



SIBYLS LOGO - ROBYN GOLDEN - HANV 28 MAY 2018



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Newsletter 88 – July 2019

Dear Sibyls

I hope this newsletter finds you well with spirits undampened by the state of the country, church or world.....your editor found time to absent herself from the heavy responsibility of producing the newsletter and to visit Sweden where she enjoyed respite from Brexit-blighted Britain and experienced some “lagom” – the Swedish concept of things just being good enough, moderate, not excessive: qualities one used to be able to associate with the British... She also experienced the European Forum of Christian LGBT Groups conference in Canterbury (see below for report), a welcome reminder of the unity we have in Christ that far transcends any ephemeral political structures.

The Anglican communion, while still tearing itself apart over same-sex relationships, has made great strides in accepting trans people, despite opposition from irreconcilable conservatives. The Catholic Church remains resolutely encamped in the middle ages. The Vatican's document "Male and Female He Created Them" sees trans people as a subversive threat to marriage, family and society generally. It shows no sign of any engagement whatever with actual trans people, targeting the nebulous concept of what it terms "gender ideology" and showing a particularly shocking misunderstanding of intersex people. Much more on this below.

It has become necessary to explain that the newsletter, including the links included within it, represents a wide range of views, including some that are actually hostile and even offensive to trans people, on the basis that in order to respond effectively to our opponents it is helpful to be informed about their views. Where necessary I will include a "trigger" warning. Any personal views expressed, including my own, are not the views of the Sibyls as a whole: we are a diverse group and obviously do not speak with a single voice. Where we do disagree, I hope it will always be in a spirit of mutual respect and care for one another. We are above all a pastoral support group seeking as best we can to love one another as our Lord loved his followers.

An excellent opportunity for sharing with and supporting each other will occur at the residential weekend at Purley Chase in September. I really hope that many Sibyls will be able to gather there and enjoy our own version of a little "lagom".....

Pauline

M 07581553357

pauline.fleck@btinternet.com

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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 may be 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.

Please note that the members' section of the website is no longer password protected although the older newsletters have been archived and still protected.

Facebook Groups

Two Facebook Groups are available to enable Sibyls and other trans Christians to communicate and express and exchange views and news. They are the Sibyls Members Group and TranschristianUK. Do join up if you are not already members.

SIBYLS LONDON EVENING MEETINGS 2019

2019 London Evening Meetings
6 August, 10 October, 12 December 2019

6:00 p.m. at St Anne's Church, Dean Street, Soho.

THESE EVENTS ARE OPEN TO ALL TRANS PEOPLE,
TO THEIR FRIENDS, SPOUSES AND SUPPORTERS

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SIBYLS TO COME

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

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. Include any details you think appropriate. You can email us privately at sibylslink@gmail.com. (If you would like your request for prayers to be made available to the whole group, the Sibyls members can of course email the Sibyls email group and/or Sibyls Members facebook group instead)

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

Details: 6:00 service at St Anne's, 55 Dean Street, Soho W1D 6AF, 50 metres 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: however it would also be helpful to get some idea of numbers in advance. If you do know you are coming, please email me at sibylslink@gmail.com. We normally decide on the restaurant to go to at the end of the service. If you are late please ring 07596 197 665.

You will be welcome
Susan Gilchrist



WEEKEND AT THE PURLEY CHASE CENTRE, The Midlands, CV9 2RQ

www.purleychasecentre.org.uk/

27-29 SEPTEMBER 2019

PROGRAMME FOR THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY

People may arrive any time after 3pm. Tea, coffee, juice and biscuits and cakes are available all the time all weekend.

7 p.m. Buffet dinner. There is a bar for people to buy their own drinks at reasonable prices. The centre only takes cash & cheques but not cards.

8.30 p.m. Time for sharing and news from our churches/denominations.

10 p.m. Compline

SATURDAY

8 a.m. Breakfast

9.30 a.m. Rev. Alison Southcombe, Spiritual Director of the Purley Chase Centre. An introduction to the ideas of Swedenborg:

Using Swedenborg's ideas of correspondence to examine the Bible

We all realise that when Jesus said "I am the bread of life," he didn't mean he was edible - he was referring to being that which feeds, nourishes, sustains and gives life. In looking at this symbolic idea, what we have understood is a 'correspondence.' This idea of Biblical allegory was known to early church fathers and was brought into fresh focus in the 18th Century by the scientist and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. Swedenborg called the understanding of these correspondences - the inner spiritual sense - which allows for a deeper understanding of scripture and a means to apply what has been apprehended to one's own life.

In this short workshop we will be looking at scripture and using the ideas Swedenborg provides as a toolkit to examine Biblical passages in a new way.

11 a.m. - Tea, coffee, juice and biscuits and cakes

11.30 a.m. This session relating to transgender issues within the Church of England will be jointly led by Rev. Priscilla White and Tina Beardsley. Priscilla is a parish priest in Harborne, Birmingham and is a representative on Synod for trans issues.

1 p.m. Lunch

2 p.m. Free afternoon. Potential options include:

- Visit the Battlefield Line www.battlefieldline.co.uk Leicestershire, Shackerstone, CV13 6NW. There are trains at 3pm & 4.15pm going from Shackerstone to Shenton and back. This is 12 ½ miles from the Centre

- Visit the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre www.bosworthbattlefield.org.uk, CV13 0AD. This is 10 miles from the centre. **2.00 pm to 3.30 pm** Join one of their experienced Guides for an informative 2 km guided walk exploring the Battle of Bosworth, the death of King Richard III and the unlikely victory of Henry Tudor.
- Stroll in the beautiful grounds of the centre or stride out further afield to the nearby Hartshill Hayes Country Park, www.countryparks.warwickshire.gov.uk/country-parks/hartshill-hayes-country-park It's a 30 min walk or a 6 min drive to the Country Park.
- Twycross zoo.
- Just relax in the warm, comfortable centre.

Refreshments are available any time people would like them.

6.30 p.m. Gala Dinner – a great opportunity for everyone to dress up.

8 p.m. Entertainments. Elaine Sommers will show films she has been involved in and may also sing.....all welcome to join in and contribute as they see fit.

10 p.m. Compline

SUNDAY

8 a.m. Breakfast

9.30 a.m. Sibyls Together

11 a.m. Tea, coffee, juice and biscuits and cakes

11.30 a.m. Service with Holy Communion in the Chapel led by Alison Southcombe.

12.30 p.m. Group photo

1 p.m. Sunday lunch

2 / 2.30 p.m. Leave to go home

Directions to Purley Chase Centre

Purley is located on Purley Chase Lane, which runs between the villages of Mancetter and Ridge Lane. Despite its rural position, the Centre is easily accessed by road and rail.

Postal Address – Purley Chase Centre, Purley Chase Lane, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwicks, CV9 2RQ.

Tel: 01827 712370

Email: enquiries@purleychasecentre.org.uk

Manager: Rachel Gilsenan



By car – The centre is just over 2 miles south of the A5 near Atherstone. It can be approached from all points of the compass via the motorway network, using M1, M6, M42 or M69 for instance. If travelling along the A5 from the East then just before Atherstone, take the B4111 towards Mancetter. If you are travelling along the A5 from the West, go past Atherstone on the dual carriageway and when you reach the large roundabout at the end, take the right exit towards Mancetter B4111. After about a quarter of a mile on B4111, just past the church, take a right turn signed Ridge Lane. Over the traffic light controlled bridge, follow the road round to the right and up through the trees, Purley Chase Centre is about a quarter of a mile further on, on the right.

By rail – The nearest main line railway station is at Nuneaton, about 6 miles away. Nuneaton is a stop on the high-speed main line between London and Lancashire. Atherstone Taxis (01827 712427) charge £17. Triple A Taxis (01827 713637) charge £14/£15. Slower trains go through Atherstone station which is about three miles away from Purley Chase Centre. This is also the Euston Crewe line. Atherstone Taxis charge £10 to £12 and Triple A Taxis charge £8/£9. Both Nuneaton and Atherstone are served by various bus and coach services.

Lifts can also be arranged for people arriving at either Nuneaton or Atherstone. Call Pauline on 07581553357.

Booking Form

To book a place for this weekend, please could you fill out this form and post it, with a cheque made out to Mr P A Raftery - The Sibyls, to:- Mr Peter Raftery, 7 Sketchley Lane, Ratcliffe Culey, Atherstone, CV9 3NZ

Or you can email the completed application form to rafterypeter1@gmail.com and transfer the money directly into The Sibyls account through internet banking.

Bank: Co-operative Account Name: Mr P A Raftery - The Sibyls
Sort Code: 08 93 00 Account Number: 80470524
Reference: 'Your name' (this is vital to help identify who has paid)

To facilitate the Centre, CLOSING DATE is 31st August 2019

Your name _____

Telephone number _____ Email _____

Your address _____

_____ Post code _____

Accommodation – please tick one option: (full-board is Friday dinner until Sunday lunch)

En-suite - Double room Twin room Single room £125 full-board per person

Adapted facilities with wet room £125 full-board per person

Name of other occupant in room or willing to share with

Standard dormitory accommodation with shared bathroom £105 full-board per person

(There are 3 double rooms and 2 adapted room with wet rooms - book early to avoid disappointment ☺)

Not needed – staying off site-Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner £38 person, Lunch & Dinner £32 per person per day Please state the number of people & which days

.....

Dietary requirements _____

Any allergies or special needs? _____

Do you need help with transport to The Purley Chase Centre?

.....

Can you offer a lift to someone?

.....If you have a question or

require further information about the weekend or the venue, please email me at

rafterypeter1@gmail.com or send a text to 07595776574. (As I teach I am unable to answer my mobile during the day)

Metropolitan Congregation, Manchester and North West

Here are the details of our weekly Metropolitan congregation LGBT+ Sunday afternoon service to which all Sibyls members are warmly invited and welcomed.

We are a Christ-centred congregation which serves, celebrates and affirms the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (lgbt) communities of Manchester and North West England. All are welcome. Our main service is on Sunday afternoons at 4.30pm. It is celebrative yet thoughtful and aims to appeal to folk from a range of different church backgrounds as well as to those for whom spirituality is new. We offer a place to explore Christian spirituality and help people live the Christian faith in ways which make sense in our contemporary society.

We are a friendly church and after worship - which usually lasts around one hour - everyone is invited to stay for refreshments and a chat. We usually have around 6-8 trans people attending and often go for a meal together after the service.



Where we are based

We are a congregation of Wilbraham Saint Ninian's United Reformed Church, near to the centre of Chorlton in South Manchester. Our address is corner of Wilbraham Road/Egerton Rd South, Chorlton, Manchester M21 0XJ (use M21 0UB for SatNavs) .

Jenny-Anne Bishop

Sibyls' Constitution

The Sibyls has been run as an informal organisation consisting of a group of members, without any structure in place. In recent years, that informality has led to increasing difficulties, as legislation, financial requirements, legal protection, insurance requirements and safeguarding issues increase.

Since its original formation Sibyls has been organising more activities and doing more things, so that these issues of personal liability, legal protection, insurance requirements and safeguarding are of increasing concern

The proposed constitution has been written in a way that seeks to make its regulation as light as possible. As an organisation which needs to protect the confidentiality of its members, provisions for dealing with breaches in confidentiality also need to be put in place.

The turnover of the Sibyls is too small for it to be appropriate to formally register as a charity: however having a constitution which clearly defines its objectives in the

required way, should enable it to apply to the Inland Revenue so that donations to the Sibyls which are eligible for gift aid may be made.

This announcement gives advance notice that the constitution for the sibyls will come into effect on and from the 1st October 2019 subject to ratification at the Sibyls together meeting during the Sibyls Purley chase weekend on the 27-29 September 2019,

During the previous two years of consultation Sibyls members have had an opportunity to suggest changes to the proposed constitution. This period of consultation is now closed.

Any member of the Sibyls who cannot attend the Sibyls Together Meeting during the Purley Chase Weekend and who wishes their views to be presented should email them to enquiries@sibyls.co.uk at least two weeks before the meeting.

The draft constitution, which was available for consultation (and has been legally checked by a QC) can be downloaded by clicking on the link below.

<http://sibyls.gndr.org.uk/documents/WebCon.pdf>

Male and Female He Created Them

The Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education has issued this document purportedly as a guide for families and schools with trans children. However, it is basically an attack on what it terms “gender ideology” – the notion that as an assertion of “radical autonomy” we can “choose” our gender or deconstruct the notion of gender altogether, at great cost to marriage, families and society. The document, with a highly critical commentary from New Ways Ministry, may be accessed at:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/06/11/excerpts-from-male-and-female-he-created-them-the-vaticans-latest-document-on-gender/>

The document is of course deeply disappointing and indeed depressing: it proposes dialogue and accompaniment but shows no sign that the authors themselves have engaged in any dialogue at all with actual trans people. More encouragingly, there have been many responses to the document presenting a very different and far more positive picture of the reality of trans lives. In the same week that the document was issued The Tablet published an excellent editorial and an article by David Jones, the director of the Anscombe Bioethics Institute in Oxford, who is seeking to develop a theological approach to trans people based on our own lived experiences:

Tablet editorial:

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/editors-desk/1/16172/gender-and-identity-the-vatican-has-gone-astray>

Gender theory and gender reality: article in Tablet by Dr David Jones:

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/16194/gender-theory-and-gender-reality>

David had earlier this year published a ground-breaking (in Catholic terms) article in the Tablet suggesting that being trans is simply one way to be human:

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/15732/transgender-one-more-way-to-be-human>

Not “gender ideology” but gender “euphoria” – a Catholic theologian comments on the Vatican document:

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/16250/gender-identity-and-the-joy-of-fulfilment>

Catholic parents of trans child comment on the harm the Vatican document may do:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/06/13/the-vaticans-new-document-on-gender-is-there-hope/>

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/13/catholic-trans-child-vatican-gender-transition-family?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Copy_to_clipboard&fbclid=IwAR18y2nLJ_QPPM-3KwMR5Vu7-gBCJJ0hPDNhKjKcARXZudosp5CWSZTMLkc

What are Catholic teachers supposed to do with the Vatican document?

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/06/24/what-are-catholic-lgbtq-educators-supposed-to-do-with-the-vaticans-gender-document/>

Susannah Cornwall writes:

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/susannah-cornwall/my-rough-and-ready-take-on-the-vaticans-gender-ideology-document/10158757361553747/>

[An extract: The authors *could* have offered something of the richness of what it has been (and still is) possible for the theological tradition to say about how sexuality, sex and gender as aspects of human being and experience intertwine and allow us to know and communicate complex, troubling and beautiful truths about ourselves as creatures, creators and curators. Rather, the document retreats to a reactionary project of wallpapering over not only cracks but huge great missing sections of theological wall – a wall whose bricks have been quietly carried away one by one to be used in new and more edifying ways by the very queer, trans, intersex and otherwise “destabilizing” people who dare to see their lives, bodies and identities as sites of God’s grace.]

Savitri Hensman writes:

http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/28472?fbclid=IwAR3pYDj8q_RksTh0SEiagJ9C2ZVT6Le5hLAMAeQ2kRMK43OdmMdL6p_YSmE

“Putting lip stick on a pig”:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/06/21/new-vatican-gender-document-is-nothing-more-than-putting-lipstick-on-a-pig-says-journalist/>

New document on gender expected from Vatican as Cardinal admits failure to listen:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/06/18/second-vatican-document-on-gender-expected-even-as-cardinal-admits-failure-to-listen/>

Response from Susan Gilchrist:

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

Poll shows US Catholics increasingly supportive of trans rights:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/06/12/new-poll-shows-u-s-catholics-are-increasingly-supportive-of-transgender-rights/>

US bishops affirm opposition to trans rights as strategic priority:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/06/20/u-s-bishops-provisionally-affirm-opposition-to-transgender-rights-as-key-strategic-priority/>

US bishop says Catholics should not support Pride events:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/06/02/catholic-bishop-pride-month-harmful-children/>

Cardinal Robert Sarah has a poor opinion of us: gender confirmation surgery is a Luciferian refusal to accept God's will:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/04/11/transgender-surgeries-are-luciferian-refusal-of-gods-will-says-top-vatican-cardinal/?fbclid=IwAR2x8TNtiB37bmUfAOGxP2nh1uaJDtw7QoNsf8KYVDhqzNN9SPhd5IAXPCw>

And what of the dear old CofE: is there any news from there to lighten the gloom a little? I'm sure there is but once more the pattern is evident of a step forward being followed by a hasty retreat. So the bishops opted to meet opponents of trans liturgies without one trans person being present:

https://www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk/bishops-meet-those-who-oppose-their-transgender-guidance/?fbclid=IwAR1MXD7UHBHccnxCUB0Ku0mxV_-bjVVboOjmAu0OPS5wZT9jtv5liGELevg

Vicar resigns over treatment by school of trans pupil:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7070773/Vicar-resigns-schools-plan-eight-year-old-pupils-sex-change-secret-parents.html?fbclid=IwAR3Jq5d5F472wYVOMN0XaA43c8zdO8G0iaSQzjCQe4gej-dA2KuJXp13tz4>

Vicar explains his views on You Tube for Christian Concern –: Trigger warning from Tina: This man is a signatory to the letter that has requested the Church of England's Guidance on prayer with trans people be withdrawn. Note the use of the phrase 'gender ideology' which is what the protestors have accused the bishops of being influenced by in producing the Guidance - presumably a reference to me, and to Rachel and Sarah who were invited to advise its drafters.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHQLmT5iOKo&fbclid=IwAR2oyZMCXxk7aJ7zReeBritWlZH1tfxbpLOzoQk779QotCXCPj-CfReMejU>

Bishop of Chelmsford send “Ad Clerum” letter to clergy about the matter:

https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/uploads-new/pages/Ad_Clerum_June_2019_FINAL.pdf

John Parker explains his resignation to his parishioners:

<https://www.premierchristianity.com/Blog/Read-the-letter-from-the-CofE-vicar-resigning-over-the-Church-s-approach-to-sexuality?fbclid=IwARovjFAMGqIXjUa9auLMbayXFEk4sgO41J-2O5f2ZMrmVVrIP49T-hmo7BI>

Sara Gillingham’s challenge to the LLF process plus comments from Colin Coward:

<http://www.unadulteratedlove.net/blog/2019/5/31/holding-the-house-of-bishops-to-account-sara-gillinghams-challenge?fbclid=IwAR0ejeVDDIlyFB0Cp9sTHdkv709OL1v8V4wpoxjXv9bPY40NeJ-TIlytRaU>

Justin Welby comes clean on equal marriage:

(<https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/40279-anglican-bishops-extend-special-gesture-kenyan-gay-community?fbclid=IwAR3VLEiD6my7jipWkiKcrOjs3d2ygtuk4-qkEPKpGRMBTjcf2wX7NhxGLt4>)

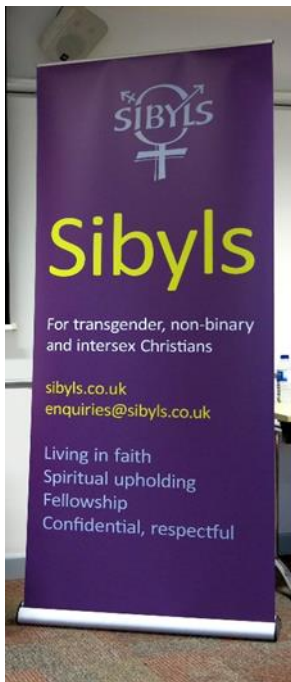
But Church says couple are still married after one transitions:

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/07/04/church-england-will-condone-gay-couples-first-time-long-man/?fbclid=IwAR1WYBMu5KGANM_Cxl2jdNSV1IsvleBKub2ACF74bMq-H7Z9h9bYLaNi4-8

Is the integrity of the CofE compromised over gay priests? Andrew Foreshow-Cain thinks so:

https://viamedia.news/2019/05/01/integrity-compromise-the-church-of-england/?fbclid=IwAR3PlyvnsRc5O7Cba_ThuemhyhcEFev7Bj8WfdEUCbMhRldr9cBqTtOorQA

Canterbury Tales – Conference of European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups



Chaucer's pilgrims travelled from London in April's soft showers. Those attending the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups annual conference, held for the first time in the UK, converged in brilliant summer sunshine in Canterbury from all parts of Europe – including some even from Russia – and enjoyed an exhilarating celebration of unity enhanced by diversity.

It was the conference that almost didn't happen. The venue was switched from London to the University of Kent in Canterbury at only a few days' notice but the organisers with the wonderful support of staff at the University and reinforced by, among others, the indefatigable Jayne Ozanne rose to the challenge and delivered a memorable and almost glitch-free conference.

As a member group, the Sibyls were heavily involved – Elaine Sommers of course is co-President of the Forum. Individual Sibyls, including Shanon Ferguson, Tina Beardsley, Susan Gilchrist and Pauline Fleck, led sessions at the “Pre-Conference” focused on trans and non-binary people and Tina also led a workshop on the pastoral care of trans people at the main conference and spoke as an individual speaker and panel member at one of the plenary sessions. The trans pre-conference sessions were attended by people from countries including Russia, Armenia, Poland, Sweden and Western European countries and encompassed a wide range of gender identities and expressions. It was fascinating to compare the experience of being trans or non-binary in very different societies and church communities – one non-binary person had fled from Ukraine to seek political asylum in the UK via Russia and Israel.....

One highlight of the conference was the guided tour, complete with talk from the Dean, of Canterbury Cathedral. The Cathedral itself was not quite at its best,

festooned with scaffolding and clearly in need of major repair – a symbol perhaps both of the state of the country and Anglican Church? But hearteningly, while we were there, the news was announced that Rose Hudson-Wilkin had been appointed to be the next bishop of Dover and the first ever black female bishop in the CofE – an increase in diversity appearing before our very eyes in the heart of Anglicanism....

We returned to Canterbury the next day, a day of exceptional heat, for our act of corporate worship in the Methodist Church of St Peter where we joyously thanked and praised our Lord, affirmed our faith and celebrated our unity with each other. Between the service and gala dinner in the evening a few sun-lovers took themselves off to the beautiful beach at Botany Bay. I expect they enjoyed it but no report reached your reporter's ears. The dinner was served to us by staff who came in specially for the occasion, typical of the outstanding efforts made by the University during the whole weekend.

The keynote speech for the conference was delivered by Ruth Hunt, the soon to be standing down CEO of Stonewall. Ruth has been a great champion of trans people and will be much missed. Her speech was inspirational. She referred to the relentless anti-trans propaganda from the media but also to the need to forgive those who hurt us and reject us. At the plenary sessions, Tina amusingly described her encounter with a protestor at the women-only swimming pond on Hampstead Heath and her appearance at London Fashion Week. More seriously, she explained why she had to resign, on conscientious grounds, from the coordinating group for the CofE Living in Love and Faith project. There was a sparkling, witty presentation from Carol Shepherd, flying the flag for bisexual people, notionally part of the "LGBTI" grouping but in practice often invisible. She spoke powerfully of the cross as the ultimate intersectionality and of sanctity as subversive. Philip Baldwin recounted movingly the experience of being diagnosed HiV positive as a 24 year old agnostic and his search for God and an accepting church community – he didn't find it at Holy Trinity Brompton or the Hillsong Church. Jayne Ozanne somehow managed to fit in an address about her own difficult journey as an evangelical to self-acceptance.

Elaine as co-president delivered the closing address for the conference, emphasising that our unity as European LGBT Christians far transcended any temporary political changes. And the team preparing for next year's conference in Budapest made an appearance. It will be great. I shall be there

Pauline Fleck

Feminine Incarnation – Richard Rohr/Jacqui Lewis

She Is Love

Why not? Why not pretend for now that the Absolute (the Great Mystery, the Ground of Being) sometimes expresses itself in the body of woman? Pretending God's a dude hasn't exactly worked out for the vast majority of the human family, let alone the animal and plant communities or the air or the waters. Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, an African American pastor and author that I greatly respect, spoke at CAC's recent conference on the theme of racial and gender inequity. Not surprisingly, some white folks in our audience were very uncomfortable. And that's okay! Discomfort is a teacher; it's an invitation to learn and grow. As unpleasant as it may be, we must face the truth of Christianity's complicity in creating and supporting systems of oppression. It's more than time for all of us to reimagine God.

Keep your heart open as you read Jacqui Lewis' vision of God:

It makes sense that because white men created so much of religion, the image of God was an old white man with grey hair. However, this image needs a makeover because he's no longer working. My God is a curvy black woman with dreadlocks and dark, cocoa-brown skin. She laughs from her belly and is unashamed to cry. She can rock a whole world to sleep, singing in her contralto voice. Her sighs breathe life into humanity. Her heartbreaks cause eruptions of justice and love.

Of course, because God is a mystery, we don't know everything about Her. So out of our imaginations and our yearnings, our hopes and our fears, we make stuff up. At our best, we project goodness, power, kindness, and love onto God. At our worst, we create a God who is punitive, angry, judgmental, and harsh. We do this because we are those things, and we think they make us safe.

Projection itself is not the problem. The problem occurs when we don't examine those projections with a critical eye, with a hermeneutic of suspicion. The issue is that we write laws that codify the shadow parts of the god we create, in order to diminish others, to abuse others. The trouble starts when our god is too small, when we reduce our worst projections to fit in our pocket and keep this god on our team. When we neglect to confront this created god, we get the Crusades and the Doctrine of Discovery; the murder of indigenous people and Jews; apartheid and enslaved

Africans; sexism, xenophobia, and homophobia—all in the name of the too-puny god that is the worst of ourselves.

I know I've got my projections. They are inspired by my imagination and by textual studies. In Hebrew, the words for womb and mercy have the same root, and the word for spirit is feminine: *ruach*. In Greek, the word *pneuma* [breath or spirit or soul] has a feminine article, the word *Sophia* stands for wisdom, and the word *agape*—God's love for us—is also a feminine word. Therefore, my God is an incarnate feminine power, who smells like vanilla and is full of sass and truth, delivered with kindness. She'll do anything for her creation; her love is fierce. She weeps when we do and insists on justice. She is God. She is Love.

Conversion Therapy

Anum Ahmed and John Peart from the Government Equalities Office are leading the Government's LGBT Action Plan commitment around bringing forward proposals to **end conversion therapy practices** in the UK. "By conversion therapy, we mean techniques to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. For more details about this public commitment, please see page 15 of the [LGBT Action Plan 2018](#).

We're currently engaging with a range of stakeholders to better understand the following broad questions to develop our knowledge in this area:

- The nature and scale of conversion therapy practices in three different contexts: health, faith/culture/community and commercial settings.
- Whether these practices differ depending on whether you have a minority sexual orientation or minority gender identity?
- What is the impact of undergoing conversion therapy and what support is available?

Are you able to share any insights on the questions above?

You are also welcome to signpost your members to some research we have commissioned Coventry University to undertake - please see more information below. The academic is currently undertaking interviews with people who have undergone efforts to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. People can register their interest via the link below.

<https://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/areas-of-research/innovative-research-across-the-life-course/research-into-efforts-to-change-sexual-orientation-or-gender-identity-call-for-participants/>

Anum can be contacted at anum.ahmed@geo.gov.uk and M 07540316519.

Review of *Pose*

What is *Pose* about? It's set in 1980s New York in the world of "ball" culture: a world where trans women and other LGBT people compete by strutting, preening, dancing and modelling various OTT styles. It is a sub-culture where those who are marginalised and discriminated against can find status, purpose and respect. Groups known as "houses" are formed which function like family units – offering, it is suggested, more care and love than many more conventional families: in the first episode you see a young gay man being thrashed by his father and thrown out of his home for being gay. The houses are headed up by formidable "mothers" – Blanca, a trans woman of colour like most of the women, is such a mother and she rescues the homeless gay man (who just happens to be an exceptionally talented dancer) and through sheer force of personality has him enrolled at a prestigious and over-subscribed dance school.

Blanca has also just been told that she is HIV positive and the glittery, joyous world of the balls keeps being intercut with scenes of dying patients from the hospital. You see her being thrown out of a gay bar and being misgendered and arrested by the police. These trans women of colour defiantly and courageously live lives held cheap and despised by the world around them. One of them, Angel (major spoiler alert here) who works in the sex trade, meets Stan, who has an executive job in Trump Tower, a fine home, beautiful young wife and two young children. Yet Stan confesses to Angel that his whole life is unreal, an empty sham: he envies and admires what he sees as Angel's authenticity.

I think this is the question *Pose* keeps presenting: who is actually real? How does one achieve authenticity in life? From one perspective, the lives of the trans women, with their constant posing, dressing up and transmutations, are highly artificial: to many their very identity as women is just another pose. One of the mothers, the imperious Elektra, is the mistress of a wealthy white man. She is gorgeous but on the insistence of her lover has not had gender confirmation surgery. She has to choose between keeping her lover and the luxurious life style he makes possible and becoming her true self. She has her surgery and is duly rejected and evicted. She has to swallow her pride and earn her living. She has chosen to be real.

Pose beautifully creates the world of brash and glitzy, greed-is-good 1980s New York and the hidden sub-culture of trans women and gay men of colour valiantly being themselves with HIV, poverty and arrest ever present threats. Not all of them could have been as beautiful and possessed of such generosity of spirit and largeness of heart as Blanca and her house. Even now the lives of trans women of colour in America are held cheap as the grim litany of deaths remembered on our Trans Day of Remembrance each year attests. *Pose* does not gloss over these hard realities but as a celebration of lives lived from the heart and with fidelity to our true

Trans Health

Trans uterus:

<https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/apr/09/transgender-film-maker-jason-barker-i-found-dressing-as-a-uterus-very-liberating>

Trans Chinese do diy gender confirmation surgery:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/may/10/china-failing-trans-people-as-young-attempt-surgery-on-themselves-study>

Trans heart attack:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/04/11/transgender-heart-attacks/>

Webberleys move gender clinic to Spain:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/05/20/gendergp-trans-clinic-moving-spain-uk-suspends-doctors/>

Pink News shows some of the impact:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/05/28/gendergp-closure-limits-trans-healthcare-options/>

Trans Wales: delays in providing GIC services cause anger:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-48093698>

Trans Welsh woman: effect of hormone treatment was like being struck by lightning:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-48102578>

Trans loneliness:

https://stillhere.info/loneliness-and-isolation?fbclid=IwAR2NDqzdoRr0qY_sNbvZvmlW3iV0gGXwLrXvhLOyM2gBq7mTN5lWaSG3ph4

Trans disabled person

https://www.hrc.org/blog/trans-activist-and-lyft-employee-underscores-the-importance-of-transgender?fbclid=IwAR2yt2UGblQ8foJ2e-ttQq_j8BZKNKYi1tOOjp_b3UFY_oQZfjH82Sv4Hww

Healthcare Chaplaincy and trans people:

Susannah Cornwall writes: "I have a paper in the new issue of Health and Social Care Chaplaincy: "Healthcare Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care for Trans People: Envisaging the Future". This contains some of the findings from the Modelling Transgender Spiritual Care project on challenges for people transitioning within the NHS system. If you don't have institutional access, feel free to message or email (s.m.cornwall AT [exeter.ac.uk](mailto:s.m.cornwall@exeter.ac.uk)) and I'll happily send you a copy."

RCGP call for better care for trans patients:

https://www.rcgp.org.uk/about-us/news/2019/june/rcgp-calls-for-whole-system-approach-to-improving-nhs-care-for-trans-patients.aspx?fbclid=IwAR3jpeja8QSOOrRH3dqXwnYqMqQxgOhZ1wfQyWh9YoOvOngRCQDpI0_7NAsk

Trans World

Trans Turkey:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/23/murder-transgender-lgbt-handekader-turkey>

Trans India – revered yet rejected:

https://www.openlynews.com/i/?id=ace1732e-a224-468c-8653-c55fb9cbebf&fbclid=IwAR3KM6Qnl2s-DmHj3f8y4gR6iKBZ2OxThn77G5CBbVquMTM9h9QRYFG5_mw

Trans Armenian: calls for her to be burned alive:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/apr/26/armenian-mps-call-for-trans-activist-to-be-burned-alive-after-historic-speech-lilit-martirosyan>

Trans Japan:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/04/12/japan-elects-transgender-assemblywoman/>

Another trans woman of colour killed in USA:

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/may/21/muhaysia-booker-trans-woman-death-texas-dallas-mourns-activist>

Trans Italian mayor takes on far right:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/03/italys-first-transgender-mayor-says-kindness-revolution-can-defeat-far-right>

Trans in America: short history:

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/50-years-since-stonewall-transgender-people-are-still-fighting-for-their-lives?ref=scroll>

Trans Iceland puts us to shame:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/21/trans-issues-britain-iceland-law-intersex-rights?fbclid=IwAR0lhgo4TtayLo_W6cRleyldJDjXVoXFf6AQHk8_xbFjVAwhuP3mW_3OK4Y

Renaming serviced for trans Episcopalians in USA:

https://www.episcopalnewservice.org/2019/06/12/in-california-celebrating-a-new-name-and-affirming-authentic-identity/?fbclid=IwAR1NywJvSEIL24POunyITAlf_cyQYyGbwPZy6Y1BuzV1Mj81XIWmCyOF50#.XQHkMrj1bTQ.facebook

Thai trans MP refuses to be labelled:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/06/i-am-not-here-to-entertain-meet-thailands-first-transgender-mp>

Trans buddhist:

<https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/transgender-buddhist/?fbclid=IwAR31ks8eV4toy-8zGIQnuUJWLRk3ZoONnTu3R2oTwk57Fwb7QhydOZqSI4Q>

Trans Families and Relationships

Lesbian's support for her trans sisters:

<https://www.openlynews.com/i/?id=3e93f8c3-2944-4f24-9b4d-9e6fad7ef162&fbclid=IwAR3HBV8wEmXrshCOWfYAAe47S3tloy91w0Wra3lxGb94la1WnAmp4N-yAik>

Brilliant trans dad:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/apr/20/the-dad-who-gave-birth-pregnant-trans-freddy-mcconnell>

Loving but unaffirming parents of trans children:

https://www.queertheology.com/lgbtq-kids-with-unaffirming-parents/?__s=bm3gex8vnmp9isk5jzra

Stephanie transitions after wife becomes ill with dementia:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47854268>

Do you have to tell someone you're trans before dating them?

<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/no-dont-have-to-tell-you-im-trans-before-dating-you>

Trans Children

Trans Prince Harry: he supports Mermaids:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/04/24/prince-harry-shows-support-trans-kids-charity-mermaids/>

...but Jacqueline Wilson worries about medical interventions for trans children:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/04/23/jacqueline-wilson-kids-gender-reassignment/>

Childline charity cuts ties with Munroe Bergdorf over her support for trans children:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/06/09/childline-cuts-ties-munroe-bergdorf/>

150 NSPCC staff condemn decision:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/11/munroe-bergdorf-nspcc-staff-condemn-decision-to-cut-ties-with-trans-activist?fbclid=IwAR2jPhDhQD5SQibMS38DFOk4mCoeTa4IjcBGWUG9U6Xv9KKvCu7rK4Zcww4>

Good letter in Times from Nick Gibb, schools Minister, on Birmingham school LGBT protests:

https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/it-s-wrong-to-protest-about-the-teaching-of-gay-relationships-t0g85vxx6?shareToken=1dfba12938ebdee2cbd18c74b22a860e&fbclid=IwAR2SRHJpnp-zb7za1YFwnwsEIja2pwNQWVZHh01D03oh_N-XUoJ69oG0ULI

Trans Media and Representation

Anti-trans propaganda – detecting and debunking it:

<https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2017/10/20/how-detect-and-debunk-anti-trans-propaganda-media?fbclid=IwAR2t9mTAIZesciJrZTGBztvEIEhknPAAolrOLhVh17XYESwStN2pWtvNQXI>

Trans journalism – some hazards for non-trans reporters:

<https://medium.com/news-to-table/https-medium-com-news-to-table-why-is-reporting-on-trans-issues-so-fraught-c3b52b4b97c4>

...and a trans Times journalist:

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/patrickstrudwick/times-sued-transphobic-bullying-former-editor?fbclid=IwAR2eWYS1-dLCgHg7UJUu-7hQVNWUCerocil3MZxRmhkOkCALQRdtyFCGjM>

Gender representation in modern visual culture: is all gender a performance?

https://www.academia.edu/38949475/Gender_Representation_in_Modern_Visual_Culture?source=swp_share&fbclid=IwAR2OGC1qtNI_UhmfZ7hJbDan1ElHpLbs0vuk9rThWMLCzPC1001xMpjJoXA

Trans Politics

Mhairi Black speaks up for trans people in HofC IDAHOBIT debate – to virtually empty chamber:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OjFzfxA9y4&fbclid=IwAR2qLade-8MbB1_4iG0218dDdecW5f-ZIDhpmbkRIHcj07jYob9e-wlWlXA&app=desktop

Scottish Govt statement on reform of GRA:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/statement-gender-recognition/?fbclid=IwAR3MF2kwiRYNaDVJ69YQOHsSPkTbPhqytPrNJlSXEBHq-nQ-r5iljpCnjVY>

Trans Theresa: PM concerned about aggression towards trans people and misrepresentation in the media:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/07/02/theresa-may-i-am-concerned-about-transphobic-aggression-and-misrepresentation-of-trans-people-in-media/>

Trans Other

Trans exile and coming home:

<https://viamedia.news/2019/04/20/voices-of-hope-april-20th-2019/?fbclid=IwAR36EGLbiczpuR1J5pRsRpkI0hI5zdNRqpidnh29UdnEvWCuhPpuFPrxQQQ>

Podcast with Ruth Hunt who stands up staunchly for trans people:

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2019/apr/29/on-the-frontline-in-the-fight-for-lgbt-rights>

Black women and black trans women:

https://thegrio.com/2019/05/20/guide-stop-failing-and-forgetting-black-transgender-women/?fbclid=IwAR1Bi_K3-wqar0POFaHhphva7PTEmjmlPmuxl2KupovAqJtut2lcrJf8nZI

Ladies only pond on Hampstead Heath now open to trans women:

https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/hampstead-heath-ladies-pond-now-16319204?fbclid=IwAR3Au9wLSrlfrk-Gkw3g587_VHl5jbMbDkJw9GoYICg2eO8vAPKanO3xAC0

Trans horse on Dr Who:

: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eURhm7Q0Kw>

Kathleen Stock on Philosophy Bites on “What is a woman?” (Trigger warning: she has views which some trans people will disagree with or find offensive):

[https://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/f/5/d/f5d20193097ed4d3/Kathleen Stock on What is a Woman .m p3?c_id=43029653&cs_id=43029653&expiration=1560283593&hwt=57a6249f10b324531cd29d4ce77415ba](https://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/f/5/d/f5d20193097ed4d3/Kathleen%20Stock%20on%20What%20is%20a%20Woman%20.m.p3?c_id=43029653&cs_id=43029653&expiration=1560283593&hwt=57a6249f10b324531cd29d4ce77415ba)

Trans ex-army officer awarded MBE:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-48616344?fbclid=IwAR1We4cLFnXtCyGVT50wRQTEVjFxbREKASHk84HndHwtYI_8-3w9GECuESc

30 academics sign letter opposing trans rights – 3,600 disagree:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/06/18/after-30-academics-sign-letter-opposing-trans-rights-3600-sign-letter-in-support/>

Battle fatigue and trans community:

<https://medium.com/@Phaylen/battle-fatigue-and-the-transgender-community-9834e5896676>

Trans Marvel character:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/06/23/marvel-introduces-first-trans-character-jessica-jones-season-3/>

Transphobic hate crimes rise by 81%:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48756370?fbclid=IwAR0NuzRvagLhgkxjPOFuxhW_HlKxjL_oR8-LJKfcCtLHHF_JOhAu7LdbTCo

Elaine Sommers flies high:

<https://viamedia.news/2019/04/03/voices-of-hope-april-3rd-2019?fbclid=IwAR1vsqzD41aWpz5Bld6EjLClYPrX2A8SD2dUTG1UxPAhNE2X3s2nBHu21o>

Trans Dunkirk veteran and painter dies:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-46757204>

Some views on a less binary future:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-35242180>

Pride organisations issue powerful statement of support to trans people:

https://divamag.co.uk/2019/03/31/pride-organisations-issue-joint-pride-with-the-t-statement-in-support-of-trans-community/?fbclid=IwAR1zrZ-QEqM-l0xxWLvaAby_Ln-D6ciFUfvQwDxykVpoWG_22B5Ppcdp2l

Trans chorister: treble to bass:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/clip/e824965b-496d-4e04-882e-f5e7c789e023?fbclid=IwAR17i-BVsq9sA0VnCLnFpbanAYmF9tRR53etuFgRTaa6YkBDmrNjpeEUrS4>