



SIBYLS LOGO - ROBYN GOLDEN - HANV 28 MAY 2018



“Transition is about spirituality from start to finish, because it is about making the outside reflect what is inside and what is inside is spiritual.” GIRES.

Newsletter 90 – Christmas 2019

Dear Sibyls

Despite the weather, ever more looming threat of climate change and the fairly dire state of our politics, 2019 has by no means been without signs of hope and encouragement. The Sibyls enjoyed a splendid weekend at Purley Chase in Warwickshire and played a full part in the excellent conference in Canterbury of the European Forum of LGBT Christian organisations, showing that, amongst LGBT people at least, we have an underlying unity with our fellow Europeans that is impervious to political change. However, the persecution of bishop Szymon in Poland (see below) shows that the position of trans and other LGBT people in parts of Europe is getting worse not better. Let us hope here that one benefit of the election will be progress finally being made on reform of the Gender Recognition Act, though, as the research commissioned by Mermaids (see below) shows (as if research were needed...), trans people continue to be demonised in the media, creating an unfavourable climate for reform. The Sibyls now has funds granted to us by the Jim Cotter Trust, for which we are extremely grateful. Of course we wish to use the money for the benefit of all members so we would be happy to hear suggestions from any member for using the money, consistent with the aims of our organisation.

May I emphasise once more that all views expressed in the newsletter are personal ones and not endorsed by the Sibyls as a whole. They include some views with which some members will strongly disagree or even find offensive – I apologise if this is the case but I believe it is important to be kept informed of the whole range of views in what we all know can be a divisive and highly emotive area. I also believe that as Sibyls we should set an example of disagreeing, where we do, with mutual respect, courtesy and love. In 2020, please do feel free to send me your own views and news entirely as you see fit.

In a world that often seems to be getting increasingly dark, we are reminded in this holy season of the light that shines in the dark, a light that the darkness cannot overcome. May the light and love of Christ shine on you and your loved ones – may you have a joyous Christmas and a very happy new year.

Pauline Fleck
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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 2020

2020 London Evening Meetings

13 February, 9 April, 11 June, 13 August, 8 October, 10 December

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

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

Forthcoming Events

European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups – annual conference 20 – 24 May 2020, Budapest, Hungary

Modern Church Living in Love and Faith conference – 13 – 15 July, High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts

Green Belt – 28 – 31 August 2020

Sibyls' Residential weekend – 27 – 29 September, 2020, Purley Chase, Warwickshire

A message from our Chair (Yvonne Wood):

Sibyls is simple – we care for one another during our journeys of realisation and we share each other’s joys and sorrows in a context of prayer. Jay Walmsley started this group for people like her, and we continue that gentle upholding. At the heart of our purpose is fellowship - tea and cake, worship, sharing, laughter. For me, visits to Jay’s house for tea and worship were precious at a lonely and worrying time. Her prompting towards spiritual guidance rather than worry and practicalities was welcome.

Sibyls is complex – we are all over the country, there are not many of us and it is hard to get together for tea and sharing. And we have to be careful, confidential and sensitive to our families and our churches.

Let us spread the gentle upholding that Jay established throughout the regions, so we can know who is close by and who we can speak to. Let others you meet find out about Sibyls and let us know if you have a safe cosy place and a good cake shop, for this kind of fellowship is important.

Faith, Wildlife and Life’s Challenges: Sibyl *Judith Dene* reflects...

It is now over 60 years since I was confirmed and, in that time, life has sometimes had some unpleasant surprises, but it has also had some wonderful moments.

As a youngster at secondary school I acquired an interest in birdwatching, which due to a master who ran a wildlife club at school, was extended into a broader interest in wildlife and the mysteries of how life evolved.



Avocet

Over the years my knowledge of birds increased, and I found that I was also drawn to specialise in mammals especially badgers and bats. Watching wildlife makes you slow down and observe what is around you, but it also makes you aware of the perilous state of some of our plants, insects, mammals etc as when you look back through your records and read articles you realise how the world is changing especially with climate warming and we must take steps to reverse the decline of species before it is too late.



Badger emerging from sett



Brown Long-eared Bat

My interest in mammals developed over the years and I have spent many hours watching badgers and bats, both nocturnal beasts, which means you are out when most others are either tucked up watching television or in bed but the peace and quiet plus watching the antics of these beautiful beasts makes the loss of sleep worthwhile. I also act as an expert witness as sadly badgers and bats are often treated badly by people. Badgers are still used for badger baiting for example, with bets being placed on which dog will win the fight. So, whilst I may not be leading protest marches for climate change, I do my bit other ways.

For me being outdoors watching nature around me is similar to being in a church or cathedral, as you can switch off the traffic noises and other extraneous sounds and listen to the sounds of the wild.....the running stream flowing over rocks, birds singing, bees humming, grasses rustling and much more and it is this I find helps me clear my mind and focus on any problems I have and take the time to analyse them and how I need to resolve the issues I may have. What has sometimes seemed insurmountable suddenly becomes more easily dealt with and often not a major issue.

Whilst over the years my faith has been challenged several times, the biggest challenge was when my son of 16 months was involved in a road traffic accident when he was out with his maternal grandmother. My then mother in law was pushing the pram across a busy dual carriage way when they were hit by a car and ended up flying over the top of the car. Sadly, mother in law died 7 hours later from her injuries. My son was initially not found, as at first people thought the pushchair was a shopping trolley, however a police officer realised it was not, took one look at my son and his failing state due to shock and bundled him into the patrol car and headed for the hospital under blue light. The doctor at A&E told me if he had not done this by the time the ambulance got to him, he would have been dead through system shut down. My son was transferred to the regional neurosurgical unit with a head injury. Things got worse over the next few days when he started fitting and the drugs were not working. We were told the only drug left could stop the fits but could also kill him and we were asked to make a decision on whether to give the drug or not. We got over that hurdle only to find that he was drowning in his own fluids as he was not passing fluid. No hope was given this time, however a ward sister hung back after the doctors left the cot side and suggested massaging in the bladder area and yes it worked, thankfully. All this really challenged my faith and I did question why God had put us through this for many months. What did help me was the

friends we had and the support I got from some of the members of the congregation and clergy at Durham Cathedral where I worshipped. Neighbours looked after our dog and house and no matter what time I arrived home from hospital one was always there to find out the latest news and to ask what else we needed done.....such support and caring was so welcome. Even in the darkest hour you are never alone, if you are willing to let others in to help you, and most of all God is always there I feel and yes it has been a trial at times with challenges but they are done for a purpose. When I reflect on what has happened over the years, and the difficulties I had in getting my son back to a semblance of normalness, I know these challenges have made me a stronger person and I hope a more understanding and tolerant person to others. He is now 38, partially handicapped, partially sighted but has a driving licence, used to play rugby and yes, he also is interested in wildlife and like me apparently finds the wide-open spaces a church where he can talk to God just as easily as if in church.

As I said earlier, I look on the vastness of the world as a church in itself, and can be equally as happy praying out in the wild as I am sitting in a pew in the most magnificently decorated cathedral as to me they are one and the same, they are just decorated differently. You may find bleak times, but always remember, that there is hope, and prayer can be very therapeutic and you can pray anywhere and at any time.



Moon rising over Loch Naver

(All photos are copyright of Judith E Dene)

Transgender abuse and the Church

Comment by Sibyl *Elaine Sommers*

Like most of us, I often receive invitations from Facebook friends to sign petitions concerning a current injustice or the like. This week I had one from a Christian friend about a trans activist who was taking a Catholic journalist/campaigner to court over their use of words about trans people, which were considered by the activist to be abusive. The petition was to defend and support the journalist, who was being taken to court. She was the seen as the victim, the trans person the abuser. When I looked

into the case, I didn't like what either of them was saying and, after some thought, I declined to sign the petition.

Such situations, where people on both sides see themselves as victims, are all too common these days, each one trying to outdo the other as the most injured party. Being trans myself, this sort of exchange on public or social media fills me with sadness, as it is unlikely to achieve anything, apart from bolstering the participants' feeling that they are in the right. I do very little of my LGBT advocacy online, so I don't get to see some of the vile comments which get posted about, or even by, trans people. This is probably just as well, for the sake of my own health and well-being. However, I am aware of the current statistics concerning trans online abuse. For instance, out of 10 million posts concerning trans in the UK and US over a three-and-a-half year period, 15 per cent were considered abusive to trans people. The highest rates of abuse were on YouTube and on discussion forums. This raises the question: how much does this sort of activity happen within The Church? Sadly, I hear many stories from trans people about marginalisation or rejection by churches. But as we are all supposed to be good Christian people, showing respect and love for each other, the abuse (or disrespect as I would prefer to call it) is much more nuanced and less visible. Trans people aren't usually rejected or ejected outright by churches (although I know people to whom this has happened). They are subtly made to feel unwelcome, by being told to seek prayer ministry for healing, often being referred to by the name or pronoun of their birth sex rather than that of their trans identity, having their spiritual ministry or eligibility for the PCC withdrawn. This is rather different from verbal abuse, but is no less distressing, something I can vouch for, since I have experienced all the above situations in the Church of England parish where I came out as trans, having attended that church for over 30 years. The inevitable outcome was that I left the church under a cloud (as the vicar was at pains to point out) and moved to a more accepting Anglican fellowship. So, whilst we may tut-tut at some of the abusive language used on social media concerning trans, we urgently need to examine the situation in our churches. The hurt being caused to trans people in our midst may be hidden, but we need to be aware that it is happening, and take steps to rectify the situation.

Petition in support of Bishop Szymon – by Elaine Sommers



May I draw your attention to serious charges being faced by Bishop Szymon Niemiec of Warsaw, and two of his colleagues? Bishop Szymon is a strong ally of the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups and we are concerned that he could be facing imprisonment or confinement in a psychiatric hospital. Sibyls members who attended the Forum's Trans pre-conference in Canterbury this year will remember Szymon's colourful and enthusiastic style, when he attended the Trans pre-conference. He is a great ally and is an active member of the Trans Working Group.

The decision to hold a religious service before a Pride Equality March in Warsaw prompted complaints from the authorities, and Bishop Szymon, Deacon Mariuz Wrzesinski and Krzysztof Leszczynski were summoned to the Chief Prosecutor's office to answer the charges. Observers have pointed out that such religious services before Pride marches have taken place for some years, with no prohibitions or complaints. One person commented that this case 'represents the current anti-LGBT+ upheavals in Poland.'

In contrast, many English cities regularly hold Pride services, including Bristol, Southwark, Liverpool, Lincoln, Durham and York Minster.

Sources close to the Polish case say that the Prosecutor is demanding psychiatric reports, to establish whether the accused is suffering from any mental illness, 'which might account for his behaviour'. As a board member of the European, I have got to know Szymon over a number of years and I know him to be a kind and reliable person, without a trace of being unbalanced.

In response to the arrests, an online petition was set up by a Forum member at change.org (<https://bit.ly/342xPWh>), and other official channels are being used throughout Europe. The petition in support of the three accused has almost reached 3000, but has levelled off. Please consider giving it a big Sibyls boost by adding your own name. Szymon could face either prison or involuntary psychiatric hospitalisation because of holding a Pride service, so we need to do all we can to publicise this injustice.

Reflection for the Transgender Day of Remembrance: 20 November 2019 by
Sibyl *Susan Gilchrist*

Matthew 28:19-20 (English Standard Version).

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”.

If you are transgender you will be aware of the increasing difficulties you have faced. United Kingdom Home Office statistics have shown an 81% increase in hate crimes against transgender people rising from 1,073 in the financial year 2016-2017 to 1,944 for the year 2017-2018. There is a further 37% increase in the year 2018-2019 and this is rising faster than any other protected group. You will also be aware of the attacks on your gender identity by certain religious groups who decide that this is a

God-given feature, which must always align with biological sex, and who argue that any departure from that, regardless of purpose, is disordered behaviour and it is automatically a depraved act. You will also be aware of the views of certain radical feminist groups who from the opposite viewpoint argue that gender identity is entirely socially determined, and the reason why transgender people depart from social expectations is to exert power and domination over women. It is decreed that their failure to succeed in the male role means they try to do it in the female role instead. Others argue from chromosomes at birth and deny all other effects. Each side listens only to its own arguments and neither side is prepared to believe that they might not be correct.

If you are transgender you are likely to be very angry that your real experiences are never listened to. For transsexuals, (as a generalisation), this understanding is instead one of a lifetime being forced to live in a gender role which one cannot identify with, with all of the anguish distress, rejection and high suicide rates that are involved. The statistics speak for themselves. A 2017 report undertaken by Cambridge University on behalf of Stonewall into the experiences of over 3,700 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils in Britain's schools shows that more than four in five transgender young people have self-harmed. More than two in five transgender young people have attempted to commit suicide. There is also great trauma which expresses itself in other ways. These figures are replicated in many other worldwide studies which almost universally report that around 40% of transgender people have attempted to take their own lives. Consistently it is shown that reasons for suicide relate to the guilt; the bullying; the rejection by families and communities; the made-up allegations of sexual abuse; the violence; the persecution and the scapegoating of this minority group. These are the features that create the anguish, depression and the self-loathing which lead transgender people into such suffering and distress.

With these statistics surely the real experiences of transgender people should be listened to. Not those of religious organisation or feminist groups who are trying to impose their own doctrines and theologies on people who are often in such distress. Perhaps that means listening to the great majority of the professional medical institutions who on a worldwide basis regard both gender and sexually variant identities and behaviour as naturally expected variations of the human condition, which are intrinsic to the personality created, that arise very early in development and cannot be changed either by the individual concerned or by the predations of others in subsequent life. Furthermore it identifies these as identity driven features instead of characteristics driven by reward. It is the need to be true to yourself, and not the search for a sex. This means that the same full range of moral expression must be found among transgender people who live lives in ways that are true to their own identities, as is found with other people in any walk of life.

That is far too often not the case. A major feature of gender complementarity comes from the way it separates the male from the female roles. In many societies gender discrimination is rife. It is built into the institutions of some of today's societies. It was also extreme in many parts of the first century world. Any form of gender and sexually variant behaviour which departs from the normal expectations of that society, for any purpose, challenges this distinction..... and the teaching of the Christian Church has traditionally declared that all forms of gender and sexually

variant behaviour are without exception disordered and depraved acts. It also recognises that this doctrine has developed from Church traditions and not from Jesus himself. But Jesus did not bring peace to the established institutions and the social order of his own society: instead he brought a sword. These transformations in Christian doctrine 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 has to look at the attitudes taken in many parts of the world to see the extremities this creates.

It is therefore 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 entirely with religious belief. 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. Today we remember those transgender people who have been murdered simply because they have tried to live lives in ways that are true to their own identities. Others have taken their own lives. In the United States at the present time, senior members of certain mainstream churches have been colluding with conservative Christian approaches to condemn without exception all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour as inappropriate acts. Taking note of the real experiences of transgender people is more than ever needed now. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus said *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”*.

As we listen to the names of those transgender people who have been murdered or committed suicide during the last year due to the increasing bullying, rejection by families and communities, made up allegations of sexual abuse, violence, persecution and the scapegoating which is being faced by this minority group, let us pray that we may all together find that true vision of a Christian Gospel that embraces everyone who lives in accordance with their true identities, in lives which fulfil the love of Christ. The fear that this is a condition which can be caught is not correct.

Sibyls' Liturgies

Did you know that there are liturgies available on the Sibyls Website for a variety of types of service?

Go to <http://sibyls.gndr.org.uk/indexmain.htm>, click on the “Pastoral Tab” and then on “Liturgies” tab and follow the links.

It is Christmas Time and a liturgy for a Christmas service is available

Fr Richard Rohr reflects on the Bible and LGBT People:

Where the Bible mentions [same-sex sexual] behavior at all, it clearly condemns it. I freely grant that. The issue is precisely whether the biblical judgment is correct. The Bible sanctioned slavery as well and nowhere attacked it as unjust. Are we prepared to argue today that slavery is biblically justified? [Over] one hundred and fifty years ago, when the debate over slavery was raging, the Bible seemed to be clearly on the slaveholders' side. Abolitionists were hard-pressed to justify their opposition to slavery on biblical grounds. Yet today, if you were to ask Christians in the [U.S.] South whether the Bible sanctions slavery, virtually everyone would agree that it does not. In the same way, fifty years from now people will look back in wonder that the churches could be so obtuse and so resistant to the new thing the Holy Spirit was doing among us regarding [sexuality].

What happened to bring about such a monumental shift on the issue of slavery was that the churches were finally driven to penetrate beyond the legal tenor of Scripture to an even deeper tenor, articulated by Israel out of the experience of the Exodus and the prophets and brought to sublime embodiment in Jesus' identification with harlots, tax collectors, the diseased and maimed and outcast and poor. It is that God sides with the powerless. God liberates the oppressed. God suffers with the suffering and groans toward the reconciliation of all things. Therefore Jesus went out of his way to declare forgiven [or unconditionally loved], and to reintegrate into society in all details, those who were identified [*by culture and religion, not God, I might add*] as "sinners" by virtue of the accidents of birth, or biology, or economic desperation. In the light of that supernal compassion, whatever our position on gays, the gospel's imperative to love, care for, and be identified with their sufferings is unmistakably clear. [*And make no mistake, despite the secular culture's celebration of LGBTQIA identities, there is still deep suffering in that community, most often at the hands of their own families and churches.*]

In the same way, women are pressing us to acknowledge the sexism and patriarchalism that pervades Scripture and has alienated so many women from the church. The way out, however, is not to deny the sexism in Scripture, but to develop an interpretive theory that judges even Scripture in the light of the revelation in Jesus. What Jesus gives us is a critique of domination in all its forms, a critique that can be turned on the Bible itself. The Bible thus contains the principles of its own correction. We are freed from bibliolatry, the worship of the Bible. It is restored to its proper place as witness to the Word of God. And that Word is a Person, not a book.

We have moved in the direction of justice and equity on many issues that were seemingly acceptable when the Scriptures were compiled: slavery, of course, but also capital and corporal punishment, bigamy, child-rearing practices, inheritance, taking interest on loans, and commerce in general. It seems to me that we as Christians should be at the forefront of ending and healing the suffering that has been caused by rejecting LGBTQIA individuals, refusing them full inclusion in our churches, and denying them equal protection under the law.

For those who were not at the Purley Chase weekend, here is a transcript of part of the talk given by the CofE priest, *Priscilla White* (Priscilla was quoting her speech at Synod in support of the “Blackburn” motion on trans liturgies):

I stand here as a cis-gendered hetero-sexual female. That identity, however, does not blind me to the fact that others are not as I am.

We have already heard in synod reference to the sixth day in the creation account in Genesis one where it is declared “Male and female he created them” and this seems to be used as a reason not to accept the issues around gender that are raised by trans people.

I would like to offer an interpretation of the Genesis account which could help us move from a purely binary approach to gender.

In this account we are presented with a series of days with other binaries alongside male and female, light and dark (or night and day) and that between dry land and the waters.

We know that in these other categories the binaries are not as binary as all that. We experience twilight, as darkness falls. marshland and beaches offer an ever-changing buffer between what is clearly water and what dry land. These hinterlands, as we might call them, defy the poetic/liturgical binaries in Genesis 1 where for the sake of economy of expression the writer does not footnote the complexities. Our creative God provides and is present in hinterland too.

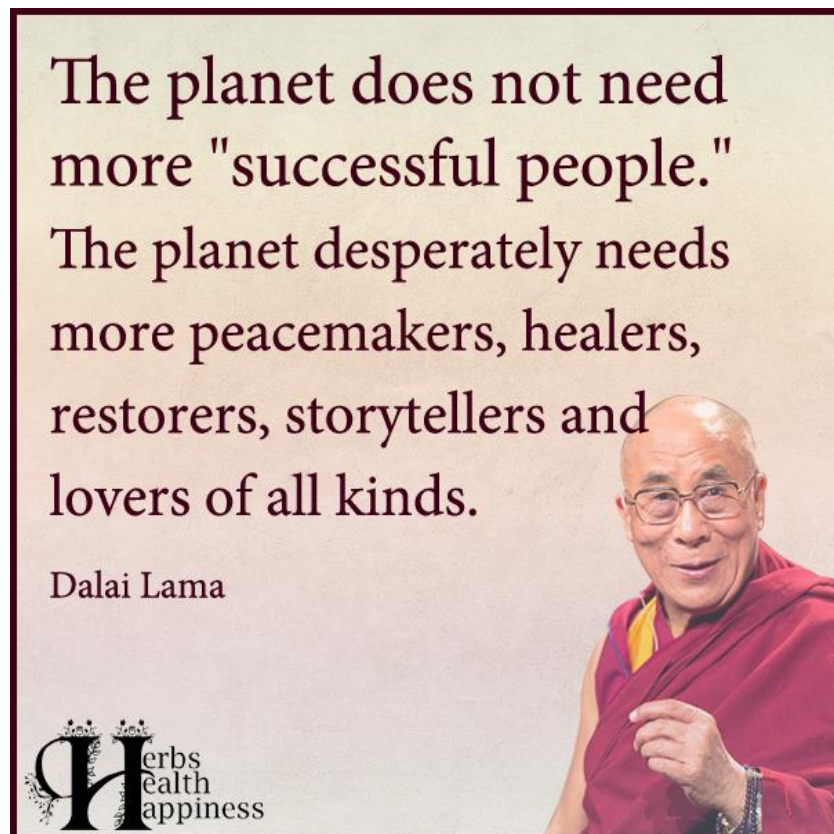
(God is as present in dark as light - see Psalm 139 as present on water as on dry land (think of the stilling of the storm) but God is also present in the twilight and in the marshland even though Genesis does not mention them.)

So I want to suggest that these hinterlands offer an interpretative key which can help us in considerations of gender issues and transgender issues in particular. I believe this concept can help us to welcome and accept that male and female are not always as simple as binary categories would suggest and be open to recognise the needs of those who inhabit complex gender hinterlands and who are seeking for their bodily expression more accurately to reflect their felt experience.

To give liturgical expression to this acceptance on a whole church level, rather than individual churches simply putting services together to reflect that sense of welcome

demonstrates to all those living through transition that the church as a whole understands that all are not the same and that some people inhabit complex hinterlands. It will give those living with issues of gender dysphoria and those who transition a sense that the church as a whole knows that they are not a problem.

In recognising liturgically the deepest movements of people's lives, in recognising the moments when identity in humanity and in Christ can be reaffirmed we offer real welcome and acceptance and enfolding in the grace of Jesus.



Trans faith:

GIRES document on supporting trans people of faith (Tina was involved in this):
<https://www.gires.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Roadmap-to-Inclusion-Supporting-Trans-People-of-Faith-GIRES-Shaan-Knan.pdf>

Carol Stone, the first trans CofE priest:
https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/mbm4jp/carol-stone-first-transgender-priest-uk?fbclid=IwAR2r4V1WIXrR0vNQcYjmEhy0CgiaOXn_Vnp2uLKZSx5uyBQihXpgkcQKtkw

Pope listens to Fr James Martin SJ – who speaks out for trans people:
<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/10/02/fr-martin-shares-trans-related-letters-with-vatican-official-behind-anti-lgbtq-document/>

..and Pope personally restores gay Catholic priest James Alison to ministry:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/09/29/pope-francis-phones-prominent-gay-theologian-and-priest-james-alison-restores-him-to-ministry/>

Joe Biden urges people of faith to support trans people:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/04/joe-biden-trans-equality-faith-religion-christianity-bible/>

Trans pastor on loss of male privilege:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/10/willow-smith-jada-transgender-pastor-male-privilege-coming-out/>

Equal Voices response to Sydney diocese's conversion policy for gender diverse people:

https://www.lotl.com/lifestyle/religion-spirituality/equal-voices-christians-lament-sydney-anglican-conversion-practice-ideology-against-gender-diverse-people/?fbclid=IwAR2BD0do3fIQ8Dvoil-EWna9J0jGmd0O7sQ3to9bMSMtE_jtSUUEKnhsH60

Peter Tatchell urges civil disobedience in Anglican communion:

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2019/25-october/news/uk/gay-rights-campaigner-peter-tatchell-advocates-civil-disobedience-in-fight-with-bigots?fbclid=IwAR1sKbIJimCauardqbYxcIJQqtDDB5drR7jjMSupgRQIUn5T6-vMmZUuNTw>

TDOR Liturgies

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/liturgies/tdor/tdor2019.htm>

Tina Beardsley's account of her pilgrimage to Rome for the canonization of St John Henry Newman:

https://www.stjohnsfulham.org/index.php/blog/2-uncategorised/88-the-canonisation-of-st-john-henry-newman?fbclid=IwAR0QM0RNKmPSSvjxfb2xtx9_CpZvZBSgMk78Jf-y9oCE-VIb0uX1IW4MwJA

Sara Gillingham reflects on LLF and leaving the Church:

<https://modernchurch.org.uk/mcblog/395-november-2019/1537-on-the-margins,-still-looking-in?fbclid=IwAR2PxzhLL6zy86zRRXNnWC7DcYIrcFg9MCmLBwQzxUqzjIVBaPaLqEVuxfE>

Modern Church conference (Tina joint Chair):

<https://modernchurch.org.uk/mcevents/modern-church-conference>

Has anyone tried to have their gender amended on church records?

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/11/25/results-mixed-in-seeking-church-record-changes-for-transgender-and-intersex-catholics/>

Queer theology: kind trans phobia is still trans phobia:

Trans media:

Trans people are trouble: fascinating study of media coverage of trans people

commissioned by Mermaids:

<https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/exclusive-new-research-reveals-the-truth-about-newspaper-coverage-of-trans-issues!.html>

Mermaids condemns “orchestrated” anti-trans media onslaught:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/07/mermaids-transgender-anti-trans-press-coverage-sky-news-mail-sunday/>

John Humphrys: BBC too sympathetic to trans people:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/07/john-humphrys-bbc-transgender-people-cheltenham-literature-festival/>

Biased BBC programmes on detransitioners:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/28/bbc-newsnight-balance-racism-bias-detransition/>

Owen Jones blames rise in anti-trans hate crimes on media:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/17/owen-jones-anti-trans-hatred-media-pinknews-awards/>

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Equalities Minister: government committed to GRA reform:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/07/uk-equalities-minister-liz-truss-reform-gender-recognition-act-denies-delay/>

Lib Dems to put reform of GRA in manifesto:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/13/gender-recognition-act-liberal-democrats-reform-manifesto-priority/>

Will some trans people be unable to vote if Boris has his way?

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/13/boris-johnson-plans-voter-id-transgender-people-right-to-vote/>

Trans Truss: Dawn Butler calls for reform of GRA:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/16/dawn-butler-liz-truss-government-failure-gender-recognition-act-transphobic-hate-crime/>

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<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/16/john-bercow-trans-rights-house-commons-pinknews-awards-2019/?fbclid=IwAR3FU6j0dzsHYmaXmk8pQU4wTtvdAAA-YhPZSzi8Xbv5mbGg790CvO4ut8>

Jo Swinson says trans people demonized:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/12/10/jo-swinson-liberal-democrats-transgender-non-binary-bbc-today-programme-gender-sex/>

Trans rights and the election:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/01/general-election-uk-transgender-rights-gender-recognition-act-boris-johnson-jeremy-corbyn/>

Trans and non-binary election candidates:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/15/uk-election-trans-non-binary-candidates-lib-dem-labour-greens/>

Record number of trans and non-binary people standing in election:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/29/record-number-trans-non-binary-people-parliament-uk-general-election/>

...but, despite that all-powerful trans lobby, none is elected:

<https://news.sky.com/story/nhs-over-diagnosing-children-having-transgender-treatment-former-staff-warn-11875624>

SNP ditches pledge to reform GRA:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/27/snp-manifesto-scottish-national-party-gender-recognition-act-lgbt-policies/>

Trans Health:

Support for puberty blockers research:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/16/puberty-blockers-study-slammed-bbc-newsnight-cleared-wrongdoing/>

Trans people who have gender confirmation surgery less likely to need mental health treatment:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/15/trans-people-gender-reassignment-mental-health-yale-university-study/>

Care of trans patients by GPs:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/21/trans-patients-denied-care-gp-senior-nurse-gender-identity-clinic-london/>

Christian doctor loses tribunal hearing over use of trans pronouns:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-49904997?fbclid=IwAR2OZ8aj3mImne-7ax5uBEvl18vDfof3wH1Qz1hQz2iIDPzRc4TRhQIhnmI>

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=474516783144502&set=a.122772174985633&type=3&eid=ARCXZSwZzr3K2x_MmdhLZLrJOZ8a774KdGs21hs0yDnSIX5_fyiBlnp6yOY98KkPjzoRtwixGQMKD2N

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<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/transforming-futures-tell-us-your-views?fbclid=IwAR3cbHgCLuLWTEOPhJbRgx9XqEvLBxOVEgW0csYaZfhf0yuEf4OfGGZZq2Q>

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https://www.gires.org.uk/lgbt-foundation-patients-experiences-of-primary-care-annual-survey/?fbclid=IwAR1VcdvWRV7qL-fTmnP7b3i-A-w3_uyZi7mk6XvjFh8mnh_ffGAqn1kUmWg

Trans depathologised by WHO:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-48448804?fbclid=IwAR2VxGOS5DYwMXXWhnlefQd5YdhmhilJbW1cDzuqtpBH_ZJ

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Trans USA:

Hilary Clinton: staying with Bill like having a trans child:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/03/hillary-clinton-staying-with-bill-parent-transgender-child/>

Hilary and Chelsea disagree on trans women:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/14/hillary-clinton-chelsea-trans-identity-sunday-times-interview/>

National Trans Visibility march in Washington DC:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/09/30/national-trans-visibility-march-washington-pose-angelica-ross/>

National Coming Out Day (USA): trans teacher's experience in Catholic school:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2019/10/11/on-national-coming-out-day-a-transgender-teachers-story-of-being-authentic-in-catholic-education/>

Trans Children:

N Ireland guidance to schools on trans pupils criticised:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-50202339?fbclid=IwAR0dhnfHaoGUg211Tjb9DFaOBUwvZAyl_Kaxm5EkveHvZQNccF9TiJVL0Q

Two years old knew he was trans:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/13/mum-powerful-story-trans-son-ireland/>

Trans children study:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/20/trans-kids-transgender-children-study/>

Single-sex schools admitting trans pupils:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/12/01/single-sex-schools-transgender-admissions-policies-changing-private-schools/>

Marvel trans superhero is an inspiring young person of faith:

https://www.advocate.com/transgender/2019/12/06/meet-marvels-first-transgender-hero-12-year-old-mighty-rebekah?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=transgender&fbclid=IwAR3uUJUCRIEAD8xNgHeDztfV3ig3O3EtXICUxOobj7KiP7ndtL2squkF-aw

Intersex:

Intersex awareness day:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/10/its-intersex-awareness-day-here-are-5-myths-we-need-to->

[shatter/?fbclid=IwAR1A9RwkREPUmKs_gW5X2bxsNqIbCf3MKLq5xCe6HZF1F6x0o26P7xQsI70](https://www.facebook.com/shatter/?fbclid=IwAR1A9RwkREPUmKs_gW5X2bxsNqIbCf3MKLq5xCe6HZF1F6x0o26P7xQsI70)

UK Intersex Awareness website:

http://www.ukia.co.uk/?fbclid=IwAR2PpHEYRKVrEhISbxx68Vs_uOPqDIE6rnYvgQPNIplYkbzPGrad92E_FRY

Trans Pronouns:

Pronouns day (yes there is one): Jeremy Corbyn et al share theirs:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/18/jeremy-corbyn-russell-t-davies-pronouns-solidarity-trans-non-binary-community/>

Non-binary Iranians – one advantage at least:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/19/non-binary-people-iran-gender-neutral-pronoun/>

Trans Sport:

Trans rugby – Sunday Times witch-hunt:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/01/sunday-times-photo-trans-man-witch-hunt-women-rugby/>

Trans swimming:

https://amp.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/31/trans-day-of-visibility-swimming-pool?fbclid=IwAR3hK9e0toCAOtdRbjG0NI5HaeJiBBexAT_m_vKdo9Lf7JRnNS_GSc93HuE

Trans Opera:

Trans opera singer (Lucia Lucas):

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/08/opera-singer-lucia-lucas-makes-history-as-first-trans-star-to-perform-with-english-national-opera/>

Vienna Opera House puts on opera based on *Orlando* written by woman:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/12/09/vienna-opera-house-olga-neuwirth-virginia-woolf-orlando/>

Trans Life

Trans tattoo:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/02/deadname-dad-tattoo-trans-daughters-removal-father-dysphoria/>

Trans university professor:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/03/coming-out-trans-amy-ko-university-washington-viral/>

Trigger: de-transitioning charity set up:

https://news.sky.com/story/hundreds-of-young-trans-people-seeking-help-to-return-to-original-sex-11827740?fbclid=IwAR0_H-5ugL3WLQ1OSB2OCIJh_i9916VpQYvGva9QDqU3nh2ey-zZr8xaGTM

Trolls trolled: revenge on Transgender

Trend:<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/07/someone-trolling-anti-trans-group-most-perfect-way/>

What is gender? Gender as role and a plea:

<https://catholictrans.wordpress.com/2015/08/19/what-is-gender-part-6-gender-as-role/>

<https://catholictrans.wordpress.com/2015/08/19/what-is-gender-part-7-a-plea/>

Sibyl Debbie Hayton writes for the Spectator (she dislikes “non-binary”):

https://www.spectator.co.uk/2019/12/trans-activists-are-making-life-harder-for-trans-people/?fbclid=IwAR3GvOtyk_1ga8Zkj1doZh2KTKdge11MY65ct-4-9g9UMg80-eU8ZcmrLmg

...and Debbie appears on Sky News discussing trans children:

<https://news.sky.com/story/nhs-over-diagnosing-children-having-transgender-treatment-former-staff-warn-11875624>

Nisha Ayub – Malaysian trans woman activist in top 100 women of the year:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-50042279>

Trans people’s lost youth/childhood:<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/18/trans-people-feelings-loss-experiencing-childhood-true-gender-twitter-viral/>

Good news for Bangladeshi Hijras:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/19/trans-woman-bangladesh-councillor-pinki-khatun/>

Homeless, unemployed and trans:

<https://anglicanfocus.org.au/2019/10/16/what-is-it-like-to-be-homeless-and-living-on-newstart/>

Claire Graham argues sex is not a spectrum – there are only two:

https://womansplaceuk.org/2019/10/21/biological-sex-is-not-a-spectrum-there-are-only-two-sexes-in-humans-with-claire-graham/?fbclid=IwAR3fbkD_yzonpycFD_I9elf4Ox29FcePUhZSqmO8P9pBfx1zwrhxPJn5p0w

Pauline Fleck interviewed for West Yorkshire Queer Stories:

<https://wyoqs.co.uk/stories/following-her-own-path/>

Trans trolling:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-50166900>

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/10/25/transphobic-hate-online-race-politics-ditch-the-label-brandwatch-munroe-bergdorf/>

Rather chilling speculation from Yuval Noah Harari about how technology could facilitate the persecution of LGBT people:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jun/22/fifty-years-after-the-stonewall-riots-yuval-noah-harari-on-the-new-threats-to-lgbt-freedom>

Trans actors playing cis characters?

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/oct/28/cast-more-transgender-actors-in-non-trans-roles-union-urges>

Debbie writes for Spectator in support of LGB Alliance (trigger warning: many Sibyls will not agree with Debbie):

<https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/10/in-defence-of-the-lgb-alliance/?fbclid=IwAR0yaNiBqaPk27CHwu7OZx4yx5RfSbXnkf6Yi5vUvfOoU18e000zIBUEB1U>

Trans triplet:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/newsbeat-50242351/trans-and-a-triplet-coming-out-brought-our-family-closer-together>

Trans parent: 10 good tips on how to do it:

https://www.premierchristianity.com/Blog/I-m-a-parent-of-a-transgender-teen-and-I-disagree-with-the-advice-of-The-Christian-Institute?fbclid=IwAR3rHkjNh9JlyGhFGIIItxxb08VTKfUK3_aXVYtX3Y1xpfdnpQc9f_i7D9kc

Trans stories featured by GLAAD:

<https://www.glaad.org/blog/transweek-trans-stories-and-creators-watch-2019>

Debbie Hayton writes:

https://unherd.com/2019/11/a-boy-in-a-dress-is-just-a-boy-in-a-dress/?fbclid=IwAR26PqzSW2SBH7exNuUlhemrebuDmA8ec9j_uh42dYz-05o9zfBos61E48E

Marriage between woman and trans man declared invalid:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/21/high-court-trans-marriage-invalid-legally-female-gender-recognition-act/>

UK military chiefs back trans troops:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40733701?fbclid=IwAR3ph03xY5idUKjxb9gN1fpFo-h4KQJ4qfl_b_5KIIWfaUYLxqtWkXsW20c

Trans Hungary: First ever Trans Pride:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/12/09/hungary-first-trans-pride-march-hundreds-demand-right-change-names-legal-gender/>

Book Review: “That All May be Saved” – David Bentley Hart by *Pauline Fleck*

Does anyone still believe in hell – a place of eternal punishment and torment for those not “saved”? It has been believed in by most Christians for most of history – even at times that the majority of the human race, born in a state of total depravity because of original sin, are going there. (It seems odd to me that we are all, automatically as it were, enrolled within original sin but need to appropriate salvation personally and individually.) The Catholic Church taught until recently – perhaps still does – that committing “mortal” sin without absolution condemns one to everlasting perdition. Mortal sins could include missing mass on Sunday. In my view, this belief in hell even as a concept undermines the credibility of the church even more than the

intolerance of LGBT people since it requires us to believe in a God less loving and forgiving than ourselves – it used to be thought that the spectacle of the damned in perpetual torment added to the bliss of the saved in heaven. David Bentley Hart considers the theology of hell with utmost seriousness and concludes that it is incoherent and ultimately utterly repugnant. He examines many of the relevant biblical texts and sees many references to universal salvation and hardly any to the possibility of eternal damnation. For him, the loss of a single soul to damnation is a defeat for the ineluctable providence of God who wills that all shall be saved, if necessary even from themselves – he dismisses the notion of the necessity of hell to preserve free will as untenable. So if like me you intuitively reject the idea of eternal punishment for sins committed by finite, imperfect beings but need to see the theology behind the intuition systematically worked out then Hart's book will be very helpful. It will not convince the "infernalsists" as he describes them who for rather puzzling reasons have a lot invested in the idea of hell (presumably for other people). A bonus is that for a work of theology it is sparkingly and entertainingly written.