

TRANSGENDER IDEOLOGY AND THE CHURCH

The Christians in Pharmacy met on 5th October 2019 in London to consider the controversial area of transgender ideology and how the church and Christian healthcare professionals can respond to it. In this we were helped by several presentations and the following is a summary of the discussions we had as a group.

INTRODUCTION

There is a huge cultural push in the West to embed the ideology that whether someone's gender is male or female (or other!) has nothing to do with biological sex (which is inborn and immutable) or human physical characteristics (including the presence of definitive male or female sexual reproductive organs). Accordingly, gender is purely in the mind or human spirit. The meeting, with full participation of the attendees, considered three main areas:

- The science and social context of transgenderism
- Implications and consequences for society and the church
- A Christian response to transgenderism

The following is a brief summary of the points made at the meeting:

I. THE SCIENCE AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF TRANSGENDERISM GENDER DYSPHORIA

- Gender dysphoria is a term described by the US Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), version 5¹. This emphasises the *distress* caused by the incongruence of one's gender identity with their biological sex. This is a shift from the previous diagnosis of 'Gender Identity Disorder' in version 4², which focussed on the *incongruence* itself. The change in diagnosis has also altered the way these features are approached and treated.
- The Government Equalities Office estimates that there are 200,000-500,000 people who identify as transgender in the UK, admitting however, 'No robust data on the UK trans population exists'³. For most stages in 'gender transition', individuals can make changes to their own documents⁴.
- Individuals who identify as transgender are at increased risk of a number of mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression⁵, and most concerning, 1 in 2 consider suicide, with nearly 1 in 3 attempting suicide.⁶ Additionally there are barriers to individuals who identify as transgender accessing healthcare, such as health system barriers and discrimination.⁷
- One term used by trans activists is an individual's 'sex assigned at birth'. However, sex is *identified* not assigned at birth. A baby's external genitalia displays if they have undergone male or female biological development, based on their genetics. And genetics

¹ DSM-5. American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013.

<https://dsm.psychiatryonline.org/doi/book/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>

² DSM-4. American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Publishing, 1994:576

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721642/GEO-LGBT-factsheet.pdf 2018

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Connolly MD, Zervos MJ, Barone CJ 2nd, Johnson CC, Joseph CL. The Mental Health of Transgender Youth: Advances in Understanding. J Adolesc Health. 2016 Nov;59(5):489-495. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.06.012.

⁶ Adams N, Hitomi M, Moody C. Varied Reports of Adult Transgender Suicidality: Synthesizing and Describing the Peer-Reviewed and Gray Literature. Transgend Health 2(1):60-75. doi: 10.1089/trgh.2016.0036.

⁷ Safer JD, Coleman E, Feldman J, et al. Barriers to healthcare for transgender individuals. Curr Opin Endocrinol Diabetes Obes. 2016;23:168-171.

are in every cell of the body.

MEDICATION AND SURGERY

- Medication, which is referred to as 'Gender affirming medication' by trans activists, is offered (hormone blockers, hormone treatment, or in children, puberty suppression); or surgical treatment, which is referred to as 'Gender confirmation surgery' and colloquially as 'top surgery' or 'bottom surgery'.
- We know that 85% of children who experience gender dysphoria find that their feelings remit after or around puberty.⁸ Many concerns have been raised about the use of puberty blockers in children, partly due to this, and partly due to concerns about the lack of a robust evidence base. "There are **significant problems with how the evidence for Gender-affirming cross-sex hormone has been collected and analysed that prevents definitive conclusions to be drawn**... The current evidence base does not support informed decision making and safe practice in children."⁹
- As Christians we should be careful in the choice of words we use. Fundamentally, no amount of medication or surgery can change the underlying biological sex coded in every cell in the body. This is binary – male or female – not on a continuum, as the transgender ideology is pushing towards. There are cases of abnormal development, known as disorders of sexual development (sometimes referred to as 'intersex'). However, these disorders are associated with other pathology, such as infertility, and other conditions, and are a deviation from normal sexual development.

UK LEGISLATION

We discussed some relevant UK legislation which pertain to the issue:

- UK Gender Recognition Act 2004
 - This gives a legal framework for individuals over 18 years old to apply for a 'gender recognition certificate'. The certificate would mean that the individual's 'acquired' gender would be legally recognised in the UK.
- Equality Act 2010
 - This Act made 'Gender reassignment' a protected characteristic
- Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013
 - This meant it became possible in mainland UK for a spouse to legally change their gender, without requiring a divorce

UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY OF THE TRANS MOVEMENT

- Immanuel Kant
Immanuel Kant was an 18th century philosopher who has hugely influenced modern philosophy and contributed towards the current postmodern view of sexuality. He placed huge value on autonomy and freedom, implying that the world should conform to the ultimate reality – one's mind. And therefore, any moral laws outside of this become oppressive. If everything is defined by nature, freedom is impossible. If we live in complete autonomous freedom, then what role does nature have?
 - Daniel Moody, in 'The Flesh made Word', made an incisive comment:
*"If the law declares that a man (physically) is in fact a woman because he feels a woman (mentally), then **reality has been changed** for all of us. The law now recognizes me as a man, not because of my physical sex, but because that's who I have declared myself to be. If taken to an extreme, if transgender is normal, then using the physical body to determine identity is taken*

⁸ Ristori J, Steensma TD. Gender dysphoria in childhood. *International Review of Psychiatry*. 2016;28;13-20.

⁹ <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmjebmspotlight/2019/02/25/gender-affirming-hormone-in-children-and-adolescents-evidence-review/>

away, and all we are left with to define humanity and navigate reality is **mind**, and **words with changed meanings.**"

As Christians, we believe that the structure of the human body has a purpose. Whereas, in culture, there is a reductionist view of the human body, where the physical body and the authentic self are believed to be separate. Accordingly, you can amend your physical body to express your true and authentic self. To accept this practice, we are accepting – whether or not intentionally – the underlying worldview, and integrating it into society.

II. IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH

DANGER OF INTOLERANCE AND TOTALITARIANISM

- When an ideology becomes dominant in society, social structures are constructed to embed it. These beliefs then become part of the fabric of daily life and defined as indisputable 'human rights.' Paradoxically, legislating for human rights can lead to totalitarianism. The meeting looked at examples from the U.K., the U.S. and Canada which highlight the increasing danger of state totalitarianism.
- Nancy Pearcey, hailed in *The Economist* as "America's preeminent evangelical Protestant female intellectual", was interviewed in the Van Maren show 20/03/2019: Episode 9: The Totalitarian Transgender Movement: *"Anyone who's read Solzhenitsyn and his Gulag Archipelago or any book like that knows that totalitarian systems often begin by compelling speech, by telling people what they may and may not say. And if you can tell or coerce people's speech, you can eventually control their thoughts."*

i. Limiting freedom of speech and religion

- **Compelling people to use or avoid certain terminology**

New York: you can be fined \$250,000 for using the wrong third-person personal pronoun. If a man asks us to refer to him as a 'she', or perhaps a 'they', or even something more exotic like 'ze', and if we decline and refer to him as a 'he', the result could be a catastrophic fine

20 March 2019 BBC News: A British Catholic mother of five is being investigated by police for "misgendering" the son of a transgender activist (who arranged for her 15-year-old son to be castrated in Thailand, because the procedure was illegal for a child of that age in the UK).

April 8, 2019 (Human Life International): a so-called "human rights tribunal" in British Columbia in Canada ruled that a Christian activist must pay \$55,000 to a provincial politician because he referred to a politician as a "biological male" in a political pamphlet. The politician in question, Morgane Oger (born Ronan Oger), is a biological male. However, he has since "transitioned," and is living his life as a "transgender woman." According to the decision, Bill Whatcott, a Christian, must compensate Oger for injuring the latter's "dignity, feelings and self-respect."

- **Intolerance and censorship in universities**

So-called 'safe spaces' where debate is shut down, and that includes Peter Thatchell (homosexual activist), and Germaine Greer (prominent feminist) being shut out because of their opposition to aspects of trans ideology

The Times, 18/08/2019: More than a dozen academics, including several leading feminist professors, fear their freedom of speech is being silenced by students complaining they are transphobic. They include Selina Todd, a professor of modern history at Oxford, and Kate Newey, professor of theatre history at Exeter. Rosa Freedman, professor of law conflict and global development, is believed to be under scrutiny at Reading University, and Kathleen Stock, professor of philosophy, has faced several formal complaints organised by students

at Sussex. Some of the women, along with other academics, say questioning of transgender policies is being censored on campus.

ii. Control of education

• State control of education

New sex and gender theories are being taught as facts in primary and secondary schools, 'transitioning' is being encouraged, and information about the mental health consequences are being suppressed. This includes Church of England schools, with full support of the Archbishop of Canterbury!

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) will be compulsory in schools from September 2020. Primary school children will be taught to respect different types of families, relationships and sexual identities, including same-sex relationships and trans-gender as normal. Parental rights are to be limited to certain age groups.

The Times reported in Sept. 2019 that BBC Teach has put together a series of nine films *BBC Teach* for use alongside the personal, social, and health education (PSHE) curriculum in schools. The series teaches children (9-12) that there are over 100 genders (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bbc-films-teach-children-of-100-genders-or-more-7xfhbg97p>).

• Academic research and freedom under threat

In 2017, important research by James Caspian (a psychotherapist) into "detransitioning" (where men or women who have tried to become the opposite sex come to reverse their decision) is being prevented by Bath Spa University because it was 'politically incorrect' and 'might cause offence'.

On 10 February 2019, the Sunday Times reported that James Caspian has been approached by 50 people who want to reverse their transition. He says rising numbers presenting with gender dysphoria have been too readily labelled as trans.

Yet, one of the leading academics in the field of gender identity – a pioneer in the theory that sex is wholly a social construct, and that 'identity' is all about power, has recently confessed that **he made it all up!** Writing in *Quillette* magazine, Professor Christopher Dummit, associate professor at Trent University, Canada, confessed that the gender identity theories on which he has built his career were based not on research, but on ideological belief put forward as fact. He now bravely says that he was wrong (<https://quillette.com/2019/09/17/i-basically-just-made-it-up-confessions-of-a-social-constructionist/>).

• Changing medical practice

In the US, children's hospitals are now routinely rated in terms of quality of care as to the extent of their affirmation of the trans agenda. Counselling or therapy which is not LGBT affirming is seen as trying to change 'who you really are'; this must be harmful, according to this dogma, for which there is no scientific basis.

• Targeting of Christian businesses

Colorado Civil Rights Commission took legal action against a Christian baker, Jack Phillips, who refused on religious grounds to make a cake celebrating a lawyer's gender transition. Although the legal action was later dropped by the Commission, this followed soon after their action against him after he refused to decorate a cake with a pro-gay marriage slogan (the U.S Supreme Court dismissed that case on the ground that the Commission has displayed anti-religious bias). The deliberate targeting of Christian businesses is frightening and is meant to intimidate other businesses.

DANGER TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Concerns for medical reasons

- Dangers of permanent damage being done to children and teenagers who think that the drastic surgery of sex change can alleviate their mental distress, only to find that it becomes much worse.
- Since 2009, the number of children and teens referred to the UK's 'Gender Identity Clinic' (Gender Identity Development Service, GIDS) has risen from 97 to 2,519 in 2017/2018 - a staggering 2,500% increase.
- Teenage girls, in particular, are at risk of being referred to the GIDS. The NHS reported that in the year 2017/2018, more than twice (1,806) were for biological females (or, in NHS-speak "young people assigned female at birth (AFAB)"). Biological males numbered 713. "This continues the trend of an increase in 'AFAB' referral proportionately," the NHS remarked.
- Children as young as four are being encouraged to present themselves as the opposite sex and are becoming confused as never before.
- American College of Pediatricians: "Conditioning children into believing a lifetime of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex is normal and healthful is child abuse"

Safety of women

- Trans 'women' working in a shelter for women who have suffered from domestic violence or rape. E.g., in early 2019, the Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter lost over \$30,000 in city funding. The city's decision to pull the funding came after a fierce campaign against the shelter spearheaded by Morgane Oger (see earlier) and other transgender ideology activists, who are furious that the centre refuses to offer its services to "transgender women," (i.e. biological men who now claim to be women.) **NB.** This would mean "transgender women" can sleep and shower among abused women.
- Women's prisons: Concerns that biological males (who self-identify as females) are housed in women's prisons
- Concerns about women-only swimming sessions, changing rooms and toilet use by trans 'women'

IMPACT ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Concern of feminists and women's groups

- Legislators here and elsewhere are moving to change the law to allow people to self-identify when it comes to gender without the need for surgical transition or medical intervention. Biological males claim to be women when they have not shared women's personal and social experience, including their physiological physical and hormonal changes.
- Feminists deplore the growing trend to remove all mention of the biological female sex and they feel that their identity is being challenged. Germaine Greer, feminist writer and academic, said biological women were "losing out everywhere." She added, *"I'm sick and tired of this. We keep arguing that women have won everything they need to win. They haven't even won the right to exist."*
- Women's rights become meaningless given the concept of 'womanhood' is so flexible and indeterminate in some trans and queer ideologies.
- How do women's rights square with allowing someone born a male but who self-identifies as a woman onto an all-woman shortlist?
- In a letter to the Sunday Times on 22nd September, twenty two disgruntled signatories-including Simon Fanshawe, co-founder of the LGBT campaigning group Stonewall in 1989 – said that transgender policies are not just undermining women's rights, but are putting both women and children at serious risk. Specifically, they went on to express concern that primary school children were being challenged too quickly to 'review' their gender identity.

Sports

- Sportswomen concerned that men self-identifying as women are giving men an unfair advantage against biological women, e.g. Martina Navratilova, a top lesbian tennis player has spoken of her concerns

DESTRUCTION OF THE FAMILY UNIT

• Loss of parental rights

Parents who fear custody of their children may be taken away when they refuse to consent to their children receiving cross-sex hormones for gender identity transition (as happened in Ohio in 2018).

17 March 2019, Mail Online:

Case of British parents who objected when their autistic teenage son was prescribed hormone therapy. After their son told his school that his parents wouldn't allow him to undergo the so-called treatment, the school reported the parents to child services for being "emotionally abusive." The parents were then warned that if they didn't support their child, he could be taken away from them and put into foster care. According to *The Daily Mail*, last year at least three children were taken away from their parents and put into foster care, because their parents objected to their gender transition.

In January 2019, the Telegraph discovered via 'Freedom of Information' that some NHS trusts in England are allowing children who want to change gender to have what they want **regardless of whether their parents agree**. Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust said in its policy document that 'the child's preference should prevail'. This is even if they do not have so-called 'Gillick competence' to give consent.

Loss of traditional concepts of marriage and family

There are good concrete Biblical reasons for the traditional family (in fact we should not use the word 'traditional' as it suggests that it is simply a variant of different types of families). By destroying the family unit, the transgender ideology will further destroy the cohesiveness of society and lead to myriads of social ills.

III. A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO TRANSGENDERISM

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27)

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ" (Ephesians 4:15)

We discussed these two fundamental pieces of Scripture and their relevance to these issues. As Christians we are shown the image of male and female, created by God. We are also taught the value of speaking the truth in love. We discussed the importance of balancing grace and truth, which is challenging, but important!

As Christians, we can offer a better way:

- Affirm the value of the body
- Affirm the unity of the human being
- Affirm diversity in the roles within the church
- Support and nurture those who feel they don't fit in
- Be careful of stereotypes
- Think creatively about male/female
- Freedom to explore what it means to be created in the image of God

We should offer open and loving communities, exposure to a deeper level of healing, an understanding of brokenness, and protection against discrimination. There is hope for our

bodies; no matter how they may feel broken or damaged, there is redemption.

We can help individuals find that their identity is not in their gender, their profession, their upbringing, or anything else – it is in being a child of God.

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

We should be careful in the terminology we use as Christians. However, we also discussed the case of Dr Mackereth, who was sacked for refusing to use the preferred pronouns from an individual who identified as transgender.¹⁰ The Judge ruled that a “...belief in Genesis 1:27, lack of belief in transgenderism and conscientious objection to transgenderism in our judgment are incompatible with human dignity and conflict with the fundamental rights of others...”¹¹

CONCLUSION

- Transgender issues are complex and Christians need to be well briefed and be aware of what is happening in society. As Ayn Ryd put it: *‘We can ignore reality but we cannot ignore the consequences of ignoring reality’*.
- Whilst Christians need to act compassionately towards those who suffer from the debilitating mental morbidity of gender dysphoria, they are also concerned at the consequences which result from transgender ideology (e.g. children suffering permanent morbidity from the use of invasive and non-reversible medication and procedures, concerns of women’s groups about the safety of women and the challenge to female identity, and the erosion of religious and civil freedom).
- We need to get involved with organisations which are giving a compassionate, but robust, response to transgender ideology (e.g. CARE, Christian Concern, Christian Institute, Barnabas Fund, etc.).
- Finally, we were all reminded at the meeting that God is our sovereign God who is still in control of His world. We were, therefore, encouraged to engage in serious prayer.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Ryan T Anderson (2018). *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment*. Encounter Books, US

Evangelical Alliance (2018). *Transformed – a brief biblical and pastoral introduction to understanding transgender in a changing culture*. Evangelical Alliance, UK.

Nancy R Pearcey (2018). *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality*. Baker Books, US

Vaughan E Roberts (2016). *Transgender*. The Good Book Company, U.K.

Mark A Yarhouse (2015). *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*. Inter-Varsity Press, US

http://admin.cmf.org.uk/pdf/cmffiles/59_gender_dysphoria.pdf

¹⁰ <https://christianconcern.com/news/court-suggests-trans-rights-crush-christian-freedom/>
https://christianconcern.com/news/doctors-biblical-belief-ruled-incompatible-with-human-dignity/?fbclid=IwAR3vmchCXVZKC1UFRBhHVt-u6PZlaAh-_M_cg6TdoiWNFJ3eBjfZ2WJlxCw

¹¹ Ibid.

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

NB. Set up by a group of concerned parents with no religious or political affiliation)