

# No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice.

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## Summary

The traditional teaching of the Christian Church condemns homosexual behaviour, and by implication all other sexual and gender variant behaviour as acts of grave depravity. In an In-Flight Press Conference Pope Francis outlined his attitude to transgender people. While his pastoral care is greatly to be welcomed, his condemnation of “Gender Theory” reaffirmed the traditional teaching of the Church. This paper examines the comments of Pope Francis during the in-flight conference. It presents an account of current scientific and psychological understandings of gender and sexual variation and it describes the results of a new research programme which combines present neuroscientific research with current psychological techniques.

In the Church of England the same refusal to take account of the current scientific understanding or to listen to other viewpoints in society is destroying the credibility of Christianity and the Church. These Church of England issues are discussed in the final section of this account.

This investigation takes a new approach. By using the development of atypical gender identity it has been possible to link the early neurophysiologically based learning and development processes to the psychologically controlled ones in later life. It is confirmed that gender and sexually variant identities and behaviour are naturally expected variations of the human condition which are intrinsic to the personality created, that arise very early in development, and which cannot be changed by the individual concerned or by the actions of others in subsequent life. It is established that the momentum of these processes allows typical and atypical core gender identities to develop, and the need to create a constancy of personality permanently fixes these in place by the age of three years. It is also demonstrated that the conditions are identity driven, so that as wide a range of moral attitudes are found amongst transgender and gender and sexually variant people as those which are found in society at large. It is further demonstrated that a moral duality must exist whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways that conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies should be highly regarded while those who misuse these relationships ought to be very severely condemned for their acts. Since this duality is fundamental to these conditions, its influence must have been present in all societies at all times. From each of the theological, social and scientific standpoints it is established that identical criteria in relation to use and abuse should be applied to heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. That directly contradicts the traditional teaching of the Christian Church.

In a separate theological section of this analysis it is demonstrated that an acceptance of this duality was present in the teaching of Jesus. However in its battles against the gross sexual abuses of Roman Society, most notably in relation to same-sex acts, all sense of the duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour has been lost. An aim of this investigation is to restore these understandings to the present day Church.

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

<sup>2</sup> Issued 8 January 2017: This paper is available online at: <http://www.tqdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

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## Context

The investigation described in these papers adopts a new and innovative approach to the development of personality, identity, gender and sexuality. There have been multitudinous studies on these issues. Broadly they break down into two camps. The first are the neurophysiologically based studies on early development which examine the growth of these capabilities in terms of brain maturation and neural function. The second are the traditional social learning and psychodynamic theories: these begin by considering mature brain functioning, from which constructs are created which seek to explain the relationships between the conscious and unconscious mind, and how learning and development takes place in early life. The first type can be described as “bottom up” studies. These can be contrasted with the “top down” approach taken by the traditional psychodynamic and social learning theories. A major deficiency to the present time has been the inability to provide an adequate link between the two processes. That omission is addressed in this analysis where, because of their early origins, the development of atypical gender identities can be used to provide the link that is required. Therefore it becomes possible to trace a continuous pattern of identity and personality development which extends from infancy to adult life. The timing and nature of the transitions between these two processes can also be mapped. It is shown that the fundamental, or core, elements of personality and identity are first driven by the search for identity, and only afterwards by the search for reward. The social, historical and theological consequences are all important. Therefore an extended neurophysiological and psychological analysis is undertaken to examine the natures and origins of these physiognomies. A second historically and theologically based analysis is conducted which examines the social impact and the theological consequences of this new research. In the paper which follows, fresh insights are explored through the adoption of this new and original approach.

## 1:0: Introduction

One of the many positive things about the Pontificate of Pope Francis is his advocacy of the pastoral care of gender and sexually variant people. That is something which is greatly to be welcomed; however this can unintentionally cause great harm when the principles upon which it is based are wrong. This is not an article which is concerned with dissecting the theological arguments; it is a one which examines the scientific principles and presumptions upon which those theological arguments are based. More detailed descriptions and references to sources are given elsewhere<sup>5</sup>.

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

<sup>4</sup> Issued 8 January 2017: This paper is available online at: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/227P-No-PopeFrancis.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> This article summarises an extended programme of research. For more detailed descriptions, (with references to sources) see: Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Science and Belief. A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-PaperPersonality.pdf> also Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-InfluencesPersonality.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf> and Gilchrist, S. (2015): “*Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf> (draft copy available on the

The contradictions between the theological and scientific perspectives were brought to light in a Press Conference which followed the recent visit of Pope Francis to Georgia<sup>6</sup>. In it Joshua McElwee, National Catholic 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”*.

In the concluding section of his answer Pope Francis drew his own contrast between the welcome he gave to a married couple, one of whom was a transgender woman, who were in a faithful and committed relationship and his condemnation of transgender people whose behaviour was typified in the newspapers he read. He said: *“Please don't say: 'the Pope sanctifies transgenders.' Please, eh! Because I see the covers of the papers. Is there any doubt as to what I said? I want to be clear! It's moral problem. It's a human problem and it must be resolved always can be with the mercy of God”*. That is a move away from one of universal condemnation, to a position which condemns some transgender people, but not all, and puts the focus on the integrity of such people rather than any transformations of gender and sex. Nevertheless Pope Francis has made it clear that, while pastoral concerns are paramount, there can be no changes to the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church. That is embodied in Paragraph 2357 of Catechism of the Church<sup>7</sup>. This makes presumptions about the neuroscience and the psychology which the research reported in this analysis shows to be incorrect. Great harm has been done through the medical misdiagnoses which have been made.

This statement in the Catechism declares that: *“Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, Tradition has always declared that “Homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.” They are contrary to the natural law. They 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.”* By extension transgender experience may be included in this as well. This doctrine is often taken to condemn all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour. It defines this behaviour as a lifestyle choice which can be diverted through the predations of others, and which is always in pursuit of lust and inappropriate acts.

The crucial question to ask is whether gender and sexually variant identities are intrinsic elements of personality, or the outcomes of a lifestyle choice. Traditional approaches to psychology and

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web). Also Gilchrist, S. (2013): *“A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach”*:

<http://www.tqdr.co.uk/documents/207P-ReassessmentPsychologyExtended.pdf>

<sup>6</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-stampa.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161002_georgia-azerbaijan-conferenza-stampa.html) also <https://newwaysministryblog.wordpress.com/2016/10/03/pope-francis-says-accompanying-lgbt-people-is-what-jesus-would-do-today/>

<sup>7</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church: Paragraph 2357. The Second Edition English Translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with corrections promulgated by Pope John Paul II on 8 September 1997

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psychiatry often tend to support the view that these are lifestyle choices, or a consequence of social disruption<sup>8</sup>. These theories expect a continuity of reasoning to guide the processes of learning at all times of life. However that presumption is increasingly challenged by the massive amount of knowledge and experiential evidence which has been amassed in recent years. This is additionally supported through encounters with the lived experiences of gender and sexually variant people. Currently a great majority of professional institutions in the Western World regard gender and sexually variant identities and behaviour as being naturally expected variations of the human condition which are intrinsic to the personality created, that arise very early in development, and which cannot be changed by the individual concerned or by the actions of others in subsequent life. Nevertheless it should be noted that considerable gender fluidity may exist as overlays on what has already been formed. This is the position taken for example by the British Royal College of Psychiatrists<sup>9</sup>, the British Psychological Society and parallel United Kingdom organisations<sup>10</sup>. Equivalent positions are taken by the American Psychiatric Association<sup>11</sup> and the American Psychological Association<sup>12</sup>. Other international mental health organizations, including the World Health Organization have followed. Against this is set minority conservative organisations such as the American College of Paediatricians<sup>13</sup> and the might of the Christian Church. One of the major difficulties in these disputes is that the genesis of gender and sexually variant conditions is not well understood. As a consequence the opposing sides in these arguments tend to be given equal impact, despite the great weight of scientific evidence that exists.

It is important to note that gender and sexual identities form independently of each other. Therefore as wide a range of sexual orientations and identities are found within the gender variant communities as those which exist in the population at large. Thus being transgender is no indication of sexual identity or orientation, and the reverse also applies<sup>14</sup>. However the same types of formation processes are involved in both cases. In many respects gender and sexually variant people share similar issues in terms of their relationships with society and that is why they can be considered together in this account.

If these disagreements are to be properly resolved it is essential that a better understanding of the origins and characteristics of gender and sexually variant conditions is developed. This document reports the results of a new study where the traditional viewpoints are challenged. Standard approaches to psychiatry and psychology also tend to assume that the processes of cognitive development guide learning at all times of life. No consideration is given to the neuroscientific studies on early development which demonstrate that early learning and advancement is dominated

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<sup>8</sup> Early workers during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century first associated homosexuality with identity. Freud was ambivalent, describing it as an inversion. He did not consider it a crime: In 1935, Freud wrote to a mother who had asked him to treat her son's homosexuality, a letter that would later become famous: "*I gather from your letter that your son is a homosexual. I am most impressed by the fact that you do not mention this term yourself in your information about him. May I question you why you avoid it? Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function, produced by a certain arrest of sexual development. Many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals, several of the greatest men among them: (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, etc.). It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime –and a cruelty, too*". However its identification as immoral reward driven sexual behaviour is prevalent in the present day. In many countries severe criminal penalties are applied.

<http://www.lettersofnote.com/2009/10/homosexuality-is-nothing-to-be-ashamed.html>

<sup>9</sup> Royal College of Psychiatrists' statement on sexual orientation [http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/ps02\\_2014.pdf](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/ps02_2014.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> British Psychological Society and other organisations: Conversion Therapy: Consensus Statement.

[http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/conversion\\_therapy\\_final\\_version.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/conversion_therapy_final_version.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> APA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Statement: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/sexual-orientation.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> APA Policy Statements on LGBT Concerns <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/policy/>

<sup>13</sup> American College of Paediatricians <https://www.acped.org/> : 'Transgender' Conditioning Is 'Child Abuse':

<http://www.cnsnews.com/commentary/j-matt-barber/american-college-pediatricians-transgender-conditioning-child-abuse>

<sup>14</sup> For an extended analysis of their formations see: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>



by the actions of mirror neurons and the contagious inbuilt physiological forces of possessive imitation, empathy and neurophysiological inhibition. That omission is addressed in this analysis. Also, in recognition of the differences between these processes, a distinction between the physiologically based autonomous processes of experiential learning and the cognitive processes which involve some element of reasoning is made. In these early processes the major challenge to be faced is not to explain how learning develops, but how the processes can be controlled so that orderly development can take place in later life.

A rapid increase in neural capabilities occurs around a median age which is here taken as two years<sup>15</sup>. In this analysis, this is called the neurophysiological transformation period, It is identified as a key stage in the transformation process where the initial domination of the inbuilt neurophysiologically based processes starts to be challenged by the influences of the cognitive capabilities, which from this time onwards increasingly take effect. There are five major sections in this account. The first examines the origin of these conditions. The second considers how their formation is related to other core elements of personality and identity which form at this time, the third examines how and why the inbuilt driving forces which dominate early development have been ignored. The fourth compares the results of this analysis with the doctrines of the Christian Church and the fifth examines the impact that this creates.

## 2:0: Origins

The first part of this investigation therefore maps the transition between the contagious physiologically driven processes which dominate early development, to the later developing cognitive processes that arise because of the development of neural co-ordination and the impact of organised thought. Strong driving forces are shown to be involved. In this investigation it is demonstrated that the physiological, neurological and psychological aspects of brain development act together to form a finely tuned system in which the maximum amount of individuality, possessiveness, intelligence and inquisitiveness, together with the minimum degree of energy expenditure is generated. However the neurophysiologically driven forces do not disappear with age: It is therefore shown that the development of identity and personality is expressed in a continuing struggle where the primarily unconscious and adventurous forces of neurophysiology remain pitted against the more conscious restraining and controlling forces of cognitive thought. It is the lifetime struggle between these adventurous feed-forward neurophysiological elements and the controlling, inhibitory and feed-back forces of cognitive thinking which enable the peaks of human potential and individuality to be achieved. People do not tend to be aware of this hidden struggle unless another conflict brings it into the conscious mind.

It also follows from this study that both of these development processes are involved in the creation of personality and identity. They are demonstrated to be independent of each other. The inbuilt neurophysiological forces are active from birth. However sufficient neural co-ordination must have been created before the cognitive development processes can form. The stages and timings of development are also important and it is shown that core elements of personality and identity establish associations of like-minded individuals in society. These are tribal rather than personal in character. They may be described as the largely unconscious sense of being associated with the part of society that one belongs to; or where one fits in<sup>16</sup>. It is additionally demonstrated that these are created before, or when the cusp of the neurophysiological transformation period occurs. This is

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<sup>15</sup> This sudden advance can take place from around 15 months onwards. The relationship between this transformation period and the Freudian and Piagetian stages in development is discussed in the more detailed papers. The median age is taken as a rounded value.

<sup>16</sup> This may best be described as a tribal allegiance. It is seen as a group identification and at this time no personal concept of self are created

of considerable importance since it means that the core senses of personality and identity arise from the actions of inbuilt neurophysiological forces alone. Their innate inward facing self-identification processes which drive early development can be contrasted with the later cognitive outward facing interactive processes that increasingly take effect after the neurophysiological transformation occurs<sup>17</sup>. When these are in harmony little evidence of the early acting unconscious physiologically based forces will be observed. When they are in opposition, considerable trauma can occur.

Early work on the development of transgender children presumed that gender identity is a socially learned experience and is the product of cognitive thought. However attempts to use psychiatric methods to change the gender identification of such children showed that the core gender identity has already become unchangeably fixed by the age of three years. That is before cognitive processes can be directly involved. Because of the persistent attempts to impose these theories, suicides and disasters occurred. The failures also led researchers and psychiatrists to consider fundamental modifications to the Freudian principles upon which these theories are based. That was not considered to be a success.

In parallel with these efforts, attempts to use surgery reassign intersex children and those born with genital malformation to a gender which cosmetically appeared to be more acceptable, led to great distress and the rejection of the gender the children had been assigned to. This was found to apply even if the surgery was undertaken close to birth; and also when the children had always remained unaware of the reassignment that had occurred<sup>18</sup>. These two concerns have led to the present policy of deferring all such surgery to a time when children are able to decide for themselves what is correct. Both of these failures have also led to the present belief that gender and sexually variant conditions arise from variations in the effects of pre-natal hormones in the unborn baby, which trigger the brain to develop along male or female lines.

This conclusion itself raises a number of difficulties. One of these is that at birth the pre-frontal cortex (this is the part of the brain which is responsible for acquiring knowledge by the use of reasoning, intuition or perception to pursue a reward) is still in a primitive state. Different parts of the brain function in isolation from each other. The learning capabilities of an infant are nevertheless very high during this period. They often exceed adult values but the overall co-ordination of the brain does not develop until around the age of one and a half to two years. At this time an explosion of cognitive abilities is found. Distant parts of the brain become interconnected and massive developments in brain plasticity and permeability; (the ability of the brain to physically re-shape itself in response to external inputs and stimuli) occurs. The early neurophysiologically driven learning patterns are not recognised by the traditional social learning, psychodynamic and psychoanalytic

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<sup>17</sup> Full descriptions are given in the following papers: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Science and Belief. A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-PaperPersonality.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-InfluencesPersonality.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2015): "*Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf> (draft copy available on the web) Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf> Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/207P-ReassessmentPsychologyExtended.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> A condition which is of particular relevance is that of cloacal exstrophy. It occurs in up to 1 in 200,000 live births. It is a severe birth defect where much of the abdominal organs (the bladder and intestines) are exposed. It often causes the splitting of both male and female genitalia (specifically, the penis and clitoris respectively). The anus is occasionally sealed. There is no other abnormality and in every other respect both chromosomally and physically they conform to either sex. Children with this condition in the past have had surgery close to birth which gives them a more cosmetically acceptable appearance. Children who would otherwise be male have been raised female and this early gender reassignment has been shown to lead to considerable distress. For more information see: Gilchrist, S. (2012): "*Personality Formation: Identity and Gender*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/204PPersFormIdentityGndr.pdf>

theories because the cognitive abilities that they rely on have not yet developed<sup>19</sup>. Therefore these theories consider the period from birth to around the age of one and a half to two years to be primarily one of seething feelings with largely disorganised thought. That is in contrast to the early extensive and contagious learning processes which have been identified by the neurophysiological research. As a consequence the conventional attempts to explain the origins of gender and sexually variant identities jump from those which rely entirely on social learning encounters to ones in which pre-natal brain development is involved. That disregard continues to the present time. What happens during this intervening two year period tends to be ignored. The studies based on the neurophysiology of brain development have thrown much greater light upon what takes place during this time.

A key feature which has been missing has been an effective way of linking these initial neurophysiologically based processes to the social learning, psychodynamic and psychoanalytic theories which become active in later life. The inability of earlier investigators to explain the origins of gender and sexually variant conditions by exclusively using socially learning and psychodynamic theories is evidence of early formation. It is a feature which spans the transition between these two processes. Therefore the study of gender variant conditions (or gender dysphoria) can provide the link that is needed. In this investigation gender variation is used as a case study to examine how the transition occurs. Because of the greatly different brain capabilities before and after the neurophysiological transformation period, it also follows that very different learning experiences and capabilities are found.

All of the studies based on the neuroscience of early development show that the seeds of identity begin to form in an isolated way and that these eventually coalesce so that more global concepts are formed. The manner of coalescence is still a matter for discussion but there is increasingly strong evidence that a quorum sensing mechanism is involved. This can be compared to crowd behaviour. Without external stimulus every member of the crowd mills round in a random and disordered manner. Once a stimulus of sufficient strength to be noticed occurs all, or many, members of the crowd rush to the point of origin to see what has happened. The equivalent coalescence cannot happen in the brain until sufficient neural co-ordination has developed. This coincides with an explosion in neural capabilities around the median age of two years. That explosion is matched with a similar increase in language skills and the development of co-ordinated thought. It also corresponds with the time when gender awareness in young children is found. It has already been shown that what is described as the core gender identity has become unchangeably fixed, if not from birth, at the latest by three years of age. All of these features form part of the neurophysiological transformation period. It follows that the nature of the core gender identity is also a product of the momentum of the inbuilt physiological processes. Therefore the creation of the core gender identity is not the product of rational analysis or cognitive thought.

The limitations of learning during this period and an understanding of the nature of the core gender identity are also important. The absence of cognitive abilities; together with the fragmented nature and the intense momentum created by these physiologically driven forces, means that this early development relies on immediate experience and is relatively immune from outside pressures. This includes the expectations of rearing, so for example, pressures to make a girl believe that she grows up to be a woman, and do womanly things have little effect.

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<sup>19</sup> Freud needed to identify a strong driving force for his psychodynamic theories to work. He chose the sexual motive since he considered that this was the best that the available knowledge could provide, although others, such as Adler disagreed. These psychodynamic theories rely on cognitive processes to unravel the interactions that are involved. One wonders what Freud might have chosen had today's knowledge been available to him at the time.

Some behavioural differences between newly born boy and girl babies have been identified, even from a few hours after birth. Because of the momentum of these processes it is also possible for pre-disposing factors present from birth to have an influence on the outcome that is found. During this initial period of development a large amount of poorly co-ordinated learning arises through drives of compulsive acquisition and the rejection of what is found to be incompatible with the reality that is pursued. Other work has shown that once development starts in a particular direction it can be difficult to stop. Without the necessary neural co-ordination it is not possible for the infant to distinguish between interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences and research has shown that tribal associations are created<sup>20</sup>. These at first are fleeting but they become stronger with time. No personal concepts of self are created. Thus the core gender identity can best be described as a tribal allegiance between children of like mind<sup>21</sup>.

The relative timings and the rates of development of each of these processes have an important influence on how the senses of identity and personality are formed. After the neural transformation period the pre-frontal cortex can begin to act as a single unit. From this point onwards children can begin the process of reasoning and attempt to make sense of what has already occurred. It is also notable that children begin to define very strong gender stereotypes for themselves from around the age of three years. The need to minimise energy consumption is significant, and preferred neural pathways in the brain develop. These are associated with a process of what is called Hebbian learning: In this the neural pathways which are most used grow stronger and those which are least used die back. That disappearance is further identified with a process called the "*Domestication of the Brain*". It is additionally notable that the synaptic density, which can be related to the number of neural pathways, increases rapidly from a very low value at birth to a peak value at around the age of three years. It then gradually dies back. The peak value is about one and a half to twice the adult value. In a baby the energy the brain absorbs is about 50% of the total that the child requires. In the adult this figure reduces to 30%. Therefore there is a strong incentive for preserving only the neural pathways which are actually required. That pattern is seen most readily in the context of language development. There is a critical period in development during which an infant is able to distinguish between individual sounds in all languages. After that has passed this ability is lost. This is understood to be why most people who learn a language in later years will always speak it with a foreign accent. The timing of these language capabilities also matches the development of the core gender identification.

Since all of these processes form part of the normal patterns of personality development, the same arguments can be applied to the development of other core aspects of personality and identity. In this investigation it is therefore argued that the pruning and structuring of the neural pathways ensures that a constancy of personality is created so that people can continue to recognise each other, even after years apart. The need for stability in childhood development, marriage and in long term relationships provides additional justifications for it. For a constancy of love between people of all ages a similar constancy is required. This means that there are strong physiological reasons of arguing why the core gender identity is unchangeably fixed by the age of three years.

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<sup>20</sup> See the pioneering work of Girard. This is described in Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>: where references are given to Girard's work. Girard's concepts of mimesis and possessive imitation did not require cognitive abilities to be present. In his study of early development he made it clear that possessive imitation took place for its own sake, it was not in pursuit of any reward. Any cognitive linkage between desire and reward is specifically denied. Gallese and others have since used neuroscience to show why this occurs.

<sup>21</sup> There may be a connection with Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, and the "we centred" mimesis described by Gallese. See Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/207P-ReassessmentPsychologyExtended.pdf>, also Gilchrist, S.(2013): "*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf> for further explorations of these issues.



So far this account has concentrated on early development. An understanding of later development is needed. In this investigation it is concluded that these early differential changes set the pattern for life. Recent work on neurology has emphasised the continued importance of brain plasticity and permeability, and their timing, in later learning and development. At a fundamental level there are major changes around puberty. The brain structure and neural organisation also continues to change massively throughout life, nevertheless the effects of this are region dependent and critical periods exist. That is seen most obviously in the development of the visual and auditory cortex, where, if inputs and stimulation are restricted during the critical period, the resulting impairment continues for life. The development of language capabilities follows a similar pattern. People normally presume to see a constancy of personality in any individual. That constancy is only expected to change as a consequence of physical brain injury or physical brain degeneration because of dementia at an older age. In this study it is concluded that the development of gender and sexual identity forms part of the same process of personality development. The impact of the domestication of the brain and these neural changes means that when atypical gender or sexual identities form during this critical period between the ages of two and three years they may be expected to last for life.

### **3:0: Overview**

In summary this investigation identifies two processes which are involved in gender identification. It is shown that their relative rates of development have an important influence on what occurs. At birth the physiologically driven forces dominate, the cognitively driven processes only begin to come into effective operation around the age of two years. By the age of three years it has been shown that the underlying sense of core gender identity has been unchangeably fixed. However children do not develop their own *"Theories of Mind"* until around four years of age - Children are said to have developed this *"Theory of Mind"* when they are able to independently distinguish between true and false information, when it is presented to them as true, and to examine for themselves what has already occurred. For many transsexuals this is also the age at which they first sense that *"something is wrong"*. However by that time their personal atypical sense of core gender identity has been unchangeably defined. The changes in brain structure which result from the domestication of the brain and a constancy of personality have already locked it in place. This is why the development of the largely hidden core gender identity should not be considered a choice. It is also this incompatibility which disrupts any conscious sense of gender identity that is later created. When that happens the collapse may be catastrophic, for it attacks the foundation of selfhood itself.

Although constancy of personality is needed, it is also necessary for the greatest possible degree of individuality to be formed. The contagious elements of development provides a powerful driving force, and in this investigation it has been demonstrated that the physiological, neurological and psychological aspects of brain development act together to form a finely tuned system in which the maximum amount of individuality, possessiveness, intelligence and inquisitiveness, together with the minimum degree of energy expenditure is generated. Typical or atypical gender identities can therefore develop and, from a statistical point of view alone it is expected that a proportion of people who have gender or sexually variant identities must be created without the requirement for any external cause. It is also shown how the momentum of the development processes can translate physical or behavioural differences at birth into the psychologically based development processes which result in a particular core gender identity being created. This predisposition can be compared with practical experience and a correlation is found. It also means that for everyone the development of their own gender identity and allegiance, atypical or not, proceeds in the same way.

Gilchrist, S. (2017). *"No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice"*.

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A consequence is that transsexuals develop a gender allegiance which is contrary to their biological sex<sup>22</sup>, but this is at least as firmly held as those for whom their gender identity and allegiance follow a normal path, indeed it may be argued that the gender allegiance and identity which is felt by transsexuals should be even stronger because it has had to be fought for at all times. These conclusions therefore support the viewpoint taken by the great majority of professional institutions in the Western world which regard gender and sexually variant identities and behaviour as being naturally expected variations of the human condition, which are intrinsic to the personality created, that arise very early in development, and which cannot be changed by the individual concerned, by predation or recruitment, or by the actions of others in subsequent life.

#### 4:0: Personality and Identity

These arguments do not just apply to the development of gender and sexual identities: the second part of this account therefore looks at how personality and identity as a whole develops. This investigation demonstrates that the development of the core gender identity is a consequence of the normal development process. It establishes that the formation of atypical gender identities is an outcome of the individuality that is created, and it follows that other core elements of personality and identity are formed in a similar way. Therefore the usefulness and validity of this analysis can additionally be tested by examining how these other aspects of personality and identity develop. That assessment is beyond the scope of this article, and more detailed descriptions are given elsewhere<sup>23</sup>. However some of the consequences are outlined in this account. It is concluded that a range of core elements of personality and identity are formed before the cognitive processes become active. It is considered these are the products of the momentum of early development and not the outcomes of rational thought. It is argued that the pruning of the neural pathways locks all of the elements in place and it is demonstrated that a framework of personality is created which remains constant throughout life<sup>24</sup>. Global concepts are shown to develop as a consequence of the coalescence of individual strands of identity during or just before the neurophysiological transformation period. It is argued that the individual concepts are not lost in this coalescence but they remain hidden in the matrix underneath, and that this graininess affects the coherence of selfhood that is formed<sup>25</sup>. As a consequence, when disturbances occur, the fragmented pattern of early development means that their impact may be specific in nature: thus the type of continuity between related conditions which is predicted by the social learning and psychodynamic theories is not found. The conscious perception of the need may differ from the real need. The intensity of the conflicts may not relate to the modesty of the demands. The bipolarity that is encountered can on the one hand, create the dynamics whereby the highest levels of human potential are obtained. On the other it may create situations where personality disorders are formed. Gender and sexual

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<sup>22</sup> This analysis makes a distinction between identity and allegiance. Instead of building a gender identity which is either male or female, people create an identity which is a composite of the early concepts that were developing. The need to make sense of this after the period of coalescence, (which begins during the neurophysiological transformation period), means that individuals and society create their personal and exclusive male or female gender allegiance to which a total loyalty is required. However there is a different end point for every individual who resolves their conflict with the gender that they are assigned to, and this can account for the great variety of experience that is found. The changes in society may also enable people to more easily reject the exclusive allegiances that are enforced. Increasing numbers of people are refusing to accept a binary male or female identity. These people are identifying themselves as "gender queer" instead. In the experience of the author this sense of non-binary gender identification is equally strongly held. See: Gilchrist, S. (2013). "Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach".

<sup>23</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2015): "*Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*". <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/209P-RethinkPaperFull.pdf> (paper under revision: draft copy available on the web)  
Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Unless there is physical brain injury, or degeneration because of dementia, takes place.

<sup>25</sup> See: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "*A Reassessment of the Traditional Christian Teaching on Homosexuality, Transsexuality and on Gender and Sexual Variation Using a New Neurophysiological and Psychological Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/207P-ReassessmentPsychologyExtended.pdf>

variation are not, and should not be, regarded as personality disorders<sup>26</sup>, but when conflict occurs, the corresponding management techniques must be used. These are already well known and it is important that the correct methods are employed.

## 5:0: Characteristics and Conflict Types

In this study it is demonstrated that the development processes which take place before the neurophysiological transformation period differ considerably from those which take place after it. In this investigation actions which come from learned autonomous experience are separated from those which involve some organisation of thought. It is necessary to differentiate between the different types of conflict and characteristics which are encountered. A distinction between identity driven conflicts and characteristics, and those which are reward driven must therefore be made.

Before the cognitive abilities that influence later development become active there is insufficient ability to make reasoning act as the link between desire and reward. The early origins of the core gender and sexual identities have already been noted. With these early processes conflict and behaviour focusses on identity alone. Because of this as wide a range on moral attitudes, beliefs, inclinations and responsibilities are found in gender and sexually variant groups as those which occur in the population at large. Conflicts that arise from this early stage are defined here as identity driven.

Identity driven conflicts are distinguished from the later arising reward driven conflicts, which have a much greater interaction between desire and reward. These reward driven conflicts develop from the time when it is considered that the cognitive processes become involved. The outcome of reward driven characteristics and conflicts is directed towards changes in behaviour, since goals and objectives are pursued. That identification corresponds with the Christian doctrine which defines gender and sexually variant behaviour as reward driven. As a consequence these are considered to be lifestyle choices which can be diverted through the predations of others. In Christian terms are always in pursuit of lust and inappropriate acts. However in this investigation that association with reward driven behaviour is shown to be incorrect. It is concluded that the identification of these identity driven conflicts as reward driven ones results in the medical misdiagnoses that are made.

Gender and sexually variant people are fellow travellers in their interaction with societies, and the same conflict dynamics occur. Nevertheless being transgender is not an indication of sexual orientation. As wide a range of sexual orientation is found amongst transgender people as that which is found in society at large. It is also perceived that there is a greater occurrence of gender and sexually variant identities in the more intellectually capable of the population. These dynamics may also go to explain the slightly greater prevalence of autism that occurs. It is often considered that transsexual people are men who want to be women and vice versa. This misconception is understandable. However behaviour is not the focus. The demand for gender reassignment may become an overwhelming compulsion - but the goal is not gender itself. Instead these are people who want to live lives in ways that are true to themselves. The early origins also mean that this demand is identity driven. After the goal of gender reassignment is achieved, many people merge invisibly into everyday roles in society which fulfil and express the selfhood they have found.

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<sup>26</sup> The major psychiatric institutions do not classify gender and sexual variation as personality disorders. A personality disorder is something which may lead to incapacity or diminution of life. In the case of gender dysphoria the search is for the fulfilment of life. In order to be diagnosed with gender dysphoria, according to the mental health manual (DSM-5), one would have to be distressed by the incongruity between his or her birth gender and the gender with which he or she identifies. <http://www.livescience.com/37087-dsm-gender-dysphoria.html>

These characteristics are already well known and a comparison with other understandings should be made. Freud described them as deviations. He defined homosexuality as an inversion: he did not describe it as incapacity, and he noted the major contributions to society that these people made. The author prefers to use the term personality variation for these conditions. This creates an enrichment of personality when it enables people to make greater contributions to society. However it creates personality disorders when disruptive elements are involved.

Accurately identifying these characteristics and the types of conflict they may create is extremely important because the correct methods of managing identity driven conflicts and reward driven conflicts are almost opposite to each other. Even the best intentioned attempts to manage identity driven conflicts as though they are reward driven conflicts can often create severe counterproductive effects. This is why so called “*Gay cures*” can cause great harm. The enforcement of Christian doctrines and psychological theories which presume that all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour is a lifestyle choice, intrinsically disordered, contrary to the natural law, and which choose the sexual act to the gift of life likewise causes great harm and distress. It is generally accepted that some 41 percent of transsexuals have attempted to commit suicide at some time in their lives. Before transition this is often because of the guilt and self-loathing that these doctrines have created, or after transition because of the persecution by others that the same Christian doctrines create<sup>27</sup>.

## 6:0: Omissions and Limitations

The third part of this account examines the consequences of this omission and finding out how and why these neurophysiological processes have been ignored. For this reason the development processes are again reviewed and compared. Neuroscience works from the bottom up by seeking to relate intellectual development to neural physiology. Psychology instead approaches these issues from the top down. Freud, Piaget and others attempted to describe early development by creating social constructs such as the ego, super-ego and id. However the relationships between these are always described in cognitive terms. This is where a limitation occurs since in these theories the presumption is made that cognitive activities guide learning and development at all times of life. In this investigation it is this presumption which is shown to be incorrect. It is demonstrated in this analysis that there is a staged development process during which the cognitive capabilities only gradually form, and the timing of the neurophysiological transformation period and each of the processes plays a critical role. The neurophysiological transformation period takes place around a median age of two years and by the age of three years the core elements of identity and personality have been unchangeably created. However children do not develop the cognitive abilities which enable them to carry out the type of self-critical analysis that allows them to question their own identities, until they reach the age of around four years. This delay means that the psychodynamic and social learning theories can only describe how children and adults make sense of what has already occurred. They do not correctly model the earlier processes. That limitation in turn leads to the assumption that the traditional theories largely act on a blank canvas. Because of this, the existence and influence of the innate physiological development processes before and up to the time of the neurophysiological transition period is denied.

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<sup>27</sup> For an account of the social, historical and theological studies, see the following papers: Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>; Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>; Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church: Is it Not Time to Consider the Science?*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/226P-ConsiderScience.pdf>; Gilchrist, S. (2013): “*An Unfinished Reformation*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/016B-UnfinishedReformationArticle.pdf>



The consequence of this is that these traditional psychodynamic and social learning theories can only act as overlays on what has already occurred. They continue to play very relevant roles in dealing with later developing conditions. However applying them to circumstances which are not appropriate is one of the reasons why the incorrect diagnoses are made.

The development of gender identity is another area where this omission has a major impact. In this study its creation is shown to involve two elements. The first is the formation of the largely unconscious core gender identity, during which learning inputs are restricted by the limited neural capabilities that are available. No personal concepts are formed, but a tribal allegiance is created and the internally shaped core identity is determined by the momentum of the processes that are involved. The second element arises from the externally focussed cognitive development mechanisms, through which the conscious sense of gender identity is created. When these two are in harmony little evidence of the earlier unconscious core identity will exist, since it acts to affirm and reinforce the conscious sense of gender identity that is later created. The concealment of this earlier process is further reinforced by the presumptions of the psychodynamic and social learning theories<sup>28</sup>. As a consequence the standard theories on the development of gender identity which are today presented rely on the cognitive processes alone. These predict that gender identification starts around three years of age and it does not become fixed until much later in life, it is understood to be established by interactions with society and the development of gender and sexually variant identities is attributed to disruptions that have occurred. The influence of the earlier physiologically driven forces is again denied.

However that is challenged by this analysis. A very different situation arises when the underlying core identity contradicts what the later cognitive development processes create, and what society expects. When that happens the contradictions with the core gender identity are exposed. This is the conflict that many transgender people face. In the 1960s and 1970s, it is what psychiatrists and psychologists involved in the research and management of gender and sexually variant behaviour discovered. It is further confirmed by the results of this research.

The lack of knowledge and the failure to take account of the internal neurophysiologically driven and contagious forces which lead to the development of core elements of gender and sexual identities are major reasons why both Christian doctrine and traditional psychiatry fail to make the correct designations. However these are just two of the barriers that are involved. The idea that gender identity is automatically determined by biology and by the appearance of the baby at birth is deceptively direct. The challenge to the social norms in societies in which gender discrimination and gender role division is institutionalised and legally enforced, averts any variation being expressed. The urgent need for the early Church to combat sexual abuse, most notably same-sex abuse in despotic societies where the powerful could act with impunity has led to the loss of the awareness of the duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour<sup>29</sup>. That includes the denial of its identity driven condition, the presumption that it is disordered, that it is a lifestyle choice and that it is always in pursuit of illegitimate sex. The standard social learning and psychological theories conclude that the underlying physiological contributions to personality and identity development do not exist, because the driving forces which empower them are denied by the presumptions of the theories and doctrines themselves. The criminalisation of all gender and sexually variant behaviour regardless of the actual purpose has prevented any chance of the duality being rediscovered. In the face of such universal condemnation it is hardly surprising that all gender and sexually variant

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<sup>28</sup> That is substantially, but only partially true. Many other studies have identified early origins for the development of gender identity but the standard view that that cognitive activities guide learning and development at all times of life has not been replaced.

<sup>29</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2016). *"Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church"*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

people are likely to band together in the face of a common attack. If this examination poses a challenge to the traditional teaching of the Christian Church, it also poses a challenge to gender and sexually variant people as well. Instead of banding together to fight against a common enemy, the same recognition of that duality must also be fully established within the gender and sexually variant communities. Above all it must be communicated to the outside world. A great deal of anger is found within the gender and sexually variant communities when the refusal to listen occurs<sup>30</sup>.

## 7:0: Science and Theology

The impact of these exclusions on current Christian attitudes and the response of the Christian Church in present day society is the focus of the fourth section of this account. For this purpose the formation processes are reviewed from the religious perspective. In the previous sections of this document it has been shown that the traditional approaches to psychiatry and psychoanalysis do not accurately describe early development because the neurophysiologically based forces have been ignored. Christian condemnations of all forms of gender and sexually behaviour are severe and complete. The results of this neurophysiological and psychological analysis also conclude that gender and sexually variant conditions are identity driven. This means that as wide a range of moral attitudes, beliefs and behaviour are to be found amongst gender and sexually variant people as those which exist in society at large. In the earlier part of this document it is demonstrated that a moral duality must exist whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways that conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies should be highly regarded while those who misuse these relationships ought to be very severely condemned for their acts. Since this duality is fundamental to these conditions, its influence must have been present in all societies at all times. Little change could take place for as long as these attitudes continued. However the social and cultural transformations in Western societies over the last fifty years have demolished the presumptions upon which the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on gender and sexually variant behaviour has been based. Freedom of expression has again revealed the moral duality which is inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour and people can now find out for themselves what this involves. The recognition of this duality continues to be denied by many in the Abrahamic religious traditions, which includes the Catholic Church, and a re-consideration is required.

The challenge is therefore to rediscover how this duality was expressed in early Christianity. This is why an extended theological and social analysis of Church history and the teaching of Jesus which uses the results of this neurophysiological and psychological investigation has been conducted. From each of the theological, social and scientific standpoints it is established that identical criteria in relation to use and abuse should be applied to heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. It is also demonstrated that the same moral duality is encountered as that which is established in the neurophysiological and psychological study. This demands the welcome of cross-gender activities and same-sex relationships which are the outpourings of love and faithfulness, while condemning those that are pursued for abusive and illicit sex. From the neurophysiological and psychological analysis, and from the example and the teaching of Jesus in the New Covenant, it is shown that in all loving and faithful relationships where the dynamics of power are not involved there should be no automatic condemnation of any cross-gender or same-sex act. There is no attack on family values, and there is absolutely no condonation of any form of inappropriate or abusive sex. Instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for all sexual abuse, it is demonstrated in this investigation that the correct objectives for the Christian Church should be those of combatting all forms of abusive sex.

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<sup>30</sup> This should not be judged on acts, but on the intentions of the acts.

Pope Francis, in your press conference after your visit to Georgia you said: *“Please don’t say: ‘the Pope sanctifies transgenders.’ Please, eh! Because I see the covers of the papers. Is there any doubt as to what I said? I want to be clear! It’s moral problem. It’s a human problem and it must be resolved always can be with the mercy of God”*. You also said: *“Life is life and things must be taken as they come. Sin is sin. And tendencies or hormonal imbalances have many problems and we must be careful not to say that everything is the same. Let’s go party. No, that no, but in every case I accept it, I accompany it, I study it, I discern it and I integrate it. This is what Jesus would do today!”* Your concern, your pastoral care, your recognition of the duality inherent in transgender and in gender and sexually variant behaviour is greatly to be welcomed, but it is not enough. Your statement: *“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”* - is a statement which denies the position now adopted by the major world authorities on psychology and psychiatry, including the large body of experiential evidence that is now available, and the results of this research. Despite this weight of evidence the refusal to listen still continues. Senior Vatican prelates continue to make all sexually and gender variant behaviour the scapegoat for abusive sex<sup>31</sup>. For the last two years the Church of England has been involved in a *“Shared Conversations”* process in the hope that *“Good disagreement”* can be obtained. Currently a review panel of the College of Bishops is examining the results of these discussions, but no sexually and gender variant people are involved. In the view of the author these discussions have been so wrapped up in the bubbles of their own theologies, that the lived experiences of gender and sexually variant people, and the independent scientific representations, have been very poorly assessed<sup>32</sup>, or ignored<sup>33</sup>. In the eyes of outside society this refusal to listen is considered to be destroying the credibility of Christianity itself.

It is also important to note that discrimination against gender and sexually variant people is a socially led phenomenon and it would be a mistake to identify its cause with religious belief. A major feature of gender complementarity comes from the way it separates the male from the female roles. Any form of gender and sexually variant behaviour which departs from the normal expectations of that society, for any purpose, challenges this distinction. The need to seek respectability and acceptance in Roman society was considered essential if Christianity was to continue to survive and bring its Gospel message to the world. However the compromises which this demanded swapped the most radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sexuality for the respectability of the Church<sup>34</sup>. In its battles against the gross sexual abuses of Roman Society, most notably in relation to same-sex acts, all sense of the duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour has been lost and a universal condemnation has been applied. These transformations have 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. One only needs to look today at the behaviour of Daesh and Boko

<sup>31</sup> See for example: Gilchrist, S. (2016): *“Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> See: Gilchrist, S. (2014): *“Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversyAndCrisis.pdf>: The author also presented written evidence to the Church of England based on the results of this investigation at the start of the *“Shared Conversations”* Process. See: Gilchrist, S. (2014): *Articles Offered to The Church of England for use in its Process of Shared Discussions on LGBTI Matters*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/020B-OfferedPapersIntroduction.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Pilling Report, (2013): All discussions of transgender issues were excluded in the report of the Church of England House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality, (or the Pilling Report). This was commissioned by the House of Bishops of the Church of England in January 2012. It was published on the 28 November 2013 by Church House Publishing ISBN-13: 9780715144374 ISBN-10: 0715144375 It is available on the web at: [http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling\\_report\\_gs\\_1929\\_web.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling_report_gs_1929_web.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> See: Gilchrist, S. (2016): *“Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church”*: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

Haram to see how extreme this can become. The persecution and slaughter of gender and sexually variant people, not only 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<sup>35</sup> There is no doubt that there was a great deal of sexual abuse in first century society, where the blatant abuses of power gave permission for extreme abuses of sex. However to condemn all gender and sexually variant behaviour for the abuses of some, is akin to saying today that all members of a minority community are terrorists because some engage in terrorist acts. In the United States at the present time, senior members of the Catholic Church have been using its traditional teaching to collude with the conservative Christian right when they condemn all transgender people as invariably being in pursuit of illicit or depraved sex<sup>36 37</sup>. These concerns are compounded by the political changes that have recently taken place. In the USA the adviser to President Trump on domestic matters is on record as saying: *"Gays can be reformed, just like arsonists"*<sup>38</sup> For both social and theological reasons there is now an urgent need to reconsider the traditional teaching of the Church.

According to the Catholic Church, humans are sexual beings whose sexual identity extends beyond the body to the mind and soul. The sexes are meant by divine design to be different and complementary, each having equal dignity and made in the image of God. The sexual act is sacred within the context of the marital relationship that reflects a complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman. Sexual sins therefore violate not just the body but the person's whole being<sup>39</sup>. The Catholic Church additionally takes the position that gender identity is determined by the biology of sex. Any departure from this is considered to be a departure from the divine order of creation and is condemned by the Church. A private document from the Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2000 decreed that gender reassignment procedures do not change a person's gender. It states that *"The transsexual surgical operation is so superficial and external that it does not change the personality. If the person was a male, he remains male. If she was female, she remains*

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<sup>35</sup> This is not just a theological point of view. In all of today's interpretations little account is taken of contrast between the privileges of power exerted in dominant societies and the oppression of submission in conquered ones: both in terms of the cultural differences that are established, and in the use and abuse of sex. Evidence of the high degree of trauma and distress that these power conflicts create is present today: it is seen with the Taliban, Islamic State and Boko Haram. In history it extends from the Christian practice of slavery in the Americas to the Empires of the ancient world. No examination of Christian theology and its attitudes to all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour can be complete without taking full account of the relationships between power and sex. Sadly, and in part because of this absence, many in Christianity, Judaism and Islam have colluded with the discrimination that has occurred.

<sup>36</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>37</sup> In 2014, the Southern Baptist Convention approved a resolution at its annual meeting stating that "God's design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female" and that "gender identity is determined by biological sex, not by one's self-perception." Furthermore, the resolution opposes hormone therapy, transition-related procedures, and anything else that would "alter one's bodily identity," as well as opposing government efforts to validate transgender identity. <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2250/on-transgender-identity>

<sup>38</sup> Nutt, Amy Ellis. (2016): *"Gays can be reformed, just like arsonists, Trump's new domestic policy adviser has said"*; Washington Post. November 19, 2016 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/to-your-health/wp/2016/11/19/gays-can-be-reformed-just-like-arsonists-trumps-new-domestic-policy-adviser-has-said/?utm\\_term=.824609a0a6e6](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/to-your-health/wp/2016/11/19/gays-can-be-reformed-just-like-arsonists-trumps-new-domestic-policy-adviser-has-said/?utm_term=.824609a0a6e6)

<sup>39</sup> Kreeft, Peter. (2001): *"Catholic Christianity: A Complete Catechism of Catholic Beliefs Based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church"*. Ignatius Press. ISBN-10: 0898707986 ISBN-13: 978-0898707984



female.”<sup>40</sup> In a 2008 Christmas message Pope Benedict XVI denounced gender theory, warning that it blurs the distinctions between male and female and that it could lead to the "self-destruction" of the human race. He also warned against separating the term gender from sex. He said: "*What is often expressed and understood by the term "gender" is definitively resolved in the self-emancipation of the human being from creation and the Creator: "Man wants to create himself, and to decide always and exclusively on his own about what concerns him." "This is humanity living against truth, against the creating Spirit".* Pope Benedict directly addressed transgender issues by cautioning Catholics about "*destroying the very essence of the human creature through manipulating their God-given gender to suit their sexual choices*"<sup>41</sup>. This makes the presumption that the motives underlying transgender people's experiences are not about the search for identity, they are about the search for sex. It criticises their motives and it reinforces the damage that medical misdiagnoses can create.

Pope Francis you agreed with Pope Benedict when you wrote in your 2015 encyclical on the environment "*Laudato Si*"<sup>42</sup> that men and women should acknowledge their bodies as a gift from God and not manipulate them. Also in your more recent exhortation "*Amoris Laetitia*"<sup>43</sup> you condemned gender ideology as an "*attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality.*" - Presumably you mean by this the idea of separating gender from sex. You have also been quoted in a book, saying that gender theory, like nuclear weapons, is a danger to humanity<sup>44</sup>. You have further declared that "*biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated*"<sup>45</sup>. These are statements which define psychology, not just theology. A Canadian Catholic Bishop additionally upheld these perceptions when he condemned a school policy by stating: "*It is the conviction of the Catholic Church that genetically, anatomically and chromosomally, the body reveals the divine plan, and that humans are "obliged to regard [their bodies] as good and to hold [them] in honour since God has created [them]."* Therefore, to attempt "gender transitioning" is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church"<sup>46</sup>.

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 the United States Catholic Bishops issued a statement in response to what it described as the "deeply disturbing" new federal guidance on transgender regulations for schools<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Norton, John. (2011): "Vatican says 'sex-change' operation does not change person's gender," *Catholic News Service*, September 19, 2011. The document lists key points from the CDF's 2000 "secret" document on transsexualism. Oddly enough this statement is correct, however it is predicated on the assumption that gender identity must always match the biological sex.

<sup>41</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 [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/december/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20081222\\_curia-romana.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20081222_curia-romana.html)

<sup>42</sup> Pope Francis. (2015): "Encyclical Letter "*Laudato Si*" Of The Holy Father Francis On Care For Our Common Home" 24 May 2015: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

<sup>43</sup> Pope Francis. (2016): " "*Amoris Laetitia*": Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of The Holy Father Francis to Bishops, Priests and Deacons Consecrated Persons Christian Married Couples and all The Lay Faithful on Love in the Family". 19 March 2016 [https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20160319\\_amoris-laetitia\\_en.pdf](https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf)

<sup>44</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>45</sup> "*Amoris Laetitia*", no. 56

<sup>46</sup> Christine Niles, Christine. (2015): "*Canadian Catholic Schools Defy Archbishop on Transgender Policy*" ChurchMilitant.com October 7, 2015 <http://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/canadian-catholic-schools-to-approve-inclusive-transgender-policy>

<sup>47</sup> Catholic News Agency. (2016): "As an alternative to the "deeply disturbing" new federal guidance on transgender regulations for schools, the U.S. bishops pointed to the words of Pope Francis in offering a positive path to young people" *Catholic News Agency* May 16, 2016. The U.S. bishops' May 16 statement was authored by Bishop Richard Malone of Buffalo, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, and by Archbishop George Lucas,

This guidance requires schools to allow children to use the bathrooms and toilets which are in accordance with the gender they identify with. In a forceful rejection of this declaration, one Catholic bishop; Thomas John Paprocki of Illinois condemned gender ideology. He also decreed that in diocesan facilities, people must use the bathrooms which correspond to their biological sex. He cited examples from around Illinois of schools granting students access to restrooms and intimate facilities designated for the opposite sex. This Catholic doctrine is also in line with fundamentalist churches, mainly in the southern part of the United States who are seeking to scapegoat transsexual people by legally enforcing them to only use toilets and bathroom facilities which correspond to the genitalia they were born with. That is irrespective of their gender identities, and any surgical transformations that they may make. Paprocki further noted the statement by the American College of Paediatricians<sup>48</sup> that “*transgenderism*” is classified as a mental illness<sup>49</sup>. It has warned legislators and educators that conditioning children to accept “*transgenderism*” as normal is child abuse. He also quoted Dr Paul McHugh, the psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital who stopped the hospital’s practice of “*sex-reassignment*” surgery<sup>50</sup>. McHugh stated that the practice “brought no important benefits” and he has condemned the widespread phenomenon of doctors and therapists encouraging children to embrace the notion that they can “*change genders*” by mutilating their bodies. The answers to these statements have already been given in this article. The work that McHugh stopped had failed because the investigators considered that gender identity is malleable and that the social learning and psychodynamic theories could be applied at all times of life. They also continued to pursue their approach long after it became obvious that difficulties occurred. The American College of Paediatricians also makes the same presumptions. However this investigation shows that these reasons are incorrect. None of these arguments coherently separate gender from sex. Gender reassignment does not change gender identity: it forms the body in a way that is compatible with the gender identity already possessed, and that is created very early in life.

The reasons why science and theology can adopt such conflicting positions on gender and sexual variation are due in no small part to the lack of understanding of the origins of these conditions. The recognition of that lack of understanding is clearly expressed in article 2357 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In circumstances where this lack of knowledge is recognised it should be absolutely essential that a full, independent and objective analysis of the science and psychology is conducted. However the only psychological and scientific evidence that is publically presented from Church sources is that which supports the traditional teaching of the Church. The contradictory evidence is dismissed or ignored. That is why the author believes it has been essential to conduct an analysis in which both the scientific and theological perspectives are independently examined, in a way that steps outside the traditions of the Church.

## **8:0: Choice or no Choice.**

That detailed analysis is described elsewhere. In this document some of the key features have already been described. Their impact on the degree of choice that is available is now examined. The results of the neurophysiological and psychological element of this investigation have concluded that gender and sexually variant conditions are identity driven. This means that as wide a

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who chairs the bishops’ Committee on Catholic Education. <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/for-us-bishops-pope-francis-brings-clarity-to-transgender-issues-90466/>

<sup>48</sup> This is a minority conservative group whose views contradict the international bodies. See the previous notes

<sup>49</sup> It is not..... That may be their definition: however it is not now classified as any form of mental illness by the great majority of professional institutions. In order to be diagnosed with gender dysphoria, according to the mental health manual (DSM-5), one would have to be distressed by the incongruity between his or her birth gender and the gender with which he or she identifies. Otherwise there is no illness. <http://www.livescience.com/37087-dsm-gender-dysphoria.html>

<sup>50</sup> McHugh, Paul: (2014/2016) “Transgender Surgery Isn’t the Solution. A drastic physical change doesn’t address underlying psycho-social trouble” *Wall Street Journal*. Updated May 13, 2016 originally published in 2014 <http://www.wsj.com/articles/paul-mchugh-transgender-surgery-isnt-the-solution-1402615120>

*Gilchrist, S. (2017). “No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice”.*

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*18*

range of moral attitudes, beliefs and behaviour are to be found amongst gender and sexually variant people as those which exist in society at large. It is further shown that a moral duality must exist whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways that conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies should be highly regarded while those who misuse these relationships ought to be very severely condemned for their acts. Since this duality is fundamental to these conditions, its influence must have been present in all societies at all times. In the separate theological part of this analysis it is demonstrated that the existence of this duality was accepted by Jesus. However in its battles against the gross sexual abuses of Roman Society, most notably in relation to same-sex acts, all sense of the duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour has been lost. This has led to the traditional teaching of the Church on gender and sexual variation which does not regard having gender and sexually variant identities and feelings as being sinful, while all expressions of them, irrespective of the actual purpose, are regarded as disordered and mortally sinful acts. That directly contradicts the results of the neurophysiological and psychological analysis. It also contradicts the lived experiences of gender and sexually variant people and those of others in the societies of today where gender and sexually variant identities can be expressed.

Giving children the ability to explore gender identity enables them to find it, not to choose it. This analysis has demonstrated that the core gender identity, which defines who one is, is irrevocably formed at the latest by the age of three years and the momentum of the process can set a direction from birth. By the time children gain the ability to explore their own gender identities; the core gender identity is fixed for life. That identifies the place of the individual in society, and no behavioural implications are involved. This analysis only asks that the same moral standards that are applied to the rest of the population are also applied to gender and sexually variant people, and that the duality and identity driven nature of these conditions is respected. There is no tolerance of inappropriate or abusive cross-gender or sexual behaviour. There are many gender and sexually variant people who, like you, disapprove of the activities of some in these groups and what the newspapers present. Enormous guilt, self-loathing and hurt has been imposed on gender and sexually variant people by a traditional Church doctrine which condemns every expression of their identity as being a disordered lifestyle choice in pursuit of immoral sex.

No, Pope Francis, gender identity is not a choice. This investigation also challenges the perceptions of “*gender theory*” that are promulgated by the Catholic Church. You yourself challenge “*gender theory*” because you believe the theory states that gender identity it is malleable and it can be made a matter of a choice. The condemnations you make would be perfectly correct if you and the Church were right in these perceptions. These denunciations have also been reinforced by the social conditioning created through centuries of condemnation by the Christian Church, and in this investigation it is shown that the perception of choice is made credible through the limitations of the traditional psychiatric approach. This examination demonstrates that gender identity is not chosen. It determines that it is fixed at very early age and that it does not necessarily conform to the biological sex. In addition it confirms the views expressed by the great majority of professional institutions in the Western World who regard gender and sexually variant identities and behaviour as being naturally expected variations of the human condition which are intrinsic to the personality created, that arise very early in development, which cannot be changed by the individual concerned or by the actions of others in later life.

## **9:0: Impact and Approach**

Transgender experiences and the impact of the conflicts between science and theology are addressed in the fifth section of this account. The management methods that are needed are also examined. Many children do go through periods of believing they belong to the wrong gender however the great majority have a core gender identity which is in accordance with their biological

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*19*

sex. This underlying identity remains constant and for these children that determines the way in which any responsible exploration will be resolved<sup>51</sup>. Transgender children are often aware that “*something is wrong*” from about the age of four years. However their discomfort with the gender identity expected of them does not disappear. Nevertheless not all gender variant children or adults seek to transition. From the outset some reject the gender identity they are assigned to. Others suppress or fight this contrary sense of gender with all their might. The agony that transgender people often face is one of defending and supporting the love, commitments and relationships they cherish in the life they have built, against the sense of identity that is felt deep inside. The more strongly this insistent sense of gender identity is fought or suppressed, the stronger it becomes. It also increases with age as commitments decrease and hopes for the future give way to realities of the past. That resistance or suppression can last for many years, before the constancy and attrition created by its demands leads to capitulation, and frequently to collapse. Finding ways to reconcile these types of conflict is work that the author has been engaged in for many years. As they cannot be fought, management methods must seek to calm the dynamics and transcend their demands<sup>52</sup>.

In this investigation it is shown that there are two components in the formation of gender identity: first the usually unconscious, inwardly focussed and tribally perceived core gender identity which fixed very early in life because of the constancy of personality that is needed, and secondly the personal, outwardly facing, conscious and individual sense of gender identity, through which the relationships with society are built. Although the core sense of gender identity remains constant throughout life, the need to conform to it depends on relationships which rise and fall with changes in age, commitments and time. Resisting or suppressing its demands may be seen as denying the potential for fulfilment in life<sup>53</sup>. Therefore maintaining any truce cannot succeed unless an outlook is adopted which gives the freedom to be able to accept and manage change whenever it is required. This is not an easy course, and it is about finding ways to manage a volcano of emotions that can erupt from deep inside. This means that the aim of these management methods should never be to deny or to prevent progress towards transition and gender reassignment. Instead they should aim to make a smooth change possible so that if it is needed it can come at the right time, for the right reasons and in a way that minimizes the trauma it creates. The outcome depends on the self-esteem that is created and how effectively these dynamics are managed. For some people the need for transition may never arise. Knowledge and acceptance of the reality of one’s gender identity is crucial before these methods can be put in place and the freedom to question one’s gender identity is an essential requirement before this can happen. However this freedom is destroyed by the guilt which is created through the condemnations which others impose.

A great deal of guilt is caused by the denial of science, and through the use of the theology and traditions of the Church to impose a psychology which demands that gender identity must match the biological sex. Great emphasis is placed on pastoral care. However any behaviour which departs from this psychological edict is seen as a rejection of a God-given feature and is condemned by the Church. Such an attitude denies the moral duality which demonstrated in this investigation to be fundamental to gender and sexually variant behaviour. A consequence of that denial is seen in the extreme social and legal penalties applied to gender and sexually variant people in many parts of the world. The disowning by your own Church and other Christian denominations in the United

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<sup>51</sup> Many children and adolescents do go through periods of questioning and experimenting with their gender and sexual identities. Considerable fluidity may be encountered. It is alleged that about 80% of children who question their gender identity come to terms in some way with the identity that is in accord with their biological sex. Although the conscious perceptions and expressions of gender and sexual identities may vary with time, it is the unconscious and unchanging core elements of personality and identity, which includes both gender and sexual identities, that give the stability required.

<sup>52</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2013): “Management Techniques for Gender Dysphoria with Particular Reference to Transsexuality”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/205P-ManagementTechniquesInGenderDysphoria.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> That demands the continuing ability to maintain a positive approach. Depression, which may be due to exhaustion or some gender unrelated problem, may bring the conflict to conscious awareness and enforce the compulsions it creates.



States of the legitimacy of transgender people's own senses of identity, with the presumption that their behaviour always seeks inappropriate sexual gratification, is not just a repudiation of the legitimacy of these people's own identities, it is an attack on their moral integrities and no amount of pastoral care can compensate for the condemnations these actions create.

Although it is made clear in this investigation that the gender and sexual variant conditions are independent of each other, they are fellow travellers in their interactions with society. Pope Francis, you have been quoted in a book, saying that "gender theory", like nuclear weapons, is a danger to humanity<sup>54</sup>. In March 2016 you wrote that: "In discussing the dignity and mission of the family, the Synod Fathers observed that, as for proposals to place unions between homosexual persons on the same level as marriage, there are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family"<sup>55</sup>. That questions the integrity of those sexually variant people for whom these same-sex relationships are as committed and as important as marriage itself<sup>56</sup>. In the same report you say that gender is inseparable from biology, by denouncing any ideologies "that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female" and in which "human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time." Set against these statements is your very obvious care and compassion for gender and sexually variant people. The call you made in the press conference during your return from Georgia<sup>57</sup> for transsexuals and homosexuals to be accepted and embraced by the Catholic Church is greatly to be welcomed, as is your refusal to make universal condemnations when you said "But each case must be welcomed, accompanied, studied, discerned and integrated. When a person (who is gay) arrives before Jesus, Jesus certainly will not say, 'Go away because you are homosexual". Your comment that: "Christians and the Roman Catholic Church should seek forgiveness from gay people for the way they had treated them" is also a very welcome comment. Likewise the statement you made during your in-flight press conference from Rio de Janeiro to Rome July 28, 2013 when you said: "If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him? The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains this in a beautiful way"<sup>58</sup>. On January 12, 2016, in an interview with a journalist about your new book<sup>59</sup> in which this statement is discussed<sup>60</sup>, you stated: "On that occasion I said this: If a person is gay and seeks out the Lord and is willing, who am I to judge that person?" "I was paraphrasing by heart the Catechism of the Catholic Church where it says that these people should be treated with delicacy and not be marginalized." Despite the pastoral support to gender and sexually variant people which is given in

<sup>54</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>55</sup> 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: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione\\_ap\\_20160319\\_amoris-laetitia\\_en.pdf](http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione_ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> This investigation does not enter into discussion about whether these should be called marriages. However for many people the position of the Church has become so compromised that it is now society which will determine the meaning of the word marriage, rather than the Church. For further discussion on the role of marriage, see: Gilchrist, S. (2013): "Reform and the Christian Church": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/008B-ReformChristianChurchArticle.pdf>

<sup>57</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-stampa.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161002_georgia-azerbaijan-conferenza-stampa.html) also <https://newwaysministryblog.wordpress.com/2016/10/03/pope-francis-says-accompanying-lgbt-people-is-what-jesus-would-do-today/>

<sup>58</sup> Pope Francis, (2013): "Apostolic Journey To Rio De Janeiro On The Occasion Of The XXVIII World Youth Day Press Conference Of Pope Francis During The Return Flight" Sunday, 28 July 2013 [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130728\\_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html)

<sup>59</sup> Pope Francis, (2016): "The Name of God is Mercy" Random House ISBN-10: 0735209766 ISBN-13: 978-0735209763

<sup>60</sup> Andrea Tornielli. "Pope Francis explains 'who am I to judge' in his new book" Catholic News Agency Jan 12, 2016 <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-explains-who-am-i-to-judge-in-his-new-book-21443/>

these statements it continues to be made clear by you, Pope Francis and by the Vatican that there must be no change in the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church.

## 10:0: Discussion and Conclusions

This account has addressed the major areas of conflict between the religious and scientific perceptions and understanding of gender and sexually variant identities and behaviour. It examines the hiatus that has been found. It recognises that people engage in gender and sexually variant behaviour for many reasons, and it condemns absolutely all forms of abusive cross-gender behaviour and sex. However the advances of science continue to be countered by the resistance of the Church. It has been shown in this investigation that this Church teaching corresponds with the views which continue to be expressed in traditional conservative psychology and psychiatry. These presume that cognitively-based processes guide development at all times of life. As a consequence the existence of the early physiologically based processes of gender and sexual identification are denied. According to these traditional theories gender and sexual identities are considered to be driven by disruption or the rewards on offer. Therefore, in the absence of the moral compass provided by the traditional Church doctrines, giving children the freedom to explore their gender and sexual identities is understood to result in an outcome which; in the words of Pope Benedict, is capable of: “*destroying the very essence of the human creature through manipulating their God-given gender to suit their sexual choices*”<sup>61</sup>. Your argument that “*gender theory*”, like nuclear weapons, is a danger to humanity likewise expresses the extent of your concern<sup>62</sup>. This is reinforced by the presumption, derived from theology and Church tradition which dictates that gender identity must correspond with the biological sex. Your concern about “*gender theory*” would be of much greater significance if the psychology which you and the Catholic Church base your condemnations on was correct. It is these interpretations of doctrine and psychology which are challenged in this analysis.

The key issue addressed in the title of this paper is one of choice. Traditional Christian doctrines are often understood to condemn all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour as lifestyle choices which can be diverted through the predations of others. They are also considered to be disordered and always in pursuit of lust and inappropriate acts. If the gender identity which is created is a product of this behaviour then these Church doctrines and the traditional social learning and psychodynamic theories would be correct in the diagnoses they make. You would also be right in concluding that it is a choice. However in this investigation it is shown that the reverse is the case. It is demonstrated in this analysis that the unconscious gender core identification begins very early in life and that it has been unchangeably fixed before children become able to make any choice. This pattern of formation creates a strong pre-disposition whereby the great majority of people continue to develop a gender identity which is in accordance with their biological sex. However some do not and when the reverse identification occurs, a strong gender identity contrary to the biological sex is created. The strength of the allegiance to a particular gender is such that it becomes difficult for others to understand the intense traumas which transgender people face. In addition it is essential for the Christian doctrines to make the proper distinctions between gender and sex.

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<sup>61</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 [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/december/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20081222\\_curia-romana.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20081222_curia-romana.html)

<sup>62</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>

Giving children the freedom to explore their gender identity does not result in a change of gender identity: it finds out what has already been created. As wide a range of moral attitudes and beliefs is found amongst the gender and sexually variant communities as those which exist in society at large. Authorising that freedom is not the same as encouraging any form of immorality or abusive sex. The physiology involved in early development also means that change in identity is not made possible by the actions of others. Cisgender<sup>63</sup> and transgender people should be therefore be treated with equal respect. The demand made by transgender people to seek gender reassignment is a matter of necessity and their search for identity: it may be urgently sought but it almost never, if it ever is, a matter of choice. These processes create a much smaller degree of moral and social disruption than the traditional Church doctrines and conservative theories predict.

In this investigation a distinction is made between characteristics and conflicts which are driven by the search for identity and those which are driven by the search for reward. From both of the medical and theological perspectives a destructive misdiagnosis is made when behaviour associated with gender and sexual variation is invariably treated a search for sexual reward: and when its identity driven nature is denied. The management techniques required for reward driven conflicts are almost entirely opposite to identity driven ones. Even when medical and theological interventions are made with the best of intentions, great harm occurs when the wrong diagnosis is made.

This investigation has adopted a new approach. By using the development of atypical gender identity it has been possible to link the early neurophysiologically based learning and development processes to the psychologically controlled ones in later life. It is confirmed that gender and sexually variant identities and behaviour are naturally expected variations of the human condition which are intrinsic to the personality created, that arise very early in development, and which cannot be changed by the individual concerned or by the actions of others in subsequent life. It is established that the momentum of these processes allows typical and atypical core gender identities to develop, and the need to create a constancy of personality permanently locks these in place by the age of three years. It is also demonstrated that the conditions are identity driven, so that as wide a range of moral attitudes are found amongst transgender and gender and sexually variant people as those which are found in society at large. It is further demonstrated that a moral duality must exist whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities in ways that conform to the highest moral standards of their own societies should be highly regarded while those who misuse these relationships ought to be very severely condemned for their acts. Since this duality is fundamental to these conditions, its influence must have been present in all societies at all times. From each of the theological, social and scientific standpoints it is established that identical criteria in relation to use and abuse should be applied to heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. That directly contradicts the traditional teaching of the Christian Church.

The centuries of criminalisation and condemnation of all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour, regardless of the actual purpose, has prevented any chance of this moral duality being rediscovered. However the social and cultural transformations in Western societies over the last fifty years has again revealed the moral duality which is inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour, and people can now find out for themselves what this involves. The recognition of this duality continues to be denied by many in the Abrahamic religious traditions, which includes the Catholic Church. Instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for all sexual abuse, it is demonstrated in this investigation that the correct objectives for the Christian Church should be those of combatting all forms of abusive sex.

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<sup>63</sup> A term used to describe those people whose gender identity is in line with the expectations of their biological sex.

Any minority group which challenges the expectations of a gender divided or gender discriminatory society is likely to be made a scapegoat by that society. In the theological part of this analysis it is demonstrated that an acceptance of the moral duality in gender and sexually variant behaviour was present in the teaching of Jesus, however in its battles against the gross sexual abuses of Roman Society, most notably in relation to same-sex acts, all sense of this duality was lost<sup>64</sup>. The traditional doctrines of the Catholic Church now condemn any expression of gender or sexually variant behaviour irrespective of the actual purpose. If any religious organisation uses this Church teaching to collude with the secular scapegoating of gender and sexually variant people within its own nation or society, the guilt that is felt by these people can be enormous, and the discrimination and legal penalties which are exacted against them may be great. This is equivalent to condemning every person in a minority group for the abuses of only some of its members. Thus an aim of this investigation is to restore the understandings of the duality which is inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour to the present day Church<sup>65</sup>.

In some Christian denominations the social changes of the last fifty years have promoted a re-evaluation of their teaching, but this has also resulted in a retrenchment into literalism and to fundamentalism in others. The resolute refusal of the Catholic Church to consider any change to its traditional teaching is not just a refusal to listen to new voices; it dismisses the advances in scientific understanding which have already occurred. That is why the author believes it has been essential to conduct an analysis in which the scientific, historical and theological perspectives are independently examined in a way that steps outside the traditions of the Church. In this investigation it is shown that the same moral duality is encountered as that which is established in the neurophysiological and psychological study. It is also demonstrated that an acceptance of the moral duality in gender and sexually variant behaviour was present in the teaching of Jesus. This demands the welcome of cross-gender activities and same-sex relationships which are the outpourings of love and faithfulness, while condemning those that are pursued for abusive and illicit sex. It also demands that the Christian witness of those transgender, transsexual, lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves, must be able to shine as beacons of light both inside the Church and outwards to society. In contrast to this, those people who do not may be severely censured for the abuses they create. Nothing less will remove the collusion of the Church with the secular scapegoating of all gender and sexually variant people, and this danger is rapidly increasing in the present day world. The continual efforts to evade these issues or to delay dealing with them by producing inconclusive reports destroys Christianity and the Church.

The crucial feature that must be resolved is identified by the scientific analysis. This demonstrates that there is a fundamental contradiction between the conclusions of science and the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. The theological, historical and social analyses, at most, can only show how and why this conflict occurs, and chart ways of escape. A radical approach is taken in this investigation. It is not necessary to agree with this historical, theological and social study, however it is essential to find ways to resolve the contradiction between science and theology that occurs. This demands that there must be some changes to the traditional teaching of the Church.

Pope Francis, in your press conference you said about gender and sexual variation: "*in every case I accept it, I accompany it, I study it, I discern it and I integrate it.*" Your condemnation of "*gender theory*" tells me that you have not understood what the current research now says. The traditional teaching of the Christian Church presents a doctrine can be tested from the scientific, theological

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<sup>64</sup> 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>65</sup> See: Gilchrist, S. (2016): "*Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church: Is it Not Time to Consider the Science?*":  
<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/226P-ConsiderScience.pdf>



and historical perspectives; and it has found to be incorrect or wanting in all three respects. A document you approved on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016 still reiterates the traditional teaching of the Church<sup>66</sup>. Please do as you say, please respect the latest scientific understanding, please study it, please discern it, please integrate it, and use it to reassess the traditional teaching of your Church.

## 11:0 Church of England

On the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017 the Church of England's Bishops' Reflection Group on Sexuality presented a report on: "*Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations: A Report from the House of Bishops*"<sup>67</sup>. The Pilling report (2013)<sup>68</sup>, proposed two years of "facilitated conversations" to enable the different sections of the Church to understand one another better. The formal process of Shared Conversations, as they became, was completed in July 2016. The Conversations were not intended or designed to achieve agreement but to assist the careful listening that would support clear and open exchange of views and embody the principle of disagreeing in a Christian manner. The Bishop's 2017 report identified two aspects of the emerging consensus within its working party which they considered to be particularly important. First, there was little support for changing the Church of England's teaching on marriage and sexual relationships. Second, there was a strong sense that existing resources, guidance and tone needed to be revisited. The report advocated compassion but no changes in the Canons, or regulations, of the Church. It describes this as: "*Interpreting the existing law and guidance to permit maximum freedom within it, without changes to the law, or the doctrine of the Church*". Clause 32 also notes that: "*It would also need to be acknowledged that some deep-seated questions are likely to come to the fore in addressing these matters. In particular, issues of identity that are both controversial and profoundly personal would need to be faced..... Can the Church of England establish a consistent tone and culture when it encompasses those who hold to some sharply differing moral judgments about those choices in this case?*" Clause 33 notes: "*This is therefore a critical and highly challenging area for further work. Tackling it well will be crucial for everything that follows*".

Apart from these clauses there is no other reference to the impact of science in this report. Its scope instead is entirely confined to issues of culture and theology. It is astonishing that the issues of science are not at the forefront of any report, in which the principles of the theology it uses can be tested by the principles of scientific research. This is even more important when the psychology on which the Church teaching is based is determined by the influences of history, theology and tradition, instead of the independence and objectivity that is required any scientific approach. That refusal to engage in these issues is of long standing, and this author has highlighted it in a paper: "*Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*"<sup>69</sup>. This author has been advocating the proper consideration of science for some time. The outputs of this have included a written submission to the Pilling Report<sup>70</sup> and a series of articles offered to the Church of England, before the start of the "Shared Conversations" process<sup>71</sup>. Access to all of this material is available on the website: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/bibliography.htm>. As

<sup>66</sup> Vatican. (2016): "*The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*" Page 81: Congregation for the Clergy

<http://www.clerus.va/content/dam/clerus/Ratio%20Fundamentalis/The%20Gift%20of%20the%20Priestly%20Vocation.pdf>

<sup>67</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-sex-relationships-after-the-shared-conversations-report-from-the-house-of-bishops.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> Pilling Report. (2013): "*Report of the House of Bishops' Working Party on human sexuality*", GS 1929, Nov 2013 [https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling\\_report\\_gs\\_1929\\_web.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1891063/pilling_report_gs_1929_web.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2014): "*Controversy and Challenge: Issues of Gender and Sexuality in the Present Day Christian Church*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/018B-ControversyAndCrisis.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2012): "*Personal submission to the Church of England House of Bishops Working Party on Human Sexuality*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/004B-SGSubmissionToHoBSexualityReview2012.pdf>

<sup>71</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2014): "*Articles Offered to The Church of England for use in its Process of Shared Discussions on LGBTI Matters*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/020B-OfferedPapersIntroduction.pdf>

well as these articles two more recent ones are also of relevance. They are: "*Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church: Is it Not Time to Consider the Science?*"<sup>72</sup> And: "*Science and Belief. A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life*"<sup>73</sup> These documents combine scientific and theological analyses. They adopt an independent approach to Church history and tradition. Some may disagree with the conclusions they reach. However disagreements pale into insignificance when the arguments presented in these and papers by other authors are neither heard, nor acknowledged, nor listened to by the Church. Clauses 32 and 33 of the Bishop's 2017 report seem to demand that this listening should now occur. However by making it clear that all future discussions must take place within the context of the traditional teaching of the Church, this report denies from the beginning the fundamental depth of listening that is needed. This is after two years of a "Shared Discussions" process whose stated aim was "*to enable the different sections of the Church to understand one another better*". Many LGBTI people contributed to these discussions, some at considerable cost to themselves. It may be presumptuous of the author to presume that clauses 32 and 33 refer to her own work, but the results and the progress of her investigation have been reported and made available to the Church of England at all stages these its discussions from the Pilling report onwards.

The 2017 Church of England Bishop's report is an interim report, which is scheduled for discussion in a "*Take Note*" debate in the General Synod of the Church of England on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017. By its action of directing that all future discussion must take place within the context of the traditional teaching of the Church it is denying the possibility of any change to that teaching. It is applying exactly the same restrictions as those which were imposed by the Roman Catholic Church and Pope Francis during the "Synod on the Family" discussions. The consequences of this are that the outcomes can only be the request to "*be nice to LGBTI people*", without any consideration of the fundamental issues that need to be addressed. That is a totally inadequate response. Therefore it is appropriate to re-iterate the results of this investigation, the outputs of other research and the experiences of LGBTI people themselves.

There are two parts to this investigation. The first is a neurophysiological and psychological analysis of the early development of personality and self-identity. The second is a historical and theological examination which considers the development of attitudes to gender and sexual variation in the Christian Church. This makes use of the results of the neurophysiological and psychological study. The results of that study shows that the development of gender and sexual identities begins at a very early stage. It demonstrates that they are identity driven. They are not behaviour driven. This means that as wide a range of moral attitudes commitments and behaviour are to be found amongst gender and sexually variant behaviour as in the community at large<sup>74</sup>. It follows that a moral duality must exist in which those gender and sexually variant behaviour who seek to live in ways that are true to their own identities while maintaining the highest moral standards should be commended for their behaviour, while those who do not may be severely condemned. This scientific result is contradicted by the theological doctrines of the Christian Church which condemn every element of gender and sexually variant act behaviour as invariably being disordered lifestyle choices, which are always engaged in for inappropriate purposes and illegitimate sex. There is clearly a conflict between science and theology. Therefore the next step taken in this investigation was to find out why this conflict between science and theology occurs. That is why an extended analysis has been

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<sup>72</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2016j): "*Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church: Is it Not Time to Consider the Science?*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/226P-ConsiderScience.pdf>

<sup>73</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2016h): "*Science and Belief. A New Approach to Identity and Personality Formation in Early Life*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/218P-PaperPersonality.pdf>

<sup>74</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2013d): "*Personality Development and LGB&T People: A New Approach*": <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/201P-PersonalityDevelopmentAndLGBTPeople.pdf>

conducted which examines the teaching of Jesus against these scientific results<sup>75</sup>. This is then compared with the development of this teaching within the history of the Church<sup>76</sup>. It is shown that acknowledgement of this moral duality was present in the teaching of Jesus. There is no conflict between His teaching and the results of the scientific investigation. The relationship between Jesus and John is shown to match what may be expected of any rabbinic partnership of the time. However all sense of the duality inherent in gender and sexually variant behaviour disappeared in the adaptations the Church had to make, both to integrate itself into Roman society and also to counteract the gross abuses of sex, notably in same-sex acts, which any despotic society is able to create.

This investigation has emphasised the need for high moral standards to be maintained by gender and sexually variant people. However many other people, who today would be regarded as heterosexual, engaged in cross-gender and same-sex acts of sex. It was entirely accepted that this was the privilege of all male Roman citizens as long as they were the penetrators when same-sex intercourse took place. Acts involving this type of same-sex rape were endemic in many societies. In battle a victor could rape his beaten enemy to ensure his humiliation was complete. Counteracting this was a major task for the early Christian Church. It is not surprising that the sense of duality in gender and sexually variant behaviour was to become lost; and the intensity with which those battles were fought made passions greatly increase. These passions are still expressed in some measure by the strength of the condemnations of all gender and sexually variant behaviour which are imposed by the Christian Church. Therefore a result of this examination is the simple and direct conclusion which states that what today are considered to be the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church on sexual and gender variance are built on a false foundation. They were driven by the need to gain respectability and to counteract same-sex abuse in Greco/Roman society. They do not come from the teaching of Jesus himself. This means that change to the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church are needed. However these are not changes which depart from the Gospel message. They are changes which return to the full meaning of the Gospel texts.

The conclusions of this study are also in accord with the large degree of experiential scientific evidence that is now available and the policies adopted by the major professional institutions. They also represent the lived experiences of LGBTI people. There is now a great deal of anger amongst the LGBTI communities who feel that the contributions they made in good faith to the “*Shared Conversations*” process have been ignored. The results of this investigation have also been made available to the Church of England, from before the start of the “*Shared Conversations*” process. If the presumption the author makes about clauses 32 and 33 in the Bishop’s 2017 report are correct, these results were known to the working party as well. Obviously any academic study must be subjected to the rigours of a peer review process. However to foreclose on any investigation by declaring that there should be no change in the traditional teaching of the Church, before all of the evidence that has been made available to the working party is fully considered, can have little justification. It is therefore very difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is an attempt to avoid the real issues that should be addressed. Presenting the report to Synod at this time in a “*Take note*” debate could be seen as a way to get Synod to stifle further discussion of the full range of factors that are involved.

These major issues still need to be addressed and Clause 33 in the report: “*This is therefore a critical and highly challenging area for further work. Tackling it well will be crucial for everything that follows*”, emphasises that point. It is also of note that the use of the word “choices” in clause 32

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<sup>75</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/219P-InfluencesJesus.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> Gilchrist, S. (2016): “*Influences of Gender and Sexual Variation in the History and Traditions of the Christian Church*”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/220P-InfluencesChurch.pdf>

suggests that the Bishops are still thinking that these are issues which are determined by lifestyle choices, instead of objective results. The real issue is not that of finding ways to be nice to LGBTI people, as the report decrees. The demand that LGBTI people make is that the duality and identity driven nature inherent in gender and sexually variant conditions is recognised, and that transgender, transsexual, lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles and activities that are true to themselves should be accepted as full and equal members of the Christian Church. In return the obligation that gender and sexually variant people accept is that the same standard of moral behaviour is required of them as it is of any other group.

From each of the theological, social and scientific standpoints it is established in this investigation that identical criteria in relation to use and abuse should be applied to heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. An extended study of the biblical texts has been undertaken. This shows that in line with the teaching of Jesus in the New Covenant, all such acts should be guided by love, the promotion of wellbeing and the purity of intention. There is no automatic condemnation of any sexual act. There is no attack on family values and there is absolutely no condonation of any form of inappropriate or abusive sex. In place of using theology and tradition to define the psychology of gender and sexually variant conditions, it is shown that this psychology should be defined by science itself. Therefore: instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for all sexual abuse, it is demonstrated in this investigation that the correct objectives for the Christian Church should be those of combatting all forms of abusive sex.

The social consequences of these Christian doctrines are considerable. Part of clause 34 of the 2017 Church of England Bishop's report states *"There was some support for the view that the teaching document [the report proposes] should include penitence for the treatment some lesbian and gay people have received at the hands of the Church"*. Penitence is not enough for it does not remove the slur, as it is expressed in the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church: *"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."* By extension transgender experience may be included in this as well. The existence of this doctrine enables others to use it to condemn all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour no matter how welcoming or accepting Pope Francis and the Bishops of the Church of England attempt to be. Severe condemnations are seen most strongly in many African nations, where extreme legal penalties are being applied to homosexual people, in fundamentalist churches where families and lives are destroyed by the rejection that occurs, in the denial of the legitimacy of transgender identities by the Catholic Church, fundamentalist Churches and state legislatures in the United States. There is no recognition of the identity driven nature of these conditions. All of these condemnations are predicated on the presumption that they are in pursuit of sexual experience which involves illicit or inappropriate sex. The actions of the present president of the United States illustrate how easily this scapegoating can occur. Instead of recognising the moral duality which is inherent in gender and sexual behaviour, without exception all of these people become the scapegoats for abusive sex. Since this article was first released the administration of Present Trump in the United States has removed the federal guidance which protected transgender children from some of these attacks<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup> However it should also be noted that Trump has reaffirmed Obama's order on the protection of LGBTI Employment Rights. The continuation of this has provoked a negative response from the United States Catholic Church. Trump's action is "troubling and disappointing" said Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia, (chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth), and Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, (chairman of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty): *"Obama's Protections for L.G.B.T. Workers Will Remain Under Trump"* ([https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/30/us/politics/obama-trump-protections-lgbt-workers.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/30/us/politics/obama-trump-protections-lgbt-workers.html?_r=0)). The Obama executive order, they said in a joint statement, is "deeply flawed." *"Prelates raise concern over Trump decision to keep Obama executive order"*: <https://cnstopstories.com/2017/02/02/prelates-raise-concern-over>



These are not just issues of religious doctrine, for they combine with the secular prejudices, social discrimination and the tribal identifications which are used to condemn any minority group. The traditional Church doctrine gives strong ammunition for that social discrimination and it leads elements of the Church to collude with the harm that this creates. This is a time when Britain, the United States and many other countries are rejecting reasoned arguments in pursuit of narrow, nationalist and protectionist policies, which place self-interest first. For Christianity and the Churches to refuse to consider even the possibility of any change to its traditional doctrines on these matters is only tampering with the issues that are involved. Instead of colluding with these condemnations and prejudices, a clear moral stand by Christianity and the Churches is needed. Therefore changes or reconsiderations of the traditional teaching of the Church are urgently required. This is a time when Christianity most needs its faithful and committed gender and sexually variant members to stand as beacons of light against the secular scapegoating by society. It is also a time when gender and sexually variant people most need the full and unwavering support of the Christian Church.

It is important that any decision taken during the “*Take Note*” debate in the General Synod of the Church of England on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 is made in full knowledge of the information that was presented to the Bishops, and what is presented in this account.

## 12:0: Bibliography

Full references to sources are given in the more detailed papers referred to in the text. A full bibliography is available on: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/bibliography.htm>

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[trump-decision-to-keep-obama-executive-order/](#)). In a July 21, 2014, statement, Archbishop Lori and Archbishop and Bishop Richard J. Malone of Buffalo, New York, (who was Chaput’s predecessor as committee chair), had already labelled the executive order on LGBT workplace rights as “unprecedented and extreme and should be opposed.” In this 2014 statement, Archbishop Lori and Bishop Malone said the term “sexual orientation” was “undefined,” and that “gender identity” was “predicated on the false idea that ‘gender’ is nothing more than a social construct or psychological reality that can be chosen at variance from one’s biological sex.” Here again theology is being used to override what scientific analysis decides. The same negative reaction is found from the religious right: “*Trump’s move to protect LGBT workers unsettles religious conservatives*”: (<https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-usa/2017/02/02/trumps-move-protect-lgbt-workers-unsettles-religious-conservatives/>). By revoking the Federal guidance which requires schools to allow children to use the bathrooms and toilets which are in accordance with the gender they identify, with Trump has returned responsibility for making this decision to the individual states. There are fears that further religiously argued exemptions will increase hysteria and scapegoating of LGBTI people, and continue to erode LGBT rights. Comment and footnote added 10 March 2017.

Gilchrist, S. (2017). “*No, Pope Francis: Gender Identity is not a Choice*”.

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