

THINKING FAITH - GENDER IDENTITY

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OUTLINE –

Identity As Men And Women
Identity As Husband And Wife
Identity As Church Members

SELECTED SCRIPTURES –

Genesis 2, Colossians 3.

GLORIFIED SEX (GLORIFICATION)

The final act of God in salvation when Christ returns and those believers who have died are now re-embodied and transformed and those believers who are alive will be instantaneously transformed, a time when there will be no more marriage (Matt. 22:30; Mk. 12:25; Lk. 20:34-35). However, our resurrection bodies will be sexed bodies, i.e., male and female, and Jesus will always be a crucified, circumcised male Jew forever. The gospel is full of grace and truth. It is an offer of grace and forgiveness to sinners as well as a call to live a holy life. It empowers us in the struggle to resist sin, including the sin of homosexual practice (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 4:20-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Titus 2:11-13). The church is to be a new community that resembles a family of brothers and sisters united in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit displaying deep relationships of love (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Rom. 12:10; 1 Timothy 5:1-2). Celibacy and singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed within the church family. Marriage is the original and foundational institution of human society, established by God as a one-flesh, covenantal union between a man and a woman that is life-long (until separated by death), exclusive (monogamous and faithful), and generative in nature (designed for bearing and rearing children), and it is to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church.

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

Creation: Genesis 1:26-28 **Fall:** Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3

Redemption: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (Revelation 22:12-16) **Glorification:** Philippians 3:20-21

HOMOSEXUALITY (BIBLICAL TEXTS)

Genesis 19 (Sodom) Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 (Moral and Sexual Boundaries and Purity)

1 and 2 Samuel (1 Sam. 18:1, 4; 20:41; 2 Sam. 1:26) (David and Jonathan)

Exodus 21:16 (Slavery) Mark 10:6-9 (Jesus' Teaching on Marriage)

Romans 1:26-27 (Paul) 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (Paul) 1 Timothy 1:9-10 (Paul)

GENDER DYSPHORIA (BIBLICAL TEXTS)

Genesis 1:27 (Created Male and Female)

Deuteronomy 23:1; 22:5 (Crushed Testicles or Male Organ Cut Off will not enter the assembly of the Lord;

Crossdressing God detests) Matthew 19:12 (Eunuchs) Acts 8:26-40 (Eunuch)

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (Unrighteous will not Inherit the Kingdom of God)

TERMINOLOGY

The transgender trend is grounded in the “gender ideology” theory, which claims that human identity is unrelated to the body. Gender ideology rejects the natural reality of the human person and instead invents new language as a foundation for its false assertions. Becoming familiar with this fabricated vocabulary allows us to respond to the transgender trend with accuracy, confidence, and truth. Gender is the idea that our identity is determined by feelings without any reference to the body. When the idea of gender is

accepted and the mind is considered superior to the body, there is no limit to who - or what - one might imagine themselves to be. Sexual identity, or one's sex as male or female, is an unchangeable biological reality; gender says that one can choose, change, or abandon sexual identity altogether. Gender is frequently and incorrectly used as a synonym for sex.

- **Gender Dysphoria**

Gender dysphoria is the condition of feeling a strong desire to identify as something other than one's sex, accompanied by significant distress. Those who struggle with gender dysphoria should be aided by therapies that guide an individual to a healthy acceptance of their sex. A diagnosis of gender dysphoria does not justify the use of irreversible hormonal and surgical interventions which give false hope, promote a negative view of the body, and ignore mental health needs.

- **Gender Fluidity**

This describes the nature of gender identity as a chosen state of mind that can fluctuate on a spectrum in the same way feelings can. Gender Identity is a self-chosen state of mind that is unrelated to the body. Because the body is considered irrelevant, there are an infinite number of possible gender identities. It is important to note that people who identify as "feeling like the opposite sex" or "somewhere in between" do not comprise a third sex. They remain biologically men or biologically women. Intersex Conditions, also known as Disorders of Sexual Development (DSDs) are exceedingly rare and are medically identifiable anomalies of the sexual binary norm. People who have DSDs are either male or female, but because of ambiguous sexual anatomy usually caused by genetic abnormalities, medical science does not always determine their sex correctly at birth. Individuals with DSDs (also referred to as "intersex") do not constitute a third sex.

- **Sex or Biological Sex.**

This is the unchangeable biological reality of being male or female. Sex is not "assigned" at birth, it is determined at conception and then recognized via external genitalia at birth. Sex can also be determined by a person's XY (male) or XX (female) chromosomes, internal reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics. Human sex is an objective, binary trait and does not exist on a spectrum.

- **Transgender**

Transgender is a term that refers to people who identify as another gender, with gender meaning a state of mind. People who identify as transgender are born with normal male or female anatomies and chromosomes, and may or may not make use of hormones, elect to have sex reassignment surgery, change their legal identity documents, or alter their appearance to reflect their chosen "gender identity." This status has no basis in observable medical or scientific fact, but is grounded entirely on self-declaration and feelings. It is important to remember that although medical technology has developed the means to hormonally and surgically alter the human body to mimic the opposite sex, it cannot actually change a person's sex. Transgender identification is a state of mind and does not represent a new sex category or a human trait. Note, we use the term "transgender-identified" to refer to people who feel that they are the opposite sex or another gender identity. Transition describes the process by which a person makes an effort to be recognized as the opposite sex or another gender identity via social, legal, and/or medical means. Because gender identity is in no way related to the body, there are an infinite number of terms used to denote these identities.

Agender, gender fluid, androgyne, bigender, genderqueer, non-binary, gender bender, pangender, queer, transmasculine, transfeminine, and trigender are just a few examples of the confusing, invented language now used to describe one's identity apart from biological sex.

THINKING IT THROUGH

The British Medical Association has said pregnant women should not be called 'expectant mothers' as it could offend transgender people. Instead, they should call them "pregnant people" so as not to upset intersex and transgender men. Transgenderism is not about who uses which toilet. That question is the trivial point of a very long and sharp spear, useful for belittling the concerns of those who believe that there is a profound connection between biology and gender. Transgenderism is set to change everything—our understanding of sex, of identity, of relationships, of the significance of the body. And it does this because it demands a revised metaphysics of personhood, a project with profound and comprehensive social and political implications. School toilet policy is a good example: It has already prioritized government rights over those of parents. There's the rub.

The main shift seems to be that sexuality, same-sex marriage, and gender are now "apologetics" issues. That wasn't the case 20 years ago. They didn't come up in talking to non-Christians, but today they almost always do.

PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS

Note - The letters LGBTQIA refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual or allied.

We Christians who attempt to follow biblical mandates on sex and marriage are not immune to expressing our own sexuality in sinful ways, for "all have sinned and fall short of God's glory" (Rom. 3:23). We must always be mindful of this and humbly relate to others accepting that we all are fallen creatures. At the same time, all human beings deserve to be treated with dignity and respect because each of us bears the image of God. An LGBTQIA person deserves this dignity and respect no less than any other, and we, as Christians, should demonstrate this in our thoughts, speech, and behaviour. Speech, including humour, which demeans LGBTQIA people, has no place in the Christian community. Likewise, this means we oppose any mistreatment of those who identify as LGBTQIA.

We mourn with those who struggle with same sex attractions, and with their families, but as we grieve, we encourage behaviour that follows the clear teachings of Scripture. We must carefully distinguish between same-sex attraction, sinful lust, self-selected identification, and sexual behaviour. It is not a sin to be tempted in the area of same gender sex. Jesus himself was tempted, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). He sympathizes with our weaknesses, and He promises to provide a way of escape in every temptation (1 Cor. 10:13).

In some cases it may not be wrong for a person to self-identify as LGBTQIA. This may be a way for the person to identify the stable trajectory of the person's sexual attractions or acknowledge the struggles she or he faces with same-sex attraction. However, such self-identification may in fact be sinful if it includes an insistence upon behaviours that express that attraction. Moreover, a believer's fundamental identification should be first as a person "in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:4-10; cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11); the prioritization of sexual identity must be seen as a form of idolatry. Some heterosexual acts are sinful, but all homosexual acts are sinful according to Scripture. One may not equate morally a committed heterosexual relationship within marriage with a committed homosexual relationship. Though recognizing that due to sin and human brokenness our experience of our sex and gender is not always as God the Creator originally designed, our recognition of our sex as male or female as a gift from God dictates that we cannot support or affirm the resolution of tension between a person's biological sex and experience of gender by the adoption of a psychological identity discordant with that person's birth sex, nor support or affirm attempts to change via medical intervention one's given biological birth sex in favour of the identity of the opposite sex or of an indeterminate identity.

We recognize that in rare cases some are born with both sets of sexual organs (intersex or hermaphrodites). This is another one of the implications of living in a fallen world, and another reminder that our sexuality has been deeply damaged by the fall. This primarily addresses those who self-select sex and/or gender. We in the Church must seek ways to minister to and support those among us who struggle with same-sex attractions, and those who have family members or others close to them who identify as LGBTQIA. We in the Church must seek ways to reach out in love to those in our society who identify as LGBTQIA.

We regard marriage as a good creation of God, and marriage within the Church as a rite and institution tied directly to our foundational belief of God as creator who made us male and female. We also regard marriage as a sacred institution which images the mysterious and wonderful bond between Christ and His Church. To us, then, marriage is much more than merely a contract between two persons (a secular notion). It is a covenant grounded in promises between a man and a woman which finds its divinely intended expression in the “one flesh” union of husband and wife, and between the “one flesh” union of husband and wife and God (the divine design). We therefore will only authorize and recognize heterosexual marriages. Recognizing the church as a family, we will seek ways to encourage deep spiritual friendships, with a special effort to include those who are single. We will model the counter-cultural reality that intimate, loving relationships need not be erotic.

**EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE – ‘TRANSFORMED’.
AN INTRODUCTION ON TRANSGENDER**

The Evangelical Alliance has produced Transformed as a brief biblical and pastoral introduction to understanding transgender in a changing culture. Available online at www.eauk.org/trans

**NASHVILLE STATEMENT
A Coalition For Biblical Sexuality**

“Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves...”
Psalm 100:3

Preamble

Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being. By and large the spirit of our age no longer discerns or delights in the beauty of God’s design for human life. Many deny that God created human beings for his glory, and that his good purposes for us include our personal and physical design as male and female. It is common to think that human identity as male and female is not part of God’s beautiful plan, but is, rather, an expression of an individual’s autonomous preferences. The pathway to full and lasting joy through God’s good design for his creatures is thus replaced by the path of shortsighted alternatives that, sooner or later, ruin human life and dishonour God.

This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity, and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus, and unashamedly proclaim his way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin? We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes glad-hearted thanksgiving, heart-felt praise, and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing ourselves.

To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for he made us for himself. And we cannot know ourselves

truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own.

Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be. We believe that God's design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God's good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ's church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

Article 1

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

Article 2

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

Article 3

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

Article 4

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

Article 5

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

Article 6

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb." With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.

WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

Article 7

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God's holy purposes in creation

and redemption as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption.

Article 8

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in purity of life.

WE DENY that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

Article 9

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality— a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality.

WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior.

Article 10

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness.

WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

Article 11

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak the truth in love at all times, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonor God's design of his image- bearers as male and female.

Article 12

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

Article 13

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self- conceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God's revealed will.

Article 14

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Saviour, Lord, and supreme treasure.

WE DENY that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach.