

SIBYLS LOGO - ROBYN GOLDEN - MANN 28 MAY 2018

How am I Resurrection for others?

How am I Life for others?

To be Resurrection for another I need to be Resurrection for myself. That means I cannot dwell in darkness and death and anger and oppression and submission and resentment and pain forever. I need to wake up, get up, rise up, put on life even when days are dark and my soul is down and shadows surround me everywhere.... I have to listen to the voice that says: "Be resurrection."

Brian McLaren

Sibyls Newsletter 112

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Editor

Pauline Fleck

mobile: 07581 553357

email: pauline.fleck@btinternet.com

Designer

Ariane Durand

email: ariane31925@gmail.com

CONTENTS

Editorial	.....	3
Introduction to the Sibyls	.....	4
Services and events in 2025	.....	5
European Forum of LGBTQ Christian groups	.....	11
Trans faith	.....	14
Trans law and politics	.....	17
Trans health	.....	25
Trans life	.....	28
Trans world	.....	29
Trans books and media	.....	30

Editorial

Dear Sibyls

You will notice that this newsletter looks a little different. Our membership secretary, Ariane, has used her skills to polish up the look of it and hopefully make it more readable. I am grateful to her.

I alone am responsible for the content – with thanks to those who have sent me or suggested contributions. And the content this time is rather sombre, dominated, inevitably, by the ruling of the Supreme Court, just before Easter, that “sex”, in the Equality Act 2010, refers to biological sex (sic). The EHRC lost no time in rushing out interim guidance aimed at the exclusion of trans people from single-sex spaces. Politicians queued up to welcome the ruling and the “clarity” it is deemed to have brought. Voices in support of trans people have been few and far between. We have suffered a major set-back and many trans people have been left feeling more vulnerable and at risk than for many years. I certainly am. There is a lot of discussion below about the implications of the ruling and responses to it, some of which you will agree with, some you may not. Sibyls has always sought to represent the whole spectrum of trans identities and to encompass a range of views. We are primarily a pastoral care organisation rather than a campaigning one. That care has seldom been more important than it is now.

One piece of good news has been the success of Sibyls in applying for a grant from Consortium LGBT. Recognising the importance in the current transphobic climate of solidarity and mutual support, it is our aim to use the bulk of this grant to subsidise the cost of attending our weekend at Purley Chase for those who might otherwise be deterred from coming. We shall use this safe space both to discuss the implications of the ruling and its effects on us and for rest and relaxation, quiet time, letting our hair down, eating and drinking, dancing (!) and deepening friendships. We are fortunate as Sibyls to be trans people of faith for whom the way of descent, the way of cross and resurrection, is the natural, accepted pattern of our lives (and of course of every life). We know that in our weakness lies our real strength. We have died and our real life is hidden with Christ in God.

May God bless you all and give you comfort and hope during these dark times which will not stay dark forever. I look forward to seeing many of you at Purley Chase and, before then, at our monthly online “service and socials”.

Pauline

Introduction to the Sibyls

We are a Christian spirituality group for gender-variant people.

Sibyls website

The main source of information about the Sibyls is our website: www.sibyls.co.uk. This includes:

- How to join the Sibyls confidential mailing list.
- Planned events, supportive churches and inclusive faith groups.
- Resources, such as books and signposted web links.
- Recent Sibyls newsletters.
- Our listening service, if you need to talk to someone about being a trans Christian.
- How to contact us.

Sibyls Facebook groups

There are two Facebook groups which enable Sibyls and other trans Christians to communicate and exchange views and news. They are:

- Sibyls Members' Group – send a request via Facebook to join this confidential group.
- TranschristianUK – an open group, do join up if you are not already a member.

Meetings for personal conversation and sharing

Some of you might appreciate the opportunity for more personal conversation on Zoom, rather than the regular large sessions. We can help arrange meet-ups for just three Sibyls – this would enable easier direct conversation and sharing (with some ground rules). If you would like this to happen, please email pauline.fleck@btinternet.com and we will see what is possible.

More detailed information about our online activity is available by post if you do not have access to the internet. Please contact Pauline as above.

Services and events in 2025

General

Online

Sibyls Zoom services and fellowship meetings take place online, usually on the 25th day of the month, between 7.00pm and 8.00pm. We aim to send out invitations about a week in advance.

London group

Sibyls based in or near London are welcome to take part in our quarterly communion service, at 6.00pm, at St Anne's Church, 55 Dean Street, London W1D 6AF, followed by a meal in a nearby restaurant. Our next services are in September 2025 (date to be confirmed) and Monday 8 December 2025.

For more information contact Susan Gilchrist at:

susan@crestcons.net

Events in North Wales / West Cheshire

Jenny-Anne Bishop is the Chair of the UNIQUE Transgender Network.

See the Unique newsletter for July at the link below (there's a lot of interesting information, not just for those lucky enough to live in North Wales):

<https://app.box.com/s/mk5w5vnjtj7xf4elhtw6z0ikg4l5ep8z>

Jenny-Anne hosts an online service every Sunday at 4.00pm for LGBTQ+ people. Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88502951623>

Residential weekend

Our annual residential weekend takes place at Purley Chase in Warwickshire from Friday 14 to Sunday 16 November 2025. On the next few pages you will find:

- The proposed programme for the weekend.
- Travel directions to Purley Chase.
- A booking form.

If you would like to book online, please use the form at

<https://form.jotform.com/251744334088056>

Our Purley Chase weekend last year was deemed a great success. The aim was to provide a mainly light-hearted time where we could all be ourselves and enjoy each other's company. We started with a film show, *Pride*, a historical comedy drama depicting a group of lesbian and gay activists who raised money to help families affected by the British miners' strike in 1984. There was a single, optional 'serious' session on Trans Health Care in the light of the Cass Report led by Pauline, a range of craft type activities, the possibility of trips out and our usual supper and disco. Lorraine acted as the event photographer capturing Sybils in both casual and formal dress. There was time for sharing the ups and downs of our trans lives together and a Eucharist Led by Nicki. For those who might have financial difficulty we can offer, in complete confidence, a reduced fee. So, if you are in this situation let Pauline know. Our aim this year is use a similar programme in the hope that it is just as successful.

Proposed programme for November 2025

Friday afternoon

15.00 onwards Arrivals with afternoon tea available

Friday evening

18.00 Dinner

19.30 Film to watch (not yet chosen)

Saturday morning

08.30 onwards Breakfast

10.00 Implications of the Supreme Court Ruling and responses from the Government and other bodies. A discussion session led by Pauline Fleck

11.00 onwards *Games / craft type hobbies / sports*

- Chess – led by Mary
- Paper-based crafts – led by Hilda
- Painting and drawing – led by Amy
- Construction kits (bring your own) – led by Hilda
- Table tennis and snooker challenge – led by Pauline

13.00 Lunch

Saturday afternoon

14.00 onwards *Option 1*
More games and craft type hobbies and sports

Option 2

A trip out somewhere – e.g. Coventry Cathedral, the National Memorial Arboretum, or a local nature ramble. To be decided on the day

Afternoon tea available

Saturday evening

18.00 Dinner

19.30 Disco

Sunday morning

8.30 Breakfast

Free time for sharing trans experiences or quiet reflection

11.00 Eucharist led by Nicki

13.00 Lunch

Sunday afternoon

14.00 onwards Departures

Directions to Purley Chase Centre

Address

Purley Chase Centre
Purley Chase Lane,
Mancetter
Atherstone
Warwickshire
CV9 2RQ

By car

The centre is just over 2 miles south of the A5 near Atherstone. Travelling along the A5 take the B4111 towards Mancetter. After about a quarter of a mile on the B4111, just past the church, take a right turn signposted 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 the right.

By public transport

The nearest mainline railway station is at Nuneaton, about 6 miles away. Slower trains go through Atherstone station which is about 3 miles away from Purley Chase Centre. Both stations are on the Euston to Crewe line.

Both Nuneaton and Atherstone are served by various bus and coach services.

Lifts can be arranged for people arriving at either Nuneaton or Atherstone stations.

By taxi

There are also taxi services:

- Atherstone Taxis (01827 712427) charge £15/£16.
- Triple A Taxis (01827 713637) charge £13/£14.

Booking form

PERSONAL DATA

Name	
Address line 1	
Address line 2	
City	
County	
Postcode	
Phone number	
Email	
Name of partner (if attending)	
Access or mobility needs (if any)	
Dietary requirements (if any)	
Allergies (if any)	
Do you need with transport to the venue?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you offer a lift to someone?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you a member of the Sibyls?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

If not a member, you are welcome to attend, on the basis that you agree not to disclose the identities of others attending.

ACCOMMODATION

Please tick one of the following options.	
En-suite room	<input type="checkbox"/> Single room <input type="checkbox"/> Twin room <input type="checkbox"/> Double room <input type="checkbox"/> Adapted en-suite facilities with wet room

If sharing a double or twin room, please name anyone you are willing to share with.	
Standard dormitory with shared bathroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Dormitory
Other requirement	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-residential / Non-residential
If part-residential / non-residential, please specify which day(s) you are coming for and which meals you would like.	

PAYMENT

Please indicate your payment method.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bank transfer – see details below <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque (payable to “Mr P A Raftery – The Sibyls”)
Bank transfer details (Please quote your name as the reference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account name – Mr P A Raftery • Sort code – 08-93-00 • Account number – 80470524
Residential cost	<p>Prices are per person, per night, and include full board from Friday dinner to Sunday lunch inclusive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single room – £104 • Double room / Twin room / Dormitory – £91
Part-residential / non-residential cost	Do not send any money now. We will obtain a pro-rata cost from Purley Chase and get back to you.
Assisted places	If you would like to apply for an assisted place, please contact Pauline (details on front cover of newsletter).

FORM SUBMISSION

Please send the form (and cheque if appropriate) to:
<p>Dr Hilda Ruth Beaumont Flat 9B College Court 108-114 Eastern Road BRIGHTON East Sussex BN2 0BF</p>

European Forum of LGBTQ Christian Groups



Report from Susan Murphy on the annual conference

Once again I attended the European Forum annual gathering, this year in Turku, Finland. As some of you will know, Finland is a very special place for me. The venue was Linnasmäki College, set amidst woodland on the outskirts of the city.

The theme : Open Doors – Open Windows was chosen by the organisers to express their warm welcome to all, reminding us that Christ's boundless love reaches each of our hearts.

In a change to previous years, there were no Pre-Conferences as such, but six themed Kick-offs:

- Growing old your way...
- Beating with the Bible.
- Love yourself as your neighbour: Expressive Arts and Creativity.
- In the Closet, underground or hidden out of necessity.
- Queering pilgrimage and spirituality.
- Living Alone: A Challenge or an Opportunity.

I had been asked to facilitate the growing older sessions, with a dear friend from Catalonia, who was a co-founder of ENLLAÇ Foundation in Barcelona, for helping elderly LGBTQI+ people. She has vast experience in this area, and represents the Foundation at municipal and regional level. So I offered an "easy start" for the group to get to know one another, in a relaxed way, after travel from all parts of Europe. The next day we talked about the various challenges, on different levels ~ personal to coping with care issues in later life. We had some good discussions, and will form a small email group for follow-up.

As part of the opening of the main Conference, there was a memorial to Forum friends that we have lost. Elaine Sommers, who I had met before she first attended, was recalled with warmth and gratitude, especially for her time as Co-President and her "Inclusion Hallelujah", which now has a permanent place in our songbook, ~ as ever bringing tears to my eyes.

There were a variety of interesting Workshops and Plenary meetings, including "My Body is not a Mistake" by Julia, an intersex activist and "Transsensivity ~ see me, hear me?" by Mio. He spoke about how we encounter our trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming siblings . . . and his view that gender is both irrelevant and relevant at the same time. There was time for discussion and the variety of questions and comments revealed many different levels of understanding, experience and a degree of uncertainty, and fear of "getting it wrong". Having had a number of trans friends over the last 20+ years, maybe, it was not as engaging as I had expected, but it had clearly sparked several conversations that I heard about later. Perhaps my overall impression was that some people were genuinely concerned about saying the wrong thing, or using terminology that was no longer acceptable or did not "fit" with today's thinking. This session immediately followed the ForumSisters Workshop that I was co-leading. So I was writing up notes, ready for our second session, which followed, and was not able to make any notes about Mio's talk.

We enjoyed hearing from Pekka Haavisto, former Finnish Foreign Minister ~ a very timely interview.

It was an honour to carry your vote, as a long standing member (26 years, I think). There was little controversial in the Annual General meeting, except the Proposal regarding change of name... After a long discussion, it was decided that "Queer" might not be the most suitable umbrella name and it was agreed that there should be further consideration, with the aim of bringing a revised Proposal to next year's Forum AGM. Part of the discussion was about the very different uses and understandings of the word "Queer" in different countries, cultures and languages.

I have attended many Forum gatherings since 1998, and really enjoy the opportunity to meet and make friends with such a wide variety of people from different church traditions, around Europe and other parts of the world. We share fellowship and worship together as one rainbow family. The stories shared can be inspirational as well as moving . . . some amazing people who have overcome many challenges . . in their families churches and communities.



A special joy was a hug from a trans man I got to know through his artwork during the Zurich Forum. He then brought these cloth panels to the Forum the following year, in the Netherlands. This year, as well as recording an interview, he introduced me to his wife of just a few weeks ~ what joy seeing them together. He is in the 2022 clip below.

Next year the Forum will be in Norway. Elisabeth, a trans woman, leading the organising committee, gave us a short presentation and invitation to Bergen.

[Facebook](#)

Here she speaks about her first time at the Forum, in Venlo, Netherlands.



For those who use Facebook:

[European Forum of Lgbti+ Christian Groups | Facebook](#)

Here you will see short clips featuring different people, identities and traditions...

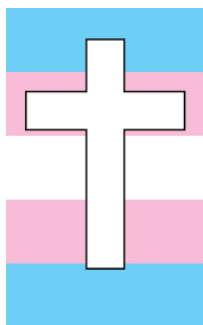
[EUROPEAN FORUM for LGBTQ CHRISTIAN groups 2022](#)

If you want any further information do contact me:

Susan Murphy

bertiefern@outlook.com

Trans faith



Rev Sarah Jones

Transgender Day of Visibility 2025

[https://vimeo.com/1068380372?](https://vimeo.com/1068380372?share=copy&fbclid=IwY2xjawJZwBVleHRuA2FlbQlMQABHYo39dwjpCzYjgxi4H6mI0VnMHvg7F_PMqhk6YbdQ_pLCMDbh1wgAFDzwg_aem_K7PmbU8BAxMEP-IJ6lykZg#t=0)

[share=copy&fbclid=IwY2xjawJZwBVleHRuA2FlbQlMQABHYo39dwjpCzYjgxi4H6mI0VnMHvg7F_PMqhk6YbdQ_pLCMDbh1wgAFDzwg_aem_K7PmbU8BAxMEP-IJ6lykZg#t=0](https://vimeo.com/1068380372?share=copy&fbclid=IwY2xjawJZwBVleHRuA2FlbQlMQABHYo39dwjpCzYjgxi4H6mI0VnMHvg7F_PMqhk6YbdQ_pLCMDbh1wgAFDzwg_aem_K7PmbU8BAxMEP-IJ6lykZg#t=0)

Phoebe Carstens

Transgender Day of Visibility 2025

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2025/03/31/trans-day-of-visibility-makes-visible-gods-abiding-love-for-all/>

Iona Community

Statement of solidarity with trans people

<https://iona.org.uk/solidarity-with-trans-people/>

Susan Cottrell

"The Prodigal Trans Daughter"

<https://qspirit.net/prodigal-son/>

Canon Dr Phil Groves

Some things you never forget

<https://viamedia.news/>

Student Christian Movement Trans Theology Group

The Supreme Court ruling

https://modernchurch.org.uk/a-trans-response-to-the-supreme-court-ruling-in-holy-week?fbclid=IwY2xjawJwKyxleHRuA2FlbQlMQABHssXjvEMXKVaf4CYxoFPp_kz-h4QBEVv8gS5oBi68nuu07Exns-qHcYyb0FN_aem_RvAxfRTuJAqv1WBmET0TbA

Susannah Clark

The Supreme Court ruling

For many trans-excluding activists, I fear that the campaign for this particular Supreme Court decision is not their only goal, merely a bridgehead leading to what they hope will be further enforced exclusion. They frame us as the enemies of women.

It's as if a trans woman like myself doesn't care about the protection of all women. I have cared about women all my life. Most trans people do – they care hugely. Many of us have mothers and daughters and wives and sisters who we love and care about. Indeed we have a vested interest ourselves in protection, because trans women know discrimination themselves.

In the end we can either accommodate each other's differences with kindness, or we can go down the road of populism, hatred, othering, and the policing of tribal boundaries. It doesn't have to be that way. Instead of meanness of spirit I think we need: generosity, kindness, responsibility, balance. We should help one another to be the whole and best of who we really are.

Transfigured

A new group aiming to make churches more trans inclusive

[https://transfigured.wixsite.com/home?](https://transfigured.wixsite.com/home?fbclid=IwY2xjawK4tAZleHRuA2FlbQlXMAbIcmIkETAxDbG3OXh3Y2JYN2o1Y2d1AR6c4MtNfUNkVQfOJgPtxmX8516MPuYKDTTAfml6i46U9jR3vf7TuLWF9yu33Q_aem_X4OdjQwZgDzWBUEcLVjlrQ)

[fbclid=IwY2xjawK4tAZleHRuA2FlbQlXMAbIcmIkETAxDbG3OXh3Y2JYN2o1Y2d1AR6c4MtNfUNkVQfOJgPtxmX8516MPuYKDTTAfml6i46U9jR3vf7TuLWF9yu33Q_aem_X4OdjQwZgDzWBUEcLVjlrQ](https://transfigured.wixsite.com/home?fbclid=IwY2xjawK4tAZleHRuA2FlbQlXMAbIcmIkETAxDbG3OXh3Y2JYN2o1Y2d1AR6c4MtNfUNkVQfOJgPtxmX8516MPuYKDTTAfml6i46U9jR3vf7TuLWF9yu33Q_aem_X4OdjQwZgDzWBUEcLVjlrQ)

Divine Source of Justice and Truth,
We come before You in this moment of political and social turmoil,
lifting our trans* siblings whose identities are being denied,
marginalised, and erased by those in power. Like Jesus who stood
with the oppressed, grant us the courage to stand in solidarity with
those whose rights are being stripped away by the Supreme Court's
decision that refuses to recognise an already scapegoated and
vilified group's identity.

Grant strength to those fighting for their dignity and personhood,
and resilience to those who are facing harm from a system that
seeks to invalidate their truth. We ask for wisdom for lawmakers,
activists, and all those in positions of power, that they may reflect
Your justice in their decisions, and work toward a world where no
one is persecuted for who they are.

May the voices of the oppressed rise louder than the silence of
indifference. May the love that we show to one another be stronger
than the hate being spewed.

May every trans* person in the UK—and around the world—know
that they are seen, they are loved, and they are worthy of every
right and freedom.

Amen.

Church of England

The CofE's "pastoral" guide following the Supreme Court ruling: utterly anodyne and meaningless

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/pastoral-response-to-supreme-court-ruling.pdf>

Trans law and politics



Disaster

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/apr/16/critics-of-trans-rights-win-uk-supreme-court-case-over-definition-of-woman>

Guardian editorial on Supreme Court ruling

Efforts to ringfence women's spaces could end up excluding trans people entirely. The worry is that a narrow legal clarification becomes a cultural victory lap. The bigger danger? That liberal societies struggle with those who don't fit neat categories, leaving trans people in a third sphere: neither male nor female, nor completely welcome.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/apr/23/the-guardian-view-on-the-uk-supreme-courts-equality-ruling-a-clear-legal-line-a-blurred-social-one>

EHRC guidance: 1

EHRC issues interim guidance on supreme court ruling and it's as bad we expected.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyw9qjeq8po>

EHRC guidance: 2

EHRC backtracks on initial guidance.

https://goodlawproject.org/ehrc-backs-down-on-single-sex-toilets/?utm_source=custom&utm_campaign=forwomenscotland_post_16508&utm_medium=custom_share&utm_content=17-06-2025&utm_source=Good+Law+Project&utm_campaign=a37ad65f62-EHRCConsultation&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_db5adb9599-a37ad65f62-464393499&mc_cid=a37ad65f62&mc_eid=be41a80f33

Ex-civil servant

Ex-civil servant involved in drafting of the legislation says that clear intention was to give trans people with a GRC same rights and protections as cis people of their gender.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/18/ruling-on-woman-definition-at-odds-with-uk-equality-acts-aim-says-ex-civil-servant>

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch condemns Supreme Court ruling.

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/05/09/regressive-uk-supreme-court-trans-ruling-condemned-by-human-rights-watch/>

Disabled activists

Disabled activists side with trans people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/may/24/disabled-campaigners-trans-people-toilet-segregation>

Labour: 1

A Labour Minister says Tories should apologise for being pro-trans under Theresa May.

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/04/17/labour-minister-says-tories-should-apologise-for-pro-trans-stance-under-theresa-may/>

Labour: 2

Just four Labour MPs think trans women are women:

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/04/25/labour-mps-are-trans-women-women/>

Labour: 3

Trans Labour councillor resigns over party throwing trans people under the bus.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/may/09/labour-transgender-people-dylan-tippetts-plymouth>

Victoria McCloud

Victoria McCloud plans to challenge supreme court ruling in ECHR.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9qw2149yelo>

Transgender Europe

Transgender Europe condemns the ruling:

The UK Supreme Court's decision has severely undermined legal certainty and reinforced the structural inequality of a community that already faces unprecedented levels of exclusion from basic services. The precise ramifications of the judgment will only become clear over time, especially on issues not covered specifically in the Equality Act and the Court's decision, but there is no doubt that it will come at great cost to the trans community.

<https://tgeu.org/while-the-uk-supreme-court-defines-who-is-a-woman-in-law-trans-people-fight-for-survival/>

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch condemns SC ruling.

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/05/09/regressive-uk-supreme-court-trans-ruling-condemned-by-human-rights-watch/>

Disabled activists

Disabled activists side with trans people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/may/24/disabled-campaigners-trans-people-toilet-segregation>

More trans reactions

Some reactions from trans people a month on from the ruling.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1e6l89wyewo>

Trans groups ask Council of Europe to investigate state of trans rights in UK.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/28/transgender-campaigners-council-of-europe-report-on-uk>

Sex Matters

Sex Matter's eliminationist agenda.

<https://yorkshirebylines.co.uk/news/home-affairs/behind-the-ruling-how-sex-matters-is-shaping-uk-policy-on-trans-rights/>

[fbclid=IwY2xjawLNJtBleHRuA2FlbQlxMOBicmlkETAxuDg3OXh3Y2JYN2o1Y2d1AR7jPSOigJmoZcs1fuua_nTs9pbx390cwBL9i8tpjuoqceWcL1jf9kquaDdynZw_aem_JOfCandJncFpxMZDpO9v-A](https://www.facebook.com/yorkshirebylines/?fbclid=IwY2xjawLNJtBleHRuA2FlbQlxMOBicmlkETAxuDg3OXh3Y2JYN2o1Y2d1AR7jPSOigJmoZcs1fuua_nTs9pbx390cwBL9i8tpjuoqceWcL1jf9kquaDdynZw_aem_JOfCandJncFpxMZDpO9v-A)

Jo Maugham (Good Law Project)

You can tell whether a thing is important to lawyers because it gets its own Latin tag. One of them – perhaps the most important – is *audi alteram partem*, that both sides should be heard.

You don't actually need to be a lawyer to know it's important. In our bones we all know it's impossible for fairness to happen without hearing both sides of the story. Except that the Supreme Court forgot. The For Women Scotland case was about whether a trans woman with a gender recognition certificate – a kind of official certificate that you've transitioned – is protected against discrimination as a woman.

The case was brought by an organisation that doesn't believe trans women are women. And it was brought against the Scottish government which isn't trans. Lots of organisations applied to be heard by the Supreme Court. And it agreed to hear from them – Sex Matters, which shares For Women Scotland's views. Scottish Lesbians – it does too. The Lesbian Project – ditto. LGB Alliance – the same. All were permitted to make written or oral arguments before the Supreme Court. So was the Equality and Human Rights Commission – also hostile to trans rights in the UK. And Amnesty – which is like the Scottish government, not trans.

No trans organisations applied to intervene. There's a reason for that. It's because they know from bitter experience what legal proceedings mean for them. They mean punishment beatings in the press, that the Charity Commission is likely to investigate, that their staff will face threats of violence and that it may well kill the organisation.

We know this because the organisation I run, Good Law Project, has funded and supported their legal actions in the past and we have seen the consequences. We asked again all of those we knew in Scotland – and they refused. But we did persuade the two architects of the Gender Recognition Act that created that certificate to intervene: an academic, Stephen Whittle, and until she resigned because of the what she experienced as a judge, our only "out" trans High Court judge, Victoria McCloud. Both trans, both with a gender recognition certificate.

Three barristers worked on their intervention – two are now KCs – and they spent hundreds of hours and many tens of thousands of pounds working on it. We funded them. But without even giving reasons, the Supreme Court flatly refused. And they were left with not even one trans person before them.

And then it got worse. They didn't just listen to the legal arguments of those organisations. They also accepted fresh evidence from them, evidence that was never tested, evidence that would have been vigorously tested. Except the Supreme Court refused to allow anyone trans to test it.

This was monumentally unfair to trans people, the community most closely affected by the decision, but it's not just the unfairness. The decision to shut out from the hearing the people most closely affected made the decision weaker. Let me give you one example – there are many others. The Supreme Court says – and I quote – that their decision "would not be disadvantageous to or remove protection from trans

people with or without a GRC". And the reason they give is that if you are perceived to be a woman you are entitled to the protection the law gives to women. But this reasoning only applies to a small proportion of trans women. If you are "out" as trans you will not be entitled to that protection – and the criminal law now forces people to "out" themselves. If you do not "pass" as a woman you are not entitled to that protection – and gender-affirming healthcare is being withdrawn so fewer and fewer trans people will pass.

Of course, there is no reason why the Supreme Court should have known any of this – after all they are all cis. But they should have known that they didn't know. They should have known that to deliver justice means hearing from both sides. They should have had some humility about the limits of their own knowledge. That they chose not to is unforgivable.

The Supreme Court can kid itself all it likes about this decision not being bad for trans people. Trans people know it is the latest savage blow against a community that is already reeling.

We have criminalised trans healthcare that is orthodox in the rest of the developed world. Institutions – like the EHRC – that are supposed to protect trans people routinely attack them. Even newspapers which pretend to be progressive – like the Observer – now pointedly celebrate their misgendering of trans people. The result – as every trans person knows – is an epidemic of suicide. And even that reality is denied to them – government departments are stretching every sinew to prevent publication of suicide statistics which are acutely embarrassing to ministers who like to pretend to care.

Several years ago Good Law Project commissioned a large survey from YouGov of how people with different "protected characteristics" trusted the judiciary. It showed that the lowest level of trust in the judiciary was held by trans people. Today's decision has proven them right. We remain committed to fighting for trans rights and standing with the trans community, and are currently looking at how we can fight this appalling decision. We're exploring our options, from domestic to the European Court of Human Rights. If you are able to, your support means more now than ever.

I am a King's Counsel and I have an unblemished professional record and I do not say this lightly. The Supreme Court's decision has made me ashamed of my profession and ashamed of what our law has become. But we won't stop fighting.

The Good Law Project's support for legal challenge to the interim EHRC guidance

https://goodlawproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Letter-to-the-Equality-and-Human-Rights-Commission-16-May-2025_Redacted.pdf?utm_source=Good+Law+Project&utm_campaign=8c68fa2cf1-EMAIL_TransHR_2025_05_19_12_55_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0-f8b3c5ba42-465146627&mc_cid=8c68fa2cf1&mc_eid=035f74c501

https://goodlawproject.org/resource/trans-inclusion-after-the-supreme-court-decision-faqs/?utm_source=Good+Law+Project&utm_campaign=8c68fa2cf1-EMAIL_TransHR_2025_05_19_12_55_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0-f8b3c5ba42-465146627&mc_cid=8c68fa2cf1&mc_eid=035f74c501



Trans Actual's letter to Keir Starmer

<https://transactual.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Keir-Starmer-22-Apr-2025.pdf>

Academics challenge "unsupported and factitious" ruling in open letter to MPs "The EHRC's actions are only the latest in a string of hostile actions taken by the government against trans people, non-binary and intersex people. These actions have chilling historical precedents. Recent changes to schools' guidance erased and demeaned the existence of trans people in ways unmistakably redolent of Section 28. Exclusions of trans people from meaningful input into reforms of trans healthcare during and in the wake of the widely criticised Cass Review recalled the shameful exercises of gatekeeping and promotion of 'cures' for homosexuality in the 1950s. The ignoring of trans voices and lived experience by both the Supreme Court and the EHRC reflect the same pattern, with further restrictions of trans people's access to healthcare now being threatened. Meanwhile, updated regulations on prison accommodation, sport participation, and statistical data collection have all targeted trans people's right to exist as trans people in ways that echo the ugliest episodes of sectarian, racial, and sexual discrimination against other minority groups in this country's history.

Full letter and signatories

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QgMDhoprQIbNDhU9UETU4NVk8bNTv95m5cH0b5J27Ps/edit?tab=t.0>

Some Thoughts on the Supreme Court Decision

To make this document read easily, I have treated it from the point of view of a female transsexual. Of course similar thoughts apply to male transsexuals. I apologise for any slight but it has been done solely to simplify the argument.

The Supreme Court reached the decision that a woman is an adult female human and is biological i.e. born, not made. Consequently only biologically born females should be entitled to women only spaces.

The principle laid down was very clear and I would suggest there is no point whatsoever in arguing with it. The vast majority of the population would agree with it. The legal profession and Parliament would accept it. There is no point in wasting time and money in challenging it.

However a case can and should be made for exceptions and this is where effort should be concentrated.

A great deal of energy has been spent on the struggle to define a woman. However very little effort was spent in defining a transwoman. This was a mistake. There are great variations in transwomen and until the trans community can clearly state what a transwoman is and what she wants, the message is going to lack focus and clarity.

For example there are individuals with beards who like to put on a dress on a Saturday night, get drunk and loudly proclaim that they are a woman. At the other extreme there is the person who has lived peacefully and unobtrusively as a woman for many years, integrated into her community, and wouldn't dream of making a fuss. There is a considerable range of types in between with differing hopes and aspirations.

The group that concerns me are the longstanding transsexuals who have changed their role and are living fulltime as women relying on the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) and their Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

In applying for a GRC I was required to give a commitment that I would live as a woman for the rest of my life. That commitment was irrevocable and I gave my word. It is there until the day I die.

The GRA laid down that holders of a GRC would be treated in all respects as a woman. Treated in all respects. ALL. There were no exceptions for women only spaces and clearly none were intended.

It's worth noting that word "as". I undertook to live as a woman. I was to be treated as a woman in all respects. Nothing said I actually was a woman but I was to be treated as a woman. And that has been the case these many years.

If this is to be overruled I need to know how, in the light of the latest pronouncements, my commitment to live as a woman until death is to be accommodated and how the State's commitment that I will be treated as a woman is to be honoured.

I remain convinced that the vast majority of the holders of GRCs merely wish to get on with their lives peacefully with no fuss. All will have met the GRA's onerous commitments, most will have had surgery. According to Google only 8,464 GRCs have been issued, some of whom will be for males and some for females. In the last twenty odd years more than a few will have died. For His Majesty's Government to honour existing commitments to the remaining few is surely not asking too much. To treat us as exceptions maintains the Supreme Court's decision whilst accommodating those who don't quite fit in. Just treat us as women in all respects.

All I wish is to live in peace as a woman until I die.

Taking it up with my MP...

I wrote to my MP (Rachel Reeves) before Christmas. More than 4 months later I received a reply from Wes Streeting which begins:

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 January on behalf of your constituent Ms Pauline Fleck about puberty blockers. I apologise for the delay in replying.

I appreciate Ms Fleck's concerns.

The Government wants trans people and their families to feel safe and accepted in our society, and to be able to live with freedom and dignity.

Mr Streeting's letter was written before the Supreme Court ruling and of course this assertion now rings very hollow indeed. The rest of the letter is a defence of the Cass Report, including:

With regard to Ms Fleck's criticism of the Cass Review, the Cass Review was a robust, evidence-based review that is the most comprehensive assessment of gender incongruence in children and young people that has been produced to date. It was underpinned by a systematic review conducted by the University of York and a programme of proactive engagement. Dr Cass's team engaged with over 1,000 individuals and organisations across the breadth of opinion on this subject, including trans and gender-questioning young people, as well as support and advocacy groups.

As has been said, fake science followed by fake jurisprudence. It's very clear (if it was ever in doubt) what we can expect from this government. Though let's not even think about what might happen should Reform ever get into power... *[Pauline Fleck]*

Trans health



NHS England

NHS England plans support for detransitioners

NHS England is setting up a programme to develop an NHS pathway of care for adults who have previously undergone a medical transition and subsequently wish to detransition. The programme forms part of NHS England's work to take forward the recommendations of the [independent review of gender services for children and young people \(the Cass Review\)](#), one of which was to ensure that there is provision for individuals considering clinical detransition. The review found that the data and research on detransition is emergent. Similarly, there are no official guidelines in the UK for health and care professionals to use when providing care for people who wish to clinically detransition. As a first step towards addressing these gaps, we are keen to hear from people who have detransitioned, or are considering doing so, who can share their experiences and support us to shape this work as it develops. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact the team at england.scengagement@nhs.net and we can contact you to arrange an initial confidential conversation.

Comment by Pauline Fleck

I don't begrudge support for that small minority of people who detransition but this does feel like another consequence of the government continuing to base their policy towards trans people on the discredited Cass Review. In this context, support for trans people is being given in a niggardly, reluctant, as minimal as possible a way. Trans rights are increasingly eroded and the validity of trans identities increasingly disrespected.

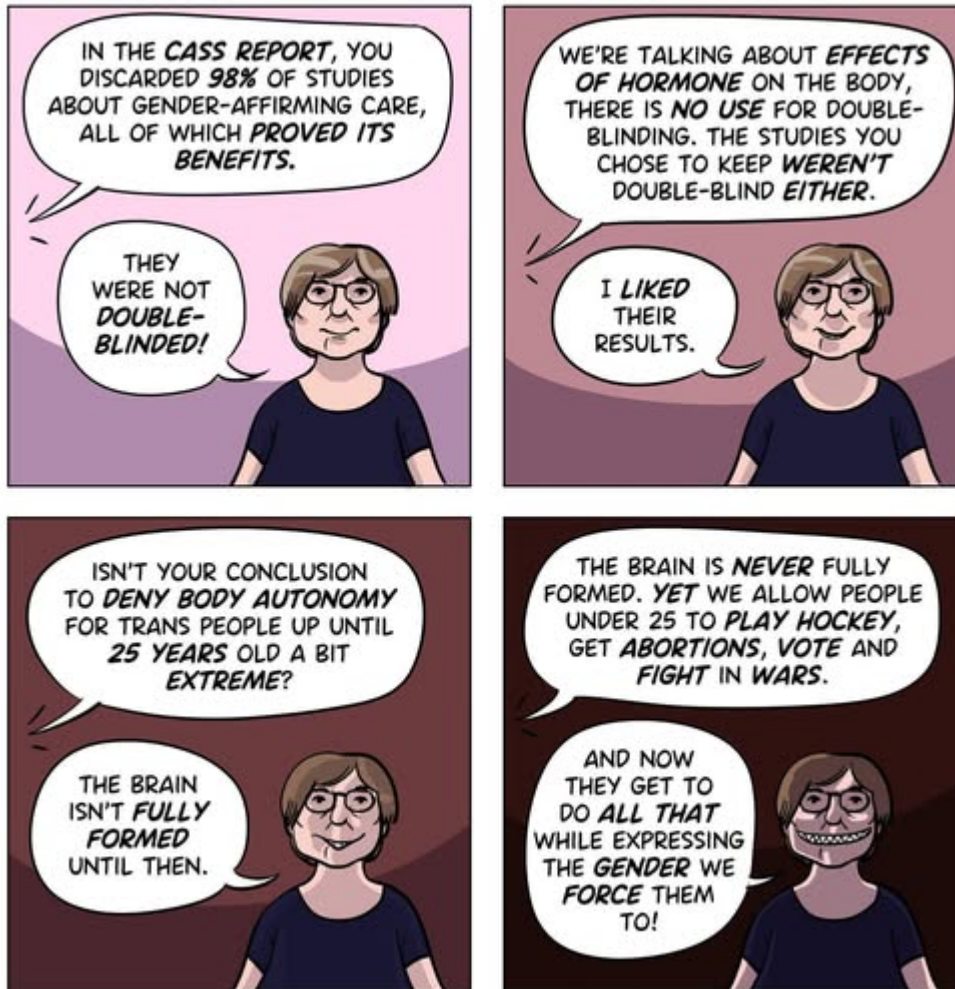
Comment by Mary Ward

It feels like a kick in the teeth: no medical help for those who want to transition (a 10+ year waiting list just to get an initial appointment), medical help taken away from all young people who are in the process of transition, but setting up a special "NHS pathway of care" for adults who want to detransition!

Trans Actual

Trans Actual's response to NHS England's consultation on service specification for adult gender clinics.

<https://transactual.org.uk/blog/2024/11/26/transactual-response-to-nhs-englands-stakeholder-consultation-on-the-adult-gender-dysphoria-non-surgical-service-specification/>



Miscellaneous comments

British Medical Association

BMA condemns Supreme Court ruling.

EM4

This meeting condemns the Supreme Court ruling defining the term 'woman' with respect to the Equality Act as being based on 'biological sex', which they refer to as a person who 'was at birth of the female sex', as reductive, trans and intersex-exclusionary and biologically nonsensical. We recognize as doctors that sex and gender are complex and multifaceted aspects of the human condition and attempting to impose a rigid binary has no basis in science or medicine while being actively harmful to transgender and gender diverse people. As such this meeting:

- i. Reiterates the BMA's position on affirming the rights of transgender and non-binary individuals to live their lives with dignity, having their identity respected.
- ii. Reminds the Supreme Court of the existence of intersex people and reaffirms their right to exist in the gender identity that matches their sense of self, regardless of whether this matches any identity assigned to them at birth.
- iii. Condemns scientifically illiterate rulings from the Supreme Court, made without consulting relevant experts and stakeholders, that will cause real-world harm to the trans, non-binary and intersex communities in this country.
- iv. Commits to strive for better access to necessary health services for trans, non-binary and gender-diverse people.

BMA supports care based on gender identity.

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/06/26/bma-british-medical-association-identity-based-care/>

Trans youths

Trans youths protest over failure to release trans suicide report.

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/05/13/nhs-hq-trans-youth-activism-blood-handprints/>

Eating disorders

Research project on eating disorders in trans people.

https://cardiffunipsych.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1SuFhbh0lxu2ZaC

Trans life



Jake and Hannah Graf

"Trans is Human" with Jake and Hannah Graf.

https://diva-magazine.com/2025/03/31/jake-and-hannah-graf/?fbclid=IwY2xjawJZvp9leHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHV62YHEtWEDlHkpxdFQVpxbA7s1TGuZX5zq9zJ_1eoVZJ7HaxidEZQlk1g_aem_YzwvnByGcQldqfc9c29ytw

Trans Virtual Centre of Excellence

<https://new.express.adobe.com/webpage/CkL6gTDI7WI29>

Good Pink News

Good Pink News article on pioneering (if controversial) trans woman Roberta Cowell...

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/05/06/roberta-cowell-trans-woman-uk-history/>

....and another on Michael Dillon, pioneering trans man who loved Roberta and became a Buddhist monk.

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/05/08/laurence-michael-dillon-trans-man/>

Cyclist Pippa York

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2025/jun/16/when-i-stopped-racing-i-thought-who-am-i-pippa-york-on-leaving-her-old-life-behind>

Trans world



India

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4g9gz5edzko>

Germany

German trans trail-blazer.

https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/charlaque-charlotte?fbclid=IwY2xjawJZvKxleHRuA2FlbQlXMAABHWolzVeN_x7eTuqEERBrUQ-ilzWhYvqz_uL7djhxNknAfcIMafDDEf7FQ_aem_tTB3r_4Y3NR7gplQAqsBFw&utm_content=buffer48562&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

USA

Plight of trans veterans in the US.

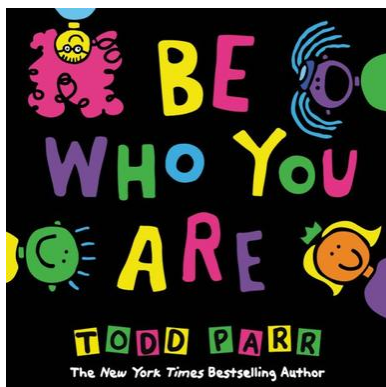
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/02/trans-soldiers-veterans-healthcare>
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/08/trump-pentagon-trans-military-ban>

Czech Republic

ECtHR rules against forced sterilisation of trans people in Czech Republic.

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/06/12/czech-republic-forced-sterilisation-european-court-of-human-rights/>

Trans books and media



“Stag Dance” by Torrey Peters

Having simply loved Torrey Peters’s last book, “Detransition, Baby” , I was very eager to read her new book, “Stag Dance”, which consists of a novella and a number of short stories, written over a period of 10 years, during which, as she says, she “inhabited and discarded many selves”. None of the stories in this book make for comfortable reading. She seems almost to have a mission to take trans people out of their comfort zones and to question more conventional, reassuring narratives about trans experience as well as getting her readers to inhabit trans identities far removed from the normal spectrum. You end up, perhaps, with a wider perception of what it means to be trans and you might also be led, uncomfortably, to ask yourself questions about your own identity and the way it has evolved over time. Torrey asks important questions but, like all good novelists, leaves each reader to find answers for themselves, which might involve some deep searching.

Film industry

At last...some support for trans people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/30/more-than-400-actors-and-film-industry-professionals-sign-open-letter-supporting-trans-rights>

Caroline Cossey

Caroline Cossey’s extraordinary story.

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/06/02/transgender-james-bond-girl-caroline-cossey/>

Mary Ward

Mary Ward writes on Bible texts thought to be unfavourable to trans people ("clobber texts") and on more favourable ones.

Verses Often Cited Against Transgender Identity

1. Deuteronomy 22:5: "A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this."

Even with the most literal interpretation, this verse does not forbid transgender people dressing according to their gender identity: if anything, such an interpretation would ***compel*** transgender people to dress according to their gender identity! A trans woman is a woman, so under a literal and universal interpretation of this verse, a trans woman should not wear "men's clothing". In fact, the precise translation is that a woman should not wear "anything that pertains to" a man. The most likely interpretation, given the context, is that certain kinds of idolatry involved cross-dressing and it is this (idolatry) that is being prohibited. Interpreting the verse as a general and universal prohibition of a man wearing a woman's garment is contradicted by Genesis 37:3, which says " Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a ***ketonet passim***". The Hebrew term ***ketonet passim*** occurs in one other place in the Bible, but fortunately for us, in that place a definition is provided. In 2 Sam 13:18 we read "Now she [Tamar] was wearing a ***ketonet passim***; for this is how the virgin daughters of the king were clothed in earlier times". So a ***ketonet passim*** is a princess dress, and Joseph is not criticised for wearing one.

Other verses in Dt 22 are not taken universally and literally: "When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof" (Dt 22:8) Most houses in the UK do not have a parapet on the roof. Of course, most UK houses do not have flat roofs that people walk about on, so if we interpret this verse in context it is simply a valid "health and safety measure". But what about Dt 22:11 which tells us not to wear clothes with mixed materials, such as wool and linen? Or Dt 22:12 which says "You shall make tassels on the four corners of the cloak with which you cover yourself"?

All these problems are solved if we interpret these passages in the light of Jesus statements in Mt 22:39-40 and Mk 12:28-29, and Paul's statements in Rom 13:9 and Gal 5:14. All laws concerning other people are derived from "Love your neighbour as yourself". There are no other laws. So if a law is interpreted in a way which harms your neighbour (such as: preventing someone from transitioning) then that interpretation is incorrect. Wearing a cloak without tassels on the corners (or wearing some other kind of outer garment) is not harming anybody, so it is not against God's law. But then, neither is cross dressing or social transition.

2. Genesis 1:27: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Here the transphobic interpretation is: God created male and female as a gender binary with nothing in between and each gender determined purely by external genitalia at birth. This external, physical appearance defines "God's will" for the person, regardless of their inner gender identity, what they know in their heart that God created them to be.

Problems with this view:

(*) Each of the other "opposites" listed in Gen 1 are two points on a spectrum: light and dark also includes dawn and twilight, land and sea also includes tidal beaches, wetlands, swamps etc, birds and fish also includes penguins, dolphins, whales, flying fish etc, so, given this context, male and female also includes intersex, transgender, agender, gender fluid and so on.

(*) God did not just create male and female: intersex people exist.

(*) Jesus acknowledges intersex and transgender people in Mt 19:12.

(*) Nowhere does the Bible say that where our heart and our physical appearance contradict, then the physical appearance is "God's will" and our heart has to conform to it. In fact, the Bible says the opposite (as we shall see below).

3. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God." (NASB).

The words translated "effeminate" and "homosexuals" are *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* in Greek. The Greek adjective "malakos" literally means "soft". It appears in a different form in Mt 11:8 and Lk 7:25 where Jesus says of John the Baptist "What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft (*malakos*) robes?"

The word could mean someone physically "effeminate" or someone morally weak. In Greek society to be "masculine" was to be aggressive, to dominate, to be "on top". A man who displayed "too great a love of women" were looked down upon. "Those who argued that male homosexual love was best made their case that to pursue a woman beyond the simple need to procreate was to taint a man with the "softness" or "effeminacy" of a woman. Men who fall in love with women demonstrate their effeminacy (*malakos*) by being controlled by women." ("Homosexuality and the Authority of Scripture", by J. Elliott Lein)

Since Paul elsewhere urges men to love their wives (Eph 5:33) he cannot have this meaning in mind. But if the "*malakoi*" are the morally weak or lax, then this is illustrated by the contrast with John the Baptist who took a firm moral stand "speaking truth to power" including the condemnation of Herod's divorce and marriage to his brother's wife.

The word "arsenokoitai" is of very uncertain meaning, but most commentators take it to refer to male prostitution or to child pederasty, an unequal relationship of abuse rather than a loving consensual same-sex relationship.

John H. Elliott writes "whatever weight and moral significance these two terms have, must be shared by all the terms in the list." ("No Kingdom of God for Softies? or, What Was Paul Really Saying? 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 in Context")

4. Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds"

This is interpreted by some as meaning that transgender people have to "transform their minds" to conform to their bodies, not the other way around. But the verse goes on "... so that you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect." The point is that we need to discern what is good and acceptable and perfect and conform to that. The idea that our body is God's will and our mind has to conform to the body is brought into the verse, not read out of it. This idea is contradicted in many other places in the Bible (see below). True discernment means making use of all the information that God has provided, including scientific information and human experience.

Verses Supporting Inclusion and Compassion

1. Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

In Christ the old hierarchies and divisions have been abolished and replaced by a radical inclusion and equality. Jews and Gentiles can eat together and worship together. Slaves are should be treated as equals, and so should men and women.

2. Isaiah 56:3-5: "Let no eunuch complain, 'I am only a dry tree.'... I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever."

Eunuchs in the ancient world were often gender-nonconforming or intersex individuals, and here, they are welcomed into God's family. In Deuteronomy 23:1 the law forbids people assigned male at birth who had their reproductive organs crushed or cut off from being part of the community of Israel. But once the Israelites were captured by Babylon and Persia, two cultures in which castration was more common, we begin to see more stories concerning eunuchs and their position in society. Once the people of Israel are freed from captivity, God speaks through Isaiah and changes the previous law: in the new Israel, eunuchs will not be outcasts but will have a special place.

3. Matthew 19:12: Jesus mentions eunuchs, including those "who have been so from birth" (those who were born intersex) and those "who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" (those who have medically transitioned to conform their bodies to their God-given gender identity).

4. Acts 8:26-40: The first non-Jew whose conversion story is recorded in Acts is a foreigner, an Ethiopian, and a eunuch: a gender non-conforming person of colour. When he hears about Jesus he asks "What is to prevent me from being baptized?" Instead of listing all the reasons why he cannot be baptized, Phillip baptises him with no questions and no strings attached, and he goes on his way rejoicing.

5. Psalm 139:13-14: "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well."

The image of being "knit together" in the womb implies a process of formation of a person: it is not something that happens instantly at the moment of conception. The human brain, which is formed in the womb, is composed of an ever-changing heterogeneous mosaic of "male" and "female" brain characteristics (rather than being all "male" or all "female") that cannot be aligned on a continuum between a "male brain" and a "female brain." (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21960961/>)

Researchers have shown that trans women have largely feminine brain structures, while trans men have largely masculine brain structures: thus confirming their innate sense of who they really are. "Transgender people have neurological traits of the gender they identify as, rather than that they are assigned at birth. Neurobiology is a far more reliable measure of who a person is than their genitals." ("Neuro-biology of trans-sexuality", Prof. Robert Sapolsky)

6. The next set of verses address the question of what matters most in God's sight: our physical appearance or the state of our heart?

In 1 Sam 16:7: God tells Samuel "Do not look on his appearance ... for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart"

In Is 29:13, quoted by Jesus in Mt 15:8 and Mk 7:6, God complains "This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me". Even though the people's outward appearance and words are those of sincere worshippers, God knows that what is in their heart is something different, and that is what matters to Him.

Contrast this with 2 Kings 5:18-19 where Naaman says to Elisha "when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow down in the house of Rimmon, when I do bow down in the house of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon your servant on this one count." and Elisha replies "Go in peace". Here, the outward appearance is of an idol worshipper, but God knows that the heart is a sincere worshipper of God, and the heart is what matters to God.

Paul underlines this fact in Rom 2:28-29 "For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God."

Even when people treat someone based on their external appearance, God sees their heart and that is the true identity of that person.

If "this perishable body must put on imperishability" (1 Cor 15:53) then the gender identity (a property of the mind/soul/spirit) must take precedence over the physical and perishable body. The physical body is a mortal, limited and temporary "tent", a dwelling place while we look forward to "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor 5:1-8).

This does not mean that the physical body is unimportant to transgender people, as with some forms of gnosticism: trans people want to physically transition precisely ***because*** their body is important to them. The body must conform to the mind, not the other way around, as Paul says "I discipline my body and bring it under strict control" (1 Cor 9:27).

Paul also says: "So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day." (1 Cor 4:16) For Paul, the "inner nature" is what matters: it takes precedence over the "outer nature".

Revd Dr Jonathan Tallon says "We have this treasure in clay jars" (2 Cor 4:7). Is that treasure just a feeling? Just psychology? Which is more important, the clay jar or the treasure? Our bodies are real, but our minds are real too. Is your commitment to Christ "just a feeling?" Is your identity in Christ "just psychology"? To reduce biology to being the only reality is sub-Christian.' ("What does the Bible say about transgender people?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYhg5J0IAIU>)

Transgender and non-binary people pursue physical change as an expression of being committed to integrity in body and spirit.

7. Changing names

In Genesis 32:28 Jacob is given the new name "Israel" because he had "striven with God and with humans, and [had] prevailed".

In Genesis 16, God changes Abram's name to Abraham, which means "father of many nations" and the name of Sarai to Sarah, possibly meaning "princess of many."

In Numbers 13:16 Moses changes the name of Hoshea, son of Nun, to Joshua, and from there he became the second-in-command to Moses.

In Matthew 16:17-18, Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter as a signal that he is to be "the rock" and foundation of the church.

The Bible establishes a precedent that name changes can be either an uncovering of who God has always seen a person to be, or as the recognition of a new identity and a new beginning.

8. In Matthew 7:16-18, Jesus provides a test by which we can show which teaching or Bible interpretation is good, and which is bad: "You will know them by their fruits.... every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit". A quick survey of the scientific research and of human experience will soon demonstrate that more than half the children who grow up in a non-affirming environment will attempt suicide, while for those in an affirming environment levels of depression and suicide attempts are no higher than the rest of the population. The scientific research is very clear: affirmation leads to positive fruit in people's lives. This is why all the main psychological and psychiatric societies and organisations support affirmation.

Finally, as we all approach this topic with compassion, humility and courage, we may call to mind the words of Gamaliel, a teacher who defended the persecuted apostles of the early church: "if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them--in that case you may even be found fighting against God!" (Acts 5:34-39, NRSV).