



SIBYLS NEWS

Issue no. 81 Sept 10th 2017



Along the road to Lake Averno in Naples, an easily missed sign, "Grotta della Sibilla", leads to a dirt path overarched with trees. The path curves and ends at a cave. Here Aeneas, with the Sibyl at his side, embarked on a journey into Hades.

Dear Sibyls

I take my leave of you as editor, and wish the next editor a fair road and a following wind. Thank you for all the thoughts and observations which have filled the pages in the last three years. Thanks especially to the committee, who have worked so hard over these years to fulfil the pastoral and lobbying roles of Sibyls, and have faithfully kept the editor informed of what needed to be included. I shall miss the almost daily routine of newsgathering and selection, but time waits for no man nor woman, and the demands on my diminishing time are so insistent that I have had to see sense. I hope to see you at events in the future, maintaining old friendships and developing new. All my very best wishes to all readers. Carol

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THE SIBYLS

Christian Spirituality Group for Gender Variant People

c/o 10, Ffordd Las, Rhyl, LL18 2DY

www.sibyls.co.uk E-mail: enquiries@sibyls.co.uk

The Sibyls is a UK-based confidential Christian spirituality group for transgender people, their partners and their supporters. It offers companionship along the journey, and information/advocacy to churches.

Sibyls seek to fulfil the two great commandments of Jesus: To love God and love one another. To achieve this we provide opportunities to meet in safe and friendly establishments. We promote the freedom to talk, to learn, to pray and to seek God's will.

If you are having difficulties reconciling your faith with being transgendered or are concerned about acceptance in your church then maybe Sibyls is what you have been looking for. It could be that you just need to talk with fellow Christians who understand what it is to be transgendered, or simply wish to be yourself as you worship in fellowship and in a safe environment.

If you are looking for an accepting church, it maybe useful to visit our website, where there is a resource for this. Go to the Resources page on <http://www.gndr.org.uk/sibyls5/indexmain.htm> Click on the "Pastoral" and then on the "Churches" tab. This is being updated, but has useful links. Especially supportive are the MCC Churches.

We like to know of churches which welcome transgender people. Also if you would like more information to give to your church please do contact us.

We welcome new members, young and old. There is no membership fee or annual subscription, and no commitment, except confidentiality. Your details are held in total confidence and will not be given to any other members without your permission.

Sibyls Website - www.sibyls.co.uk

- Dates and information on future events are posted on the website
- A full range of resources is also available. Click on the "Resources" tab on the right of the top banner on the website to access these.

There is also a member's section for which a Username and password is required.

The current username for the member's section is **SibylsWeb** (all one word). The password is **4All-Members** (All one word: use uppercase and lowercase as indicated)

Forthcoming Sibyls events:

12 Oct, 14 Dec 2017 - St. Anne's, Soho (page 3)

22 - 24 September 2017 - Weekend at Hilfield Priory (please see pages 6,7 and 8)

18 November 2017 - Sibyls Reflective Day at The Sisters Of St Andrew, Lewisham (pp. 9, 10)

Jan/Feb 2018 - Sibyls Christmas/Winter Dinner (please see page 3)

OUR BOOKING FOR 2018 AT THE WINDERMERE CENTRE FELL THROUGH, WITH THE CLOSURE OF THE CENTRE.

A POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT would be 15-17 June 2018, Holy Rood House Thirsk
This is very much under discussion at present. All input welcome.

SIBYLS LONDON EVENING MEETINGS

NEXT MEETING: **12th October 2017**
6:00 p.m. at St Anne's Church, Dean Street, Soho.

We meet on the Second Thursday of every second month for a Service at St Anne's Church, followed by a meal together

THE SERVICE IS OPEN TO ALL TRANS PEOPLE, TO THEIR FRIENDS, SPOUSES AND SUPPORTERS
Come in whatever role is convenient at the time

During the intercessions we normally pray for those we know and also on behalf of others who would like our prayers. If you would like your name, or the name of someone you know to be included on the prayer list, please email me. You can email me privately at sgen4144@gmail.com. (

These meetings are very good; gentle lovely evenings with a service which is always thoughtful, peaceful and healing, followed by a good meal in congenial surroundings

St Anne's, 55 Dean Street, Soho W1D 6AF, is 50 yards up on the left from Shaftesbury Avenue (it doesn't look like a church but it is), and from about 6.30 a gathering at a Soho restaurant. You can just turn up on the evening, but it would also be helpful to get some idea of numbers in advance. If you do know you are coming, please email me at sgen4144@gmail.com. We normally decide on the restaurant at the end of the service. If you are late please ring 07546 213 971.

The remaining dates for 2017 are 12 October, 14 December 2017
Remember it's 6:00 p.m. Susan

SIBYLS CHRISTMAS/WINTER DINNER

**THE SIBYLS ARE INTENDING TO ORGANISE AN EVENING DINNER IN
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018**

Various venues are being considered but the St Katherine's Foundation in East London is a likely venue. The Sibyls have had a long connection with St Katherine's, and the foundation was instrumental in creating Sibyls in the early days

ALL CURRENT SIBYLS and FORMER SIBYLS MEMBERS, with their spouses and friends, are invited.

The cost is likely to be £40 per person and the programme is expected to involve:

Afternoon tea/coffee

Service of Holy Communion in the Chapel

Evening Dinner

Those who wish to will be able to stay at St Katherine's overnight.

The event will be held either a Saturday or Sunday. Overnight accommodation at St Katherine's is cheaper on a Sunday evening.

If you would like the event to be held in another location, please let us know

In recent months transgender people have increasingly become the focus for scapegoating and abusive attacks by sections of conservative Christianity and other elements of society. The recent movement towards such condemnation is seen most vividly in the United States, where Present Trump acting under the direction of the conservative Christian right is moving towards a position where transgender people cannot legally exist... whatever the reality of the situation may be. The UK is not immune. **The opposition to the motion on welcoming transgender people into the Church, which was passed by the General Synod of the Church of England in July this year, shows how science can be distorted and abused in order to make religious points. It is a matter of considerable urgency that such abuse of science, history and theology must be ended before more harm is done.**

The LGBTI Anglican Coalition, which was active until 2015 had seven partner organisations. These were: Accepting Evangelicals; *Changing Attitude*; The Evangelical Fellowship for Lesbian and Gay Christians (EFLGC); *Inclusive Church*; the *Sibyls*; the United Kingdom Intersex Association (UKIA); and the General Synod Human Sexuality Group. *Changing Attitude* has since merged with LGCM to form the "One Body one Faith Organisation". The LGBTI Anglican Coalition has been dormant since 2015 and the LGBTI Mission which was originally set up to be a sub group under the authority of the Coalition has adopted an independent role. Since that time increasing fragmentation has taken place.

Despite repeated efforts by the Sibyls there is no adequate representation of transgender issues in the LGBTI Mission. This is even though individual members of the Mission Steering Committee have worked very hard in their support on transgender matters and the efforts of these members are fully appreciated. The Mission Chairperson has also agreed that greater transgender input is needed, however despite being a full partner member of the LGBTI Anglican Coalition, repeated inputs from Sibyls to the Mission in relation to the need for transgender expertise and support, have not been acted on or ignored. This disregard is not confined to inputs from the Sibyls.

The changing social attitudes to transgender and intersex people make this a matter of concern. Regrettably at the next Sibyls Committee meeting a motion will be discussed whereby the Sibyls formally withdraw its support for the LGBTI Mission. This is despite having had considerable input into the LGBTI Mission Statement which the Coalition was responsible for creating. This lack of regard for transgender and intersex matters means that the inclusiveness and the role of all LGBTI groups working together for common purpose has been lost.

Other changes also affect the situation. While *Changing Attitude* gave strong representation to transgender Issues and had appointed trustees to represent transgender issues LGCM has no previous history of dealing with either transgender or intersex issues in the same way. It is intending to do so. However it is early days and at present there is no section of the One Body One Faith website which deals with intersex or transgender issues. As a member of "One Body one Faith" I am strongly encouraging them to address these issues, and I strongly advise others to do the same.

This is not a satisfactory situation. At a time when it is becoming increasingly essential to have a prominent web presence on the internet and on social media, the only group remaining at this time which can effectively create that Christian presence on both transgender and intersex matters is the Sibyls. However the Sibyls is not a campaigning group; although the need for some campaigning work is recognised in its objectives. The Sibyls is a confidential Christian Support Group for transgender people. It includes intersex members. To go further down this route would severely damage the core objectives of the Sibyls. Therefore I personally advocate two strategies

1) To encourage Sibyls members to join the **"One Body one Faith" Group** and to use their influence to ensure that transgender (and intersex) concerns are fully represented. This group also runs a freely accessible Facebook Group the "One Body One Faith Forum". This Facebook group is open to all who support the acceptance of LGBTI people in Church and Society, not just OBOF members, and to use it so that transgender matters are heard

2) To join **"TranschristianUK"**.** This is an equivalent Facebook group which can focus more closely on transgender matters. Although its creation is an initiative of the Sibyls, it is not part of the Sibyls organisation. It is an independently moderated Facebook group which is open to all who support the full acceptance of transgender people

If you search Facebook you should find both groups

Neither of these approaches is exclusive. It is hoped that people will join both groups and share posts between them. In the longer term it may be possible to develop this transgender forum into a complementary social media and internet based group which supports transgender and intersex people in their relationships between their personal and spiritual lives and the Christian Church

These are personal thoughts. Although each of the LGBTI conditions have different characteristics, we are all fellow travellers in our relationships with society. I hope that the co-operation which was present in the LGBTI Anglican Coalition can be restored

**** Please see next page**

Joining the Sibyls Member's Confidential Facebook Group:

- If you are a Facebook friend of someone who is already a member of this confidential group, ask that person to recommend you via its Facebook link
- Alternatively: Make “**Dottie Cavia**” a Facebook Friend.
- Post and share on her timeline that you wish to join.
- Please remember that you have to agree to the terms and conditions. For these conditions, download the link: <http://sibyls.gndr.org.uk/members/SibylsMembersFacebookGroupConditions.docx>
- We need to check requests to ensure that they come from current Sibyls members.
- If you are requested to do so, complete the form on the link and email it to enquiries@sibyls.co.uk
- When accepted you will be joined.



TranschristianUK

An Independent Open Forum Facebook Group to Discuss Transgender Matters in the Context of Religious Faith
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1239546282786208/>

Sponsored by the Sibyls: www.sibyls.co.uk

This group “*TranschristianUK*” has been created for all people who wish to affirm the place of gender variant people within the fellowship of the Christian Tradition. It is open to everyone who supports the aims of the group, irrespective of their religious faiths, who are on the same spiritual journey.

This is an unofficial group which is separate from the Sibyls. Any views expressed by group members do not necessarily represent the views of the Sibyls, the moderators and administrators, or any of its members.

To join, click the “Join Group” button on the Group Page. If accepted you will be made a member.

Confidentiality is still extremely important for some people. DO NOT POST PHOTOGRAPHS OR TEXTS which would breach the confidentiality that other people require. The administrators may take down any posts without stating reasons where they deem this could happen. However no liability is accepted for any breaches of confidentiality that do occur.

The administrators reserve the right to remove any content that is inappropriate or offensive or which does not contain a corresponding content warning. If you believe that something is offensive or inappropriate, please report it to an administrator by clicking on the top right hand drop-down menu on the post itself. You can also send a private message to an administrator.

The nature of conversation online means that often we may sometimes forget to respect one another in the heat of a disagreement. Please take care in whatever you post.

The administrators retain the right to remove anyone from the group without stating any reason at any time.



The first openly transgender armed forces officer Caroline Paige is among the women celebrated in a stunning photograph marking 100 years of women in the military. 3.7.17 SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, assembled a number of women currently serving and veterans from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Airforce for the centenary of women being legally permitted to serve in the British military. Among the women is Flight Lieutenant Caroline Paige, (4th from left) the first transgender officer to serve openly in the UK Armed Forces as their chosen gender identity.

SIBYLS HILFIELD WEEKEND

FRIDAY 22nd to SUNDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2017.

Weekend at the Hilfield Franciscan Friary 22-24 September 2017.

The anticipated theme is "One Church, One Faith, One Lord".

The validity of Same-Sex, or Equal Marriage is a topic which is causing major dissention in the Christian Church. For transgender people there are potentially life changing issues and trauma to be overcome, for both partners, when one person in a marriage transitions. In the present climate the focus is almost entirely on lesbian, gay and bisexual concerns. The challenges which transgender people face are largely ignored. We will be addressing these issues from a transgender point of view during the weekend.

As a Christian minister Deirdre will be describing her personal journey of understanding of marriage, which has moved from the traditional point of view that it can only "be between one man and one woman for life" to the more open acceptance in the present day. Susan Gilchrist will give an account of the history of differing attitudes to marriage, extending from Old Testament times to today. Ways forward will be discussed. A further session "Transgender perspectives on Marriage" will be held to chart the way forward in particular from the transgender perspective, and ways of making transgender people more

DRAFT PROGRAMME

This weekend is partly self-catering. You will be asked to bring something for the Bring- and-Share buffet on the Friday evening and pudding/cheese/biscuits etc. for the Saturday evening meal. Basics for breakfast will be provided but if you want a particular cereal bring your own! So that everyone does not bring the same thing, specific requests will be given to you at a later date.

Friday

17.15 Evening Prayer, (followed by prayer time) with Franciscans
18.00: *Bring and Share Supper* and Introduction
19.30: **Deirdre – a personal journey + Susan Gilchrist – historical background**
21.00: (Night Prayer with Franciscans)
Chores for Everyone, washing up etc. - if not already completed!

Saturday

07.00 (Silent Prayer in Chapel with Franciscans)
07.30 (Morning Prayer with Franciscans)
08.15 *Breakfast: Self Catering*
10:00 **Tina Beardsley and others: Transgender perspectives on marriage**
11.00 *Coffee*
11:15 **Plenary Discussion: Making a more welcoming Church**
12.00 Midday Prayer and Eucharist with Franciscans
13:00 *Lunch with Franciscans*
14.00 **Free time**
16.30 *Afternoon tea*
17.15 Evening Prayer, (followed by prayer time) with Franciscans
18.30 *Dinner: Self Catering*
19:30 **Social time/Entertainment**
20:45 (Night Prayer with Franciscans)
22:00 **Chores for Everyone, washing up etc. - if not already completed!**
22:30 Sibyls Compline
Late Silence Together (very optional)

Sunday

07.30 (Morning Prayer followed by silent prayer with Franciscans)
08.30 (Sung Eucharist with Franciscans)
08.30 *Breakfast*
09.30 **Sibyls Together**
10.45 *Coffee*
11:00 **Communion Service with the Bishop of Salisbury in the chapel**
12:00 **Group photo and Coffee**
12:15 **Informal discussion**
12:30 (Midday prayer with the Franciscans- for those who would like to go)
13:00 *Lunch with Franciscans*
14:00 **Meeting with Bishop of Salisbury: "Where now in the church?"**
16.00 Disperse

BOOKING FORM

I/ we wish to attend the Sibyls Hilfield weekend from Friday September 22th to Sunday 24 September 2017.

I enclose a cheque for £ _____ *

***IMPORTANT –please see lower half of page re. payment**

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel: _____

Email: _____

I/ we will be staying for the Whole Weekend / Friday / Saturday/ Sunday / (Delete as applicable)

Are you a member of the Sibyls: Yes/ No

Any special dietary or access requirements/: _____

Most rooms are single but it may be necessary to share a room.

Are you willing to share? Yes / No

If yes: Anyone or Name: _____

Please post this booking form to Pauline Fleck, 1 Newlathes Gardens, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4JU

or email it to pauline.fleck@btinternet.com

(THIS WEEKEND IS INTENDED FOR SIBYLS MEMBERS ONLY. PLEASE APPLY TO JOIN THE SIBYLS IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND.)

If you wish to join the Sibyls, please email enquiries@sibyls.co.uk or write to: The Sibyls, 10, Ffordd Las, Rhyl, LL18 2DY



Suggested Payment and Gift Aid

The Friary does not levy a charge, but asks for donations. The suggested rate for donations is from £80 to £120 per person for the whole weekend (pro-rata if you only attend for part of the time).

Please note that at the moment you cannot Gift Aid to the Sibyls (we are working on that). However you *can* Gift Aid directly to the Community of St Francis, provided you complete and return the Gift-Aid form which follows.

If you can Gift-Aid, we therefore recommend that you split your contribution into two parts:-

1. **A cheque/contribution of £30 made directly to the Sibyls (Gift-Aid cannot be claimed on this)**
2. **A cheque representing the remaining balance of your payment, made payable directly to the Community of St Francis. (Gift-Aid for the Community can be claimed on this)**

Any surplus remaining in the Sibyls Contribution, over and above that which is needed by the Sibyls, will be donated by the Sibyls to the community of St Francis.

So, for example, if you decide to donate £110 pounds, a cheque/payment for £30 should be made payable to Mr P.A. Raftery – The Sibyls, and a cheque/payment for £80 should be made payable to the Community of St Francis.

If you cannot Gift-Aid, your total payment of £110 should be made payable to ‘Mr P.A. Raftery – The Sibyls’

For more information on the programme, please contact pauline.fleck@btinternet.com T: 0113 259 0878

GIFT-AID FORM FOR THE COMMUNITY OF SAINT FRANCIS

I am a UK taxpayer and want The Community of Saint Francis Charity number (286615) to reclaim the tax on this donation, any donations I have made in the past 4 years and all future donations.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

I agree to the above statement.

Legal Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self- Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code. Please notify the Community of St Francis if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income or capital gains.

PLEASE RETURN THIS GIFT-AID FORM WITH

- YOUR GIFT-AID DONATION (CHEQUE MADE PAYABLE TO 'THE COMMUNITY OF SAINT FRANCIS'),
- THE BOOKING FORM FOR THE EVENT
- THE SEPARATE PAYMENT OF £30 TO THE SIBYLS, (CHEQUE MADE PAYABLE TO 'MR P.A. RAFTERY –THE SIBYLS')

TO Pauline Fleck, 1 Newlathes Gardens, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4JU

Transport Advice to Hilfield.

It is always tempting to seek the convenience of the car, but the community is active in promoting low-carbon lifestyles, and does its best to help those who arrive by different means:

The community is happy to collect guests from local railway stations or Bus stops at mutually convenient times and asks for a £5 donation towards costs. In comparison the taxi fare from Sherborne is £20. There is also a car park at the Friary and guests are asked to car share if possible to lower their carbon footprint.

If coming by train, most travellers should type in Sherborne Station to discover train times. For some it may be cheaper to come to Yetminster station on the Bristol – Weymouth line. For a very few travellers, Dorchester South Station, although the furthest of our 3 stations, may be the best option. The friary can meet you by arrangement in advance at all 3 stations.

If you are willing and able to come closer to the friary by public transport, try Chetnole station on the Bristol Weymouth line. Google maps will give you the 4 mile walking route to us. Cyclists, there is usually room to put your bike on this train without reservation. A few people even cycle the 9 miles from Sherborne Station. There are usually unreserved bike places on off-peak trains from London.

The X11 bus runs approx. every 2 hours between Sherborne Station and Dorchester South Station. Type in Minterne Magna, a village 2 ½ miles SE of the friary as the nearest bus stop on this route. You can be met there if arranged in advance. The bus stops by the church. If you want to walk the last 2 miles over the hill, ask the driver if he can let you alight ½ m north of Minterne Magna at the Evershot sign – it is not an official stop.

There are few convenient coaches, but we do recommend Berries Buses which runs from Hammersmith in London to Yeovil Bus Station where you can be met by arrangement in advance. www.berryscoaches.co.uk

There are also taxis at Sherborne and Dorchester South Stations and Yeovil bus station. Beaver Cabs at Sherborne 01935816620.

The last half mile to the friary from the South is a steep, narrow hill. The Google Map does not tell you there is a sign saying that it is not suitable for large vehicles!.

Venue contact details

WRITE: The Friary, Hilfield Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 7BE

EMAIL: hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk

CALL: Main Office: 01300 341345

Guest Booking: 01300 341741

SIBYLS REFLECTIVE DAY AT THE SISTERS OF ST ANDREW, LEWISHAM

18TH NOVEMBER 2017

ANGER AND THE RIGHTEOUS

The sessions will be facilitated by the Revd. Andrew Foreshow-Cain formerly the vicar of St Mary with All Souls, Kilburn, and St James in West Hampstead

As Christians we are called to love and not to count the cost; and yet for those of us who are often targets of the anger of others within the Church and in wider society that can be costly and can arouse deep anger within us.

The message from the Church is often that anger is sinful but 'anger has its origins in creation, not our sinfulness ... Anger is connected to embodiment and is a basic ingredient in the imago Dei, actually a gift from God' (Andrew Lester)

During the course of the day we will reflect on anger and its proper place in the spiritual life

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL TRANS PEOPLE, THEIR FRIENDS, SPOUSES AND SUPPORTERS

Provisional Programme

10.00-10.30	Coffee
10.30	Welcome and Introductions.
10.45-12.15	Session 1: Anger and the God of Love
12.15-12.45	Eucharist
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.00	Session 2: Anger and others
15.00-15.30	Tea
15.30-16.30	Session 3: Anger for ourselves
16.30	Closing thoughts and Evening Prayer
18.30	Optional Evening Meal in a Local Restaurant

For more information please email: sibylslink@gmail.com

**Sisters of St Andrew, The Welcome, 99 Belmont Hill, Lewisham, London SE13 5DY
Tel.:0208 852 1662 e-mail: welcome@sisters-of-st-andrew.com**

Message from the Sisters: Where to find us

- As we have a limited number of parking spaces we need to know when you book if you are coming by car or public transport. We are in proximity to the A2, A20 and the M25. Satnav: 51.4629 - 0.0000 (this is the entrance of our drive)
- **By train:** St. Andrews is well served by trains from London's main line stations to Lewisham and Blackheath as well as the Docklands Light Railway to Lewisham, but at present it is best to avoid Lewisham as there are huge road works and developments near the station.

Take the over ground train to Blackheath (Direction usually Dartford) from any of the following Main Line stations

- London Bridge / Cannon Street / Victoria / Charing Cross

- the time of the journey will vary according to which station. eg. London Bridge is the quickest about 10 minutes and from Victoria about 24 minutes.

Once out of the station and onto the High Street cross directly to the bus top opposite and take the (numbers 108/54 or the 89) bus - direction Lewisham - and get off at second bus stop @ St. Margaret's Church, Branham Road. Cross the road and our property is next to the bus stop with green iron gates and lots of trees. Do not go around the drive but come straight ahead to the main entrance left of the chapel.

By bus: We have an excellent bus service from Blackheath station with bus stops just outside the property. (Numbers: 54-89-108)

Ring us on your mobile if there is a problem - **0208 852 1662**

SIBYLS REFLECTIVE DAY AT THE SISTERS OF ST ANDREW, LEWISHAM

18TH NOVEMBER 2017

BOOKING FORM:

Please email the completed form to: sibylslink4@gmail.com.

or print out and send the completed form with your donation to:

Sibyls Day Meeting, 8 Greenways Drive, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 5DU.

Your Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Post code: Telephone:

E-mail:

Dietary Requirements

Will you stay for the meal in a local restaurant on the Saturday evening?

Are You a Member of the Sibyls?

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL TRANS PEOPLE, FRIENDS, SPOUSES AND SUPPORTERS

The suggested donation for the event is £12-£35. Lunch is included: BUT please give less or more as you are able.

We do not want anyone to be deterred from coming if they cannot afford this.

Please make cheques payable to "Mr P. A. Raftery - The Sibyls".

For catering purposes, if you can please book at least 5 days in advance. Donations can be made on the day.

I enclose a donation for this event of £

Your booking is provisional until we have received this form (completed), with your donation. If you require confirmation, please tick the box below and we will send you confirmation to your e-mail address above; or else please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.



Limited Overnight Accommodation on the Friday and Saturday Nights is available with the Sisters of St Andrew. This must be SEPARATELY booked.

PLEASE NOTE that overnight accommodation has to be booked ***directly with the Sisters of St Andrew***. Accommodation is self-catering only but very comprehensive kitchen facilities are provided. There are also plenty of restaurants in the area. The accommodation is available on a first come first served basis. Details are on the Sibyls website at <http://www.gndr.org.uk/sibyls5/headlines/SuG0627b-SibylsStAndrewDayCosts.htm> : or follow the website links.

General Synod welcomes transgender people and backs ban on conversion therapy - Motions Passed at the General Synod of the Church of England in York 7-11 July 2017

General Synod backs ban on conversion therapy

08 July 2017

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/07/general-synod-backs-ban-on-conversion-therapy.aspx>

The full motion agreed was:

That this Synod: (a) endorse the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK of November 2015, signed by The Royal College of Psychiatrists and others, that the practice of gay conversion therapy has no place in the modern world, is unethical, potentially harmful and not supported by evidence; and 3 (b) call upon the Church to be sensitive to, and to listen to, contemporary expressions of gender identity; (c) and call on the government to ban the practice of Conversion Therapy.

The votes in the House of Bishops were 36 for and one against, with no abstentions.

In the House of Clergy 135 backed the motion with 25 against and 13 abstentions.

In the House of Laity 127 supported the motion with 48 opposing and 13 abstentions.

Welcoming Transgender People

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/07/welcoming-transgender-people.aspx>

09 July 2017

The General Synod of the Church of England has passed a motion on welcoming transgender people.

That this Synod, recognising the need for transgender people to be welcomed and affirmed in their parish church, call on the House of Bishops to consider whether some nationally commended liturgical materials might be prepared to mark a person's gender transition.

The votes in the House of Bishops were 30 for and two against, with two abstentions.

In the House of Clergy 127 backed the motion with 28 against and 16 abstentions.

In the House of Laity 127 supported the motion with 48 opposing and eight abstentions.



School in rural Wales crowns 16-year-old transgender girl prom queen 19th July 2017

A transgender girl living in rural Wales has been voted Prom Queen by fellow pupils. 16-year-old Lori Beynon, 16, from Cardigan, Wales is believed to be the UK's first ever transgender Prom Queen.

Lori had been really looking forward to her year 11 prom and Cardigan Secondary School but had no idea her friends and classmates had all voted for her to be queen. She said it was scary, but one of the best moments of her life, to walk in front of her clapping classmates to receive her sash and crown.

"I just want to go as far as I can to feel authentic to myself and who I am. Being prom queen was one step closer."

She said that after years of struggle with her gender, this was so affirming and important.

"I didn't feel like I was a girl – I felt like I was a queen."

Lori has known she was transgender since age 10 when she first used the internet to research what she was feeling. She came out to her mother, Sarah, when she was thirteen. Lori said her mother was "really, really supportive," and has helped her with transitioning.

Over the past two years, Lori has started counselling at the Gender Identity Development Service at London's Tavistock Clinic and is about to start hormone treatment.

—10 July 2017

At the General Synod of the Church of England in York on the 8th and 9th July 2017, two motions were carried by substantial majority of all three houses of the Synod: (bishops, clergy and laity). The first motion condemns “Conversion Therapy” which aims to change a person’s sexual orientation. The second motion gives an unconditional welcome to transgender people in the Church. It also requires it to consider preparing officially sanctioned liturgies for welcoming and giving full affirmation of the identities of transgender people within the Church. A key feature of both of these motions is that they dispute the traditional teaching of the Church which condemns homosexuality and other forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour as acts of grave depravity which always pursue desires for inappropriate or immoral sex. All forms of sexual abuse remain very strongly and unconditionally condemned. However, by approving these motions the Church of England has recognised that gender and sexually variant identities are natural variations of the human condition which are intrinsic to the personality created. They pursue the search for identity, not sexual desire, they arise very early in development: and they cannot be changed, either by the individual concerned or by the predations and actions of others in subsequent life. This has now brought the teaching of the Church of England into line with the beliefs of the great majority of professional medical and psychiatric institutions in the Western World,

For many years with academic and community support, this author in company with others from different academic institutions, has been conducting research into the initial development of personality and self-identity in tribal conflict situations where the type of institutional tribal violence which affects the whole of society occurs. With the same community and academic support this author has also used the results of this research to examine how gender and sexual identities are created and how the early development of self-identity and personality in these areas takes place. This is totally secularly focussed research. Even though religious issues cannot be totally avoided I have been very careful to ensure that no religious doctrines and theology distort the conduct of this work. It is shown that the results of this scientific research contradict the traditional teaching of the Church. However, because I am very aware of the great harm that is being done through this scientifically incorrect teaching being applied, I have additionally carried out an independent theological study to determine how and why the contradiction between religion and science has taken place. Although this investigation involves both scientific and theological elements, these two sections are kept strictly apart in their methodologies and in the interpretation of their results. The scientific study on the development of personality and self-identity uses a novel approach to map the transition between the internally created neuro-physiological processes propelling early development to the externally moderated cognitive processes in later life. As a consequence, a continuous process extending from infancy to adulthood can therefore be described. The development of atypical gender and sexual identities is used to examine how this occurs. It is demonstrated that the formations of these core features are driven by the search for identity, before cognition seeks behavioural rewards. A moral duality therefore exists whereby gender and sexually variant people who express their true attractions and identities while conforming to the highest standards of their societies should be highly regarded. Those engaged in misuse may be severely condemned for their acts. That contradicts the traditional teaching of the Christian Church which condemns all such behaviour as reward driven disordered lifestyle choices that always pursue inappropriate sex.

Tribal conflicts are characterised by the battles of power between different groups and societies. However, victory within these conflicts is not usually sought for its own sake, it is normally in pursuit of restricted resources, or the fear of what would happen to one side if the other side won. The consequence of the scapegoating that also occurs is that everyone on the other side is presumed to have evil intent. In this research each infant’s sense of identity, as defined by their place in society, is shown to be created before the concepts of the personal self are formed. This is demonstrated to be why the sense of tribal identity is so enduring, and why extremities of conflict can develop without any evidence of a significant material cause.

The development of gender and sexual identities and behaviour arise from the same types of processes. However, there is no reference whatever to the interactions between power and sex in the traditional Christian doctrines which condemn homosexuality and the other types of gender and sexual variation which are adopted by the Christian Church. An explanation for this absence is needed and that is why the relationships between power, gender and sex form an important part of this study. The criminalisation of homosexuality and the condemnation of gender and sexually variant behaviour prior to the 1960’s prevented any study of the lived experiences of these people and this also prevented long term stable relationships being created. The advances in science since the 1960’s have shown that the type of gender and sexually variant behaviour associated with homosexuality and transgender conditions is about the search for identity and not reward. That major change is now accepted on a worldwide basis. This means that these conditions are medically misdiagnosed by the traditional Christian doctrines. The management methods for the two types of condition are almost opposite to one and other. Schisms are developing in the Church of England and in other Christian Churches because sections of Christianity have failed to respond to the science. As a consequence, great harm is often done when techniques like “Gay Cures” and “Reparative Therapy” are applied when the outdated and medically incorrect Christian doctrines and disapprovals continue to be used.

The extended theological and historical study uses these scientific results to determine how and why this contradiction exists. The cultures and moralities of the surrounding Greek and Roman cults and societies are examined in detail using the same techniques. This is done before considering the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. It is demonstrated that the major concern in first century Judaism was about the abuses of power in these despotic societies. That, with their enforcement of humiliation and domination over subject people, gave permission for the gross abuses of sex. In the victimised, and gender unequal, Jewish society the denunciation of same-sex intercourse was complete. The specific condemnations of same-sex intercourse in Leviticus 20:13: and 18:22 are shown to be a denunciation of the evils of power and domination: they are not primarily the condemnations of alleged temple prostitution and the desire for sex.

A paradigm shift has occurred in Christianity, in which the first century condemnations of same-sex intercourse, which had been based on the abuses of power and hospitality, has been turned into the unchangeable condemnation of the sexual act. The doctrine of papal infallibility protected a powerful Church against attacks for its own abuses and the sexual scandals inside it, and led to the Cathar Revolt. Aquinas avoided the issues of power in his own teaching on gender and sex by concentrating exclusively on the condemnation of lust and inappropriate sex. That is shown most vividly in those passages in the bible where rape by the Israelites in victory seems to be endorsed. Under Aquinas these acts were justified by divine providence, however all other acts of rape which were not given this protection are virulently condemned in the teaching he presents. As a consequence, all references to the abuses of power have been written out of what today is regarded as the traditional teaching of the Christian Church on homosexuality and gender and sexually variant behaviour. Engaging in it for any purpose is invariably condemned as a disordered act of grave depravity which always desires inappropriate or immoral sex. It is no longer possible to separate same-sex relationships given in love from those which pursue abusive sex.

These abuses of power are not discussed in the New Testament condemnations, and that absence is addressed in this analysis. Peter and Paul demanded obedience to the Roman authorities. This meant that Christianity could not challenge the social structure of society, but it still vociferously condemned its gross abuses of sex. As the moral duality shown by the scientific study is inherent to gender and sexually variant behaviour, its influence must be present in all societies at all times. In societies where same-sex relationships were expressed, that duality would also have been evident to Jesus, Paul and the other disciples, and in this analysis, it is shown that the teachings of Jesus and Paul do not conflict with the results of the scientific study. The same is true in the first century Jewish interpretations of the Old Testament texts. This means that the contradictions with science must derive from changes in the Church. It is therefore concluded that the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church on sexual and gender variance are built on the wrong foundation. They come from the need to gain respectability and to combat same-sex abuse in Roman society, and are reinforced by the paradigm shift which occurred in the later Church. They do not come from Jesus himself. From the theological, social and scientific standpoints it is established that identical criteria in relation to use and abuse should be applied to all cross-gender identification and heterosexual and same-sex acts of sex. In accord with the teaching of Jesus in the New Covenant, all behaviour should be guided by love, wellbeing and purity of intention. There is no automatic condemnation of any sexual act. Instead of centuries of making homosexuality the scapegoat for all sexual abuse, the correct objectives for the Christian Church should be those of combatting all forms of abusive sex.

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. That need for respectability is clearly set out in Peter and Paul's New Testament Letters and Epistles. Paul's letter to Philemon suggests that the early Christian community sought to express the Gospel message in full within its own boundaries, while adjusting to the demands that society made outside it. One of the strengths of Christianity is that it has been able to adapt to local circumstances. However, the compromises which this demanded swapped the most radical teaching of Jesus on gender and sexuality for the respectability of the Church. Nevertheless, that gives no excuse for the gross gender discrimination of the 4th Century Church. The need to protect the 13th century Church from its own abuses was an action that made the paradigm shift complete.

It is 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. 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 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. 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.

In June 2017 Thomas Paprocki, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Springfield, Illinois called on priests under his jurisdiction to deny Holy Communion and even funeral rites to people in same-sex unions unless they show "some signs of repentance" for their relationships before death. His decree also said that people "living publicly" in same-sex marriages may not receive the sacrament of confirmation or be admitted to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, a process by which many converts become Catholic, preparing them for baptism and confirmation. At the same time, Paprocki said that children living with a Catholic parent or parents in a same-sex marriage may be baptized. But when it comes to same-sex unions, priests cannot bless couples, church property cannot be used for ceremonies and diocesan employees are forbidden from participating in any such events. 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, derided and trivialised the reality of the identities of transgender people in an 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: in which access to bathroom and toilet facilities was discussed. These religious attitudes are compounded by the political changes that have 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". For all of these reasons there is now an urgent need to reconsider the traditional teaching of the Church

Throughout its history, priestly sexual abuse has been a major concern for the Christian Church. On the 22nd June 2017, an independent report by Dame Moira Gibbs commissioned by the Church of England, into the sexual abuse and wrongdoing by a former Church of England Bishop Peter Ball was released. In it Dame Moira states that this abuse is not just shocking in itself: but it is compounded by the failure of the Church to respond appropriately to Ball's misconduct, again over a period of many years. Ball's priority was to protect and promote himself and he maligned the abused. Dame Moira concluded that the Church colluded with that rather than seeking to help those he had harmed, or assuring itself of the safety of others. This exposure of this sexual abuse in the report "Abuse of Faith", together with the effective collusion by Archbishop Carey and other members of the senior hierarchy demands an independent and objective re-examining of the present Church attitudes to gender and sexuality which uses all of the medical and scientific expertise that is available. Other allegations continue to emerge in which Church of England Bishops have failed either to take action or to respond adequately to multiple claims of sexual abuse. These are not just concerns for the Church of England. On Thursday the 29th June Cardinal George Pell, the Vatican treasurer, was charged with multiple sexual offences. Of course, Pell must be presumed innocent unless and until he is proven guilty: however this is only part of the long history of clerical sexual abuse. If these disgraces are to come to a better resolution, there must be no cover-ups, and no holding back. For as long as any Christian church continues to proclaim a doctrine which medically misdiagnoses how gender and sexual identities develop and excludes any consideration of the relationships between power, gender and sex from its remit, such sexual abuses will continue to take place. This must include a re-examination of its traditional doctrines on homosexuality and on gender and sexually variant behaviour "As the Church of England has received it: so that the Church is not misled in future years. Yet despite all of these abuses and concerns there is little evidence that the Churches are willing to move sufficiently on these matters. The 2017 report of the Church England "Bishop's Reflection Group on Sexuality" confined any future consideration to that of: "Interpreting the existing law and guidance to permit maximum freedom within it, without changes to the law, or the doctrine of the Church". On the 16th February 2017 following the decision by the General Synod not to take note of the report of the Bishops Reflection Group the Archbishops of Canterbury and York wrote a letter to members of the Church of England which restated the same position. In the paper: "Next Steps on Human Sexuality" also written by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and which was presented to the General of the Church of England on the 7th July 2017, the same constraints were again applied to all future work. Pope Francis has repeatedly stated that there can be no possibility of change to the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church.

Both churches emphasise the need to develop pastoral care and radical inclusion of all gender and sexually variant people in the Christian Church. However, no pastoral care, however well-meant and intently pursued, can ever be effective if the foundations on which it is based are incorrect. On its own it diverts attention away from the abuses of power which excuse the abuses of gender and sex. These are the arguments for reconsidering and for re-examining the traditional teaching of the Church.

This investigation considers the development of tribal, sexual and gender identities. The aim of the theological part of this investigation has been to determine how and why the contradiction with science occurs. It is shown that paradigm shift has taken place, in which the first century condemnations of same-sex intercourse, which had been based on the abuses of power and hospitality has been turned into the unchangeable condemnation of the sexual act. As a consequence, it is necessary to examine this paradigm shift and then reverse it, in order to recover the teaching of the early Church. While people will continue to discuss the origins and nature of gender and sexually variant conditions, the real harm created by the traditional teaching of the Church is that it treats every gender and sexually variant person who attempts to express their true identity, as tribal outcasts within the Christian Church. Because of this tribalism, many have been rejected from their own Church communities. The centuries of criminalisation and condemnation of sodomy, and gender and sexually variant behaviour, means that the only knowledge that many people have about these conditions, is what their enemies tell them. Conservative groups, such as GAFCON, who claim that the Church teaching has never changed, do not succeed in returning to the Gospel message, instead they return to a Christianity determined by the needs of the 13th century Church.

The thesis presented in this argument is that it is not Christianity which is responsible for creating the persecution of gender and sexually variant people. That was already present in society. Any departure from stereotypically male or female behaviour challenges the institutional frameworks of these despotic and gender unequal societies. These can be considered as disordered actions which threaten the social status and stability that a socially divided society requires. In Galatians 3:28 Paul did not say that there is no male or female, he said there is no male and female. In Acts 8:26-40 it was a eunuch who was charged with taking the Christian message to the world. No matter how high their rank and ability, eunuchs were reviled and regarded as social and sexual outcasts in Roman and in other first century societies. These actions and statements challenged at source the institutional structure of Roman Society, and the gender and sexual abuses that lay within it. They also expressed the radical inclusion that was present in the teaching of Jesus and the Gospel Church. Instead of following this radical teaching, which combats the secular scapegoating and persecution of gender and sexually variant people in society, the paradigm shift has occurred where Christianity has come instead to collude with these secular condemnations. This is why change today is urgently required, not just in Christianity, for in many religions and societies great harm is being done throughout the world.

These are not minor matters. Extreme penalties continue to be exacted against gender and sexually variant people in many countries. The changes which were endorsed by the General Synod of the Church of England in July 2017 do not go far enough. For Christianity to be true to the Gospel message, it also needs its modern-day eunuchs, in the form of gender and sexually variant people: including all transgender, transsexual, lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities within roles that are true to themselves, to take the Gospel to the world.



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The Trans Partner Handbook

A Guide for When Your Partner Transitions

Jo Green

A detailed step-by-step look at the different stages of transitioning for partners of trans people. With personal reflections from over 15 trans partners in healthy and successful relationships, this insightful guide provides practical advice for those supporting a partner as they transition.

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Description

Individuals who transition from one gender to another are often in some degree of a relationship, and over 55% of these relationships endure through the transition process.

While more resources are emerging for trans people themselves, there is very little information available for their partners. Through first-hand accounts and vignettes of successful partnerships, this book presents detailed descriptions of everything involved in the transition process, with specific guidance for those supporting a partner in transition. Topics include disclosure, mental health, coming out, loss and grief, sex and sexuality and the legal, medical and social practicalities of transitioning. In this essential guide, people whose partners are across the transgender spectrum speak out on their own experiences with personal advice and support for others.

Reviews

'*The Trans Partner Handbook* provides a wealth of information and ideas, to become more fluent with the terminology and lingo used when discussing trans matters. When you transition, everyone around you does too. It's a time of adjustment for all. This book is absolutely jam-packed full of information on the topic of being trans, particularly for those at the start of their transition.'

- Fox Fisher, Trans activist and author of *Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?*

'*The Trans Partner Handbook* is just that - a step-by-step guide for how to approach a partner transitioning. Jo Green addresses this topic with sincerity, honesty, and openness, weaving together their experiences with those of other partners of trans people to paint a picture of the breadth of challenges and joys a partner's transition can bring.'

- Laura Erickson-Schroth, author of *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves*

'The essential topics in this handbook offer critical information that trans partners can use throughout their partner's transition.'

- D.M. Maynard, Author and Educator



Our Movement Can Defeat Homophobia - Trade unionists must call out discrimination wherever it occurs - by [Debbie Hayton](#)

This article was first published by [The Morning Star](#) on 6 July 2017: '[Our Movement Can Defeat Homophobia](#)'.

LGBT+ rights are enshrined in law. The 2010 Equality Act could not be clearer: discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender reassignment are explicitly prohibited.

Prejudice, however, runs deep in our society, and homophobia, biphobia and transphobia remain endemic problems in the workplace and elsewhere. They have a pernicious and destructive impact that can sap the confidence of LGBT+ people, compromise their mental health and destroy their careers.

Following debate at last year's TUC LGBT conference, the TUC undertook extensive research to identify the extent of the problems and better understand the experiences of LGBT+ workers, both unionised and non-unionised. At the launch, TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "We hope that this comprehensive research will let us shine a light on the range of issues faced by LGBT workers across the UK."

The results published today* were predictable but distressing nevertheless. Over a third of LGBT+ workers reported bullying and harassment at work, and this figure rose to almost half of the trans people who responded. Nearly two in five people suffered from harassment or discrimination by colleagues, a quarter by a manager and around one in seven by a client or patient. These figures are truly shocking, but not surprising in a society where appalling behaviour can be trivialised and dismissed as "banter."

That practice came through all too clearly in the findings. More than 60 per cent of respondents had heard homophobic or biphobic remarks or jokes directed to others in their workplace, while over a quarter had been targeted personally. But this is no joking matter. Over half of all those who responded, and as many as 70 per cent of those who identified as trans, said that their experience of workplace harassment or discrimination had adversely affected their mental health. Most seriously, around one in 20 people had experienced reported physical violence in the workplace.

It is understandable therefore that many workers choose not to disclose their sexuality or gender identity in the workplace.

Only half of all respondents were "out" to everyone at work, and young people and women were especially cautious. Significant numbers of workers on zero-hours contracts and in other forms of precarious employment were out to nobody.

As a result, people are less likely to report incidents. Indeed, only a third of respondents had mentioned the most recent incident of harassment or discrimination to their employer, and only one in eight had raised it with human resources.

At the same time people do have a right to privacy, though sadly that right is not universally respected by others. Just under a quarter of all respondents had been outed against their will, while almost a third of transgender respondents reported that their trans status had been disclosed without their permission.

This survey may identify the nature and extent of the problems, but action needs to be taken. Trade unions and their members have a vital role to play, and it was therefore encouraging to hear positive anecdotes of union support and representation.

The campaigning zeal of activists is unabashed and delegates assembling today for this year's TUC LGBT conference will debate motions that call upon the TUC and affiliates to challenge prejudice, discrimination and hate crime and explore ways of supporting everyone's mental health.

The Tories cannot be trusted — a majority of their MPs voted against equal marriage in 2013. Their new friends in the DUP even used a petition of concern to subvert the democratic will of the Northern Ireland Assembly and prevent equal marriage legislation reaching the statute book in Northern Ireland.

As trade unionists — individually and collectively — we must take the action that is needed. Exposure of wrongdoing must not stop with the publication of this survey, and we must continue to spread the message that discrimination and harassment are wrong, and call them out whenever they occur.

Self-Identification & The Struggle For Equal Rights (posted by *Morning Star* in Features, 22nd July 2017)
DEBBIE HAYTON says the left should take care before assuming proposed legal changes will advance the equality agenda

Trans rights were thrust back into mainstream politics this week when Jeremy Corbyn offered Labour Party support to government plans to reform the 2004 Gender Recognition Act.

The law is in desperate need of reform, but introducing gender identity as a protected characteristic and allowing people total freedom to self-identify their gender may not be the best way forward.

While we should all applaud measures to combat discrimination, the law needs to be robust and enforceable. The current law protects actions — the right for someone to change their social gender role. The proposed shift to gender identity is problematic because our feelings about ourselves are impossible to verify externally. How do we protect thoughts and feelings?

The law also needs to be future-proofed. Since the House of Commons women and equalities committee consulted in 2015, non-binary identities have risen to prominence and our understanding of gender identity has moved with it.

A law written only two years ago might already be out of date in 2017; where we will be in another two years is a matter of speculation.

Moreover, by creating a class of people with a gender identity that needs protecting, the law plays into the hands of those who seek to discriminate against those people. It would be far better to protect everybody's rights.

For example, rather than direct employers to make specific provision for trans and non-binary people, why not extend freedom of gender expression to everyone? If a man wishes to wear a skirt, or a woman wishes to wear a suit and tie then let them.

While trans and non-binary people would be the primary beneficiaries of inclusive policies like these, it is better to be able to claim those rights because we are human beings not because we identify with a specific minority group.

As a trans person, I am aware of the impact of gender on all our lives. I am grateful to earlier campaigners who made it possible for me to change an M to an F in a multitude of databases.

However, it does beg the question why those gender markers are needed in the first place. Why does a bank, for example, need to label me as M, F or something else?

All I noticed were changes in directed marketing, which perpetuated the unhelpful gender stereotypes that we are trying to overcome.

Gender, and gender discrimination, will not be abolished overnight so we need to monitor gender along with other characteristics such as race and disability.

But let's move forwards and not backwards by creating new gender identities that will inevitably provide fresh grounds for discrimination.

In the rush to permit freedom to self-identify, we must not forget the rights of women.

The perennial toilet debate is largely a red herring but it would be very foolish to ignore genuine concerns about communal changing facilities, rape crisis centres, dormitory accommodation and the like. Should female facilities be open to anyone who declares themselves to be a woman, or should limits be set?

The debate over female sport has been rumbling since Renee Richards transitioned in the 1970s. Gatekeeping by governing bodies has maintained public credibility, but would this be allowed to continue?

While gender stereotypes prevail, girls and boys will be socialised differently and their opportunities in life will not be the same.

Female-only short lists and other protected places in society have been necessary to ensure that women are not overlooked. Should those positions be open to anyone who identifies as a woman irrespective of their socialisation and how they present in society?

There are lots of questions and they need answers. We can shut down debate but we do not shut down people's thoughts, and any law offers limited protection if it lacks credibility.

A progressive government in waiting needs to take a look at the entire equalities agenda to develop workable, robust and credible legislation that defends all our rights because we are all human beings.

A Message via 'Inclusive Church' came to the committee this week from:

Mr Kim Normanton, Esher, Surrey

Phone: 07852373012

Email: kim@normanton1.co.uk

Hello

I'm a radio producer based in Surrey. I usually make programmes for BBC Radio 4. I've been asked by Interfaith Radio a station based in the US to make a radio feature about transgender people and the Church of England. This feature will be one of a series of programmes broadcast in the US looking at how Transgender People feel they are being accepted (or not) in the eyes of the church. I attended the Synod debate in July, 'Welcoming Transgender People' and recorded an interview with the Revd Chris Newlands and with Ken Wilkinson (a trans man).

If possible, I'd like to talk to someone who wants a ceremony in an Anglican church to mark their new identity. With a view to recording their thoughts and hopefully - some of the ceremony, or their thoughts after the ceremony. I'm hoping to get in touch with an individual who might be at the right stage for this and I wonder if you might be able to help?

The feature is going out in the US in November. It will be part of a series illustrating the range of attitudes in various religions towards transgender people. In all, there'll be seven half-hour programmes. The host of the programmes is Rev Seth David Wynn, a trans pastor in the US.

I'm aware this is a sensitive issue. I've made many features for BBC Radio 4 about people who feel, or are perceived to be, different eg 'Black, Muslim and Gay'. Several of these programmes have won international awards and I'm still in contact with the interviewees. <https://kimnormanton.wordpress.com/radio/>

Wonder if I could have a phone chat with someone to see if you think this request might be possible or if it's just too much at this stage to expect people to talk on radio about it? (We wouldn't have to use full names and this is only being broadcast in the US - though it would be available online too.)

thanks

Kim Normanton
Radio Producer

mobile: 07852 373012

The Gay Cowboy

A successful rancher died and left everything to his devoted wife. She was a very good-looking woman and determined to keep the ranch, but knew very little about ranching, so she decided to place an ad in the newspaper for a ranch hand. Two cowboys applied for the job. One was gay and the other a drunk.

She thought long and hard about it, and when no one else applied she decided to hire the gay guy, figuring it would be safer to have him around the house than the drunk. He proved to be a hard worker who put in long hours every day and knew a lot about ranching.

For weeks, the two of them worked, and the ranch was doing very well. Then one day, the rancher's widow said to the hired hand, "You have done a really good job, and the ranch looks great. You should go into town and kick up your heels." The hired hand readily agreed and went into town one Saturday night.

One o'clock came, however, and he didn't return. Two o'clock and no hired hand. Finally he returned around two-thirty, and upon entering the room, he found the rancher's widow sitting by the fireplace with a glass of wine, waiting for him.

She quietly called him over to her.

"Unbutton my blouse and take it off," she said. Trembling, he did as she directed.

"Now take off my boots." He did as she asked, ever so slowly.

"Now take off my socks." He removed each gently and placed them neatly by her boots.

"Now take off my skirt." He slowly unbuttoned it, constantly watching her eyes in the fire light.

"Now take off my bra." Again, with trembling hands, he did as he was told and dropped it to the floor.

Then she looked at him and said, "If you ever wear my clothes into town again, you're fired."



Donald Trump has reversed an Obama policy allowing transgender people to serve in the US military.

26th July 2017 **He announced the ban before setting out any details of the policy.**

In June of last year, President Obama asked the Pentagon to lift its long-held ban on transgender soldiers serving openly in the military. The Department of Defense was given until July 1 of this year to implement the policy, with LGBT advocates hopeful that transgender soldiers would finally be able to serve openly. The decision was delayed by Trump's Defence Secretary James 'Mad Dog' Mattis – and the President confirmed today that he would reverse the decision and put the ban back in place.

President Trump tweeted: "After consultation with my Generals and military experts, please be advised that the United States Government will not accept or allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military. Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail. Thank you."

The ban on TG people serving was only lifted in 2016.

The decision was reportedly pushed by Vice President Mike Pence, a strong opponent of LGBT rights.

The Department of Defense spent five times more on Viagra in 2014 than it would on care for transgender troops.

It will cost the US military 114 times more to ban transgender soldiers than to keep them - Experts now claim the cost of banning transgender soldiers will be far more than the cost of keeping them. The Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California and the Palm Center estimate it would cost \$960 million to enforce the ban on trans soldiers. That's 114 times than the cost of allowing the trans service people to continue serving – which is estimated at \$8.4m a year. There are an estimated 15,500 openly trans people in the US military at present. Experts estimate that it would cost \$75,000 to recruit and train each replacement soldier. Based on hiring 12,800 new soldiers – the figure they estimate that would be needed to continue function similarly – the total bill is almost a billion dollars.

Some Reactions:

The ACLU said: "This is an outrageous and desperate action. The thousands of transgender service members serving on the front lines for this country deserve better than a commander-in-chief who rejects their basic humanity

Sarah Kate Ellis of GLAAD said: "President Trump today issued a direct attack on transgender Americans, and his administration will stop at nothing to implement its anti-LGBTQ ideology within our government – even if it means denying some of our bravest Americans the right to serve and protect our nation."

The Democrats said: "Right this moment, around the world, brave transgender service members are protecting the American people – including Donald Trump and Mike Pence. While the White House claims to be celebrating 'American Heroes' week, the president and vice president are shoving real American patriots back in the closet and putting our nation's security at risk. Donald Trump said he would protect LGBTQ people, but today's decision to ban transgender Americans from serving in the military proves his promise was another bald-faced lie. Democrats stand with the transgender community and we will fight this administration's bigotry tooth-and-nail. Those who defend our right to live freely should be able to serve freely. This cowardly statement by Donald Trump shames our nation and its history of advancing diversity in our military – from the integration of African-Americans into the military by President Truman to President Obama's ending of Don't Ask Don't Tell – and it is an insult to the millions of Americans who have courageously served our nation."

The Human Rights Campaign attacked the White House for a "deeply troubling and patently unpatriotic assault on military families". The group added: "[Trump and Pence should] be working to ensure all service members and their families are getting the support and resources they need and deserve, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation."

Chad Griffin added: "Today Donald Trump has proven himself as unpatriotic as he is unfit to serve as Commander in Chief. He has put a target on the backs of the more than 15,000 transgender troops proudly serving in our military. This heinous and disgusting action endangers the lives of American service members, undermines military readiness and makes our country less safe. It is also the latest effort by Trump and Mike Pence to undo our progress and drag LGBTQ people back into the closet by using our lives as political pawns."

Monica Helms, a veteran of the US Navy and creator of the transgender flag, has spoken about her time in service, her trans journey, and her opinion on Trump's ban. Helms served in the navy from 1970 to 1978, on the submarines USS Francis Scott and USS Flasher. "What Trump did was strictly to serve his bigot followers and nothing else," she told BuzzFeed News. "Trans people have proven to serve well and without any issues, both in our country and several throughout the world."

J.K Rowling compared Trump's smiling face to a frog's, saying: "Well, kudos to Aesop. It turns out 'The Frogs Who Desired a King' wasn't a fable, it was an actual bloody prediction."

Former Vice President Joe Biden said: "Every patriotic American who is qualified to serve in our military should be able to serve. Full stop."

Transgender Navy SEAL Team 6 member Kristin Beck, who served for 20 years in the unit whose troops killed Osama bin Laden, challenged Trump to tell her that she was "not worthy" to her face. "Being transgender doesn't affect anyone else. We are Liberty's light. If you can't defend that for everyone that's an American citizen, that's not right. I was defending individual liberty I defended for Republicans, I defended for Democrats. I defended for everyone."

Retired army sergeant Shane Ortega, who was the first out transgender soldier in the United States military, called the President a "war-dodger".

[The President famously dodged the draft four times during the Vietnam war, and has never served in the military.]

Staff Sergeant Logan Ireland, a security forces airman who has been deployed to Afghanistan, said: "I would like to see them try to kick me out of my military. You are not going to deny me my right to serve my country when I am fully qualified and able and willing to give my life"

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

U.S. military veterans labelled Donald Trump's transgender ban an 'embrace of hate' Commenting on the policy, Vote Vets Tweeted: "There's NO reason for a transgender ban. Military isn't asking for it. Americans don't want it. This is about Trump embrace of hate. Period."

The US Navy Secretary, Richard V. Spencer, said he believes that any patriot should be welcome in the US Armed Forces.

Caitlin Jenner, a Republican who has previously spoken in support of Trump, objected to the ban tweeting "Well @realDonaldTrump, from one Republican to another, this is a disaster. You made a promise to protect the LGBTQ community. Call me."

MTV hit back at Donald Trump by inviting transgender troops to the Video Music Awards (24th August 2017)

A former Navy surgeon has announced that she will waive the fee for trans military personnel who are seeking surgery. Dr Christine McGinn, who is trans herself, has said that any trans people scheduled for surgery with her will not have to pay the fees if the government refuses to.

Sarah Warbelow, Human Rights Campaign Legal Director, said in a statement: "Attacks against the LGBTQ community at all levels of government continue to pour in from the Trump-Pence Administration. In one fell swoop, Trump's DOJ has provided a roadmap for dismantling years of federal protections and declared that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people may no longer be protected by landmark civil rights laws such as the Fair Housing Act, Title IX, or Title VII. For over a decade, courts have determined that discrimination on the basis of LGBTQ status is unlawful discrimination under federal law. [The administration's] filing is a shameful retrenchment of an outmoded interpretation that forfeits faithful interpretation of current law to achieve a politically-driven and legally specious result."

BUT

The American Family Association, an influential ultra-conservative pressure group, put out a release promoting a 'petition' in support of Trump today. They praised Trump for 'draining the swamp' through recent policies rolling back LGBT rights. It says: "President Trump recently made several attempts to drain the D.C. Swamp. Thank you for going against the political establishment and the progressive agenda. Thank the president for banning those who identify as transgender from serving in the military. We also thank the President for using the Department of Justice to declare sexual orientation is not a Civil Right".

Reactions to the U.K. government's plans to improve the process for transition 28.7.17 (See also p.17)

On Sunday, the government announced a move to streamline and de-medicalise the Gender Recognition Act, to allow transgender people to more easily change their legal gender. The progressive move was welcomed by a huge number of LGBT activists. However, it prompted a backlash from some who desperately yelled that political correctness had gone too far. Too many rights for too many people, it seems.

In the **Times** of 28th July, **Clare Foges**, a former speechwriter for Prime Minister David Cameron, wrote that the new reforms – which have not been proposed in any concrete way – would "create a world of confusion and anxiety" for children. She states that giving children the freedom to self-define – which seems to be outside of these potential reforms – would worsen mental health problems in young people. "I am no expert on children," she says. But, she continues, seeming to express intimate knowledge on the subject, "children...are being led to believe, on social media and in schools, that gender is simply a lifestyle choice."

Foges also says "all of the great legislative battles on equality have been won," which will be news to many campaigners, before going on a tirade laced with hypotheticals. "If they don't enjoy 'girly' things like make-up are they perhaps a boy?" She then confuses the concepts of gender and sexuality, saying: "If they have a crush on people of both sexes could they be agender? If they simply feel different to everyone else and uncomfortable in their own skin, common enough in adolescence, might they be genderfluid?"

The article, entitled "Gender fluid world is muddling your minds", is being promoted on Facebook with a paid-for slot by The Times.

This viewpoint was dismantled by **Susie Green, the chief executive of Mermaids**, a charity which campaigns for the rights of gender nonconforming children. "Once again, people who this will never affect, who have no issues around their gender and never will are attempting to dictate to a vulnerable population how they should be supported. Trans children have a 45 percent suicide attempt rate, and 1 in 10 young trans people receive death threats in school due to ignorance and prejudice. Surely, any moves to both educate and support these young people should be embraced."

She said that "young trans people feel invalidated," and that articles like this "question their identity and sense of self. This is not political correctness, this is children dying."

On the point Foges makes about all of the great legislative battles on equality having been won, Green said: "I absolutely don't think so. We've got a very long way to go in looking at the way trans people are treated in all walks of life. There still needs to be far greater protections, not to mention the way they're depicted in the media. Essentially, we want children to grow up and be valued members of society, so we have to acknowledge and embrace the differences that are there. Not doing so is not helpful, and can actually be very detrimental to those young people affected."

Mermaids provided quotes from the father of a trans child, who said that "our kids and youth are scared – they are being bullied in our schools, they are being demonised in our press and they are self-harming".

A Stonewall spokesperson said: "We're disappointed to see another attack on trans identities this week, and these comments certainly underline the need for more education. It's vital that all young people feel supported."