



Gender Confusion

A briefing for Bible Christians

John Benton

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In writing this booklet I am extremely indebted to my friend Ruth Woodcraft who has furnished me with the results of much of her research into this subject. The booklet is an expanded version of a talk given at the Annual Meetings of the Association of Grace Baptist Churches (South East) in October 2022. Some of the contents overlap with my brief work *The Woke Agenda: a guide for pastors*.

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Introduction

Is there a difference between our sex and our gender? What's wrong with same-sex marriage? What's the problem with physical intimacy between people of the same sex, as long as it is consensual? Is there a spectrum of genders with male and female not the only options? Can a boy be genuinely trapped in a girl's body? Is the best solution for a person who thinks like that about themselves to have surgery?

These are some of the questions which face Christians and the churches now.

Urgency

And such questions come with an urgency which we may not have realised yet.

Back in 1934, the Oxford academic, J. D. Unwin published his book *Sex and Culture*. His work investigated the correlation between a society's level of sexual restraint and its stability and achievements. He found that where chastity and (old fashioned) monogamy prevailed, society flourished. But, according to Unwin, once a nation becomes too prosperous it tends to embrace an increasingly liberal stance towards sexual activity and relationships. This in turn leads to a loss of society's cohesion (through such things as family breakdown or failure to form families) accompanied by a dissipation of a society's momentum and sense of purpose. Social 'entropy' is accelerated, thereby diminishing its creativity and energy. The society begins to unravel.

Unwin's studies led him to believe that the full effect of this decline is not realised until the third generation. Change takes root slowly in the first generation, becomes more normalised in the second, its full effect only emerging in the third generation.

Interestingly, if we equate a generation with around 20 – 30 years and locate the beginning of the West's sexual revolution in the 1960s with the advent of the contraceptive pill, then if Unwin is correct, our society is just entering the period of full societal breakdown.

Not the time to compromise

Well, the indicators of a society that has lost its way seem to be all around us, don't they? And now is not the time for the church to be compromising with this

stuff, but to understand what is going on and give a compassionate and clear lead.

In this brief booklet I want to try to give us a handle on some of this by looking at a number of different aspects regarding the current challenge of gender confusion. All I can do here is to give some notes and possible pointers for our thinking. We will glimpse the theology, the history and the psychology of gender confusion.

1: A theology of gender confusion

Clear, Bible theology will help us to think straight about complex issues and have the mind of Christ. Though we may live in a rapidly changing world, the Bible is still God's word and Jesus assured us that, though heaven and earth may pass away, his words would never pass away or become irrelevant, Luke 21.33.

Jesus' teaching

The Lord Jesus, when questioned about marriage, divorce and sexual relationships was unashamed to refer back to the book of Genesis in order to give his answer. He said, 'At the beginning the Creator "made them male and female", and said, "for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife..."' Matthew 19.4,5. He uses two quotations. They are from Genesis 1.27 and Genesis 2.24.

Notice, *first*, according to Jesus we are created beings, made by the Creator God. That is so important in our thinking. We did not emerge by chance. Nor did we make ourselves. Though we have great dignity as human beings made in the image of God, yet we are only creatures not gods.

Second, note that Jesus says that human beings are made by God male and female. Therefore, male and female are not social constructs nor simply a matter of our own inner consciousness. They are God's design indicated by the different biology he endowed us with.

Genesis 2 makes it particularly clear that male and female are rooted in the physical attributes God gave us. With regard to Adam, in Genesis 2.7 we read, 'the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being'. The word for man and Adam are the same. But the indication here is that Adam, made out of the dust of the earth, was male even before God breathed life into him and gave him consciousness. His maleness was rooted in what he had been made physically.

We find a similar truth regarding Eve. We read in Genesis 2.22, 23 the following: 'Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' for she was taken out of man.'"'

Adam's designating of Eve as 'woman' came as God brought her to him and he first saw her. Based on her physicality, Adam saw she was both like him and different from him and called her 'woman'. This, as far as we can see from the text, was before Eve had ever spoken to Adam or expressed anything to him about how she thought of herself.

These days many people speak in terms of our sex being what we are physically and our gender being how we think of ourselves. But Genesis indicates that we should take our cue of how we think of ourselves from our physical attributes.

So, Biblically, we are created beings, male and female, and our biological sex and our gender are synonymous. Precious because made in God's image, that's who we are. And that's how Jesus saw us.

Since the Fall there are now aberrations physically from this pattern. These disorders of sex development (DSDs) are very infrequent – and those folk need special care and consideration – but the 'created male and female' is still the overall rubric – as the whole science of biology, not just human biology, tells us.¹

Where are we today?

Given this Bible background here are three considerations to help us understand where we are now.

A). In a secular society, feeling good eventually takes precedence over common sense. Practical atheism is one of the axioms of modern life for 'intelligent' people. When people no longer believe in God, they turn in upon themselves. They become 'lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,' 2 Timothy 3.4. There is nothing else to live for. And because it brings such powerfully enjoyable emotions, this often comes down to sex and sexual desire.

A godless culture's prioritising 'feel good' and sex is taught throughout Scripture.

Jeremiah describes how illicit passion consumes those who have turned away

¹ DSD, or disorders of sex development are often referred to as 'intersex'. This term is misleading and some who have DSDs consider it an offensive term. It implies there is 'another' sex, or there are other things between the binary divide of male and female. DSDs are numerous in type, but rare to occur. Particular kinds of DSD can only appear in a biological male, and other kinds only in females. Therefore, DSDs reinforce the binary nature of biological sex. They are also not something to 'identify as', which is why many people who speak up about having a DSD don't like being included in the LGBTQIA+ listing. It's a medical condition, not an identity.

from the Lord: 'They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man's wife,' Jeremiah 5.8.

Paul describes how, when people reject God, he 'gives them over to the sinful desires of their hearts,' Romans 1.24 and in a parallel verse, 'having lost all sensitivity (to God), they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more,' Ephesians 4.19. God gives them over / they give themselves over.

With the priority of 'feel good', the internal, personal world of individuals takes precedence over the external. The subjective trumps the objective. So we get this dislocation between gender and sex. What I am biologically (male?) is of secondary importance if I feel more comfortable, especially sexually, as a female – because feeling positive, satisfying my desires is my life – it is who I am. But, thinking themselves to be wise, they become fools, Romans 1.22. Our world has an objective reality whether we *like* it or not and to pretend otherwise brings tragedy.

B). Behind this attitude to life is the Satan's original lie – 'You shall be as God,' Genesis 3.5. Adam and Eve were lured into disobeying God's command not to eat the forbidden fruit by Satan's promise of deity.

Genesis 1 tells us that God is the Creator, Genesis 1.1. But the contemporary world replies with a sinful, rebellious 'No'. 'I shall be my own creator – I will decide what I shall be, and what is good, what is right for me – no-one else, and especially not God'. 'I will be God'. 'You can be whatever you want to be' (I'm sure you've heard that kind of thing) and it finds particular expression in the ethos of gender confusion. 'I will decide if I'm male or female or something else'.

Given this way of thinking, now the world is not so much a given within which I am to operate – but a lump of playdough that I can make into whatever I want. I will be whatever I want to be. And, of course, the advances in some modern technologies can appear to reinforce that idea. CGI (Computer Generated Images) means I can create a total fantasy world of weird creatures and whatever on screen – and why shouldn't I become one? Whatever the problems of me following through on choosing my own gender and sexual preferences – I'm sure advances in modern surgery and medicine can overcome them. This is the current *hubris* of many of our contemporaries.

But the promise 'You shall be as God' was a lie – and if you read Abigail Shrier's

book *Irreversible Damage: Teenaged Girls and the Transgender Craze*² – you will see that is still the case as young teenagers have wrecked their lives through surgery and testosterone therapy they later deeply regretted. And given the current politically correct ideology, no-one, not even health professionals, dared challenge them – because people must be free to be whatever they want to be. This is all terribly wrong, but our hearts go out to those caught up in these things.

C). The perpetration of this original lie from the garden of Eden (and this is speculative) just may signal the beginning of Satan’s little season, ‘which deceives the nations in the four corners of the earth’ which we read about in Revelation 20. This whole gender confusion ideology linked with the so-called Woke agenda of ‘being alert to layers of “oppression” in society’ has taken such deep root so quickly, and made such inroads even into the church itself, that I think we must take seriously very difficult times ahead for the faithful church.

² *Irreversible Damage: Teenaged Girls and the Transgender Craze*, by Abigail Shrier, Swift Books, 2021

2: A history of gender confusion

We must ask a question. Why has all this gender confusion come to the fore now? Why wasn't this so well-known and accepted in earlier centuries? Surely human beings have always been sinful – so what has happened to nurture the sexual revolution and its accompanying gender confusion into the open so powerfully? Well, for sure, this has not come out of the blue.

There is much that could be said, including reference to the decline of belief in Christianity in the West and the development of digital technology and the internet which means ideas can spread across the globe more quickly. But there is a story linked to the changes in people's outlook which does explain quite a lot. The story goes something like this – in very simplified form.

Marx and sex

For reasons that will become obvious, we take Karl Marx, materialist and atheist, as our starting point. With 19th century thoughts of evolution and the progress of society in the back of his mind, Marx (1818-1883) held the idea of the upward climb of society through revolution. Seeing the wealth of the aristocracy and factory owners and the grinding poverty of most workers (almost enslavement), his understanding was that through a series of violent confrontations, societies could be vastly improved for the majority of people. He felt his calling was to stir the masses to overthrow the *status quo*.

One obstacle to this was religion. Faith can encourage people to accept their circumstances now and put their hope in a better life to come. This would not help Marx agitate the workers to action. So Christ and the church, he thought, lulled a population into sitting on their hands and doing nothing, and so became the enemy.

But the other obstacle he saw was that working people were willing to put up with difficult conditions, simply out of love for their families and their desire to provide for them. In this way family gave strength to Capitalism. Thus, the family too becomes the enemy. And what better way to undermine the family than representing marriage as an oppression and preaching sexual 'liberation'.

Here is a quote from the Catholic writer, Noelle Mering: 'Echoing earlier writings of Marx, Engels argued in *The Origin of the Family* that women ought to become liberated from the oppression of their husbands by entering...the workforce.'

Marx and Engels laid the foundation for (the word) “patriarchy” as pejorative. Housework should be nationalized, they claimed, and children were to be raised not by parents but communally. Besides advancing the power of the (Communist) state, these changes would lead to more women being available for sex by removing their need for the support of a husband or the responsibility of child care.³

Twentieth century

This ‘sexual revolution’ strategy came increasingly to the forefront in the early twentieth century. Under the influence of Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, through the so-called ‘Frankfurt School’ (which moved to America in the 1930s as they fled Hitler) this became enormously influential. People like Wilhelm Reich (1930s) and later Herbert Marcuse (1960s) pushed radical ideas about sex. It promoted the undermining of family. Making men lecherous through pornography, for example, engenders distrust of them in their wives and despising of them in their children – families fall apart, so get pornography out there for the revolution.

All this was in the intellectual background as the rather naïve ‘Flower Power’ / ‘Free Love’ Generation of the 1960s emerged – with the pill and legal abortion. In 1960, D. H. Lawrence’s sexually explicit novel, *Lady Chatterly’s Lover*, was adjudged by the courts to be suitable to be sold in bookshops. And around this point the sexual revolution begins to break away from its roots in cultural Marxism to have a life of its own as godless ‘feel good’ society validates lust. ‘Life is for living’, they would say – by which they meant enjoy yourself with as few trammels as possible.

It was in the late 1960s that homosexuality began to raise its profile especially after the Sexual Offences Act of 1967. Homosexual acts were made legal so long as this took place between consenting adults. Obviously homosexual relationships are inimical to the ordinary family.

The whole homosexual outlook opens the door to confusing gender and it moved very quickly from being ‘the love that dare not speak its name’ to the centre of Western public life, especially through the repackaging advised in the 1990s by the book *After the Ball: How America will conquer its Fear and Hatred of Gays*, written by two advertising consultants with both psychiatric and public

³ *Awake, Not Woke: A Christian Response to the Cult of Progressive Ideology*, by Noelle Mering, Tan Books, 2021, pages 33-34

relations expertise. Basically, the message was, play down the more gross, strident side of gay lifestyle and tell stories of lonely, middle-aged women who find companionship and sexual comfort in each other. Make it look cuddly and altruistic. And meanwhile 'fun' TV soaps like *Sex in the City* (produced by gay men it seems) – normalised all kinds of sexual activity and attitudes in the eyes of the public as they laughed along. (And meanwhile, these things were hardly mentioned in church and to preach from Scripture concerning such things was often frowned upon).

But all this was carrying the subtext that your sexual desires are the most important thing about you. Your sexual proclivities are your identity – who you really are and what your life is about.

LGBT etc.

And, inevitably, it was not long before a community emerged saying I am not straight or gay, I am transgender. This is who I am. And here we are into real gender confusion. Some people were saying, for example, 'I may have the body of a man, but I feel most comfortable thinking of myself as a woman. And to exclude me or marginalise me because of my sexual identity is an act of oppression'. Transgender had arrived. LGBT etc formed as a coalition. It now holds astonishing sway with its rainbow flags etc. across the Western world

But what is becoming increasingly obvious is that Lesbian, Gay and Transgender do not fit together. Many lesbians, for example, don't want transgender men among them. Both lesbian and gay outlooks are predicated upon the idea of binary sex. Trans and other outlooks are not. But, notice, the coalition is held together by their common rejection of God's created norms for sexual activity.

As an example of the tensions within the LGBT movement, it was notable that in October 2022 the author of the famous *Harry Potter* books, J K Rowling, supported those protesting against the Scottish Parliament's gender recognition legislation which backed the idea that people should be able to self-identify as whatever sex they want. There would be no need for doctors' reports. Those who protested said that the law would undermine the safety of women-only spaces (like female toilets) and would make the most vulnerable women less safe. As part of the protest, Rowling wore a T-shirt with wording calling Scotland's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, 'a destroyer of women's rights.' Who knows how all this will play out in the long run?

Agents and victims

But once you begin to see this story of sexual ‘liberation’ and its consequences – rooted in cultural Marxism and the attack on the family – you realise that there is at least an element of our society being not just rebellious, but being manipulated into gender confusion – especially through the immense presence of a hard-line LGBT community on the internet and social media – ready to shout down and deride anyone who questions where all this is leading.

And, though many ties have been cut with cultural Marxism, nevertheless, in true Marxist style, they are ready to deny what is fact – to sacrifice truth if it does not conform with ‘the party line’.

Writing in *The Spectator* recently, the journalist Mary Wakefield began an article titled *Parents must resist Stonewall’s gospel* saying⁴: ‘I think it’s becoming horribly apparent to parents of every political persuasion that we can’t sit out the culture wars...It (is) impossible to ignore the fact that gender activism these days isn’t about gay rights or even trans rights, it’s not about being inclusive, it’s about presenting utter nonsense as plain fact.’ And what she had in mind were such things as the propaganda that no-one is born male or female. She asks the obvious question, ‘If there’s no such thing as biological sex, why does any child need to transition at all?’ Thinking themselves to be wise they have become fools.

⁴ *The Spectator*, 16 July 2022, page 23

3: A psychology of gender confusion

Some people take the transgender route having suffered rape or sexual abuse thinking that changing gender might be a safeguard against that happening to them again. We should have great sympathy for such folk. Far more sinister, however, at the other end of the spectrum, there seems to be evidence that some drug companies are promoting trans because basically those who undergo surgery and hormone therapy become patients for life. They become people needing all kinds of pharmaceuticals for years and years. If the reports are right, this is simply about preying on people in order to make money.

Gender dysphoria

Now we need to be clear before we go any further that there is a genuine medical / psychological condition known as gender dysphoria or formerly 'gender identity disorder'. It has been known for many years and follows a known pattern. It is characterised by the presence of severe and persistent discomfort with one's biological sex. This typically begins to manifest itself in early childhood – ages 2 to 4 – though it may grow more severe in adolescence. In most cases – I have heard 70% to 90% quoted – childhood gender dysphoria resolves itself with time.

However, and note this – historically, it was present in a very tiny proportion of the population – we are talking roughly 0.01% – and almost exclusively in boys. Abigail Shrier writes, 'Before 2012 there was no scientific literature on girls ages 11 to 21 ever having developed gender dysphoria at all.' But for some reason, now many teenaged girls are identifying as trans.

My main concern is this: Why this sudden explosion of youngsters, especially girls, claiming to be transgender? What's going on? I realise there are other age groups and much more to consider but that's what we are going to focus on here.

It is worth just stopping to note this: the 0.01% figure which is quoted is equivalent to 1 in 10,000 children. If the average secondary school had 2,000 pupils (and that's a high estimate), you would expect to find just one youngster in five schools suffering from this problem. But that is, evidently, far from the case at present. It seems currently that almost every school in the country has children who are presenting as trans. There are girls dressing as boys and boys dressing as girls in many classrooms. Why?

To put my cards on the table, this looks like a craze. In fact, it gives signs even of being something of a cult – stirred up by LGBT activists and others with access to young people via social media / internet.

Considerations

Here are some of the reasons as to why I think this.

A). *Firstly*, teenaged years are classically difficult for young people as they struggle in the move from childhood to adulthood and trying to ‘find out who they are’. Often, they feel awkward, unsure of themselves, sometimes despondent, powerless, and unhappy. As an expression of these kinds of inner tensions, over recent years we have had a succession of unhelpful ‘epidemics’ among young people.

In my early years as a pastor, it was the terrible scourge of anorexia. Many teenagers starved themselves seeing themselves as being too fat. It then moved on to self-harm. Youngsters have deliberately cut their arms and let blood as a habit. These are expressions of youngsters, at some level, not liking themselves. And the transgender epidemic appears to be in the same line of things. There are voices out there in society telling teenagers, ‘you are feeling like you don’t like yourself and don’t belong – you are unhappy – it’s because you are the wrong sex...you need to change gender.’ That is the powerful message out there, seemingly so convincing, which speaks to the teenagers’ vulnerabilities.

B). *Secondly*, I have said there are rare genuine cases of gender dysphoria of which we need to be mindful. But this ‘outbreak’ of gender confusion among teenagers (having never shown any signs of gender dysphoria in their earlier years) really does not fit the known pattern. It doesn’t look like the genuine article. Something else is going on here. And we know the power of the internet especially in the lives of young people. Just recently there has been the inquest on Molly Russell, who killed herself at the age of 14 back in 2017 after viewing material online about self-harm, suicide and depression on platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest. Molly’s story has provided fresh impetus for big-tech companies to be more closely regulated. There is an awful lot online about becoming transgender, what surgery is required, what drugs to get hold of, and how to handle parents who might disapprove. To suggest this is having no effect on young people is extremely naïve.

It is worth noting the words of the coroner from Molly Russell’s inquest. He said,

‘Molly appeared a normal healthy girl who was flourishing at school. However, Molly had become depressed, a common condition affecting children of this age. This worsened into depressive illness. Molly subscribed to a number of online sites. Some were not safe as they allowed access to adult content that should not have been available for a 14-year-old child to see. The way that the platforms operated meant that Molly had access to images, video clips and text concerning self-harm, suicide or what were otherwise negative or depressing. The platform operated in such a way, using algorithms, as to result in binge periods of images provided without Molly requesting them. In some cases, the content was particularly graphic, tending to portray self-harm and suicide as an inevitable consequence of a condition that could not be recovered from. The sites normalised her condition, focusing on a limited and irrational view without any counterbalance of normality. It is likely that the material viewed by Molly, already suffering with a depressive illness and vulnerable due to her age, affected her mental health in a negative way and contributed to her death in a more than minimal way.’

If online sites can contribute in a ‘more than minimal way’ to a teenager’s suicide it is just as likely to have a big effect on youngsters concerning pursuing changing sex.

C). *Thirdly*, the idea that this outbreak is not genuine is also backed up on the ground. I spoke to a parent whose children go to school in London. The school caters for girls presenting as boys etc. in the way they dress, and it provides support for such children. But, and here’s the crucial thing, the school does not ‘celebrate’ their chosen gender. They support but will not have a fuss made. The dopamine of applause for what the children are doing is denied. The school’s experience is that after a couple of years most of these children stop saying they are transgender and just revert to being boys or girls according to what they are physically. So again, what is happening doesn’t look genuine.

What are they thinking?

Why would children choose this path in the first place? What’s the psychology here? At least four things seem to be going on.

1. The teenaged years, as we have said, are a struggle as young people move towards adulthood. At the back of their minds, they are asking themselves, ‘will I make the grade?’ They are anxious. But remember how today’s society works. To become a member of a marginalized / oppressed group – is to gain victimhood. The thought is something like this: ‘If I’m a

victim then people will not expect so much of me – or if they do, they put themselves in the wrong’. So, this affords a way of self-protection. Here’s a quote from a therapist writing for the Gender Exploratory Therapy Association⁵: ‘In my...work with mothers of teens...I am a frequent second-hand witness to children who, seeking to avoid developmental demands of approaching independence, cling to their frailties.’ Well, encouraging young people to become transgender gives an open door for them into frailty and victimhood.

2. The teenaged years, as youngsters seek to move towards standing on their own two feet as people, are also famously the years of rebellion against parents – who have got it wrong about everything. And the whole gender confusion thing and rejection of binary sex is a convenient stick with which to beat parents and to tell them they don’t understand anything. We’ve all been there in our time as teenagers.
3. Add to that the need for teenagers to find their own community – separate from their parents – and peer group pressure to conform to what their friends are saying is cool and right. This too, of course, is a strong influence. And, at present, transgender is seen as cool.
4. It is also worth thinking about what has happened in recent years around gender stereotyping. In times gone by, we were rightly warned away from thinking that every man had to be macho and every woman a painted doll. In Scripture we find for example that some males were great warriors, like David’s mighty men, 2 Samuel 23.8-39, but others, like say Bezalel, the maker of the Tabernacle would have loved a craft shop, Exodus 31.1-6. But that did not make Bezalel any less a man than say, Joab the general. Or again think of Peter the brawny Galilean fisherman compared with Paul the academic who was good at needlework, Acts 18.3. There is a similar spectrum of personalities and skills among Bible women too, e.g., Luke 10.38-42. The Bible tells us to beware of thinking too rigidly about what makes a male or a female. But these days the LGBT movement has often adopted and misused male and female stereotypes. Boys are told that if they like sewing and cooking instead of football they must be gay. Girls are told that if they are more interested in cars and motorbikes than in going shopping for the latest fashions, they must be transgender or something similar. This kind of misguided ‘logic’ can get into the minds of teenagers

⁵ Lisa Marchiano <https://genderexploratory.com/2021/04/30/example-post-2/>

and lead them astray.

If what we have proposed makes sense, then the conclusion is that it is not the dress or the bodies of teenagers that need changing, but rather their minds. For whatever reason, they have been lured into a false way of thinking and they need, with kindness and support, to be led out of this and back to normality.

How families are affected

But meanwhile this kind of stuff is devastating families and family life. As an aside, it is worth remembering that the attack on the family, as Biblically understood, is a theme that has run throughout our theological, historical and now our psychological sections of what we have been considering.

Mothers and fathers are in turmoil over what is happening to their children. Here is a piece from a [website⁶](#) for (I think) US parents whose children have declared themselves transgender. A mother writes:

‘I have yet to meet a family, where one or both parents hasn’t had a complete mental collapse following their child’s announcement. Many have contemplated suicide, some seriously. Many parents, moms especially, have had to seek out mental health therapy and anti-depression or anti-anxiety drugs to cope with daily life, **in a world where there is a physical threat to their child AND all of society, seemingly, is aligned against them.**⁷ ... Strife between parents is also common, breaking down marriages and sibling relationships.

‘Why are the parents losing it? Because in this movement, our confused kids, having been indoctrinated in the false belief that they can literally become the other sex and magically fix all of their problems, will seek out and easily obtain drugs that will chemically castrate them, break down their bones, and degrade their brain function. They can do this without any gatekeeping, without our permission, and without any real mental health screening or therapy. ‘The family unit is under siege, as parents wrangle with life or death decisions for their children, with no evidence-based information available, and tons of public pressure. Children are... told to reject their loving parents and to trust outsiders that do not have their long-term best interests in mind. ... It’s appalling’.

The loving family is part of God’s good in creation. But through gender confusion this gift is both denigrated and sometimes destroyed.

⁶ Parental Mental Collapse <https://t.co/JPxR4HdyGU>

⁷ The bold type-face was part of the original

4: Facing Gender Confusion

What are we to do? How are Christians and churches to respond?

Parents

For parents with children who declare themselves transgender the message that seems to emerge from people's experiences is *first* that you must take control of your children's online access and cut them off, as far as you can, from transgender activists and those whose aim it is to destroy God's gift of family. We have already noted in the case of Molly Russell that the coroner emphasised the power of the internet over vulnerable and impressionable young people. This will need a straight but loving conversation with your teenagers about how the online world works and the artificial intelligence machines programmed to feed us things that will simply keep us glued to the screen. There is no concern here about what is best or healthy for viewers, but only what will keep us captivated.

The *Netflix* movie, *The Social Dilemma*, might be a good film for the whole family to watch together. It is a docu-drama, which includes tech experts from Silicon Valley sounding the alarm about the dangerous impact of social networking, which so-called 'Big Tech' companies use in an attempt to manipulate and influence us.

Second, as with the London school I mentioned, it is good for parents whose teenager has decided they are transgender or whatever to have an attitude of support for them as people but to refuse to celebrate or approve of their choice. What they are playing with is fire and is actually a huge mis-step in life. Don't make them into 'celebrities' for having made this choice. There must be love but there must also be truth, Ephesians 4.15.

I know that this is more easily said than done – but that is round about where we have to land. And in all this, of course, pray.

Churches

For churches seeking to be faithful, the message of love and truth is the same. There must be a degree of love in the churches which sadly has rarely been seen in our day. One of factors which makes LGBT so attractive to some people is the strength of acceptance and kindness within that community. The church must

more than match that with Christian love. In his book *Strange New World*, Carl Trueman writes the following: ‘The reason they have moved from the margins to centre stage is intimately connected to the strong communities they formed while on the margins. This is why lamentation for Christianity’s cultural marginalization, while legitimate, cannot be the sole response of the church to the current social convulsions she is experiencing. Lament for sure – we should lament that the world is not as it should be, as many of the Psalms teach us – but also to organize. Become a community. By this, the Lord says, shall all men know that you are my disciples, by the love you have for each other, John 13.35. And that means community’.⁸

However, there must also be truth as well as love. We must compassionately but without compromise stick to Scripture and Biblical teaching on sex and gender. The kind of society which Paul describes in 2 Timothy 3 as likely to occur in the last days is a society very like ours. People are described as being ‘lovers of themselves’ and ‘lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God’. As we have seen earlier in this booklet this addiction to the self, this turning in on oneself, lies very much at the root of gender confusion as the felt needs of the self take precedence over reality.

But it is in just such a society as ours that Paul gives perhaps his most famous description of the Bible and the need for it, unaltered, to be preached. ‘All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths,’ 2 Timothy 3.16 – 4.4. And I think the *Spectator* journalist Mary Wakefield, might say ‘and if you want myths, just listen to the propaganda that for human beings there is no such thing as biological sex.’

We are to make communities of love and we are to preach the word. And we are to do this in hope. The faithful church can show the way to a lost world. Here are another couple of sentences from Carl Trueman’s book:

⁸ *Strange New World*, by Carl Trueman, Crossway, 2022, page 175

'Many Christians talk of engaging the culture. In fact, the culture is most dramatically engaged by the church presenting it with another culture, another form of community, rooted in her liturgical worship practices and manifested in the loving community that exists both in and beyond the worship service. Many talk of the culture war between Christianity and secularism, and certainly the Bible uses martial language...But perhaps 'cultural protest' is a way of translating that idea into modern idiom...The church protests the wider culture by offering a true vision of what it means to be a human being made in the image of God'.⁹

And if J D Unwin was right – this is all extremely urgent.

⁹ *Strange New World*, page 176