the woman] will be saved through childbearing — if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control*”? For the Roman church this denotes the submission of women. For the Church of the East women were liberated after “*Mary said yes*” to bearing the Christ Child: and had equality instead.

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## CONTINUITY

- Christianity never in the first instance sought to separate itself from Judaism. So, continuities and seamless changes should be expected. Any analysis should first begin by considering how gender and sexuality was treated in the first century Jewish world.
- In common with other societies the acceptability of male relationships in first century Judaism was made by distinguishing between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. Responsibility was demanded. Male same-sex intercourse was the only totally prohibited act, and this was because of the abuses of power and sex.
- In Part 2: “*Paradigm Shift in Christian Teaching*”, Part 3: “*Marriage and Relationships*”, Part 4: “*Reformation and Condemnation*”, and Part 5: “*Rediscovery*”, of these presentations we have seen how loving same-sex relationships could be expressed during the first millennium in the Christian Church.



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## CHANGES

- In these we saw that after the Cathar defeat there was a paradigm shift in Christian teaching...The moral duality which existed in first century Judaism and guided Christianity through much of the first millennium, where all sexual relationships given in love were highly valued but those engaged in for immoral or abusive purposes were strongly condemned... was replaced by the universal condemnation of all same-sex sexual acts.
- Although the contributions of women became more highly valued, and the cult of Mariology gave women even greater status, the continuing and increased enforcement of a gender complementarity which deprived women from teaching, preaching, and leadership roles, reinforced their positions as handmaids of men in the life of the Church.
- Instead of condemning the abuses of power which gave permission for the abuses of sex, the condemnations became focussed on condemning the sexual act<sup>369</sup>.

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## DEFICIENCIES

- One of the most serious concerns arises because of the separation of the abuse of power from the abuse of sex. Not only has this allowed the shameful history of sexual abuse within the Christian Church, also by condemning the symptoms rather than the cause, it has inhibited the Church from engaging in effective remedial acts<sup>370</sup>.
- The turning of strategies and approaches which were necessary for the survival of the early Church into the doctrines of the Church transforms a Christian movement from one which had challenged the defects of a society, into one who consents to them. How often have we seen this happen in Ireland and in many other parts of the world?
- Any analysis which ignores the paradigm shift and insists on enforcing Christian teaching “*as the Church of England has received it*”, also disregards the moral duality in same sex relationships, and seeks a history which supports the doctrines of a medieval church.

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## RESISTANCE

- All gender and sexually variant people are vulnerable, because only science and experiential evidence supports their position. When both of these elements are absent, or denied, it is perfectly reasonable for people to assume that any engagement which departs from the biological stereotypes pursues immoral purposes or inappropriate acts.
- Centuries of criminalisation and condemnation of all gender and sexually variant behaviour destroyed the experiential evidence available during the first millennium. Christian ethics transformed from those which could accept loving and responsible same-sex relationships and gender variant behaviour, into those which colluded with the secular scapegoating and persecution of gender and sexually variant people, with horrendous results.
- Gender critical feminist groups likewise scapegoat transgender people by denying the current neuroscience and clinical evidence... to prove that gender identity does not exist.

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## VALUING WOMEN

- When Michael Mitton Wrote
- *"We find, then, in the Celtic church an impressive acceptance of the feminine. It is desperately sad to recognise how this was lost after the Synod of Whitby" Had we been allowed to pursue the natural faith that the Spirit of God first breathed upon this land, which contained a far more just attitude to women than was experienced elsewhere, then our shameful history of repression of women may not have developed...we would also have had a far healthier attitude to sexuality generally, affirming the masculine and feminine within ourselves and within our communities*
- This is not confined to Irish Christianity: he was describing the loss of the value of the feminine, doctrines which force people into stereotypical male and female roles and attacks the legitimate expression of gender variant and loving same sex relationships.

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## TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

- In Matthew 19:12 Jesus declares that: *“There are eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake”*
- Self-castration as an act of extreme devotion was widely practiced in the first century world. It was a requirement for the male Goddess priests. In the fourth of these presentations, we saw that Jesus included those who had self-castrated as well as those castrated by others. For Jesus the gender transformations and acts of castration were not relevant. The welcome that Jesus gave applied to everyone who followed the Gospel message, involving transgender people alike.
- Therefore, as with the transgressive body of the eunuch in the New Testament, all transgender people who use the breadth and range of their experiences to embrace and fulfil the Gospel message can engage in the same priestly acts. (Acts 8:26-40)<sup>371 372</sup>

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## THE NEW COVENANT

- Christianity never tried to separate itself from first century Judaism or to replace the Law and the Prophets. What Jesus did was to move away from a strict legalistic interpretation of their features, which were based on penalties and condemnations, into understandings where the judgements were made on love and the intentions of the acts.
- In this account we have shown that a moral duality existed in first century Judaism where responsible and loving same sex relations were highly valued, but any who use them for abuse are condemned for their acts. The only act specifically prohibited was male same-sex intercourse. The first Century interpretations of Leviticus 18: 22 and 20:13 show this was entirely because of the abuses of power and sex. It is demonstrated in this analysis that in any loving, responsible, caring, and faithful relationship, where these abuses of power and domination are absent, there should be no automatic condemnation of heterosexual or same sex intercourse or any other loving sexual act.

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## PROTECTION OF WOMEN

- There is also an enormous difference between the imperative need to pass laws and regulations which ensure the safety of women, and gives them protection from male aggression, against those laws which deprive them of gender equality and social roles.
- The Magnificat in Luke gives women and motherhood a very high status, yet the Roman Church has deprived them, and in many areas still deprives them, of public preaching, teaching, and women's participation in many public leadership roles.
- Gender equality does not mean treating people identically. Biological and physical differences make it essential to treat men and women differently, and to protect women against sexual violation, abuses, and attacks: this must be absolute. Gender equality means giving same opportunities and respect for everybody, with protection where necessary in the ways that we live our lives. These opportunities must never be denied.

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## TODAY

- How should we today reach agreement when the first Century church did not.
- Some 80 percent of the Churches in the Anglican Communion, including GAFCON<sup>373</sup> support the traditional teaching of the Church using the doctrine of gender complementarity as it is presented today... while only about twenty percent seek gender equality and a fully egalitarian approach.
- Peter, Paul, and Thomas took Christianity into very different societies, and the nature of these societies determined their types of approach. Previously as a slave, Patrick would be expected to have a good understanding of Brehon law and society. It may be argued that Patrick succeeded in Ireland because he came to adapt his teaching to that of the much more gender equal society... while Palladius, who came before him failed because he did not.



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## OUTCOME

- To attempt to enforce a gender complementarity where women are expected to defer from men, both then and today in any more gender equal society would only be seen as attempts to turn the clock back. These attempts in the present-day gender equal societies is destroying the credibility of the Church
- As Peter, Paul and Thomas found, it should be expected that there are different ways to reach the same goal. There may be disagreements on the process, but there should be no disagreement in the goal.
- Jesus did not attack gender complementarity, but he attacked it's social, legal and religious enforcement many times. Alone among the religious leaders of the time, Jesus is the only one who did not discriminate against women or challenge their equality in any way. This is the mark of a gender equal and egalitarian Church

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## QUESTIONS

- The decision by Peter and Paul to argue for the continued enforcement of traditional Jewish and Roman customs involving this subjection of women and the social legal and religious enforcement of strongly divided gender roles... together with their constant efforts, in their Epistles and Letters to ensure that Christianity both respects the authorities and gains the respect of others in Roman society... allowed entry and evangelised Roman society. However, it removed the challenges to the social structures that Jesus presents. Do you think that their approach was correct? Discuss the difficulties and challenges it brought.
- Gender-critical feminist groups and traditional Christian doctrines both apply the same forms of gender complementarity. This dictates that gender identification must follow biological sex. Any departure from this is driven by sexual motives and is a disruption to the normally expected path of development. What is the impact of this?



***Christian Doctrines, Transgender Disputes, and Celtic Traditions.***

***Susan Gilchrist***

***PART 10: FUTURE DIRECTIONS***

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## OVERVIEW

- In this series we have traced the development of Christianity from three perspectives. One is that of the Church in the Roman Empire, and the other is through the Sassanid, or Persian Church of the East, and the Irish Celtic Church
- In tracing the history of the Roman Church, we saw that men and women were given equal esteem. All are of equal value in the eyes of God, but a gender complementarity was enforced which imposes stereotypical male and female roles and determines that gender identity must follow biological sex. Any departure from this is a falling from grace and is considered to pursue immoral or depraved sexual acts.
- The Sassanid Church of the East and others did not deny gender complementarity but refused to enforce it: They demanded that gender equality and inclusion is practiced, so that all, regardless of gender and sexuality, have equal opportunities in everyday life,

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## CHURCH OF THE EAST

- The results of this study demonstrate that we are likely to get closer to the teaching of Jesus if we base our analyses on the experiences of the Sassanid Church of the East, the Parthians, the Desert Fathers, and the Irish Celtic Church. None of these had to deal with the adaptations the Roman Church needed to survive in a grossly unequal and patristic society, with its subjection of women and the changes in teaching which occurred.
- The leadership and structure of the Church of the East remained largely disorganised until 315 when Papa bar Aggai (310–329), bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, imposed the primacy of his see over the other Mesopotamian and Persian bishoprics. The Church of the East, shared communion with the other Churches in the Roman Empire until 431.
- However, the Church of the East, which had been far larger than the Roman Church was swept away by Muslim conquests and much of its history and theology was destroyed

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## DEPENDABILITY

- This lack of central organisation and authority may raise concerns about theological orthodoxy in the Church of the East. The one and only almost complete extant version of the Gospel of Thomas was discovered in a cache hidden near a Pachomian monastery near Nag Hamadi in Egypt, with various Christian gnostic scripts. It was presumably buried after Saint Athanasius condemned the use of non-canonical books in 367 A.D.
- What we know of Cathar theology also raises questions about their theological orthodoxy. However, the only record we have is the testimony of the victors, since all evidence coming from Cathar sources was either suppressed or destroyed.
- The library of the Thomasine Christians in India was destroyed by the Portuguese somewhere around 1560. This means that access to the early sources is limited. Therefore, a greater dependability and access to history might be found in the Irish Celtic Church.

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## THE IRISH CELTIC CHURCH

- Christianity in the Roman Empire from 527 to 565. was organised in the five distinct sees of the Pentarchy which, although in communion with each other were largely independent, and often disagreed. Rome did not have overall authority.
- Christianity came late to Ireland. Its formation via the Church of the East and the Desert Fathers, skirted the periphery of the Roman Empire. Its gender equality meant that the theology of the Irish Celtic Church had more in common with the Church of the East.
- Although the Irish Church failed to maintain the organisational structure that St Patrick instituted, it still remained in communion with Rome. Between 560 and 1000 CE much of Northern Europe was re-evangelised by Irish Christian monks. Thus, a form of Christianity which espoused gender equality surrounded the Roman Empire and the Roman Church which enforced gender complementarity within it.

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## ORTHODOXY

- We have seen that, unlike the Roman Church, the Church of the East had a much more diffuse organisational structure, which may have made it more prone to Christian Gnostic influences, and less discipline applied to its theology.
- There is no evidence of any equivalent influences in the Irish Celtic Church. St. Patrick accepted the previous existing Brehon Law as a model for Irish society. He removed only the sections he felt were incompatible with Christianity, leaving others including attitudes to gender equality and same-sex relationships largely intact.
- This gave a distinctive brand of Irish Christianity which espoused gender equality, valued the feminine, gave an acceptance of gender and sexually variant people, asceticism, and monasticism, which had much in common with Thomas and the Church of the East, but in other respects accepted the orthodoxy and practices of the Roman Church.



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## INTERACTIONS

- It is a mistake to believe that all of these Churches acted independently. There was considerable interaction, St. Patrick was recognised as the patron saint of Irish Christianity in the Church of the East. However, there was not a united approach.
- This means that it is better to treat these Churches as a network in societies where different attitudes to gender equality and gender complementarity prevailed, where authority was only gradually established, and where no agreement on a common approach was reached. We have seen how this developed in the earlier presentations.
- The real test comes through considering how the approaches of Peter, Paul, and Thomas match the teaching of Jesus. Only Thomas seems to meet that expectation. Paul appears to see it as goals to be sought. For Peter it seems that achieving gender complementarity, instead of the complete gender equality sought by the others was an end in itself.

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## CONTINUITY

- The early Christians never sought to separate themselves from Judaism. Therefore, we should expect to see a continuity of tradition being carried over into the Christian Church.
- In these first Century societies we saw that only sexual relationships between men were considered and the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour was made on the grounds of the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex. We have also seen that loving and responsible male same-sex relationships were supported in first century Judaism. However, there was a total ban on male same-sex intercourse, and that was because of the abuses of power and sex: not about the act.
- We have also seen that in 1298 the distinguished East Syriac scholar Abdisho bar Brika<sup>374</sup> wrote in his *“Book of the Pearl”*<sup>375</sup> that the East Syriac Christians had *“never changed their faith and preserved it as they had received it from the apostles”*<sup>376</sup>

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## ADAPTATION

- One of the positive features about Christianity has been its flexibility in accepting local religious traditions and incorporating them as far as is possible into its own beliefs. This is what St Patrick did in Ireland. We may presume that Thomas, Thaddeus of Edessa, Addai and Mari did the same in the Persian, Mesopotamian, and Zoroastrian worlds
- Little change to the teaching of Jesus on gender and sexuality was needed in the Church of the East since it was already included in these societies. However, the attacks by Jesus on the legalism and the abuses and injustices in Jewish society were severe and without compromise. Only Thomas seems to have continued these in the Eastern Church.
- In the search for acceptability and respectability, the same challenges in the teaching of Jesus, were lost in the Roman Church: and a church which conformed to the expectations of a first century Roman society has become the model for a present-day church.

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## DIFFERENCES

- The Church of the East, The Irish Celtic Church, those in Northern Europe and on the periphery of the Roman Empire embraced brands of Christianity in which full gender equality was adopted. Women had equality of status because the Virgin Mary had already said “yes” to bearing the Christ child, and people lived in societies where women were accepted in teaching, preaching and leadership roles.
- That is in stark contrast to the gender complementary in the Roman Church which made them subject to the authority of men and deprived them of these public roles. Although women were regarded as fully equal with men, this was in heaven and not on earth, femininity was decried, and women had to do penance for the sins of Eve in their earthly lives
- As we have it the New Testament seems to support only the latter approach. This is why we need to look carefully at the evidence the Irish and other Churches can provide.

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## TRADITION

- Today the traditional Christian teaching on homosexuality and transsexuality by extension is best seen in article 2357 in the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church
- *“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<sup>377</sup>.*
- *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 choose 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”.*

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## CONDEMNATIONS

- Christianity never sought to separate itself from Judaism so a continuity between Jewish and Christian understanding should be expected. That continuity is absent in this account
- This doctrine not only denies the moral duality which existed in first century Judaism and guided Christianity through much of the first millennium, where responsible heterosexual and same-sex sexual relationships given in love were highly valued but those engaged in for immoral or abusive purposes were strongly condemned. It additionally condemns all gender and sexually variant behaviour as grossly disordered acts by using a gender complementarity which forces people to conform to stereotypical male and female roles, deprived leadership to women, and implied the submission of women to men in these acts.
- Finally, it ignores abuses of power by institutions or authorities, and plays into the hands of gender-critical feminist movements by attributing all of these to the desires of sex.

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## PARADIGM SHIFT

- In the previous presentations we saw how first century Jewish rabbinic partnerships became incorporated into Christian Tradition. These embraced loving and responsible same-sex relationships where the only act totally prohibited was male same sex intercourse because of its use in imposing subjection and domination in these grossly unequal and tribal societies, and the abuses of power that enabled the abuses of sex.
- During the first millennium these manifested themselves in various ways, such as Anam Cara and Spiritual Marriages which were accepted by the Christian Church
- Matters came to a head during and just after the first millennium when the Cathars who endorsed a total gender equality representative of the Church of the East, revolted against the gender and sexual abuses in the Roman Church. Defeat of the Cathars promoted the paradigm shift that changed condemning abuse to condemning the act.

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## PERSECUTION

- Any church which has conformed to the values of a gender unequal society for so long and also turns what were necessary policies for survival into its own doctrines, becomes an ally of that society and loses the ability to challenge the precepts it presents.
- Not only has that collusion reinforced the secular prejudices of such discriminatory societies towards gender and sexually variant people. It gave, and it still gives religious legitimacy to them. As we have seen in the earlier presentations, the harm that has been created is enormous. The Reformers raised the condemnations by keeping the traditional teaching of the Church<sup>378</sup> Today transgender people are coming under increasing attack.
- The consequence of that acquiescence is seen in other areas. Historically we have seen how the churches try and have tried to justify, sectarianism in Ireland, apartheid, slavery, and sides which are now being taken in the Ukrainian war.



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## VALUING WOMEN

- When Michael Mitton Wrote
- *"We find, then, in the Celtic church an impressive acceptance of the feminine. It is desperately sad to recognise how this was lost after the Synod of Whitby" Had we been allowed to pursue the natural faith that the Spirit of God first breathed upon this land, which contained a far more just attitude to women than was experienced elsewhere, then our shameful history of repression of women may not have developed...we would also have had a far healthier attitude to sexuality generally, affirming the masculine and feminine within ourselves and within our communities*
- He was describing not just the loss of the value of the feminine, he was describing doctrines which force people into stereotypical male and female roles and attacks the legitimate expression of gender variant and loving same sex relationships that then arise.

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## RESTORATION

- If we are to move beyond the present impasses and disputes, we need to remove some of the roadblocks that are present.
- Many conservative Christian groups condemn all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour by relying on this traditional teaching of the Church. By ignoring the paradigm shift and confining the remit of the LLF process to doctrines as the “*Church of England has received it*” means that the developments which took place during the first millennium are largely ignored, and the doctrines offered reflect mostly those of a medieval Church
- By the end of the second century, Christianity had turned approaches which were needed to ensure the survival of the early Church into teachings of the Church. We saw that Peter, Paul and Thomas pursued different strategies and goals. That means that we must examine how each of these approaches matches the teaching of Jesus himself.

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## SOURCES

- We have previously noted that the most striking thing about the role of women in the life and teaching of Jesus is that they are always present. And the continual testimony to the presence of women amongst the followers of Jesus, including his serious teaching and treatment of them is a break with tradition which has been described as without any precedent in contemporary Judaism. Of all the founders of religions and religious sects, Jesus stands alone as the one who did not discriminate against women in any way<sup>379</sup>.
- In the Epistles and Letters, as we have them, both Peter and Paul seem to adopt an approach of gender complementarity where the authority of men over women is asserted, and women are denied public roles. The attacks by Jesus on the Jewish authorities were without compromise. These are not matched by equivalent attacks by Peter and Paul on the Roman authorities, who instead demand that the authorities are given respect.

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## TRANSFORMATION

- These views are directly contradicted in Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28 "*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*". His treatment of the runaway slave, and his personal support for women in teaching, preaching and leadership roles, also suggests that the complete gender equality demanded by Thomas is the goal that he also sought, but the need to work within Roman Society meant that it could not be achieved at that time.
- In the Gospel of Thomas, we have seen that the saying: to "*Make Mary and all women male*" is not to deny or change sex. It gives women full and equal access to power, status, a soul<sup>380</sup>, and to all roles occupied by men in society, including equality in ministry, leadership, preaching, and teaching in the Church. It reveals a gender equality taught by Jesus that is appropriate to the present-day world.

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## INTERPRETATIONS

- A further issue concerns Matthew 19:12, where it says (New International Version) *"There are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others - and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."*
- However, that is completely different to the interpretation accepted during the first millennium where the text was taken to refer literally to eunuchs, and that included those who self-castrated in line with the requirements for the male Goddess Cults, many of whom would most likely be transgender. The Berean Literal Bible states: *"And there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of the heavens"*. The direct nature of this passage and its authenticity caused great problems for the early church. Origen self-castrated and self-castration was practiced by certain Christian groups into the 12th Century<sup>381</sup>.

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## CIRCUMCISION

- Corresponding issues concern circumcision. In Galatians Chapter 1, Paul railed against its enforcement, saying: *If you receive circumcision Christ will be of no advantage to you*
- An interesting version appears in Saying 53 in the Gospel of Thomas: *“His disciples said to him: ‘Is circumcision beneficial, or not? He said to them: If it were beneficial, their father would beget them circumcised from their mother, but the true circumcision in the spirit has prevailed over everything’”*.<sup>382</sup>
- Apart from anticipating Darwin by nearly 2000 years, the statement that *“true circumcision in the in the Spirit has prevailed over everything*, implies that, like the eunuch in Acts, all people, transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual heterosexual who follow the Gospel message have an equal entitlement and can share totally in the priesthood Christ

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## REDISCOVERY

- There are only two ways to challenge the traditional teaching of any Church where these disagreements over theology and gender and sexually variant people occur.
- These are experiential evidence and science. The centuries of criminalisation and condemnation has meant that access to experiential evidence has been denied, and the scientific evidence was not then available. Therefore, a stalemate occurred until the 1960's when legalisation and return of the freedom to express loving same-sex relationships resulted in a revolution in outlook.
- Today, same sex marriage has been legalised in many societies where gender and sexual equality is practiced, and strong laws to prevent any form of discrimination including the protection of gender and sexually variant people are in place.

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## EQUALITY

- The same principles of use and abuse must be applied equally to all heterosexual, cross-gender and same-sex acts. There is no toleration of any form of abusive or immoral sex.
- When the abuses of power are absent it is concluded that all people, transgender, transsexual, lesbian, gay, heterosexual, and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities within roles that are true to themselves; must be fully accepted in their own right.
- There is no derogation of personal relationships, women's identities, marriage, and family life. All behaviour is governed by the purity of intention. For transgender people the search is for identity and the rejection of what is wrong. For all gender and sexually variant people, there is no automatic condemnation of any cross-gender or same-sex act.



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## LESSONS

- By claiming divine authority all religions can be generators of preoccupations as well as truths. The Roman Church developed a preoccupation with sexuality. The Church of the East developed a preoccupation with asceticism, The Thomas Christians developed a preoccupation with the caste system in India.
- By returning to the inclusive Gospel of Christian Love, we can truly welcome all people, of all gender identities and sexualities into the fellowship of Christ.
- In the Gospel of Thomas, Peter is demoted to the role of “*Wise Messenger*”, instead of being as in the Canonical Gospels; “*The Rock upon the Church is built*”. We may or may not accept the legitimacy of this Gospel, but using it gives us a greater understanding of Paul’s own teaching, where no distinction is made between male and female, “*for all are as one in Christ Jesus*,” and a gender equality which gives equal opportunities for all men and women in public teaching, preaching, and leadership roles is applied

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## MOVING FORWARD

- We saw that in 1298 the East Syriac scholar Abdisho bar Brika<sup>383</sup> wrote in his *“Book of the Pearl”*<sup>384</sup> that the East Syriac Christians had *“never changed their faith and preserved it as they had received it from the apostles, and are called Nestorians unjustly, especially since Nestorius was not their patriarch and did not understand their language”*<sup>385</sup>
- Although at times subject to persecution, the Church of the East the Irish Celtic Church and the Thomas Christians faced fewer difficulties than in the Roman Church where much greater gender inequality and discrimination occurred. We have also seen the changes that have occurred because of these problems in the Roman Church,
- If we are to get closer to the teaching of Jesus, we should look instead at how Christianity developed in one of these societies, rather than in the Roman Church. The Irish Celtic Church was always in communion with Rome and that is the best model for our studies.

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## MISSION

- When we considered Celtic Christianity in the first of these presentations, we examined a Christianity where gender equality was sought. Close same-sex relationships were accepted. There was no denigration of gender transformations, and sexual acts were condemned when the intent was abuse, not because of the acts.
- Many churches and religious organisations have conformed to the demands and institutions of society they cannot stand outside them. No change will be possible for as long as the Christian Churches continue to collude with secular scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people by society. Instead, the discrimination will increase
- When Paul said In Galatians 3:28, *“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”*, He was not describing current society. That is the vision of the ideal society we are called to express.

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## CHALLENGES

- The more we encounter the divisions and discrimination in our current societies, the more we are called to fulfil that prophetic role.
- Paul, working within a grossly gender unequal and enslaving society had to try to change it by example. That message was brought by the examples of the Christian Churches shining as beacons of light in an otherwise dark and uncomprehending world.
- Today we may look to Christian Communities, including, the Iona Community, the Lindisfarne Community, the Northumbria Community, the Corrymeela Community, and others to re-envision these messages of Celtic Christianity. So that they may bring the Gospel message of full inclusion for everyone, including all gender and sexually variant people back to a fractured world, and fulfil their missions in that visionary role

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## NOTES

**Please note, these endnotes are still in draft form**

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<sup>1</sup> Say something about St Pachomius

<sup>2</sup> Persia was part of the Parthian Empire, which ruled from 247 BCE to 224 CE. From 224 CE Persia was ruled by the Sassanid Dynasty. Under the Parthians there was a great deal of religious tolerance, less under the Sassanid Dynasty where at times persecution took place. It did not develop an ordered structure until around 345 CE. We may refer to this church as the Sassanid Church since that was the time when major advances occurred.

<sup>3</sup> The Church which developed in the Persian Empire under the Sassanid Dynasty and reflected Persian and Zoroastrian Cultures. Tradition claims that the Church of the East was first founded by the Apostle Thomas, Thaddeus of Edessa, and Mari. Controversy surrounds its early origins, with Roman Christianity arguing that it only emerged as a distinctive church from the time of Nestorius. (Died: c. 450 aged 63 or 64) It later split into three major branches of Eastern Christianity which developed from the Christological controversies of the 5th and 6th centuries. From then, the Church of the East or the Church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, also called the Assyrian Church or, incorrectly, the Nestorian Church, was an Eastern Christian church of the East Syriac Rite, based in Mesopotamia, alongside the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Chalcedonian Church. Currently, three churches in Iraq claim the heritage of the Church of the East. Churches in India also claim the heritage of the Church of the East. See Gilchrist, S. (20\*\*): *“East and West: A Comparison of How the Apostles Interpreted the Gospel Message in Roman and Persian Cultures”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/035B-EastAndWest.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Tacitus in his book, Germania.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.calafia.org/library/essays/CelticClothing.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Describe 2 spirit worlds

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<sup>7</sup> Fourth Branch: Math, son of Mathonwy

<sup>8</sup> Matthews, John (2001): "The Celtic Shaman (Practical Guide)" Rider; ISBN-10: 0712614176. Gender transformations were part of the shaman's shapeshifting roles.

<sup>9</sup> Position of Women and Children: <https://www.libraryireland.com/SocialHistoryAncientIreland/III-XV-2.php> General: <https://www.libraryireland.com/Brehon-Laws/Contents.php> Celtic societies were not truly equal societies, discrimination was based on power, kinship, and status, instead of gender and sex

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.libraryireland.com/SocialHistoryAncientIreland/I-IV-2.php>

<sup>11</sup> For more information see at Gilchrist, S. (20\*\*): "East and West: A Comparison of How the Apostles Interpreted the Gospel Message in Roman and Persian Cultures": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/035B-EastAndWest.pdf> A further document: Gilchrist, S. (20\*\*): "The Gospel of Thomas: Its Origins and Consequences for Understandings of Theology, Gender and Sex in the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/027B-ThomasAnalysis.pdf> These are both draft documents and are available for comment.

<sup>12</sup> Irish monasticism was notable for its permeability. In permeable monasticism, people were able to move freely in and out of the monastic system at different points of life. Young boys and girls would enter the system to pursue Latin scholarship. Students would sometimes travel from faraway lands to enter the Irish monasteries. When these students became adults, they would leave the monastery to live out their lives. Eventually, some of these people would retire back to secure community provided by the monastery and stay until their death. Saint Patrick established churches within small enclosures in which groups of Christians, often of both sexes and including the married, lived together, served in various roles, and ministered to the local population. They were not divorced from the rest of society, but were fully engaged with it, involving craftsmen and secular groups. Double monasteries involving both men and women, of which the most influential one of St Brigid in Kildare was a typical institution, became powerhouses for evangelisation throughout the world. Like the Church of the East, Celtic Christianity also put great value on asceticism and withdrawal to remote places like Skellig Michael. The proximity with nature identified these as "Thin Places" where earth and heaven meet. Although a limited number of these "solitary ones" or solitary people regarded their withdrawal as a lifetime vocation of perfection, the more usual expectation seems to be one of treating sojourns in these places as shorter times of withdrawal, replenishment and recharging so that, as good Christians, engagement with the gospel mission and society can be better grounded and more complete. Although Celtic Christianity is sometimes considered to draw inspiration from the Desert Fathers, this ascetic tradition may have developed much earlier and independently since much earlier influences are found within Celtic pagan traditions.



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<sup>13</sup> Early monasticism was of two types. Eremitics were hermits living alone, either living off what others brought them or by a simple means of subsistence existence, such as ropemaking. Paulus the Hermit (c. 230-342) was the first Christian monk known by name to history. Eventually, many adopted a modified eremitic existence, living as hermits but near each other for occasional gatherings and support. Marcarius first encouraged this form of living, nicknamed the skete. The second type is called Cenobitic which is a gathered community of monks living together and following a common rule. Pachomius of Egypt (292-346) it is traditionally believed gathered the first community of monks, though this may have been one simply one of several loose associations. At its height in 5th through 7th centuries, Pachomius created community or cenobitic organizations, in which male or female monastics lived together and held their property in common under the leadership of an abbot or abbess. The Celtic Cenobitic monastic tradition was a different one than that of Benedict and western monasticism. It also followed Pachomian monasticism where male or female monastics lived together and held their property in common under the leadership of an abbot or abbess. Celtic monasticism, had some differences in practice and emphasis, including the practice of peregrination, wandering on land or sea without direction or planning, totally dependent upon God's purposes. They observed a different calendar than that of Rome, and, in line with monastic traditions in the Church of the East, possibly some married monks were allowed. Celtic monasteries were also known for their rich book production and early missionary work in the British Isles and France. Many of their scholars would form the backbone of the Carolingian Renaissance in future centuries. Important early Celtic missionaries include Patrick of Ireland (c. 390-461), Columbanus (543-615) who founded Iona, and Aidan (d. 651) who founded Lindisfarne in Northumbria. At the Synod of Whitby in 633, the Celtic orders adopted Roman practices, including the Roman calendar

<sup>14</sup> Edward C. Sellner gives a description of Aman Cara and the influence of the Desert Fathers on the Celtic Church in "*Soul Friendship in Early Celtic Monasticism: Part 1*" <https://www.aislingmagazine.com/aislingmagazine/articles/TAM19/Friendship.html> However, these interactions must be treated with care, because a permeable "Pachomian" monastic tradition had already been established in Egypt, which was inspired by the Church of the East. This more permeable tradition existed prior to the later attention devoted to Egypt and the Desert Fathers, by exiles from suppression by the Roman Church. In AD 367 Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria demanded the destruction of all texts which did not conform to the theology and ethos of the Roman Church. In reaction to this, certain monasteries in Egypt, including a Pachomian one near Nag Hamadi, hid their non-conforming documents rather than destroyed them. The only (reasonably full) version of the Gospel of Thomas was found among these. There were continuing fights over interpretations of Christian creeds between the Church of the East and the Roman Church, so considerable changes in theology and attitude occurred. Although always identifying itself with Roman Christianity, lack of influence or contact meant that Celtic Christianity was divorced from the authority of Rome, and it

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seems that the inspiration which the Irish Church gained from the desert fathers stemmed as much, if not more, from the permeable monasticism of the Church of the East, rather than the extremes of asceticism highlighted in the traditions of the Roman Church. See section: 6:0 Church Attitudes in Gilchrist, S: (2013g): *"Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf> , see also Gilchrist, S. (20\*\*): *"East and West: A Comparison of How the Apostles Interpreted the Gospel Message in Roman and Persian Cultures"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/035B-EastAndWest.pdf> (in draft) for more information. References to other works can be found in : [Soul Friendship](#), by Edward Sellner [Early Celtic Soul Friendship](#), by Ed Sellner [Heavenly Fire: Celtic Spirituality and Intimations of the Future](#), by Ed Sellner [The Double Archetype](#), by Ed Sellner [The Early Christian Church as an Ecclesian Entity](#), by Ed Sellner. In *"The Double Archetype"*, Sellner discusses the love between two men. There is no condemnation of homosexuality as the expression of equal love and attraction between two men (or two women) in Celtic Christianity, and same-sex intercourse is condemned only because of the abuses of power which give permission for the abuses of sex. Soul friendships may therefore be heterosexual or homosexual, where the distinctions are made, not on gender terms but between the noble pursuit of love and the carnal abuse of sex.

<sup>15</sup> Similar types of bonding are found elsewhere. The Welsh "Periglour" is another example. From a very early date services of "Adelphopoiesis" or "Brother Making" were carried out, most notably in the Eastern, or Byzantine Christian Church. Today these relationships are interpreted as "Covenanted Friendships" where sexual involvement of any type is explicitly denied. The word, "agapē" is a direct transliteration of the Jewish word *ahabà*, which is used to describe this type of relationship. Much depends on how the word "agapē" is interpreted. In Christian tradition *agapē*, is defined as the fatherly love of God for humans, and the unselfish love for each other. When discussing the relationship between David and Jonathan, on page 180 of the Resource book produced for the Church of England Living in Love and Faith programme, it is stated that *"Some have seen a sexual reference in the phrase 'passing the love of women', but while this verb always implies strong affection, it does not typically imply sexual expression"*. The resource book recognises that the word is open to various interpretations. In this resource book and Christian tradition, it is taken to represent strong affection, where all sexual elements are denied. However, in the Old Testament the same word is used in sexual contexts, and in many other places, including in the Song of Solomon, to describe committed, faithful and responsible love between two people. Therefore, the word "agapē" does not define the absence of sex. In the case of David and Jonathan, the same word is used to describe their passionate same-sex acts. In translating this passage, into Greek, the Septuagint implies this relationship included orgasm and sexual arousal, but where the permitted physical expression was only transgressed after David "exceeded" the constraints that were set. This Jewish tradition accepts



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the relationship between David and Jonathan as being a responsible and loving same sex relationship. Given the “pairs” culture in Judaism, also the first century Middle Eastern attitudes to gender and sex, there seems to be little justification of confining the concept of “Covenanted Friendships” to heterosexual relationships. In common with much of the Middle East, first century Judaism treated heterosexual and same sex relationships alike. Therefore, those who sought to conform to the highest standards of society could be highly regarded, while others who did the opposite could be severely condemned for their acts. For much of the first millennium, much of Christianity followed the same pattern, in which loving same sex relationships were openly expressed, but where male same-sex intercourse was severely condemned because of the abuses of power in the unequal and enslaving societies which gave permission for the abuses of sex. For more information on the interpretation of “agapē” see sections 2, 4:6, and 6:2 1 of Gilchrist, S. (2011b): “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf> and for Adelphopoiesis or “Brother Making” see section 10 in Gilchrist, S. (2011b): “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf> and section 3:2:5 in Gilchrist, S. (2013a): “*An Unfinished Reformation*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> The Lateran III Council of 1179 became the first to rule specifically on homosexual acts, or more correctly non-procreative sexual acts, along with moneylending, heresy, as well as the arch-heresies of Judaism and Islam.

<sup>17</sup> Many the scholars and the missionary monks of the Irish Church would form the backbone of the Carolingian Renaissance

<sup>18</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx: “Spiritual Friendship (Cistercian Fathers Book 5)” Ed Dutton, M (2010) : Liturgical Press (1 April 2010) ISBN-10 : 0879079703 ISBN-13 : 978-0879079703

<sup>19</sup> Frontain, Raymond-Jean (2003) “Reclaiming the Sacred: The Bible in Gay and Lesbian Literature” p 78 Psychology Press, 2003 ISBN 1560233559, 9781560233558

<sup>20</sup> <http://cdn.theologicalstudies.net/70/70.1/10.1177.004056390907000104.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> “He was the refuge of my spirit, the sweet solace of my griefs, whose heart of love received me when fatigued by labours, whose counsel refreshed me when plunged in sadness and grief... What more is there, then, that I can say? Was it not a foretaste of blessedness thus to love and thus to be loved?”-- Saint Aelred, from his eulogy on the death of his close companion, Simon

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion on Sergius and Bacchus see: Gilchrist, S. (2017g): “*Sergius and Bacchus*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/029B-SergiusAndBacchus.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Penitential texts

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<sup>24</sup> Wikipedia: Pentarchy: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentarchy>

<sup>25</sup> Persia was part of the Parthian Empire, which ruled from 247 BCE to 224 CE. From 247 CE Persia was ruled by the Sassanid Dynasty. Under the Parthians there was a great deal of religious tolerance, less under the Sassanid Dynasty where at times persecution took place. It did not develop an ordered structure until around 345 CE. We may refer to this church as the Sassanid Church since that was the time when major advances occurred.

<sup>26</sup> For convenience we will simply refer to the Sassanid or Ancient Church of the East as “The Church of the East”

<sup>27</sup> Church of East Comparison

<sup>28</sup> Cenobitic (or coenobitic) monasticism is a monastic tradition that stresses community life. Often in the West the community belongs to a religious order, and the life of the cenobitic monk is regulated by a religious rule, a collection of precepts. The older style of monasticism, to live as a hermit, is called eremitic. A third form of monasticism, found primarily in Eastern Christianity, is the skete. The English words “cenobite” and “cenobitic” are derived, via Latin, from the Greek words *koinos* (κοινός), “common”, and *bios* (βίος), “life”. A group of monks living in community is often referred to as a cenobium. Cenobitic monasticism appears in several religious traditions, though most commonly in Buddhism and Christianity.

<sup>29</sup> Wikipedia

<sup>30</sup> This goes back to a very early date. To the statement in 1 Timothy 2:15. “Yet she will be saved through childbearing - if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control”

<sup>31</sup> While Paul played an important role in the development of western Christianity by encouraging behaviour which would gain respect to Roman society, the social differences and gender equality in the Persia and in the East demanded different approach. In “East and West” it is shown that these came to a head around AD50 in the Council of Jerusalem

<sup>32</sup> Paul is often blamed for this: see 1 Timothy 2:15: “*Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control*”. Paul’s treatment of women as individuals is exemplary. However, if the early Church was to survive in Roman society it also had to conform to its social roles. This gave hope to women who were confined to these roles.

<sup>33</sup> Diarmaid McCulloch writes: “At page 180 [in the Living in Love and Faith Resource Book] they will be spared from the danger of encountering any exceeding at all, since LLF disingenuously cuts off the quotation from the verse before getting there. Moreover, that excision occurs precisely in one of the many spotlight text-boxes deployed by LLF in order to discuss a specific crux: in this case the subject of the box is the conundrum of just how sexy David and Jonathan’s friendship was. It is a shame that this sort of evasion is

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concentrated in one of the earliest and important parts of the book, Ch. 3 on 'the gift of marriage'. The intellectual flabbiness of that chapter is the result of not taking seriously what the history of Christianity can tell us about marriage. Thanks to the neglect of sustained historical analysis in the text, the reader might be forgiven for believing the bland assertion that there is 'a Christian understanding of marriage'... this phrase recurs eight times in LLF, and there are further artistic variations on it elsewhere, so the lack of serious analysis in Ch. 3 really matters; it gives a shaky foundation to all that follows... Now here is the biggest howling silence in the whole text of LLF. Nowhere would its readership learn that the Early Church, such a touchstone for LLF's discussion, never associated marriage with any ceremony celebrated in church... One could go on pointing out the pervading distortions caused by historical myopia in LLF... Church leaders have tried in the publication of LLF to embark on a new road of humility. It would be good in the follow-up to their book, if they sought out some more comprehensive route-maps to see where they travel next. <https://modernchurch.org.uk/prof-diarmaid-macculloch-living-in-love-and-faith>

<sup>34</sup> See the "Living in Love and Faith" section of these presentations for more details

<sup>35</sup> Robert Gagnon is one of the more conservative evangelical theologians who emphasise this point His arguments can be found on facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/12180773894/permalink/10159928220773895/?sfnsn=scwspmo&ref=share> . His arguments and my answer can also be found on <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-SuP0515b-gagnon.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> See: Brodsky, David (2009) "*Sex in the Talmud: How to Understand Leviticus 18 and 20 Parashat Kedoshim (Leviticus 19:1–20:27)*" From the book "*Torah Queeries*" New York University Press, 2009 <https://doi.org/10.18574/9780814785249-032> also Brodsky, David. (ND): "*Rabbinic Judaism*" in Nissinen, M. H. (2016) "*Homosexuality : I. Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*" de Gruyter, 2016 pp303-305 : Digital Repository of the University of Helsinki [https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/325479/EBR\\_Homosexuality.pdf?sequence=1](https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/325479/EBR_Homosexuality.pdf?sequence=1) See also Greenberg, S., (2005): "*Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition*" University of Wisconsin Press; 1st edition (February 24, 2005) ISBN-10 0299190943 ISBN-13 978-0299190941

<sup>37</sup> Leviticus boys condemnation. See section 7:0: Intercourse Prohibitions in Gilchrist, S. (2017d): "*A House Built on Sand? Attitudes to Gender and Sexual Variant Identities and Behaviour in Christianity and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/231P-HouseUponSand.pdf>

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<sup>38</sup> See section 7:2 Love and Sex in Gilchrist, S. (2015a): “*Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*”: [Updating]: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf> Sex in the Talmud: How to Understand Leviticus 18 and 20: Parashat Kedoshim (Leviticus 19:1–20:27) From the book ed. Brodsky, David (2020) “Torah Queeries” 2020 New York University Press, New York, USA <https://doi.org/10.18574/9780814785249-032>

<sup>39</sup> See Gilchrist, S. (2011b): “*Issues on the Sanctity of Same-Sex Relationships*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/014B-IssuesOnTheSanctityOfSame-SexRelationships.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Brodsky, David. (ND): “*Rabbinic Judaism*” in Nissinen, M. H. (2016) “*Homosexuality : I. Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*” de Gruyter, 2016 pp303-305 : Digital Repository of the University of Helsinki [https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/325479/EBR\\_Homosexuality.pdf?sequence=1](https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/325479/EBR_Homosexuality.pdf?sequence=1)

<sup>41</sup> Different meanings have been applied to this passage at different times. These include the misuse of cross-dressing for deception, preventing women carrying the weapons of war, condemning cross-dressing for prostitution and foreign religious practice, preventing women wearing religious items of apparel worn by Jewish men, prohibiting men adopting women’s customs regarding hairstyles etc., and stopping men and women entering places assigned to the opposite gender for the purposes of illicit sex. The most common theme is that of crossdressing for sexual advantage and abuse. A further area of relevance relates to the power struggles and the abuses of gender and sex within gender unequal and patriarchal societies. Clement of Alexandria made it clear that maintaining masculinity was paramount if early Christianity was to succeed in gaining a foothold of respectability inside Roman society. He considered that this was the purpose of the prohibition. In the Old and the New Testament understanding no literal interpretation has ever been applied. Gilchrist, S. (2015e): “*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>

<sup>42</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2015e): “*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>

<sup>43</sup> Gilchrist, S: (2013g): “*Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> See Maimonide’s commentary on the Mishnah, Avot 1:6 aseh lekha rav

<sup>45</sup> Torah Portion – Kedoshim <http://www.jewishledger.com/2016/05/36105/> “Rabbi Akiva says that the verse should be understood as follows: If one studied Torah in his youth he should study more Torah in his old age; if he had students in his youth he should have additional students in his old age, as it is stated: “In the morning sow your seed, etc.” They said by way of example that Rabbi Akiva had

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twelve thousand pairs of students in an area of land that stretched from Gevat to Antipatris in Judea, and they all died in one period of time, because they did not treat each other with respect".(B.T. Yevamot 62b)

<sup>46</sup> St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) formulated his Christian sexual ethics: "right reason declares the appointed end of sexual acts is procreation," and declared that homosexuality was one of the gravest of the "sins against nature," which is still the official view of most Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and even Protestant Christian Churches. Marriage Council of Trent he 1653

<sup>47</sup> Peter Damian and Sexual Abuse

<sup>48</sup> Catharism itself was a Christian religious movement with dualistic and Gnostic elements that appeared in the Languedoc region of France (Occitania at the time) around the middle of the 12th century. Although it mainly developed in France and Spain many of its roots can be traced back to the Eastern Churches. The movement was branded by the Catholic Church as heretical with some authorities denouncing them as not being Christian at all. It existed throughout much of Western Europe (including Aragon and Catalonia in Spain, the Rhineland and Flanders in Northern Europe and Lombardy and Tuscany in Italy), but its focus was in the Languedoc and surrounding areas of what is now southern France. In addition it had links with the similar Christian movement the Bogomils (Friends of God) from the Balkans. The Cathars were ruthlessly suppressed and finally exterminated by the Catholic Church in the 14th century. Most of these heretical groups, the Albigensians, Paulicians, Patarenes, Bogomiles, Cathars, etc., were rather puritanical in non-sexual areas and appealed not only to the common people, but to wealthy burghers and the nobility

<http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/trm/files/2014/03/GCMSRachel-Ernst.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> Cathar theology Gnosis discussion

<sup>50</sup> Bernard does not appear to refer to the divine dualism in Cathar Teaching or the doctrine of reincarnation which were major deviations of the theology as understood by the Roman church

<sup>51</sup> The cult of the Virgin Mary spread strongly from the East in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. This conflict may reflect back to the Nestorian controversy where instead of describing Mary as Mother of God, Nestorius and the Church of the East described her as Mother of Christ. The Church of the East took Mary as a symbol of the equality between men and women on earth, while the Roman Church made her a pedestal to be looked up to and confined the equality expressed in the Church of the East to the Heavenly realm.

<sup>52</sup> In the Catechism of the Roman Church there are justified by reference to Sodom and Gomorrah etc

<sup>53</sup> The term paraphilia is sometimes used to avoid the negative connotations that perversion presents



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<sup>54</sup> MoU2 Conversion therapy is the term for therapy that assumes certain sexual orientations or gender identities are inferior to others and seeks to change or suppress them on that basis. The 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) makes it clear that conversion therapy in relation to gender identity and sexual orientation (including asexuality) is unethical, potentially harmful and is not supported by evidence. It updates the 2015 version released at the Department of Health, which focused exclusively on sexual orientation.

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/mou/>

<sup>55</sup> Novel 89 of Pope Leo IV (790 – 855) extended the necessity of a religious ceremony to the marriage itself

<sup>56</sup> From the 12<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, the Church sought to take control over marriage by making it a sacramental act.

<sup>57</sup> <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691010885/spiritual-marriage>

<sup>58</sup> Greenberg etc Rav and Rashi

<sup>59</sup> Rapp, Claudia. *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium: Monks, Laymen, and Christian Ritual*, Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. xiv, 349. \$65.00 (hardback). ISBN: 978-0-19-538933-3 (hardback).

<sup>60</sup> Morris Stephen *“When Brothers Dwell in Unity Byzantine Christianity and Homosexuality”*: McFarland Books pISBN: 978-0-7864-9517-7 eISBN: 978-1-4766-2214-9

<https://mcfarlandbooks.com/product/when-brothers-dwell-in-unity/> In the world of early Byzantine Christianity, monastic rules acknowledged but discouraged the homosexual impulses of adult males. What most disturbed monastic leaders was adolescent males being accepted as novices; adult men were considered unable to control their sexual desires for these “beautiful boys.” John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople (397–407), virulently denounced homosexuality, but was virtually the only Byzantine cleric to do so. Penances traditionally attached to heterosexual sins—including remarriage after divorce or widowhood—have always been much more severe than those for a variety of homosexual acts or relationships. Just as Byzantine churches have found ways to accommodate sequential marriages and other behaviour once stridently condemned, this book argues, it is possible for Byzantine Christianity to make pastoral accommodations for gay relationships and same-sex marriage.

<sup>61</sup> Similar attitudes to same-sex relationships were carried forward into the early Christian church. Liturgies of services of fraternisation, or “Brother making” which imposed requirements that were identical to those applied to same-sex relationships in the first century Jewish tradition have survived. These liturgies date from between the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries but the ceremony is believed to have been introduced early in the life of the church. These were not marriages and anal penetration was not endorsed. The relationship was made between two equals and there was no marriage contract, but many of the symbols and social obligations of marriage were embraced. In

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practice these ceremonies could also give protection from the civil laws which were enacted against anal penetration, and they would also impose by religious commitment an outcome which legal compulsion could not easily enforce. It is suggested that the nearest equivalent to this service may be found in the present-day blessing of a civil partnership. Copies of the liturgies the ceremony of Adelphopoiesis still exist and they show how the vows, which are made between two equal people, both bless and affirm relationships which are given in love. Although the ceremony was not a marriage, symbols of the marriage service were used in the ceremony and the symbolism of these actions is clearly indicated. The kinship arrangements which the service established were also the same as those for a heterosexual marriage. See Issues section 10:0 Christian Affirmations of Same-Sex Relationships

<sup>62</sup> Mantzouneas, Fr. Evangelos K. (1982) Secretary of the Greek Synod Committee on Legal and Canonical Matters; "Report on Adelphopoiesis 1982: "Fraternization from a Canonical Perspective" Athens 1982". See also section 3:2:5 Adelphopoiesis or "Brother Making" in Gilchrist, S. (2013a): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> Commentary on "Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium: Monks, Laymen, and Christian Ritual" Claudia Rapp New York: Oxford University Press, 2016 <https://orthodoxyindialogue.com/2018/01/02/brother-making-in-late-antiquity-and-byzantium-monks-laymen-and-christian-ritual-reviewed-by-kevin-elphick/>

<sup>64</sup> Spiritual marriage endorsed by Adelphopoiesis

<sup>65</sup> Boswell's book

<sup>66</sup> The *affrèment*, which existed in France and elsewhere in late medieval Mediterranean Europe, was a contract that provided the foundation for non-nuclear households of many types and shared many characteristics with marriage contracts, as legal writers at the time were well aware. Allan Tulchin, "Same-Sex Couples Creating Households in Old Regime France: The Uses of the *Affrèment*" in the *Journal of Modern History*: September 2007, argued that the ceremony of *affrèment* in France joined unrelated same-gender couples in lifelong unions, who then could raise family, hold property jointly, and were in all respects the same as or equivalent to marriages in terms of law and social custom, as shown by parish records. These were not, however, contiguous with the earlier Eastern tradition, and not described in sexual terms in parallel to modern concepts of sexual identity. Non-nuclear households were quite common in Mediterranean Europe — more than half the population probably consisted of people in such households, so it is hardly surprising that the law provided for *affrèments* as a means to regulate them. However, by this time these were secular arrangements, where vows were made in front of

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a civil notary since the concept had been condemned by the Church. The consequences of entering into an *affrèment* were profound. The new “brothers” pledged to live together sharing ‘un pain, un vin, et une bourse’—one bread, one wine, and one purse. All of their goods usually became the joint property of both parties, and each commonly became the other’s legal heir, cutting off other close relatives. They also frequently testified that they entered into the contract because of their affection for one another. During this period the *affrèment* offered a way for two single, unrelated men to express their love and arrange to live with each other. But even this is a dramatic change in today’s popular attitudes. Prior to the 1960s, anywhere in the West, if two men had sought publicly to enter into such a contract it would have caused a scandal. Four to six centuries ago such contracts were legal and although uncommon, occurred regularly without attracting any unfavourable commentary. The very existence of *affrèments* shows that there was a radical shift in attitudes between the sixteenth century and the rise of modern anti-homosexual legislation in the twentieth.

<https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/42361>

<sup>67</sup> With the widespread criminalization of homosexual relations starting in the thirteenth century, the marriages of men in church could not last. The Byzantine emperor Andronicus II decreed in 1306 that, along with incest and sorcery, sex between men was prohibited. He added: “*If some wish to enter into ceremonies of same-sex union, we should prohibit them, for they are not recognized by the church.*” No Latin versions of the ceremonies survive—presumably they were destroyed—and several of the surviving Greek texts appear to have been defaced over time by disapproving churchmen. By the sixteenth century, Montaigne would write of a “strange brotherhood” in which Portuguese men in Rome “married one another, male to male, at Mass, with the same ceremonies with which we perform our marriages, read the same marriage gospel service and then went to bed and lived together.” They were burned to death.

<https://www.theawl.com/2012/05/when-a-medieval-knight-could-marry-another-medieval-knight/>

<sup>68</sup> Rapp, Claudia. *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium: Monks, Laymen, and Christian Ritual*, Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. xiv, 349. \$65.00 (hardback). ISBN: 978-0-19-538933-3 (hardback).

<sup>69</sup> This formal relationship was initially enforced by a decree of the Persian emperor who was suspicious that any exclusively male organisation could provide a focus for unrest.

<sup>70</sup> That is in total contrast to the Western church which required women to live their earthly lives in submission and penance for Eve’s sins. Redemption was still available for women, but only through the blessings of childbirth or through the total rejection of femininity and the refusal of all earthly sexual passions or acts. The statement by Tertullian; cited earlier: “The judgment of God upon this sex lives on in this age; therefore, necessarily the guilt should live on also” is a terse reminder of what that meant. Although asceticism was very strongly



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emphasized in the religious institutions and traditions of the Church of the East, no such differentiation between the sexes was made. High esteem was placed on the “Solitary Ones” and this was sought in terms of devotion to Christ rather than denial of sex. Religious communities involved both sexes. The decision that obliged the monks and priests of the Church of the East to marry, which was made at the Synod of Beth Lapat in 484, was reversed in 553. These differences in attitude between the Church of the East and the Western Churches can be observed to considerable effect by comparing the communal and the sexually cohesive traditions of the order created in Egypt by St Pachomius (286-346) with the asceticism of Antony and the Desert Fathers, founded by St Antony around 305. The two types of monasticism existed side by side. In 571 Abraham the Great of Kashkar, founded a new monastery on Mount Izla . The third abbot of this monastery, Babai the Great, 551-628, finally drove out the married monks from the monasteries on this mount. As the “Visitor of the Monasteries of the North”, he also ensured that the alternate type of monastic ideal pioneered by Antony and the Desert Fathers, rather than that of St Pachomius and Basil the Great, was taken seriously throughout northern Mesopotamia. Some of the more extreme ascetic practices from this tradition date from that time. At various periods other splits and divisions occurred. One took place at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. This led to the creation of the Chaldean Catholic church which is in communion with Rome, and continuing elements of the Church of the East which are not. Probably the present day “Assyrian Church of the East” is the one which claims the most direct line with the Apostolic Tradition. See East and West

<sup>71</sup> There are some suggestions that married monks were recognised in the Irish Celtic Church. There would have been “Spiritual Marriages” where celibacy is observed.

<sup>72</sup> Saint Anselm, 1039-1109 was born in Italy in 1033 and joined the Benedictine monastery of Bec in Normandy in 1056. He became its prior in 1063 and then its abbot in 1078. In 1093 he became Archbishop of Canterbury, where he died and was buried in 1109. The Council of London in 1102 wanted to enact ecclesiastical legislation which declared – for the first time in English history – that homosexual behaviour was a sin, and they recommended that offending laymen be imprisoned, and clergymen be anathematized. However, Anselm as Archbishop of Canterbury prohibited the publication of their decree, advising the Council that homosexuality was widespread and few men were embarrassed by it or had even been aware it was a serious matter; he felt that although sodomites should not be admitted to the priesthood, confessors should take into account mitigating factors such as age and marital status before prescribing penance, and he advised counselling rather than punishment. St Anselm's letters appeared during the last flowering of homosexual love before fanatical anti-gay prejudice swept across Europe in the twelfth century, as documented by John Boswell in Christianity, ‘Social Tolerance and Homosexuality (1980)’. The following is a letter from Anselm to Gilbert (c. 1077/78) : Brother Anselm to Dom Gilbert, brother, friend,

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beloved lover'. . . sweet to me, sweetest friend, are the gifts of your sweetness, but they cannot begin to console my desolate heart for its want of your love. Even if you sent every scent of perfume, every glitter of metal, every precious gem, every texture of cloth, still it could not make up to my soul for this separation unless it returned the separated other half. The anguish of my heart just thinking about this bears witness, as do the tears dimming my eyes and wetting my face and the fingers writing this. You recognized, as I do now, my love for you, but I did not. Our separation from each other has shown me how much I loved you; a man does not in fact have knowledge of good and evil unless he has experienced both'.

<sup>73</sup> For example, Genesis 19 records God's destruction of two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, by "sulphur and fire" for their wickedness. For 1,500 years after the writing of Genesis, no biblical writers equated this wickedness with same-sex acts. Only in the first century A.D. did a Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, first equate Sodom's sin with same-sex sexuality. The Jewish Commentator Josephus also made the connection, but the evidence suggests that this was not then taken up by the Christian Church. Section in Issues

<sup>74</sup> Roman Centurions slaves

<sup>75</sup> Note that the slave need not have been gay. What tis passage tells is about how lesbian and gay people should be treated

<sup>76</sup> Section 7:4:1: Cross-Cultural Challenges: Gilchrist, S. (2015/2017): "Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> Section 7:2:2 Judean Attitudes to Love and Sex: Gilchrist, S. (2015/2017): "Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> Chavruta is a traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students work together to learn, discuss, and debate a shared text. It challenges the student to analyze and explain the material, point out the errors in his partner's reasoning, and question and sharpen each other's ideas, often arriving at entirely new insights into the meaning of the text. Chavruta is most associated with the Tannaim and Amoraim periods (0-500 AD) and it is almost certain that Jesus and John would have engaged in this didactic process. The nearest academy (Yeshiva) was in Zippori (Sepphoris) about four miles from Nazareth. Resh Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan were partners in a chavruta and Zippori is also the birthplace of Rabbi Yochanan. Prior to this the spiritual leadership of the Jewish people was in the hands of five successive generations of zugot ("pairs") of religious teachers. In the Avot de-Rabbi Hathan it is recommended that a friend should be someone with whom one can "eat and drink, read and study, sleep, and share secrets of the Torah and personal secrets" The rabbis repeatedly urged their students to acquire a study partner and each chavruta fulfilled a social as well as an educational need. The choice of chavrutas seems to have been based on friendship or social proximity, they often developed into lasting friendships where the

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shared commitment to scholarship and intellectual growth has been said to create a close bond between study partners which is closer than that of many married couples. The word chavruta, like marriage, came to be used in the singular to describe two people in a relationship. The Talmud (Yevamot 62b) states that 12,000 pairs (sic) of students of Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph (ca.50–ca.135 AD) died of plague between Passover and Shavuot, "because they did not treat one another with respect". The context of the passage indicates that each pair of students formed a chavruta. The text also implies that this plague was diphtheria, but this may be a disguise for sexual misbehaviour, and for the massacres that took place after the Jewish Revolt in 70 A.D. Within these boundaries, there seems to have been no restriction placed on same-sex relationships. The contemporary Jewish interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 prohibited only anal penetrative sex and the more intense the relationship was between Jesus and John, the more it would have been valued for the benefits it brought.

<sup>79</sup> Graubart Levin, Michael (1986). *Journey to Tradition: The odyssey of a born-again Jew*. Ktav Publishing House. p. 33. ISBN 0881250937.

<sup>80</sup> For some additional comments see Gilchrist, S. (2013b): "*Reform and the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/008B-ReformChristianChurchArticle.pdf>

<sup>81</sup> In Matthew 5:17 it is stated that Jesus Christ came to fulfil the Law of Moses and create a New Covenant between God and his people. The old covenant was written in stone, but the new covenant is written on our hearts, made possible only by faith in Christ, who shed His own blood to atone for the sins of the world, (Luke 22:20). In the teaching of Jesus the Jewish doctrines based on the letter of the law are now to be interpreted in the light of love and the intention of the acts. This essence of Christian doctrine is summed up by Paul in Galatians 3: 26-28 where he states: "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". No qualification is imposed in this statement. See section 7:4:5 Jesus and the New Covenant Gilchrist, S. (2015/2017): "Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf>

<sup>82</sup> Further justification for this interpretation is given in later presentations

<sup>83</sup> Church of England: (2019): "Civil Partnerships – for same sex and opposite sex couples. A pastoral statement from the House of Bishops of the Church of England"

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House of Bishops December 2019 [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/Civil%20Partnership s%20-%20Pastoral%20Guidance%202019%20%282%29.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/Civil%20Partnership%20-%20Pastoral%20Guidance%202019%20%282%29.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> From the 12<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, the Church sought to take control over marriage by making it a sacramental act.

<sup>85</sup> For more analysis see: Gilchrist, S. (2018c): "*The Safeguarding of Transgender Children*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/241P-SafeguardingTransgenderChildrenDoc.pdf> also Gilchrist, S. (2017j): "*Religious and Secular Scapegoating of Transgender People: and its impact on the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/238P-SecularScapegoating.pdf>

<sup>86</sup> Mitchell Book

<sup>87</sup> See for example: Gilchrist, S. (2019b): "*The Development of Transgender Behaviour and Identities in Early Life*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-BehaviourSelfIdentity.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> For my own work see Gilchrist, S. (2013d): "*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2019b): "*The Development of Transgender Behaviour and Identities in Early Life*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-BehaviourSelfIdentity.pdf> and other papers in <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/bibliography.htm>

<sup>89</sup> Testosterone book reference

<sup>90</sup> For more detailed consideration see: Gilchrist, S. (2021a): "*Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/250P-GenderIdentityAndTrans.pdf>

<sup>91</sup> Butler's comments on the anti-gender movement and trans-exclusionary radical feminism:.. Butler said in 2020 that trans-exclusionary radical feminism is "a fringe movement that is seeking to speak in the name of the mainstream, and that our responsibility is to refuse to let that happen." In 2021 they described the anti-gender movements as fascist trends and cautioned self-declared feminists from allying with such movements in targeting trans, non-binary, and genderqueer people. Butler also explored the issue in a 2019 paper in which they argued that "the confusion of discourses is part of what constitutes the fascist structure and appeal of at least some of these [anti-gender] movements. One can oppose gender as a cultural import from the North at the same time that one can see that very opposition as a social movement against further colonization of the South. The result is not a turn to the Left, but an embrace of ethno-nationalism." The Guardian interview,,, On September 7, 2021, The Guardian published an interview[ of Butler by Jules Gleeson that included Butler's critique of trans-exclusionary feminists ("gender critical feminists" or "TERFs"). Butler stated that "The anti-gender ideology is one of the dominant strains of fascism in our times." [99] Within a few hours of publication, three paragraphs including this statement were removed,

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with a note explaining "This article was edited on 7 September 2021 to reflect developments which occurred after the interview took place." The Guardian was then accused of censoring Judith Butler for having compared TERFs to fascists. British writer Roz Kaveney called it "a truly shocking moment of bigoted dishonesty", while British transgender activist and writer Juno Dawson, among others, observed that The Guardian had inadvertently triggered the Streisand effect, in which an attempt to censor yields the unintended consequence of increasing awareness of a topic. The next day, The Guardian acknowledged "a failure in our editorial standards". Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith\\_Butler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_Butler)

<sup>92</sup> Give reference for unfinished reformation

<sup>93</sup> Hendrix, Scott H. "The Controversial Luther" Archived 2 March 2011 at the Wayback Machine, Word & World 3/4 (1983), Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN. Also see Hillerbrand, Hans. "The legacy of Martin Luther", in Hillerbrand, Hans & McKim, Donald K. (eds.) The Cambridge Companion to Luther. Cambridge University Press, 2003. In 1523, Luther wrote that Jesus Christ was born a Jew which discouraged mistreatment of the Jews and advocated their conversion by proving that the Old Testament could be shown to speak of Jesus Christ. However, as the Reformation grew, Luther began to lose hope in large-scale Jewish conversion to Christianity, and in the years his health deteriorated he grew more acerbic toward the Jews, writing against them with the kind of venom he had already unleashed on the Anabaptists, Zwingli, and the pope. Schaff, Philip: History of the Christian Church, Vol. VIII: Modern Christianity: The Swiss Reformation, William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, 1910, page 706 (cited from Wikipedia)

<sup>94</sup> : Gilchrist, S. (2013a): "*An Unfinished Reformation*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

<sup>95</sup> For more analysis see: Gilchrist, S. (2018c): "*The Safeguarding of Transgender Children*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/241P-SafeguardingTransgenderChildrenDoc.pdf> also Gilchrist, S. (2017j): "*Religious and Secular Scapegoating of Transgender People: and its impact on the Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/238P-SecularScapegoating.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> Germaine Greer example

<sup>97</sup> WPATH MoU etc

<sup>98</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2021a): "*Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/250P-GenderIdentityAndTrans.pdf> also Gilchrist, S. (2019): "*Interpreting Science and Challenges to Gender Identity Research*" <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-InterpretationsSelfDeclaration.pdf>



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<sup>99</sup> I had previously been invited by the leader of the previous Church of England “Shared Conversations” programme to join a small group whose task was to independently give advice and to monitor the progress of this programme. The group met once, and nothing was achieved.

<sup>100</sup> Alex Clare-Young (2021) *Living in love and faith? The construction of contemporary texts of terror*, Theology & Sexuality, DOI: [10.1080/13558358.2021.1954864](https://doi.org/10.1080/13558358.2021.1954864)

<sup>101</sup> These issues caused very real difficulties for the early church. The most relevant passage in the Bible which describes the attitude of Jesus to celibacy and ritual castration is that in Matthew 19:12 which states “For there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it”. The third phrase in this statement implies that this is an active act and for the social culture of the time that statement was very direct. Those who opposed ritual castration had an uphill battle against them for there was little doubt about the authenticity of the text. Throughout Christian and European history there have been many who took and taught these statements literally. They include Valentinus (whose sect was declared heretical in the mid-second century), Julius Cassianus (declared heretical in the mid-second century), Basilides (also declared heretical in the early-second century), Leontios of Antiochia, (Bishop of Jerusalem, late-fourth century), Melito “the Eunuch” (ca. late-second century), Hilarion (mid-fourth century), Marcarius “the Egyptian (late 4th century) and Origen (also declared heretical in the early-third century). These people are among the most famous of thousands that chose ritual castration. This perception was not confined to the Gnostic or fringe movements, it became a major issue in the early church. The earliest report of the desire for castration among Christians comes from the second century writings of Justin. Self-castration was a widely practiced and it was an ancient expression of religious devotion throughout the Middle East. Several early Christian encratite and ascetic movements (centred mainly in Egypt) are known to have members who were eunuchs. The cloisters of Egypt and Syria were centres of self castration, and Coptic monasteries continued to perform castration well into the Islamic period. Indeed, the criminalization of eunuchs in the church at the Council of Nicaea is testimony to the degree to which self castration was practiced. For the full account see Gilchrist, S .2012. “Sexuality, Gender and the Christian Church”.

<sup>102</sup> Hester, J. David, (2005) “Eunuchs and the Postgender Jesus: Matthew 19:12 and Transgressive Sexualities” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* September 2005 28: 13-40, Interfakultäres Zentrum für Ethik in den Wissenschaften, Tübingen Centre for Hermeneutics and Rhetorics, California. Accessed at [www.spirituality.org.za/files/Eunuch.pdf](http://www.spirituality.org.za/files/Eunuch.pdf) 23 July 2012

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<sup>103</sup>This was the subject of the first Canon in the Canons of the Council of Nicaea: Canon 1: Castration among the clergy: “If anyone due to sickness has undergone a surgical operation, or if he has been castrated by barbarians, he is allowed to remain among the clergy. But if anyone enrolled among the clergy has castrated himself when in perfect health, it is good for him to leave the ministry. From now on, no such person should be promoted to the clergy. But since this applies only to those who wilfully castrate themselves, if anyone has been made a eunuch by barbarians, or by his master, and is otherwise fit for office, church law admits him to the clergy”.

<sup>104</sup> The Jewish concerns in Deuteronomy 22:5 are not about creating or reinforcing gender differences but in preventing the gender associations of clothing, or possibly body hair from being used to deceive others for purposes leading to sexual immorality, or to dishonest behaviour. Every interpretation condemns cross dressing for dishonest or destructive action or to condemn the practice in other cults. None of them prohibit it for just purpose. In the ancient world no literal interpretation has ever been applied to this passage and it is rightly put in the section of the Holiness Code in Leviticus which deals with deceit. For a full discussion and an account of the various interpretations see Gilchrist, S. 2012. “Sexuality, Gender and the Christian Church”.

<sup>105</sup> “A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man’s praise is not from men, but from God” (Romans 2:28-29).

<sup>106</sup> Saying 53 in the Gospel of Thomas expands on this point. “His disciples said to him: “Is circumcision beneficial, or not? He said to them: If it were beneficial, their father would beget them circumcised from their mother, but the true circumcision in the spirit has prevailed over everything”.

<sup>107</sup> In the Apostolic Church gender was contested as a “natural” category because of the transcendent power of God’s Spirit at work in the community and the world. Therefore early Christianity challenged gender in every way. Unlike the requirements for physical castration that was demanded by the Goddess religions this action was no longer required, but many Christian men still continued to self castrate as an act of extreme devotion. Origen was the most notable of these, but there were also many others. In early Christianity a woman’s identity and spirituality could also be developed separately from her roles as wife and mother (or slave), whether she actually withdrew from those roles or not. This meant that women and men could equally exercise leadership in the Church on the basis of spiritual achievement alone. That was apart from their gender status. However, this attitude also contravened what were regarded as the “respectable” division of gender roles in a male dominated patriarchal society. (See for example King, Karen (1998) “Women In Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries”. Accessed 27 March 2013 at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>.)

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<sup>108</sup> Christian examples of male to female transgender people are hard to come by because gender reassignment in that direction would become so suppressed by the later Church. However there is much more evidence of transgender behaviour in the female to male direction. The early Church sought to transcend all divisions of gender and the nature of this type of transgender influence may be due more to the growth of gender discrimination within the Church because of the ways it sought to gain respectability by conforming to the polarised gender role expectations of a male dominated Greco/Roman society. Thus, for example saying 114 in the Gospel of Thomas reads: "Simon Peter said to them, "Make Mary leave us, for females don't deserve life." Jesus said, "Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of Heaven." Most scholars now tend to attribute an early date to the Gospel of Thomas. (See: <http://gnosis.org/naghamm/gosthom.html>). One of the most famous woman leaders was Thecla, a virgin-martyr who was converted by Paul. She cut her hair, donned men's clothing, and took up the duties of a missionary traveller. Threatened with rape, prostitution, and twice put in the ring as a martyr, she persevered in her faith and her chastity. Her lively and somewhat fabulous story is recorded in the second century Acts of Paul and Thecla, The importance of such stories lies in their acceptance and not necessarily their absolute truth. (As at the 25 February 2013 the text of the acts can be accessed at: (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/thecla.html>). During the second and third centuries gender discrimination continued to increase and it was considered that fourth century female mystics could only achieve salvation and redemption if they rejected every aspect of their femininity. Even then redemption could only be gained in heaven and not on earth. Therefore even if male to female transgender behaviour was considered abhorrent by the second third and fourth centuries it was positively encouraged in the female to male direction. The idea that women had to have an instant sex change when they die in order to enter heaven as men was commonly held in the Church. Had the surgical possibilities present day female to male gender reassignment been available to the second third and fourth Century Church one wonders what might have happened! Thus for women gender reassignment for entry to heaven was an ideal to be achieved but it could only come after death, in order to protect the authority of a male church hierarchy in a male dominated society. That attitude towards reassignment for entry to heaven was not held by all, and others concluded that because lust and sexuality was absent gender differentiation failed to matter at all after death. In the meantime, on earth women could only redeem their lives through childbirth, obedience or by renouncing all aspects of their femininity. On earth they could only wait in penance for the sins of Eve until heaven, when the day of gender reassignment, or freedom from gender comes.

<sup>109</sup> This has sometimes been interpreted as a condemnation of cult prostitution, but that is not a feature of the LLF book



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<sup>110</sup> On Page 287 the LLF resource book states that the primary cultural and theological driving force behind the list of prohibited relationships (in Leviticus) seems to be the protection of the integrity of marriage within the framework of the extended family structure in Israel. On Page 287 it states that the worlds of the text are very different from our own. The patriarchal, rural world of ancient Israel was based around the house of the father. This was an extended household, organized around the male head, and was often polygamous. It included several generations of the extended family: children, aunts, uncles, servants, single, relatives, and widows. In the more urbanized world of the Exile, the family became increasingly important for ethnic and religious identity. The way in which 'marriage' was understood and practised was very different from the way in which it functions in our society. On P181 The LLF book notes that stories in the Bible that touch on sexual relationships are striking for their careful depiction of the relationship between sex and power. Issues of power and pain are discussed from page 184, but these are in terms of prostitution and sexual immorality.

<sup>111</sup> In passages such as Genesis 34:1-4, Judges 16:4-15, Jeremiah 2:20-25, Jeremiah 2:33, Hosea 4:18 and Hosea 9:1, the word *agapē* is used to describe acts of non-marital sexual love. Passages such as Genesis 24:67, Judges 14:16, 1 Samuel 18:20-21, and 1 Kings 11:1-3 deal with married sexual love. Genesis 29, Deuteronomy 21:15, 1 Samuel 1:4-5, 2 Chronicles 11:21 use the word to describe acts of sexual attraction. The Song of Solomon uses it to describe the outpouring of love in a sexual context. The same word is also used to describe the relationship between David and Jonathan, (see for example 1 Samuel 18), and between Jesus and the beloved disciple in the Gospel of John (issues section .2).

<sup>112</sup> Some have seen a sexual reference in the phrase 'passing the love of women', but while this verb always implies strong affection, it does not typically imply sexual expression. It is used in a wide variety of relationship contexts, and what is stressed here is the unusual intensity of affection. In this case, even allowing for the rhetoric of mourning, it might well mean that this relationship mattered more to David than his marriages.

<sup>113</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

<sup>114</sup> *Agape*, Greek *agapē*, in modern interpretations is the fatherly love of God for humans, as well as the human reciprocal love for God. In Scripture, the transcendent *agape* love is the highest form of love and is contrasted with *eros*, or erotic love, and *philia*, or brotherly love. In John 3:16, a verse that is often described as a summary of the Gospel message, *agape* is the word used for the love that moved God to send his only son for the world's redemption. The term necessarily extends to the love of one's fellow humans, as the reciprocal love between God and humans is made manifest in one's unselfish love of others.

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<sup>115</sup> What did St Paul say about marriage? He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his Body. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Paul conceived of marriage as a social obligation that had the potential of distracting Christians from Christ. For him celibacy was the single life, free from such distraction, not a life of saintly denial. Sex, in turn, was natural and not sinful, and sex within marriage was both proper and necessary. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing - if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. Now concerning the matters about which you (the Corinthians) wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control

<sup>116</sup> The standard Christian interpretations argue that both *phileo* and *agape* have no sexual content. This view is indicated in paragraph 3 of the encyclical letter "Deus Caritas Est" of Pope Benedict XVI, on Christian Love. In the encyclical letter "Deus Caritas Est", Pope Benedict XVI describes the use of the word *agape* in relation to the "Song of Solomon" in these terms: "This word expresses the experience of a love which involves a real discovery of the other, moving beyond the selfish character that prevailed earlier. Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking in the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice". Pope Benedict defines *agape* as a more spiritually directed "Ascending love" and *eros* as a more earthly directed "Descending Love". The definitions he uses might be seen to attribute to the word *eros* the sexual context of the word *agape*. As Pope Benedict points out the Greek Old Testament uses the word *eros* only twice and it is never used in the New Testament - but the way the word *agape* is used throughout the Septuagint clearly implies that the outcomes of

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many of the loving relationships which it describes are expected to be expressed through sexual acts. encyclical letter “Deus Caritas Est” of Pope Benedict XVI, on Christian Love

<sup>117</sup> McCulloch, Dairmaid (2010) “A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years” : Penguin (2 Sept. 2010) Paperback : 1216 pages ISBN-10 : 9780141021898 ISBN-13 : 978-0141021898 ASIN : 0141021896 How did an obscure personality cult come to be the world's biggest religion, with a third of humanity its followers? This book, now the most comprehensive and up to date single volume work in English, describes not only the main facts, ideas and personalities of Christian history, its organization and spirituality, but how it has changed politics, sex, and human society. Taking in wars, empires, reformers, apostles, sects, churches and crusaders, Diarmaid MacCulloch shows how Christianity has brought humanity to the most terrible acts of cruelty - and inspired its most sublime accomplishments. 'A stunning tour de force' Simon Sebag Montefiore, Sunday Telegraph Books of the Year 'A landmark in its field, astonishing in its range, compulsively readable, full of insight ... It will have few, if any, rivals in the English language' Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, Guardian 'A prodigious, thrilling, masterclass of a history book' John Cornwell, Financial Times 'Essential reading for those enthralled by Christianity and for those enraged by it' Melvyn Bragg, Observer, Books of the Year 'Magnificent ... a sumptuous portrait, alive with detail and generous in judgement' Richard Holloway, The Times Diarmaid MacCulloch is Professor of the History of the Church at Oxford University. His Thomas Cranmer won the Whitbread Biography Prize, the James Tait Black Prize and the Duff Cooper Prize. He is the author most recently of Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490 - 1700, which won the Wolfson Prize for History and the British Academy Prize.

<sup>118</sup> At page. 180 they will be spared from the danger of encountering any exceeding at all, since LLF disingenuously cuts off the quotation from the verse before getting there. Moreover, that excision occurs precisely in one of the many spotlight text-boxes deployed by LLF in order to discuss a specific crux: in this case the subject of the box is the conundrum of just how sexy David and Jonathan's friendship was. It is a shame that this sort of evasion is concentrated in one of the earliest and important parts of the book, Ch. 3 on 'the gift of marriage'. The intellectual flabbiness of that chapter is the result of not taking seriously what the history of Christianity can tell us about marriage. Thanks to the neglect of sustained historical analysis in the text, the reader might be forgiven for believing the bland assertion that there is 'a Christian understanding of marriage'... this phrase recurs eight times in LLF, and there are further artistic variations on it elsewhere, so the lack of serious analysis in Ch. 3 really matters; it gives a shaky foundation to all that follows... Now here is the biggest howling silence in the whole text of LLF. Nowhere would its readership learn that the Early Church, such a touchstone for LLF's discussion, never associated marriage with any ceremony celebrated in church...One could go on pointing out the pervading distortions

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caused by historical myopia in LLF... Church leaders have tried in the publication of LLF to embark on a new road of humility. It would be good in the follow-up to their book, if they sought out some more comprehensive route-maps to see where they travel next. •

<https://modernchurch.org.uk/prof-diarmaid-macculloch-living-in-love-and-faith>

<sup>119</sup> We have created an institution that seeks power and authority, but is failing to critically analyse its own privilege. Two questions that need to be answered are: in seeking that influence, who has it taken power away from? Are we anymore a Christian or loving country in this grab for power? The Church at its worst in some Parishes is an agent for social control, full of self-righteousness, pushing the weakest into blind obedience or even further to the margins....Theologically I was forever put in a position where I had to legitimate my bodily existence drawing on scripture, for I was repeatedly told God made us either male or female, so therefore I must be inherently 'disordered' as a result of the Fall. I could draw upon scripture and theological writings on eunuchs, but the reality is I have never questioned that I was born other than like everyone else, in the image of God. <https://modernchurch.org.uk/sara-gillingham-on-the-outside-looking-in>

<sup>120</sup> Denominational responses to sexuality and gender can lead to the construction of contemporary texts of terror. In this article, I draw on theory around identity, dialogue, and safety, as well as my own lived experience, to examine the creation of, and responses to, texts of terror in three elements of the construction of and response to Living in Love and Faith (2020). Firstly, I highlight the unequal power dynamics of the LLF process' membership. Secondly, I critique the use, by Christian Concern, of personalizing argument as a tool wielded against both theology and the individuals whose identities they critique. Finally, I argue that a paradigmatic shift is necessary if LGBTQ+ people are to live in hope, rather than fear. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13558358.2021.1954864>

<sup>121</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith/living-love-and-faith-next-steps> Terms of reference <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/LLF%20Next%20Steps%20Group%20ToR.pdf>

<sup>122</sup> Church of England House of Bishops (2022); Meeting Report: Thursday March 24 2022: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/house-bishops-thursday-march-24>

<sup>123</sup> <http://www.unadulteratedlove.net/blog/2021/5/20/living-in-love-amp-faith-llf-to-reconsider-gender-identity-and-transition>

<sup>124</sup> In the Catechism of the Roman Church these are justified by reference to Sodom and Gomorrah etc

<sup>125</sup> BBC News (2021) "Archbishop of Canterbury criticises Ghana anti-LGBT bill" <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-59062483>

<sup>126</sup> In-Flight Press Conference Of His Holiness Pope Francis From Azerbaijan To Rome: Papal Flight Sunday, 2 October 2016 [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20161002\\_georgia-azerbaijan-conferenza-](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161002_georgia-azerbaijan-conferenza-)

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[stampa.html](#) also <https://newwaysministryblog.wordpress.com/2016/10/03/pope-francis-says-accompanying-lgbt-people-is-what-jesus-would-do-today/>

<sup>127</sup> 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/>

<sup>128</sup> 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>

<sup>129</sup> 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

<sup>130</sup> "Amoris Laetitia", no. 56 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\\_amorislaetitia\\_en.pdf](https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amorislaetitia_en.pdf)

<sup>131</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2017k): "*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>

<sup>132</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2017a): "*No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice*". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

<sup>133</sup> The Royal College of Psychiatrists have produced a separate statement which takes an equally strongly expressed view.

<sup>134</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2018c): "The Safeguarding of Transgender Children": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/241P-SafeguardingTransgenderChildrenDoc.pdf>

<sup>135</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2017). "No, Pope Francis: "Gender Identity is not a Choice: It need not follow biological sex": This paper is available online at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

<sup>136</sup> See for example: Kozłowska, K., et al. G. (2021). Australian children and adolescents with gender dysphoria: Clinical presentations and challenges experienced by a multidisciplinary team and gender service. Human Systems: Therapy, Culture, and Attachments, 0(0). doi:10.1177/26344041211010777.

<sup>137</sup> Theory of Mind

<sup>138</sup> Handbook of sexuality and psychiatry



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<sup>139</sup> Chapter in “this is my body

<sup>140</sup> Mitchell Book

<sup>141</sup> See for example: Gilchrist, S. (2019b): “*The Development of Transgender Behaviour and Identities in Early Life*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-BehaviourSelfIdentity.pdf>

<sup>142</sup> • “the foremost challenge to be explained is not about how learning develops but about but how this process can controlled and inhibited for constructive effect”

<sup>143</sup> Neural Development Studise

<sup>144</sup> Measured vas synaptic density

<sup>145</sup> Section B:7:2:1: Neural Development in Gilchrist, S. (2021): “*Responsibility in Transgender Disputes*”:

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibiity.pdf>: (I am presently withholding part of this document because I wish to update it in the light of the Tavistock v Bell court ruling. However key sections continue to be available). “*One area of major importance during this time is the massive development of neural capabilities which occurs in the first three to four years. At birth, the part of the brain most responsible for thinking and reasoning (the pre-frontal cortex) is very primitive in nature but, within the first three years an enormous growth in neural interconnections, and the corresponding capabilities takes place. However, that development does not take place uniformly. It is also marked by periods of intense activity where very rapid neural advancement occurs. These intense periods occur in different areas of the brain at different times. Before and after these periods much reduced neural development is found. Around the age of one and a half to two years a rapid and wide-ranging transformation in neural and reasoning capabilities takes place. It has been described by various investigators as the time when the brain “lights up”. Neural activity, which was previously localised in nature rapidly spreads, distant areas of the brain become connected, and networks between the two hemispheres develop. There is an explosion in language abilities and cognitive capacity. Up to this time, the pre-frontal cortex of the brain had been in a relatively undeveloped state; but that rapidly changes: Significantly, for the first time, the pre-frontal cortex of the brain can start to function in a more effective way as a single co-ordinating unit . The existence of a close correlation between the development of language capabilities and a child’s first awareness of what gender means has been noted by various investigators. This identification might best be described as an unconscious sense of belonging, which is without behavioural implications. The term core gender identity has been used to describe this concept. It is different from the gender role identity. That is created by the experiences of socialisation. In contrast to the core gender identity, this gender role identification only begins to become apparent about one year later, when children begin to form strongly defined gender*

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*stereotypes, this is from around the age of three years: I prefer to use the term “gender allegiance” for the gender role identification instead. Significantly this means that identification precedes socialisation during these first stages. That is the reverse of what is understood to happen when the theories based on sexual motivation and social learning are used. However, in later years the pressures of socialisation may be expected to drive identification instead”.*

<sup>146</sup> Cite my research on transition regret

<sup>147</sup> Cite mu transgender management document

<sup>148</sup> Rippon, Gina. (2019); *“The Gendered Brain: The new Neuroscience that shatters the myth of the female brain”*: Penguin Random House, London 2019: ISBN 9781847924759

<sup>149</sup> For my full analysis of Rippon’s work, see sections B:5, C:4:1, C:5 in Gilchrist, S. (2020b): *“Responsibility in Transgender Disputes”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibiity.pdf>

<sup>150</sup> Fine, Cordelia: (2010): *“Delusions of Gender: The real science behind sex differences”* Ikon Books 2010: ISBN 978-184831-220-3

<sup>151</sup> Baron Cohen, Simon (2003): *“The Essential Difference: Men Women and the Extreme Male Brain”* ISBN-13 978-0-241-96135-3

<sup>152</sup> For a full discussion on this and “Quorum sensing mechanisms” see Section 5:1 “Neurology and Learnin”: Gilchrist, S. (2013d): *“Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>

<sup>153</sup> Management methods must also take account of the bipolar nature of these conflicts

<sup>154</sup> Pope Francis. (2016). *Amoris Laetitia* (AL), no. 56

<sup>155</sup> <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/12451/pope-francis-attacks-evil-of-gender-theory->

<sup>156</sup> Burbidge, Most Rev. Michael, Bishop of Arlington “A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology”: Read Letter from Bishop Burbidge <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/bishop/public-messages/2021/a-catechesis-on-the-human-person-and-gender-ideology/>

<sup>157</sup> Price, Matt (2021) WLUC: Catholic Diocese of Marquette explains new guidance on transgender church members: Guidance instructs priests to withhold full communion and other sacraments to transgender people unless they have repented Published: Dec. 10, 2021 <https://www.uppermichiganssource.com/2021/12/10/catholic-diocese-marquette-explains-new-guidance-transgender-church-members/>

<sup>158</sup> Referenced for No Pope Francis Article plus safeguarding transgender children article

<sup>159</sup> Arlington Diocesan Statement: Cited references: Hruz PW. Deficiencies in Scientific Evidence for Medical Management of Gender Dysphoria. The Linacre Quarterly. 2020;87(1):34-42. doi:10.1177/0024363919873762. d'Abrera, J., et al. (2020). Informed consent and

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childhood gender dysphoria: emerging complexities in diagnosis and treatment. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 28 (5), 536-538. doi:10.1177/1039856220928863. Bränström, R., & Pachankis, J. (2020). Toward Rigorous Methodologies for Strengthening Causal Inference in the Association Between Gender-Affirming Care and Transgender Individuals' Mental Health: Response to Letters. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 177(8), 769-772. Kozłowska, K., et al. G. (2021). Australian children and adolescents with gender dysphoria: Clinical presentations and challenges experienced by a multidisciplinary team and gender service. *Human Systems: Therapy, Culture, and Attachments*, 0(0). doi:10.1177/26344041211010777. Giovanardi, G., Vitelli, R., Maggiora Vergano, C., Fortunato, A., Chianura, L., Lingiardi, V., & Speranza, A. (2018). Attachment Patterns and Complex Trauma in a Sample of Adults Diagnosed with Gender Dysphoria. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9(60). doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00060.

<sup>160</sup> Cornell University Study

<sup>161</sup> Stonewall etc persecution reports

<sup>162</sup> Section: 8:2: Experience and Campaigns. Gilchrist, S. (2021a): "Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People":

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/250P-GenderIdentityAndTrans.pdf>

<sup>163</sup> See for example Butler 1990s book

<sup>164</sup> Compare Rippon's book with others and give references

<sup>165</sup> *"While sex (male/ female) is an immutable biological reality, gender (masculinity/ femininity) is understood as a social construct which changes through history and according to societal norms. Conversely, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) who produce the guidance upon which NHS practice is based, describes gender identity as: 'a category of social identity (that) refers to an individuals' classification as male, female or occasionally some category other than male or female. It's one's deeply held sense of being male or female, some of both or neither, and does not always correspond to biological sex' As such the APA & NHS gender identity is unverifiable and yet considered to exist independent of both gendered socialisation and biological sex. There is no scientific basis for the idea of innate deeply-held sense of gender".* <https://www.transgendertrend.com/current-evidence/> See also "The Pink and Blue Brain Myth":

<https://www.transgendertrend.com/brain-research/> [All accessed 2020]

<sup>166</sup> Transgender Trend: <https://www.transgendertrend.com/>

<sup>167</sup> Gendered Intelligence: <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

<sup>168</sup> GIRES: <https://www.gires.org.uk/>

<sup>169</sup> Allsorts Youth Project: <https://www.allsortsyouth.org.uk/>



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<sup>170</sup> Section 8:0 Gwnder Idwenty feminism and trans

<sup>171</sup> Autogynephilia was defined by an American psychologist, Dr Ray Blanchard, as “a male’s propensity to be sexually aroused by the thought of himself as a female”. (Auto = self, gyne = woman, philia = love.) According to Blanchard and Lawrence “The increasing prevalence of male-to-female (Male to female) transsexualism in Western countries is largely due to the growing number of Male to female transsexuals who have a history of sexual arousal with cross-dressing or cross-gender fantasy. Ray Blanchard proposed that these transsexuals have a paraphilia he called autogynephilia, which is the propensity to be sexually aroused by the thought or image of oneself as female. Autogynephilia defines a transsexual typology and provides a theory of transsexual motivation, in that Blanchard proposed that male to female transsexuals are either sexually attracted exclusively to men (homosexual) or are sexually attracted primarily to the thought or image of themselves as female (autogynephilic), and that autogynephilic transsexuals seek sex reassignment to actualize their autogynephilic desires. Despite growing professional acceptance, Blanchard’s formulation is rejected by some male to female transsexuals as inconsistent with their experience. This rejection, I (Lawrence) argue, results largely from the misconception that autogynephilia is a purely erotic phenomenon. Autogynephilia can more accurately be conceptualized as a type of sexual orientation and as a variety of romantic love, involving both erotic and affectional or attachment-based elements”. According to Lawrence: “This broader conception of autogynephilia addresses many of the objections to Blanchard’s theory and is consistent with a variety of clinical observations concerning autogynephilic Male to female transsexualism”. Becoming what we love: Lawrence, A. A. (2007): “Autogynephilic transsexualism conceptualized as an expression of romantic love”; *Perspect Biol Med.* Autumn 2007;50(4):506-20. doi:

10.1353/pbm.2007.0050.

<sup>172</sup> The words have essentially the same meaning. The word paraphilia is used to remove the negative connotation that the word perversion has acquired

<sup>173</sup> For those who argue that gender identity is purely a socially learned construct, the issue is one of male domination and power over women. From this perspective, those male-to-female transsexuals who identify as women are understood to erase women’s identities and attack women’s sex-based rights: their argument is that social conditioning creates boundaries that cannot be crossed. This gives strong reasons for adopting autogynephilic explanations for transsexuality, where homosexuality is regarded as a personality variation and is a fundamental and clearly defined element of identity, while male-to-female transsexuality is regarded as a sublimated sexually motivated paraphilia or disruption of homosexuality instead.

<sup>174</sup> Refer to Rippon’s book

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<sup>175</sup> Testosterone book reference

<sup>176</sup> WPATH

<sup>177</sup> Memorandum of Understanding

<sup>178</sup> Stonewall

<sup>179</sup> GIRES

<sup>180</sup> Section 8 of feminism paper

<sup>181</sup> Joel, Daphna; Berman, Zohar; Tavor, Ido; Nadav, Wexler; Gaber, Olga; Stein, Yaniv; Shefi, Nisan; Pool, Jared; Urchs, Sebastian; Margulies, Daniel S.; Liem, Franziskus; Hänggi, Jürgen; Jäncke, Lutz; Assaf, Yaniv: (2015): “Sex beyond the genitalia: The human brain mosaic” CrossMark: Elsevier PNAS Vol 112 No 50 Published 15 Dec 2015 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1073/PNAS.1509654112>

<sup>182</sup> Joel, D., Garcia-Falgueras, A., Swaab, D.; (2020) “The Complex Relationships between Sex and the Brain” The Neuroscientist 2020, Vol. 26(2) 156–169 DOI: 10.1177/1073858419867298. In their 2015 paper Joel et al did not say that there were no sex differences. Instead of this, they described the brain as a mosaic of male and female features. Within that mosaic, various workers have since identified divergent male, transgender, and female phenotypes. In a 2020 paper Joel et al summarised the present situation by saying: “It is impossible to determine whether the differences between the groups reflect the different life experiences of individuals with different identities or preceded these experiences. It is also impossible to determine whether differences in specific brain structures are responsible for the different identities. These questions of cause and effect are further complicated by the observation that brain functions are generally not localized in one particular brain structure but distributed over circuits of large numbers of interacting brain areas”. There is also supporting evidence from other neurological studies to show that, while male and female neural differentiations on average fall into these two categories, there is such a large spread in the distribution of these identifications that large overlaps occur. Mitchell for example gives a comprehensive account of this in his book. This means that it is Joel et al themselves, who discredit the interpretation which these gender critical feminist groups place on their work. Also: rather than looking at neural activity, examining neural interconnectivity may be a more appropriate approach. Standard handbooks such as that on: “Sex Differences in Neurology and Psychiatry” show the complex interactions that exist between sex and gender, even before and soon after birth. This contradicts the arguments presented by those groups who claim the gender identity is determined by social conditioning alone. It also has major consequences for those feminist movements whose gender politics are based entirely on the premise that gender is wholly socially constructed. As the feminist accounts of gender identities and transgender people show, this presumption is unquestioned in their own histories, cultures, and research.

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<sup>183</sup> Mitchell, Kevin J. (2018): *"Innate: How the Wiring of our Brain Shapes Who We Are"*: Princeton University Press; ISBN 978-0-691-17388-7.

<sup>184</sup> I also discuss this extensively in Responsibility in Transgender Disputes::Gilchrist, S. (2021): *"Responsibility in Transgender Disputes"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibiity.pdf>: (I am presently withholding part of this document because I wish to update it in the light of the Tavistock v Bell court ruling. However key sections continue to be available).

<sup>185</sup> See for example Lanzenberger, R.; Kranz, G.S.; Savic, I.: (Eds) (2020): Sex Differences in Neurology and Psychiatry" Handbook of Clinical Neurology Volume 175, 2020

<sup>186</sup> See section 2:0 and Bettcher, Talia, (2014): *"Feminist Perspectives on Trans Issues"*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/feminism-trans/> . Mikkola, Mari, (2019) *"Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender"*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/feminism-gender/> .

<sup>187</sup> Dhejne C, Lichtenstein P, Boman M, Johansson ALV, Långström N, Landén M (2011): *"Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden"*. PLoS ONE 6(2): e16885. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0016885>  
Conclusion *"This study found substantially higher rates of overall mortality, death from cardiovascular disease and suicide, suicide attempts, and psychiatric hospitalisations in sex-reassigned transsexual individuals compared to a healthy control population. This highlights that post-surgical transsexuals are a risk group that need long-term psychiatric and somatic follow-up. Even though surgery and hormonal therapy alleviates gender dysphoria, it is apparently not sufficient to remedy the high rates of morbidity and mortality found among transsexual persons. Improved care for the transsexual group after the sex reassignment should therefore be considered."*

<sup>188</sup> The statement on the Transgender Trend website that "there is no evidence that transition is a 'cure' is based on this Swedish study," which is taken to mean that transgender conditions arise because of the internal traumas that people must deal with . That is not replicated in other literature, where the high rates of morbidity are instead considered due to the external attacks and discrimination that transgender people face. Transition does not remove this external discrimination in any way and the misrepresentation this outlook presents increases the strength of such attacks. It is of note that the lead author of the Swedish paper referred to above (Dhejne), specifically and strongly rejects the interpretations which have been attributed to this paper by various gender-critical feminist groups .  
Section D:5: Sources of Trauma, in :Gilchrist, S. (2021): *"Responsibility in Transgender Disputes"*:

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<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibiity.pdf>: (I am presently withholding part of this document because I wish to update it in the light of the Tavistock v Bell court ruling. However key sections continue to be available).

<sup>189</sup> Section D:4: Suicides and Attempted Suicides, in :Gilchrist, S. (2021): *“Responsibility in Transgender Disputes”*:

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibiity.pdf>: (I am presently withholding part of this document because I wish to update it in the light of this court ruling. However key sections continue to be available).

<sup>190</sup> Williams, Cristan (2015): “A 2011 Swedish study proves that trans people are more suicidal due to transition, are likely rapists and that trans women exhibit male socialization. Or does it?” *Trans Advocate* 2 November 2015: [https://www.transadvocate.com/fact-check-study-shows-transition-makes-trans-people-suicidal\\_n\\_15483.htm](https://www.transadvocate.com/fact-check-study-shows-transition-makes-trans-people-suicidal_n_15483.htm)

<sup>191</sup> Statistical Interpretations

<sup>192</sup> Stonewall (2018): “LGBT in Britain - Trans ROther documents under the same form of attack include “Stonewall School Report 2017” and the Stonewall “LGBT in Britain - Trans Report” of 2018. These were commissioned from Cambridge Uni-versity and You Gov respectively . On their website the LGB Alliance state that all opposing groups are: “Mainly peopled by activists linked to a plethora of LGBTQ+ lobby groups such as Stonewall that have grown bloated on huge funding, much of it from the taxpayer, and who use their undue influence to misinterpret both the spirit and the letter of the existing law”. The analyses presented in these re-ports are interpreted in ways which tend to make transgender people appear as agents of their own misfortunes rather than victims of the external discrimination and abuseeport” <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-britain-trans-report> also Stonewall/Cambridge University (2017): “School Report (2017)”: <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>

<sup>193</sup> Butler, J., 1990, “*Performative Acts and Gender Constitution*”, in *Performing Feminisms*, S-E. Case (ed.), Baltimore: John Hopkins University.

<sup>194</sup> Butler, Judith, (2021): “Why is the idea of ‘gender’ provoking backlash the world over?” the Guardian 23 October 2021: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/commentisfree/2021/oct/23/judith-butler-gender-ideology-backlash?fbclid=IwAR0rB1GFwR8N88U-cPMyXrpCQ2FQLzge5IUfNISuckXkhNzVEarOg66uh0s>

<sup>195</sup> Refer to clinical evidence

<sup>196</sup> Refer to regret rates in section 8 of feminism re regret

<sup>197</sup> Explain Theory of Mind

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<sup>198</sup> CNN (2021) This record-breaking year for anti-transgender legislation would affect minors the most By Priya Krishnakumar, CNN April 15, 2021 <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/15/politics/anti-transgender-legislation-2021/index.html>

<sup>199</sup> For one example see: NY Times (2022) “Texas Investigates Parents Over Care for Transgender Youth, Suit Says” NY Times 1 March 2022: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/01/us/texas-child-abuse-trans-youth.html>

<sup>200</sup> 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/>

<sup>201</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2021a): “Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/250P-GenderIdentityAndTrans.pdf>

<sup>202</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2017e): “Gender and Sexual Malpractice and Abuse in the Christian Church”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/236P-Malpractice.pdf>

<sup>203</sup> Restosterone book

<sup>204</sup> In that paper, I note that: “Gender and sexuality go their different ways. Many transsexuals marry in their imposed gender role for all the right reasons and love they possess. However, as age increases the drive 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 sexuality that is suppressed. There is the destruction of relationships and commitments through the failure to cope, even when love is as strong as ever. There is the blame for letting oneself down, the hurt to other people that has been caused and the guilt for the inability to conform to the edicts of others and one’s own expectations. Crippling harm can be created by the attitudes of some religious groups who heap guilt on transsexuals who cannot follow the path they prescribe. The trauma that this creates can be enormous and further attempts to fight the conflict only accelerate the demand. Much of one’s self-identity is built on a foundation that is wrong and a different approach is required. This must calm the dynamics and provide a firm base”.



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<sup>205</sup> Transgender issues and women's concerns

<sup>206</sup> Joel, Daphna; Berman, Zohar; Tavor, Ido; Nadav, Wexler; Gaber, Olga; Stein, Yaniv; Shefi, Nisan; Pool, Jared; Urchs, Sebastian; Margulies, Daniel S.; Liem, Franziskus; Hänggi, Jürgen; Jäncke, Lutz; Assaf, Yaniv: (2015): "Sex beyond the genitalia: The human brain mosaic" CrossMark: Elsevier PNAS Vol 112 No 50 Published 15 Dec 2015 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1073/PNAS.1509654112>

<sup>207</sup> Dhejne C, Lichtenstein P, Boman M, Johansson ALV, Långström N, Landén M (2011): "Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden". PLoS ONE 6(2): e16885. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0016885>  
Conclusion "This study found substantially higher rates of overall mortality, death from cardiovascular disease and suicide, suicide attempts, and psychiatric hospitalisations in sex-reassigned transsexual individuals compared to a healthy control population. This highlights that post-surgical transsexuals are a risk group that need long-term psychiatric and somatic follow-up. Even though surgery and hormonal therapy alleviates gender dysphoria, it is apparently not sufficient to remedy the high rates of morbidity and mortality found among transsexual persons. Improved care for the transsexual group after the sex reassignment should therefore be considered."

<sup>208</sup> The statement on the Transgender Trend website that "there is no evidence that transition is a 'cure' is based on this Swedish study," which is taken to mean that transgender conditions arise because of the internal traumas that people must deal with. That allegation is not supported in this paper and is not supported in other literature, where the high rates of morbidity are instead considered due to the external attacks and discrimination that transgender people face. Transition does not remove this external discrimination in any way and the misrepresentation of this outlook presents increases the strength of such attacks. It is of note that the lead author of the Swedish paper referred to above (Dhejne), specifically and strongly rejects the interpretations which have been attributed to this paper by various gender-critical feminist groups. Section D:5: Sources of Trauma, in :Gilchrist, S. (2021): "Responsibility in Transgender Disputes": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibility.pdf>: (I am presently withholding part of this document because I wish to update it in the light of the Tavistock v Bell court ruling. However key sections continue to be available).

<sup>209</sup> Section D:4: Suicides and Attempted Suicides, in :Gilchrist, S. (2021): "Responsibility in Transgender Disputes": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibility.pdf>: (I am presently withholding part of this document because I wish to update it in the light of this court ruling. However key sections continue to be available).

<sup>210</sup> Williams, Cristan (2015): "A 2011 Swedish study proves that trans people are more suicidal due to transition, are likely rapists and that trans women exhibit male socialization. Or does it?" *Trans Advocate* 2 November 2015: [https://www.transadvocate.com/fact-check-study-shows-transition-makes-trans-people-suicidal\\_n\\_15483.htm](https://www.transadvocate.com/fact-check-study-shows-transition-makes-trans-people-suicidal_n_15483.htm)

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<sup>211</sup> Joel, D., Garcia-Falgueras, A., Swaab, D.; (2020) "The Complex Relationships between Sex and the Brain" *The Neuroscientist* 2020, Vol. 26(2) 156–169 DOI: 10.1177/1073858419867298. In their 2015 paper Joel et al did not say that there were no sex differences. Instead of this, they described the brain as a mosaic of male and female features. Within that mosaic, various workers have since identified divergent male, transgender, and female phenotypes. In a 2020 paper Joel et al summarised the present situation by saying: "It is impossible to determine whether the differences between the groups reflect the different life experiences of individuals with different identities or preceded these experiences. It is also impossible to determine whether differences in specific brain structures are responsible for the different identities. These questions of cause and effect are further complicated by the observation that brain functions are generally not localized in one particular brain structure but distributed over circuits of large numbers of interacting brain areas". There is also supporting evidence from other neurological studies to show that, while male and female neural differentiations on average fall into these two categories, there is such a large spread in the distribution of these identifications that large overlaps occur. Mitchell for example gives a comprehensive account of this in his book. This means that it is Joel et al themselves, who discredit the interpretation which these gender critical feminist groups place on their work. Also: rather than looking at neural activity, examining neural interconnectivity may be a more appropriate approach. Standard handbooks such as that on: "Sex Differences in Neurology and Psychiatry" show the complex interactions that exist between sex and gender, even before and soon after birth. This contradicts the arguments presented by those groups who claim the gender identity is determined by social conditioning alone. It also has major consequences for those feminist movements whose gender politics are based entirely on the premise that gender is wholly socially constructed. As the feminist accounts of gender identities and transgender people show, this presumption is unquestioned in their own histories, cultures, and research.

<sup>212</sup> Mitchell, Kevin J. (2018): *"Innate: How the Wiring of our Brain Shapes Who We Are"*: Princeton University Press; ISBN 978-0-691-17388-7.

<sup>213</sup> I also discuss this extensively in *Responsibility in Transgender Disputes*: Gilchrist, S. (2021): *"Responsibility in Transgender Disputes"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibility.pdf>: (I am presently withholding part of this document because I wish to update it in the light of the *Tavistock v Bell* court ruling. However key sections continue to be available).

<sup>214</sup> See for example Lanzenberger, R.; Kranz, G.S.; Savic, I.: (Eds) (2020): *Sex Differences in Neurology and Psychiatry* Handbook of Clinical Neurology Volume 175, 2020

<sup>215</sup> See section 2:0 and Bettcher, Talia, (2014): *"Feminist Perspectives on Trans Issues"*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/feminism-trans/> . Mikkola, Mari, (2019)

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"*Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender*", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/feminism-gender/> .

<sup>216</sup> My article on Reform of the Gender Recognition act

<sup>217</sup> Ho men and women integrate Acceptance

<sup>218</sup> UK Parliament (2021): "Gender recognition process urgently in need of reform, say MPs" United Kingdom Parliament Select Committee Reports: 21 December 2021 <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/328/women-and-equalities-committee/news/160020/gender-recognition-process-urgently-in-need-of-reform-say-mps/> Maya Wolfe-Robinson, Maya (2021): "*UK government's approach to trans rights has 'caused real distress', MPs say*": The Guardian 21 Dec 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/dec/21/uk-governments-approach-to-trans-rights-has-caused-real-distress-mps-say?fbclid=IwAR0bMjaV96W8JmR27WHN2L5VVH0uqBOGY2kz0JQvAo9Cfy7aZGm2YechJbo>

<sup>219</sup> Noakes, Caroline (2021): "*Why am I being abused for trying to improve the gender recognition process?*": The Guardian 23 December 2021 [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/dec/23/why-am-i-being-abused-for-trying-to-improve-gender-recognition-process?fbclid=IwAR3Nt8FcrAykIFsnyTIRC0cAWXSY7QYSohcsWsV\\_NP-9gYOPsniAh6SPNhg](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/dec/23/why-am-i-being-abused-for-trying-to-improve-gender-recognition-process?fbclid=IwAR3Nt8FcrAykIFsnyTIRC0cAWXSY7QYSohcsWsV_NP-9gYOPsniAh6SPNhg)

<sup>220</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2020): "*A Comparison Of Changes To The House Of Commons Briefing Paper On 'Gender Recognition And The Rights Of Transgender People' Made On The 16th July 2020*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/SuM0720a-BriefingComparisonDocument.pdf>

<sup>221</sup> Initial GRA Consultation and reform of the act

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721725/GRA-Consultation-document.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721725/GRA-Consultation-document.pdf)

<sup>222</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9079/>

<sup>223</sup> <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/09/22/gender-recognition-act-reform-liz-truss-announcement-self-id-trans-healthcare/>

<sup>224</sup> In: United Kingdom Parliament: (2021) "Conversion Therapy": The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA 02072192840 post@parliament.uk parliament.uk/post @POST\_UK Number 658 December 2021 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0658/POST-PN-0658.pdf>

<sup>225</sup> Letter from the Minister of Equalities to the Chair of the Women and Equalities Committees, 14 July 2021.

<sup>226</sup> The role of the EHRC is to interpret human rights law. The advice it gives does not have legal force and is subject to the advice given in the 3010 Equality Act.



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<sup>227</sup> Morgan, H., Lamprinakou, C., Fuller, F., Albakri, M.: (2020): “*Attitudes to Transgender People August 2020*”: Equality and Human Rights Commission”: Published August 2020 ISBN: 978-1-84206-830-4:

[https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/attitudes\\_to\\_transgender\\_people.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/attitudes_to_transgender_people.pdf)

<sup>228</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022): “*Response submitted to UK Government consultation: Banning conversion therapy*”: 26 January 2022 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/consultation-response-banning-conversion-therapy-26-january-2022.docx>

<sup>229</sup> EHRC (2022): “Protecting people from sex and gender reassignment discrimination” EHRC 4 April 2022

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/protecting-people-sex-and-gender-reassignment-discrimination>

<sup>230</sup> EHRC (2022): “*Response submitted to UK Government consultation Banning conversion therapy*” Equality and Human Rights Commission,

January 2022 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/consultation-response-banning-conversion-therapy-26-january-2022.docx>

<sup>231</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill-analysis-responses-public-consultation-exercise/> <https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/EHRCJ/2022/1/25/8c18e05c-08ab-4c7d-992b-4b0467541d70/EHRCJS062022R1.pdf>

<sup>232</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/consultation-response-gender-recognition-act-18-october-2018.pdf>  
[https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/gender\\_recognition\\_act.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/gender_recognition_act.pdf)

<sup>233</sup> Moore, Mallory; Links, Meryl; Clarke Sarah. (2022): “EHRC asserts protections for religious and trans conversion therapy, calls for pausing GRA reform” Transsafety Network: Thu Jan 27, 2022 (updated: 12:21 ). [https://transsafety.network/posts/ehrc-defends-ct-pauses-gra-reform/?fbclid=IwAR1ncCNfAYGbk5msmJ\\_CMh1j8ga6noc\\_LW1eIIZRYBH-GzRkc9rLUKealYQ](https://transsafety.network/posts/ehrc-defends-ct-pauses-gra-reform/?fbclid=IwAR1ncCNfAYGbk5msmJ_CMh1j8ga6noc_LW1eIIZRYBH-GzRkc9rLUKealYQ)

<sup>234</sup> Description of evidence against conversion therapy for transgender people

<sup>235</sup> Stonewall (2018): “*LGBT in Britain - Trans Report*”: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-britain-trans-report> also Stonewall/Cambridge University (2017): “*School Report (2017)*”: <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>

<sup>236</sup> Balarajan, M., Gray, M., & Mitchell, M. (2011), Monitoring equality: Developing a gender identity question. London: National Centre for Social Research. [Accessed 16 July 2020]

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<sup>237</sup> Paragraph 40 of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022): “*Response submitted to UK Government consultation: Banning conversion therapy*”: 26 January 2022

<sup>238</sup> This is in part due to the legal definitions involved. In the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristic of sex protects people from being discriminated against because of being a man or a woman (Equality Act 2010, Section 11) – defined as a male or female of any age (Equality Act 2010, Section 212 (1)). Therefore, according to this legislation, biology exclusively determines what a man or woman is. However, most people identify men and women through the ways in which people integrate into society. Many people now see that male to female transsexuals integrate seamlessly into society as women and have a proud history of fighting for women’s rights. The current Equality Act states that Protected characteristics include sex as being a man or a woman (not male or female) and gender reassignment, as being an individual who is ‘proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process or part of a process to reassign their sex’. There is no requirement for a trans person to have any kind of medical supervision or intervention in order to be protected from this gender reassignment discrimination. Nor does a person need a Gender Recognition Certificate to be protected under this characteristic of gender reassignment. A trans person is protected from the moment he or she makes that declaration. That is harmful for many transgender people fight never- ending battles between their loyalty to the identity they sense inside, and their loyalty to the love and commitments they have made. In order to maintain these relationships, the first requirement is to create self-acceptance and create self-esteem so that conflicts do not explode, and catastrophic collapse occurs. This is the type of affirmative approach adopted by the professional medical institutions. As it stands the current equality act requires trans people to lie in order to gain that protection. The legislation also fails because it considers sex and gender only in binary terms

<sup>239</sup> UK Government (2010): Equality Act <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

<sup>240</sup> See sections 3:0 to 11:00 of Gilchrist, S. (2019a): “*Divisions: Self-Declaration and Gender Variant People*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-DivisionsSelfDeclaration.pdf>

<sup>241</sup> UK Government (2010) Equality Act Notes <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/notes>

<sup>242</sup> Intersex people (the term used to describe a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male) are not explicitly protected from discrimination by the Equality Act, but you must not be discriminated against because of your sex or perceived sex. For example:

if a woman with an intersex condition is refused entry to a women-only swimming pool because the attendants think her to be a man, this could be sex discrimination or disability discrimination Equalities and Human Rights Commission; (2021): “*Gender reassignment*

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*discrimination. Advice and guidance*”: Last updated 22 Dec 2021 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/gender-reassignment-discrimination>

<sup>243</sup> UK Government (2010) Equality Act Notes <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/notes>

<sup>244</sup> For those who argue that gender identity is purely a socially learned construct, the issue is one of male domination and power over women. From this perspective, those male-to-female transsexuals who identify as women are understood to erase women’s identities and attack women’s sex-based rights: their argument is that social conditioning creates boundaries that cannot be crossed. This gives strong reasons for adopting autogynephilic explanations for transsexuality, where homosexuality is regarded as a personality variation and is a fundamental and clearly defined element of identity, while male-to-female transsexuality is regarded as a sublimated sexually motivated paraphilia or disruption of homosexuality instead.

<sup>245</sup> Additional comments include: This (treatment) should include support to reduce distress and reconcile a person to their biological sex where clinically indicated, including for children and young people aged under 18 if this is in their best interests (para 7). Proposals to restrict the promotion of conversion therapy could curtail freedom of expression. However, given the evidence that conversion therapy is statistically associated with negative health outcomes... a provider of what might be considered conversion therapy should supply the individual with information about the likely effectiveness of this treatment (para 20). This offence should not capture communication such as casual conversations, exchanges of views or private prayer, with the distinction defined clearly in the legislation (para 28). Encouraging people to comply with religious doctrine that requires refraining from certain types of sexual activity should not fall within the definition of conversion therapy either. However, faith and community leaders should be made aware of the ban on conversion therapy in order that they understand the importance of compliance (para 6): Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022): “Response submitted to UK Government consultation: Banning conversion therapy”: 26 January 2022

<sup>246</sup> The role of the EHRC is to interpret human rights law. The advice it gives does not have legal force and is subject to the advice given in the 2010 Equality Act.

<sup>247</sup> It is alleged that the EHRC held several private meetings and exchanged correspondence with gender-critical groups <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2022/02/02/ehrc-equalities-watchdog-trans-lgb-alliance-fair-play-women/>  
<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2022/02/02/ehrc-equalities-watchdog-trans-lgb-alliance-fair-play-women/>

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<sup>248</sup> The Independent (2002) *"Liz Truss faces criticism for failing to set up new LGBT+ advisory panel nine months after scrapping old one"*. The Independent 9 January 2022 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/liz-truss-lgbt-panel-government-b1988136.html>

<sup>249</sup> The role of the EHRC is to interpret human rights law. The advice it gives does not have legal force and is subject to the advice given in the 3010 Equality Act.

<sup>250</sup> The role of the EHRC is to interpret human rights law. The advice it gives does not have legal force and is subject to the advice given in the 3010 Equality Act.

<sup>251</sup> See Paragraphs 3, 4, 7, 31 of the EHRC response document: Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022): "Response submitted to UK Government consultation: Banning conversion therapy": 26 January 2022

<sup>252</sup> Gov UK (2019) National LGBT Survey and Action Plan" <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-lgbt-survey-2017>

<sup>253</sup> Gov UK (2021): "The prevalence of Conversion Therapy in the UK" 29 October 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevalence-of-conversion-therapy-in-the-uk/the-prevalence-of-conversion-therapy-in-the-uk>

<sup>254</sup> Paragraph 2 of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022): "Response submitted to UK Government consultation: Banning conversion therapy": 26 January 2022

<sup>255</sup> Gov UK: (2021) "Conversion Therapy: an Evidence Assessment and Quantitative Study" 29 October 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conversion-therapy-an-evidence-assessment-and-qualitative-study/conversion-therapy-an-evidence-assessment-and-qualitative-study#what-are-the-outcomes-of-conversion-therapy-1>

<sup>256</sup> Paragraph 4

<sup>257</sup> Royal College of Psychiatry (2018) Supporting transgender and gender-diverse people March 2018 PS02/18 [https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS02\\_18.pdf](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS02_18.pdf)

<sup>258</sup> MoU2 Conversion therapy is the term for therapy that assumes certain sexual orientations or gender identities are inferior to others and seeks to change or suppress them on that basis. The 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) makes it clear that conversion therapy in relation to gender identity and sexual orientation (including asexuality) is unethical, potentially harmful and is not supported by evidence. It updates the 2015 version released at the Department of Health, which focused exclusively on sexual orientation. <https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/mou/>

<sup>259</sup> APA (2018): Position Statement on Conversion Therapy: American Psychiatric Association <https://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/About-APA/Organization-Documents-Policies/Position-Conversion-Therapy.pdf>

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<sup>260</sup> World Professional Association for Transgender Health. (2012). *Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People* [7<sup>th</sup> Version]. <https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc>

<sup>261</sup> TGEU (2018): “World Health Organisation moves to end classifying trans identities as mental illness” Posted on 18. June 2018 <https://tgeu.org/world-health-organisation-moves-to-end-classifying-trans-identities-as-mental-illness/> WHO, (2018): “WHO releases new International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11)” [http://www.who.int/news-room/detail/17-06-2018-who-releases-new-international-classification-of-diseases-\(icd-11\)](http://www.who.int/news-room/detail/17-06-2018-who-releases-new-international-classification-of-diseases-(icd-11))

<sup>262</sup> UNHCR (2020): Report on conversion therapy: The United Nations Committee on Human Rights <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SexualOrientationGender/Pages/ReportOnConversiontherapy.aspx>

<sup>263</sup> Ashley, Florence. (2108): “List of professional organisations opposing conversion or reparative therapy targeting transgender and gender non-conforming individuals” The Medium October 5 2018 <https://medium.com/@florence.ashley/list-of-professional-organisations-opposing-conversion-or-reparative-therapy-targeting-transgender-f700b4e02c4e>

<sup>264</sup> GOV UK (2021): “An assessment of the evidence on conversion therapy for sexual orientation and gender identity” 29 October 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/an-assessment-of-the-evidence-on-conversion-therapy-for-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/an-assessment-of-the-evidence-on-conversion-therapy-for-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>

<sup>265</sup> The main findings from the studies were that: *There is no robust evidence that conversion therapy can achieve its stated therapeutic aim of changing sexual orientation or gender identity. The types of practices tend to be similar for conversion therapy for sexual orientation and for gender identity – for example, talking therapies delivered by faith groups or mental health professionals. Conversion therapies were associated with self-reported harms among research participants who had experienced conversion therapy for sexual orientation and for gender identity – for example, negative mental health effects like depression and feeling suicidal. There is indicative evidence from surveys that transgender respondents were as likely or more likely to be offered and receive conversion therapy than non-transgender lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) respondents*. Gov UK: (2021) “Conversion Therapy: an Evidence Assessment and Quantitative Study” 29 October 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conversion-therapy-an-evidence-assessment-and-qualitative-study/conversion-therapy-an-evidence-assessment-and-qualitative-study#what-are-the-outcomes-of-conversion-therapy-1>

<sup>266</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2021a): “Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/250P-GenderIdentityAndTrans.pdf> also Gilchrist, S. (2019): “Interpreting Science and Challenges to Gender Identity Research” <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-InterpretationsSelfDeclaration.pdf>



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<sup>267</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2020b): “Responsibility in Transgender Disputes”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibiity.pdf>

<sup>268</sup> Farley, H. (2021) “Gay conversion therapy: Hundreds of religious leaders call for ban”: BBC News: 16 December 2021: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55326461> Greenhalgh, H. (2020) *Hundreds of global faith leaders call for ban on LGBT+ conversion therapy*: Reuters 16 December 2021: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-religion-lgbt-rights-trfn-idUSKBN28Q00U>

<sup>269</sup> Global Interfaith Commission Principles: These were announced at 630pm on Tuesday 22 March 2022 after an Act of Commitment led by the Dean of St Paul's<sup>269</sup>. <https://www.globalinterfaith.lgbt/safeguarding/>

<sup>270</sup> This is the initiative of the new [Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives](https://www.globalinterfaith.lgbt/safeguarding/), overseen by partners the [Ozanne Foundation](https://www.ozannefoundation.org/). They said today:

*“We recognise that certain religious teachings have, throughout the ages, been misused to cause deep pain and offense to those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex. This must change. That is why we have launched the Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives, which aims to provide a strong and authoritative voice from religious leaders across the global faith community who wish to affirm and celebrate the dignity of all, independent of a person's sexuality, gender expression and gender identity”.* More than 370 religious leaders from over 35 countries have already signed the declaration including Dr Mary Macaleese, former President of the Republic of Ireland and Archbishop Desmond Tutu from South Africa. The initial list of signatories includes nine Archbishops, 51 Bishops and 16 Deans from across the Anglican Communion, 65 rabbis and various religious leaders from the Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu religions. <https://opentable.lgbt/our-news/2020/12/16/otn-patrons-sign-global-interfaith-declaration-on-the-sanctity-of-life-and-the-dignity-of-all>

<sup>271</sup> Gallagher S and Parry J (2022) “Conversion therapy: Ban to go ahead but not cover trans people” BBC News 2 April 2022 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-60947028>

<sup>272</sup> Cooper, J. (2021) “Recommendations On Effectively Legislating for A Ban On Conversion Practices By The Ban ‘Conversion Therapy’ Legal Forum” Cooper Report [https://www.ozanne.foundation/cooper\\_report/](https://www.ozanne.foundation/cooper_report/)

<sup>273</sup> HRC Foundation: (ND): “The Lies and Dangers of Efforts to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity” <https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy>

<sup>274</sup> See also McCay, Layla (2021): “Conversion therapy survey findings” Findings from the Health and Care LGBTQ+ Network and the Mental Health Network's survey asking for members' views on the conversion ban consultation. 7 December 2021

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<https://www.nhsconfed.org/articles/conversion-therapy-survey-findings>

<sup>275</sup> Beardsley, C., O'Brien, M. (2016): *"This Is my body: Hearing the theology of transgender Christians"*: Paperback: 240 pages Publisher: Darton Longman & Todd (26 May 2016) ISBN-10: 0232532060 ISBN-13: 978-0232532067: Dowd, C., Beardsley, C., and Tanis, J., (2018) *"Transfaith: 'a transgender pastoral resource'"* Paperback 224 pages Publisher: Darton Longman and Todd ISBN 978 0 232 53311 8 Beardsley, C., Dowd, C.: (2020): *"Trans Affirming Churches: How to Celebrate Gender-Variant People and Their Loved Ones"* 19 Mar. 2020 Paperback: 176 pages: Publisher: Jessica Kingsley Publishers (19 Mar. 2020) ISBN-10: 1785925326 ISBN-13: 978-1785925320

<sup>276</sup> Burns, Christine (editor) (2018). *"Trans Britain: Our Journey from the Shadows"* Unbound: ISBN-10: 1783524715 ISBN-13 : 978-1783524716 and by Chevasutt, Chrissie (2021): *"Heaven Come Down: The story of a transgender disciple"* Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd ISBN-10: 1913657205 ISBN-13 : 978-1913657208

<sup>277</sup> Transgender Books Bibliography. See for example <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/oct/21/top-10-transgender-books>  
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/the-read-down/books-by-trans-non-binary-and-gender-non-conforming-authors/>

<sup>278</sup> <https://www.transgendertrend.com/>

<sup>279</sup> <https://womansplaceuk.org/>

<sup>280</sup> <https://lgballiance.org.uk/>

<sup>281</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-equality/studies-and-research-lgbti-equality\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-equality/studies-and-research-lgbti-equality_en)

<sup>282</sup> PACE (2022): *"Rights of LGBTI people: advances achieved are under threat, PACE says"* Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: 25 January 2022 <https://pace.coe.int/en/news/8582/rights-of-lgbti-people-advances-achieved-are-under-threat-pace-says>:

Council of Europe (2021) *"LGBTI Persons' Rights"*: September 2022

<https://rm.coe.int/thematic-factsheet-lgbti-eng/1680a3b2d7> "Adopting a resolution based on a report by Fourat Ben Chikha (Belgium, SOC), the Assembly strongly condemned "the extensive and often virulent attacks on the rights of LGBTI people for several years" notably in Hungary, Poland, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the United Kingdom, stressing that the significant advances achieved in recent years were today under threat. During the debate, in which intervened the European Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli, the parliamentarians deplored anti-gender narratives, which reduce the fight for the equality and rights of LGBTI people to what some conservative movements deliberately mis-characterise as "gender ideology" or "LGBTI ideology". For a gender-critical viewpoint see: Hayton Debbie (2022) *"Stop saying the UK is transphobic"* Blog: 3 February 2022



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<https://debbiehayton.com/tag/parliamentary-assembly/>

<sup>283</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/banning-conversion-therapy>

<sup>284</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmwomeq/977/summary.html>

<sup>285</sup> As equalities minister, Truss has the power to appoint new commissioners to the board of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), an ostensibly independent body that “promotes and upholds” equality law across England, Scotland, and Wales. She has used this power to make two appointments that sparked worry in the trans community. In November 2020, Baroness Kishwer Falkner was named chair of the EHRC, and promptly said that her watchdog would protect “freedom of belief”, including “gender critical” beliefs, and that it is “entirely reasonable” to question trans people’s gender identity. In December 2021, Truss appointed the barrister Akua Reindorf to the board of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Reindorf is known in the community for her review of the “de-platforming” of two anti-trans speakers at the University of Essex, which was highly critical of Stonewall’s trans inclusion advice. Appointments to the EHRC are likely to outlast Truss’ role overseeing equalities, and paints a troubling picture for the rights of trans and non-binary people.

<sup>286</sup> Adams, Richard (2021): “Sussex professor resigns after transgender rights row” BBC News 28 October 2021

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/28/sussex-professor-kathleen-stock-resigns-after-transgender-rights-row>

<sup>287</sup> See Section 12 of Gilchrist, S. (2021a): “*Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People*”:

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/250P-GenderIdentityAndTrans.pdf> Stock, K., (2018): “*Why self-identification should not legally make you a woman*” “The Conversation” October 1, 2018 <https://theconversation.com/why-self-identification-should-not-legally-make-you-a-woman-103372>

Also sections D and E in Gilchrist, S. (2020b): “*Responsibility in Transgender*

*Disputes*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibility.pdf>

<sup>288</sup> Stock, K (2020): “Written evidence from Professor Kathleen Stock (FOE0029) to the UK Government consultation on reform of the Gender Recognition Act:

13 November 2020 <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/16374/pdf/>

<sup>289</sup> Parsons, V: (2020) “A ‘gender-critical’ academic awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours list has branded LGBT+ charity Stonewall “a threat to freedom of speech” in a diatribe about “gender identity ideology”. Pink News December 31, 2020

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/12/31/kathleen-stock-obe-stonewall-twitter-trans-gender-critical-new-year-honours/>

<sup>290</sup> Parsons, Vic. (2021): “*Outraged academics condemn government for handing anti-trans professor Kathleen Stock an OBE*” Pink News 6 January 2021 <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2021/01/06/kathleen-stock-obe-transphobia-open-letter/>

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<sup>291</sup> It should be noted that I have known Debbie well as a friend and I hope I still do. We have worked together on those transgender issues we agree with and agreed to disagree in areas where we do not. While I greatly regret the views she now expresses, I no know way doubt here personal integrity and the sincerity of her belief in holding these gender critical views. I believe that it is important to call out views I disagree with, but in no way should this be considered a personal attack. For more on this you may wish to look at: Gilchrist, S. (2018b): “*Transgender People and Women’s Concerns*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-TransgenderSocialIssues.pdf> and Gilchrist, S. (2019a): “*Divisions: Self-Declaration and Gender Variant People*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-DivisionsSelfDeclaration.pdf>

<sup>292</sup> Hayton, Debbie (2021): “*Stonewall’s annus horribilis\**”. The Spectator 28 December 2021 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/stonewall-s-annus-horribilis>

<sup>293</sup> Hayton, Debbie; (2020): “*Gender identity is bollocks*” Spectator Australia, 4 April 20 <https://www.spectator.com.au/2020/04/gender-identity-is-bollocks/20> See some of Debbie Hayton’s papers: <https://www.spectator.co.uk/writer/debbie-hayton>

<sup>294</sup> Brown, David (2021): “*A philosopher who resigned from her university post after criticism of her views on trans issues ridiculed an academic conference which questions if the UK is a “rainy fascism island”*”. The Times December 20<sup>th</sup>. 2021 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/professor-kathleen-stock-academic-in-trans-row-mocks-sex-conference-09mt3fmxq>

Hayton, Debbie (2022): “*Stop saying the UK is transphobic*”: Unherd 3 February 2022: <https://debbiehayton.com/tag/parliamentary-assembly/>

<sup>295</sup> See section 2:0: “*Feminism and Transgender Issues*” of Gilchrist, S. (2021a): “*Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/250P-GenderIdentityAndTrans.pdf>

<sup>296</sup> See for example Abeni, C. (2015) “*Feminist Germaine Greer Goes on Anti-Trans Rant Over Caitlyn Jenner*” The Advocate, October 26<sup>th</sup>. 2015. <https://www.advocate.com/caitlyn-jenner/2015/10/26/feminist-germaine-greer-goes-anti-trans-rant-over-caitlyn-jenner> This is more thoroughly elaborated in Janice Raymond's Book: (Raymond, Janice, (1979) “*The transsexual empire: The making of the she-male*”, Boston: Beacon Press).

<sup>297</sup> EHRC(2022): “*Protecting people from sex and gender reassignment discrimination*” EHRC 4 April 2022 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/protecting-people-sex-and-gender-reassignment-discrimination>

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<sup>298</sup> Syal, Rajeev (2022): “*Trans people can be excluded from single-sex services if ‘justifiable’, says EHRC*” Guardian 4 April 2022

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/apr/04/trans-people-can-be-excluded-single-sex-services-if-justifiable-says-ehrc>

<sup>299</sup> Additional comments include: This (treatment) should include support to reduce distress and reconcile a person to their biological sex where clinically indicated, including for children and young people aged under 18 if this is in their best interests (para 7). Proposals to restrict the promotion of conversion therapy could curtail freedom of expression. However, given the evidence that conversion therapy is statistically associated with negative health outcomes... a provider of what might be considered conversion therapy should supply the individual with information about the likely effectiveness of this treatment (para 20). This offence should not capture communication such as casual conversations, exchanges of views or private prayer, with the distinction defined clearly in the legislation (para 28). Encouraging people to comply with religious doctrine that requires refraining from certain types of sexual activity should not fall within the definition of conversion therapy either. However, faith and community leaders should be made aware of the ban on conversion therapy in order that they understand the importance of compliance (para 6): Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022): “Response submitted to UK Government consultation: Banning conversion therapy”: 26 January 2022

<sup>300</sup> Stewart H., and Elgot, J. (2022): “*Gay and trans rights issues divide both Tories and Labour*” The Guardian Fri 1 Apr 2022

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/apr/01/gay-and-trans-rights-issues-divide-both-tories-and-labour>. At a back-slapping dinner for Conservative MPs, Boris Johnson greeted his colleagues with a typical joke, aimed at exploiting Labour’s discomfort over the sensitive issue of gender: “Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Or, as Keir Starmer would put it, people who are assigned female or male at birth,” he quipped. From this starting point of ridiculing and misrepresenting transgender people, in the House of Commons he later praised Jamie Wallis for his courage in coming out as transgender. Johnson also tweeted “Sharing this very intimate story would have taken an immense amount of courage. Thank you @JamieWallisMP, for your bravery, which will undoubtedly support others. The Conservative Party I lead will always give you, and everyone else, the love and support you need to be yourself. Nicholson, K. (2022) “*Boris Johnson Joked About Trans People Hours Before Conservative MP Came Out*” Huffington Post 30 march 2022

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/boris-johnson-trans-people-jamie-wallis\\_uk\\_624415b4e4b0d8266aa56c44](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/boris-johnson-trans-people-jamie-wallis_uk_624415b4e4b0d8266aa56c44)

<sup>301</sup> Intersex people (the term used to describe a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male) are not explicitly protected from discrimination by the Equality Act, but you must not be discriminated against because of your sex or perceived sex. For example:

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if a woman with an intersex condition is refused entry to a women-only swimming pool because the attendants think her to be a man, this could be sex discrimination or disability discrimination Equalities and Human Rights Commission; (2021): *“Gender reassignment discrimination. Advice and guidance”*: Last updated 22 Dec 2021 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/gender-reassignment-discrimination>

<sup>302</sup> Parry, J and Moss, L (2022) *“Safe To Be Me’ LGBT conference cancelled after boycott”* BBC News 5 April 2022 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-61002448>

<sup>303</sup> .Practices should not be banned that enable individuals to explore, reflect on or understand their sexual orientation or being transgender. Nor should LGBT people be prevented from seeking spiritual support from their faith leader in the exploration of their sexual orientation or being transgender, including within their families, schools and communities. Encouraging people to comply with religious doctrine that requires refraining from certain types of sexual activity should not fall within the definition of conversion therapy either. However, faith and community leaders should be made aware of the ban on conversion therapy in order that they understand the importance of compliance.

<sup>304</sup> This offence should not capture communication such as casual conversations, exchanges of views or private prayer, with the distinction defined clearly in the legislation.

<sup>305</sup> 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-sexrelationships-after-the-shared-conversations-report-from-the-house-of-bishops.pdf>: See also: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/229PGS2055.pdf>

<sup>306</sup> the Global Anglican Futures Movement <https://www.gafcon.org/about/global-movement>

<sup>307</sup> As translated from the Russian by Jacob Lassin, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies. : *“Eight years ago there were attempts to destroy what existed in Donbass. And in Donbass there is an aversion, a fundamental rejection of the so-called values offered by those who claim worldly power. Today there is a loyalty test for for this power, a kind of permit to that ‘happy world,’ the world of excess consumption, the world of visible ‘freedom.’ Today there is such a loyalty test, And you know what that test is? The test is very simple and at the same time horrible—it is a gay parade. Demands to many to hold gay parades are a loyalty test for that most mighty world; and we know that if people or countries refuse these demands than they will not be part of that*



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world, they will become foreign to it. Also, Putin's comments on J.K. Rowling and: Stewart, W. Newman, J. (2022): "Vladimir Putin slams 'monstrous' West for teaching children they can change their gender, saying it is 'close to a crime against humanity'": Mail Online 21 October 2021 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10117735/Vladimir-Putin-slams-monstrous-West-teaching-children-change-gender.html> . Putin's comments closely follow those of Pope Francis.

<sup>308</sup> Church of England House of Bishops (2022); Meeting Report: Thursday March 24 2022: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/house-bishops-thursday-march-24>

<sup>309</sup> 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>

<sup>310</sup> Stewart, W. Newman, J. (2022): "Vladimir Putin slams 'monstrous' West for teaching children they can change their gender, saying it is 'close to a crime against humanity'": Mail Online 21 October 2021 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10117735/Vladimir-Putin-slams-monstrous-West-teaching-children-change-gender.html> . Putin's comments closely follow those of Pope Francis.

<sup>311</sup> Cite personal Malpractice article

<sup>312</sup> Soteriou, Emma (2022) "Sajid Javid 'to launch inquiry into gender treatment' as system is 'failing children'". LBC News 23 April 2022 <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/sajid-javid-review-child-gender-treatment-system/>

<sup>313</sup> Butler, Judith (1999): "Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity": Routledge New York And London: <http://eng296.digitalwcu.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/butler-gender-trouble-chapter-1-w-RC-selections.pdf>  
[http://www.kyoolee.net/GENDER\\_TROUBLE - Preface - Butler.pdf](http://www.kyoolee.net/GENDER_TROUBLE_-_Preface_-_Butler.pdf)

<sup>314</sup> Hayton article on Stonewall and Kathleen stock condemnations

<sup>315</sup> Hayton, Debbie (2021): "Stonewall's annus horribilis". The Spectator 28 December 2021 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/stonewall-s-annus-horribilis>

<sup>316</sup> For more detailed discussion see section 2:0 of Gilchrist, S. (2021a): "Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender People": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/250P-GenderIdentityAndTrans.pdf>

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<sup>317</sup> See for example: Lanzenberger, R.; Kranz, G.S.; Savic, I.: (Eds) (2020): *Sex Differences in Neurology and Psychiatry* Handbook of Clinical Neurology Volume 175, 2020 also section D of Gilchrist, S. (2020b): “*Responsibility in Transgender Disputes*”:

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/248P-Responsibility.pdf>

<sup>318</sup> In her book “Gender Trouble”, first published in 1990<sup>14</sup>, Judith Butler argued that behavioural manifestations are present prior to the existence of gender identity and a sexed body<sup>15</sup> (rather than the other way around). However, in this book she called into question the pre-existence of any group of gender-based characteristics prior to the enforcement of a gender role. She followed Freud in seeing the ego as formed largely through a process of complex identifications. Under Freud, the cognitive abilities needed to transform these behavioural manifestations into personal identifications are not considered to be present until about the age of three years. For Butler therefore gender identity becomes a socially learned performative act<sup>17</sup> and all understandings of the driving forces in gender identity in these feminist narratives become associated with power and sex, masculinity and femininity, social learning, and the gender role<sup>18 19</sup>. Freudian approaches with sexually motivated psychodynamic theories, and by implication Butler in her 1990 book, and in her other publications of the time, considered that before the age of three little in the way of structure is understood to be created. Section 2:0 Feminism and Transgender Issues Gilchrist, S. (2021a): “*Gender Identity, Feminism, and Transgender*

*People*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/250P-GenderIdentityAndTrans.pdf>

<sup>319</sup> Butler, J., 1990, “*Performative Acts and Gender Constitution*”, in *Performing Feminisms*, S-E. Case (ed.), Baltimore: John Hopkins University.

<sup>320</sup> To understand the attitude that Judith Butler takes today to transgender issues, the You Tube video: “*Feminist icon Judith Butler on JK Rowling, trans rights, feminism and intersectionality*” should be viewed See Butler’s YouTube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXJb2eLNJZE>

<sup>321</sup> Butler, Judith, (2021): “Why is the idea of ‘gender’ provoking backlash the world over?” the Guardian 23 October 2021:

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/commentisfree/2021/oct/23/judith-butler-gender-ideology-backlash?fbclid=IwAR0rB1GFwR8N88U-cPMYXrpCQ2FQLzge5IUfNISuckXkhNzVEarOg66uh0s>

<sup>322</sup> Mitchell Book

<sup>323</sup> See for example: Gilchrist, S. (2019b): “*The Development of Transgender Behaviour and Identities in Early Life*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/243P-BehaviourSelfIdentity.pdf>

<sup>324</sup> Give reference to safeguarding transgender children

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<sup>325</sup> 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/>

<sup>326</sup> For more detailed discussion see Gilchrist, S. (2017a): "No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

<sup>327</sup> 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>

<sup>328</sup> In that paper, I note that: "Gender and sexuality go their different ways. Many transsexuals marry in their imposed gender role for all the right reasons and love they possess. However, as age increases the drive 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 sexuality that is suppressed. There is the destruction of relationships and commitments through the failure to cope, even when love is as strong as ever. There is the blame for letting oneself down, the hurt to other people that has been caused and the guilt for the inability to conform to the edicts of others and one's own expectations. Crippling harm can be created by the attitudes of some religious groups who heap guilt on transsexuals who cannot follow the path they prescribe. The trauma that this creates can be enormous and further attempts to fight the conflict only accelerate the demand. Much of one's self-identity is built on a foundation that is wrong and a different approach is required. This must calm the dynamics and provide a firm base".

<sup>329</sup> It is "impossible" for God to "bless sin", the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) BBC (2021): "Catholic Church 'cannot bless same-sex unions' BBC News:Published 15 March 2021 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-56402096>

<sup>330</sup> For background info see Chaplain, Chloe (2021): "Government 'has no interest' in banning trans people from single-sex toilets, Liz Truss tells equalities tsar" I news: February 21, 2022 <https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/government-no-interest-banning-trans-people-single-sex-toilets-liz-truss-tells-equalities-tsar-1474413>

<sup>331</sup> Safe To Be Me: A Global Equality Conference on LGBT Rights Statement made to the UK House of Commons on 17 May 2021

<sup>332</sup> See the first two presentations in this series

<sup>333</sup> Sometimes it is argued that masturbation is condemned, but this condemnation is about participation in a levirate marriage instead. The rabbis allowed it within reason but condemned excessive use. See:

<sup>334</sup> Mitton, Michael, (1996): "The Soul of Celtic Spirituality: In the Lives of Its Saints": Twenty-Third Publications, 1996 ISBN089622662X, 9780896226623



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<sup>335</sup> The Gospel of Thomas is understood to have circulated principally in the Syriac Christian Community. There are strong traditions which indicate that Thomas brought this Syriac Christian tradition to India and that he was martyred there in AD 72. Unlike Paul, who needed to make these adaptations for Roman society, in Syria and India, and in line with the gospel of Thomas, the immediate adoption of the Gospel Message was sought.. (See: Strain, Janna Y (2013): *“This I say not as one doubting”: Traditions of the Apostle Thomas from the Beginning of the Common Era through 800”* Illinois Wesleyan University). As a story in the “Acts of Thomas” goes, king Gundaphar requires Thomas to build him a palace and the apostle gives all the funds for the project to the poor, building the king a palace that Gundaphar may see *“when thou dost depart this life”* (Acts of Thomas 21). Instead of being killed for his disobedience, as Gundaphar had intended, Thomas was saved by a miraculous act. When Thomas redistributes the king’s money to the poor, people report to the king that: Neither has he built a palace or done anything else of what he has promised to do, but he goes about the towns and villages, and if he has anything he gives it all to the poor, and he teaches a new God . . . his works of compassion, and the healings which are wrought by him without reward . . . and the quality of his faith, show that he is righteous or an apostle of the new God whom he preaches. On a later occasion the then king, Misdeus (or Mizdeos), was infuriated when Thomas converted the queen Tertia, the king's son Juzanes, sister-in-law princess Mygdonia and her friend Markia to Christianity. Misdeus led St Thomas outside the city and ordered four soldiers to take him to the nearby hill, where the soldiers speared to death. This is generally assumed to have happened in AD 72. What is important in these accounts is not the accuracy or factuality of these stories. It is in the nature of the ministry of Thomas that no compromises were made with those in authority, and no compromises with the teaching of Jesus were made.

[https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=religion\\_honproj](https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=religion_honproj). Also: Aykara, Thomas A. and Chethimattam John B. (1989): “Church of St. Thomas in India; It's History, Problems, and Hopes.” *The Journal of Dharma* 14.1 (1989): 62-73. Also: Aykara, Thomas A. and Chethimattam John B. (1986): “Living Flame: Church of St. Thomas in India : Its History, Problems and Hopes” Editor Thomas A. Aykara Contributor John B. Chethimattam Publisher: Syro-Malabar Religious Conference (SMRC), 1986

<sup>336</sup> The Staggs note that the synoptic Gospels of the canonical New Testament contain a relatively high number of references to women (Stagg, Evelyn and Frank. *Woman in the World of Jesus*. Westminster John Knox Pr, 1978. ISBN 978-0-664-24195-7). Bilezikian agrees, noting that this is exceptional by comparison with other literary works of the same epoch (Bilezikian, Gilbert. *Beyond Sex Roles*. Baker, 1989. ISBN 0-8010-0885-9 p.82). 66 King, Karen L. “Women in Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries.” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.htm>

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<sup>337</sup> Anon (ND): "Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas, when He came into India, and Built the Palace in the Heavens".

[https://biblehub.com/library/unknown/acts\\_of\\_the\\_holy\\_apostle\\_thomas/acts\\_of\\_the\\_holy\\_apostle\\_2.htm](https://biblehub.com/library/unknown/acts_of_the_holy_apostle_thomas/acts_of_the_holy_apostle_2.htm)

<sup>338</sup> Brodsky, David. (ND): "Rabbinic Judaism" in Nissinen, M. H. (2016) "Homosexuality : I. Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament" de Gruyter, 2016 pp303-305 : Digital Repository of the University of Helsinki [https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/325479/EBR\\_Homosexuality.pdf?sequence=1](https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/325479/EBR_Homosexuality.pdf?sequence=1) See also Greenberg, S., (2005): "Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition" University of Wisconsin Press; 1st edition (February 24, 2005) ISBN-10 0299190943 ISBN-13 978-0299190941

<sup>339</sup> Chavruta is a traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students work together to learn, discuss, and debate a shared text. It challenges the student to analyze and explain the material, point out the errors in his partner's reasoning, and question and sharpen each other's ideas, often arriving at entirely new insights into the meaning of the text. Chavruta is most associated with the Tannaim and Amoraim periods (0-500 AD) and it is almost certain that Jesus and John would have engaged in this didactic process. The nearest academy (Yeshiva) was in Zippori (Sepphoris) about four miles from Nazareth. Resh Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan were partners in a chavruta and Zippori is also the birthplace of Rabbi Yochanan. Prior to this the spiritual leadership of the Jewish people was in the hands of five successive generations of zugot ("pairs") of religious teachers. In the Avot de-Rabbi Hathan it is recommended that a friend should be someone with whom one can "eat and drink, read and study, sleep, and share secrets of the Torah and personal secrets" The rabbis repeatedly urged their students to acquire a study partner and each chavruta fulfilled a social as well as an educational need. The choice of chavrutas seems to have been based on friendship or social proximity, they often developed into lasting friendships where the shared commitment to scholarship and intellectual growth has been said to create a close bond between study partners which is closer than that of many married couples. The word chavruta, like marriage, came to be used in the singular to describe two people in a relationship. The Talmud (Yevamot 62b) states that 12,000 pairs (sic) of students of Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph (ca.50–ca.135 AD) died of plague between Passover and Shavuot, "because they did not treat one another with respect". The context of the passage indicates that each pair of students formed a chavruta. The text also implies that this plague was diphtheria, but this may be a disguise for sexual misbehaviour, and for the massacres that took place after the Jewish Revolt in 70 A.D. Within these boundaries, there seems to have been no restriction placed on same-sex relationships. The contemporary Jewish interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 prohibited only

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anal penetrative sex and the more intense the relationship was between Jesus and John, the more it would have been valued for the benefits it brought.

<sup>340</sup> Graubart Levin, Michael (1986). *Journey to Tradition: The odyssey of a born-again Jew*. Ktav Publishing House. p. 33. ISBN 0881250937.

<sup>341</sup> Refer to Greenberg's book and my description of this

<sup>342</sup> Plato Socrates chariot

<sup>343</sup> Refer to threshing within and without

<sup>344</sup> Gilchrist, S. (20\*\*): *"East and West: A Comparison of How the Apostles Interpreted the Gospel Message in Roman and Persian Cultures"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/035B-EastAndWest.pdf> I note that according to the tradition, Thomas the Apostle took Christianity to India in AD52-53. Today many scholars consider that the Gospel may well have originated around or before this date. If Peter and Paul were to make compromises which resulted in the submission of women in Roman society, Thomas clearly did not. Sayings 21 and 61 in the Gospel According to Thomas present Mary Magdalene and Salome as wise confidants of Jesus, while the disciples are presented as those stumbling to understand. Saying 22 in the Gospel According to Thomas makes it clear that there should be no difference in treatment between men and women. In this paper and in section 8:0 of another paper: "The Gospel of Thomas: Its Origins and Consequences for Understandings of Theology, Gender and Sex in the Christian Church" <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/027B-ThomasAnalysis.pdf> I also confirm that saying 22 can only be interpreted as the fulfilling transcendence of gender; not the suppression of all sex. In addition, I show that Saying 114 must be interpreted in the context of first century societies. That is not as how we perceive it today, which is in terms of the biology of sex. In the ancient Middle Eastern world gender transformations and their threats, metaphorical or not were used as political and social weapons to manipulate people in society. Therefore, to "Make Mary Male" in saying 114 was to give her full equality with all of the male apostles in all activities and responsibilities, in social roles, in public and private ministries, and in every other act.

<sup>345</sup> From early in the Second century, encratic teaching had become a major influence in the Syrian Church. This teaching declares that salvation can only be gained through complete abstinence from sex. The focus changes from abstaining because of the asceticism demanded by Jesus for the total commitment for spreading the gospel, to one which condemns the sexual act. The name is identified with an ascetic Christian sect led by Tatian, a 2nd-century Syrian rhetorician. It represents the group's doctrine of continence. However this focus on sex is not present in the Gospel According to Thomas. In the Gospel According to Thomas the "Solitary Ones" are called the

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elect; in this Gospel it is clear that this form of asceticism is to ensure total commitment to the Gospel message by avoiding the distractions of blood relationships and family life: it was not the condemnation of sex. First century concerns over same-sex intercourse related to its use to enforce power and domination over people in socially unequal societies, again it was the abuses of power that gave rise to sexual abuse rather than the horror of sex. Nevertheless, sexual abuse was also rife in these first century societies. In all cases that was totally and vociferously condemned. Although Encratic and Christian teaching combines all of these together, and regardless of purpose, condemns them as the evils of sex. The teaching in the Church of the East continued to emphasise asceticism as a total demonstration of commitment to the gospel message, rather than abstaining from the horrors of sex.

<sup>346</sup> There are some limits which did not influence everyday life

<sup>347</sup> The primary issue which is understood to have been addressed related to the requirement of circumcision, as the author of Acts relates, but other important matters arose as well, as the Apostolic Decree indicates. The dispute was between those, such as the followers of the "Pillars of the Church", led by James, who believed, following his interpretation of the Great Commission, that the church must observe the Torah, i.e. the rules of traditional Judaism, and Paul the Apostle, who believed there was no such necessity. The main concern for the Apostle Paul, which he subsequently expressed in greater detail with his letters directed to the early Christian communities in Asia Minor, was the inclusion of Gentiles into God's New Covenant, sending the message that faith in Christ is sufficient for salvation. However he did have to adapt his teaching to ensure the survival of the Roman church.

<sup>348</sup> And also a soul. It is a common perception in these worlds, that only men had souls.

<sup>349</sup> According to Syrian Christian tradition, Thomas was killed with a spear at St. Thomas Mount in Chennai on 3 July in AD 72, and his body was interred in Mylapore. Ephrem the Syrian states that the Apostle was killed in India, and that his relics were taken then to Edessa. This is the earliest known record of his death

<sup>350</sup> For Paul's arguments on circumcision, see Galatians 3, Romans 2:25–29

<sup>351</sup> Thomas, saying<sup>53</sup>: His disciples said to him: Is circumcision useful or not? He said to them: If it were useful, their father would beget him from their mothers (already) circumcised. But the true circumcision in the Spirit has proved useful in every way

<sup>352</sup> In the first century world it was often considered that only men had souls.

<sup>353</sup> Abdisho bar Brik died 1318

<sup>354</sup> Full text of "The Book of the Pearl": [https://archive.org/stream/bookofpearlhisto00kunz/bookofpearlhisto00kunz\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/bookofpearlhisto00kunz/bookofpearlhisto00kunz_djvu.txt)

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<sup>355</sup> The Roman Church falsely tried to claim that Nestorius founded the Church of the East. For an overview of Nestorian Theology see: Dickens, Mark: (1999): “Nestorian Theology” at <http://www.oxuscom.com/theology.htm>

<sup>356</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:33–35 states: *“As in all the congregations of the Lord’s people. Women should remain silent in the churches, They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.”* 1 Timothy 2: 9-15 says: *“Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness. A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint”.* 1 Cor 11:3–9 states *“But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man<sup>2</sup>. Eph. 5:22–30 says: “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, people have never hated their own bodies, but they feed and care for them, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body”. Col. 3:18–19 says ““Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them”. Epistle to the Romans 1:26–27 says: “For this reason [viz. idolatry], God gave them up to passions of dishonour; for even their females exchanged the natural use for that which is contrary to nature, and likewise also the males, having left the natural use of the female, were inflamed by their lust for one another, males*



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*with males, committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the recompense which was fitting for their error". 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 says: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind" 1 Timothy 1:9-10: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine", In some of these texts the authorship is questioned and Paul tries to justify these on theological grounds.*

<sup>357</sup> King, Karen: "Women In Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries" Frontline

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>

<sup>358</sup> And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. (2 Peter 3:15-16 ESV)

<sup>359</sup> The Staggs note that the synoptic Gospels of the canonical New Testament contain a relatively high number of references to women (Stagg, Evelyn and Frank. Woman in the World of Jesus. Westminster John Knox Pr, 1978. ISBN 978-0-664-24195-7). Bilezikian agrees, noting that this is exceptional by comparison with other literary works of the same epoch (Bilezikian, Gilbert. Beyond Sex Roles. Baker, 1989. ISBN 0-8010-0885-9 p.82). 66 King, Karen L. "Women in Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries."

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.htm>

<sup>360</sup> The somewhat unusual statement that Jesus makes "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given" in Matthew 19:12 does not just refer to Eunuchs. It also includes those who made themselves eunuchs. Thus, it can also be taken to refer to gender transformation and acts of self-castration in the priests of the goddess cults who were widespread in Palestine at the time. More generally it may reflect on some of the difficulties in implementing this teaching as a whole

<sup>361</sup> Most scholars believe that Paul actually wrote seven of the Pauline epistles (Galatians, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philemon, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians)

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<sup>362</sup> Does not mean they condoned it. In 2 Peter, Peter explains that believers should submit to unjust government (2:13-14) and the unjust institution of slavery (2:18-200. He is commanding these Christians to submit to these unjust institutions in view of Christ's submission for us (2:21-25) and for the purpose of avoiding further persecution (2:15).

<sup>363</sup> "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear". (1 Peter 3:1-6)

<sup>364</sup> As guardians of the home and family life, women could exert considerable power behind the scenes, but only in support of their husbands. When Roman men of high standing (and emperors) were called away, often for long periods, their wives often took over the management and running of their large estates. Women could inherit and widows could continue to exercise that power. As Karen King notes in; King, Karen L (1998): "*Women In Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries*" PBS Online, April 998 <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html> : "*It is not surprising then to see women taking leadership roles in house churches. Paul tells of women who were the leaders of such house churches (Apphia in Philemon 2; Prisca in I Corinthians 16:19). This practice is confirmed by other texts that also mention women who headed churches in their homes, such as Lydia of Thyatira (Acts 16:15) and Nympha of Laodicea (Colossians 4:15). Women held offices and played significant roles in group worship. Paul, for example, greets a deacon named Phoebe (Romans 16:1) and assumes that women are praying and prophesying during worship (I Corinthians 11). As prophets, women's roles would have included not only ecstatic public speech, but preaching, teaching, leading prayer, and perhaps even performing the eucharist meal. (A later first century work, called the Didache, assumes that this duty fell regularly to Christian prophets.)". For more information on this, and on the Didache see Gilchrist, S: (2013g): "Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf> and Gilchrist, S. (2013a): "An Unfinished Reformation": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>*

<sup>365</sup> The great majority of the arguments that Paul is claimed to present are in these pseudepigraphical epistles. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 14:33–35 (NIV) states: "As in all the congregations of the Lord's people. Women should remain silent in the churches, They,



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are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church." is contradicted elsewhere in 1 Corinthians 11:5 which presupposes that women are, in fact, praying and prophesying in the assembly of believers. It is also inconsistent with Paul's dealings with his co-workers in that women such as Prisca, Phoebe and Junia could not have functioned as Church leaders and apostles if they were not allowed to speak in public. This is commonly regarded as a "post-Pauline interpolation" of the text.

<sup>366</sup> Wars between Rome and Persia also promoted independent development, for neither side could be seen too openly to collude with the other. The Roman–Persian Wars, also known as the Roman–Iranian Wars, were a series of conflicts between states of the Greco-Roman world and two successive Iranian empires: the Parthian and the Sasanian. Battles between the Parthian Empire and the Roman Republic began in 54 BC; [1] wars began under the late Republic and continued through the Roman (later Byzantine) and Sasanian empires. Various vassal kingdoms and allied nomadic nations in the form of buffer states and proxies also played a role. The wars were ended by the Early Muslim Conquests, which led to the fall of the Sasanian Empire and huge territorial losses for the Byzantine Empire, shortly after the end of the last war between them. (Wikipedia). See also Gilchrist, S. (20\*\*): *“East and West: A Comparison of How the Apostles Interpreted the Gospel Message in Roman and Persian Cultures”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/035B-EastAndWest.pdf>

<sup>367</sup> Section 2:3:3 The Genderisation of God onwards: Gilchrist, S. (2013a): *“An Unfinished Reformation”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>

<sup>368</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2016f): *“Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2016e): *“Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>

<sup>369</sup> That gave openings for sexual abuse: Gilchrist, S. (2017f): *“Condemning Sexual Abuse and Welcoming Gender and Sexually Variant People into the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/237P-ChangesInChurch.pdf>

<sup>370</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2017f): *“Condemning Sexual Abuse and Welcoming Gender and Sexually Variant People into the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/237P-ChangesInChurch.pdf>

<sup>371</sup> In the Apostolic Church gender was contested as a "natural" category because of the transcendent power of God's Spirit at work in the community and the world. Therefore, early Christianity challenged gender in every way. Unlike the requirements for physical castration

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that was demanded by the Goddess religions this action was no longer required, but many Christian men still continued to self castrate as an act of extreme devotion. Origen was the most notable of these, but there were also many others. In early Christianity a woman's identity and spirituality could also be developed separately from her roles as wife and mother (or slave), whether she actually withdrew from those roles or not. This meant that women and men could equally exercise leadership in the Church on the basis of spiritual achievement alone. That was apart from their gender status. However, this attitude also contravened what were regarded as the "respectable" division of gender roles in a male dominated patriarchal society. (See for example King, Karen (1998) "Women In Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries". Accessed 27 March 2013 at:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>.)

<sup>372</sup> Christian examples of male to female transgender people are hard to come by because gender reassignment in that direction would become so suppressed by the later Church. However there is much more evidence of transgender behaviour in the female to male direction. The early Church sought to transcend all divisions of gender and the nature of this type of transgender influence may be due more to the growth of gender discrimination within the Church because of the ways it sought to gain respectability by conforming to the polarised gender role expectations of a male dominated Greco/Roman society. Thus, for example saying 114 in the Gospel of Thomas reads: "Simon Peter said to them, "Make Mary leave us, for females don't deserve life." Jesus said, "Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of Heaven." Most scholars now tend to attribute an early date to the Gospel of Thomas. (See: <http://gnosis.org/naghamm/gosthom.html>). One of the most famous woman leaders was Thecla, a virgin-martyr who was converted by Paul. She cut her hair, donned men's clothing, and took up the duties of a missionary traveller. Threatened with rape, prostitution, and twice put in the ring as a martyr, she persevered in her faith and her chastity. Her lively and somewhat fabulous story is recorded in the second century Acts of Paul and Thecla, The importance of such stories lies in their acceptance and not necessarily their absolute truth. (As at the 25 February 2013 the text of the acts can be accessed at: (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/thecla.html>)). During the second and third centuries gender discrimination continued to increase and it was considered that fourth century female mystics could only achieve salvation and redemption if they rejected every aspect of their femininity. Even then redemption could only be gained in heaven and not on earth. Therefore even if male to female transgender behaviour was considered abhorrent by the second third and fourth centuries it was positively encouraged in the female to male direction. The idea that women had to have an instant sex change when they die in order to enter heaven as men was commonly held in the Church. Had the surgical possibilities present day female to male gender reassignment

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been available to the second third and fourth Century Church one wonders what might have happened! Thus for women gender reassignment for entry to heaven was an ideal to be achieved but it could only come after death, in order to protect the authority of a male church hierarchy in a male dominated society. That attitude towards reassignment for entry to heaven was not held by all, and others concluded that because lust and sexuality was absent gender differentiation failed to matter at all after death. In the meantime, on earth women could only redeem their lives through childbirth, obedience or by renouncing all aspects of their femininity. On earth they could only wait in penance for the sins of Eve until heaven, when the day of gender reassignment, or freedom from gender comes.

<sup>373</sup> GAFCON

<sup>374</sup> Abdisho bar Brik died 1318

<sup>375</sup> Full text of "The Book of the Pearl": [https://archive.org/stream/bookofpearlhisto00kunz/bookofpearlhisto00kunz\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/bookofpearlhisto00kunz/bookofpearlhisto00kunz_djvu.txt)

<sup>376</sup> The Roman Church falsely tried to claim that Nestorius founded the Church of the East. For an overview of Nestorian Theology see: Dickens, Mark: (1999): "Nestorian Theology" at <http://www.oxuscom.com/theology.htm>

<sup>377</sup> In the Catechism of the Roman Church there are justified by reference to Sodom and Gomorrah etc

<sup>378</sup> Give reference to "An Unfinished Reformation"

<sup>379</sup> The Staggs note that the synoptic Gospels of the canonical New Testament contain a relatively high number of references to women (Stagg, Evelyn and Frank. *Woman in the World of Jesus*. Westminster John Knox Pr, 1978. ISBN 978-0-664-24195-7). Bilezikian agrees, noting that this is exceptional by comparison with other literary works of the same epoch (Bilezikian, Gilbert. *Beyond Sex Roles*. Baker, 1989. ISBN 0-8010-0885-9 p.82). 66 King, Karen L. "Women in Ancient Christianity: The New Discoveries."

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.htm>

<sup>380</sup> In the first century world it was often considered that only men had souls.

<sup>381</sup> Self castration notes

<sup>382</sup> Saying 53 in the Gospel of Thomas expands on this point. "His disciples said to him: "Is circumcision beneficial, or not? He said to them: If it were beneficial, their father would beget them circumcised from their mother, but the true circumcision in the spirit has prevailed over everything".

<sup>383</sup> Abdisho bar Brik died 1318

<sup>384</sup> Full text of "The Book of the Pearl": [https://archive.org/stream/bookofpearlhisto00kunz/bookofpearlhisto00kunz\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/bookofpearlhisto00kunz/bookofpearlhisto00kunz_djvu.txt)

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<sup>385</sup> The Roman Church falsely tried to claim that Nestorius founded the Church of the East. For an overview of Nestorian Theology see: Dickens, Mark: (1999): “Nestorian Theology” at <http://www.oxuscom.com/theology.htm>