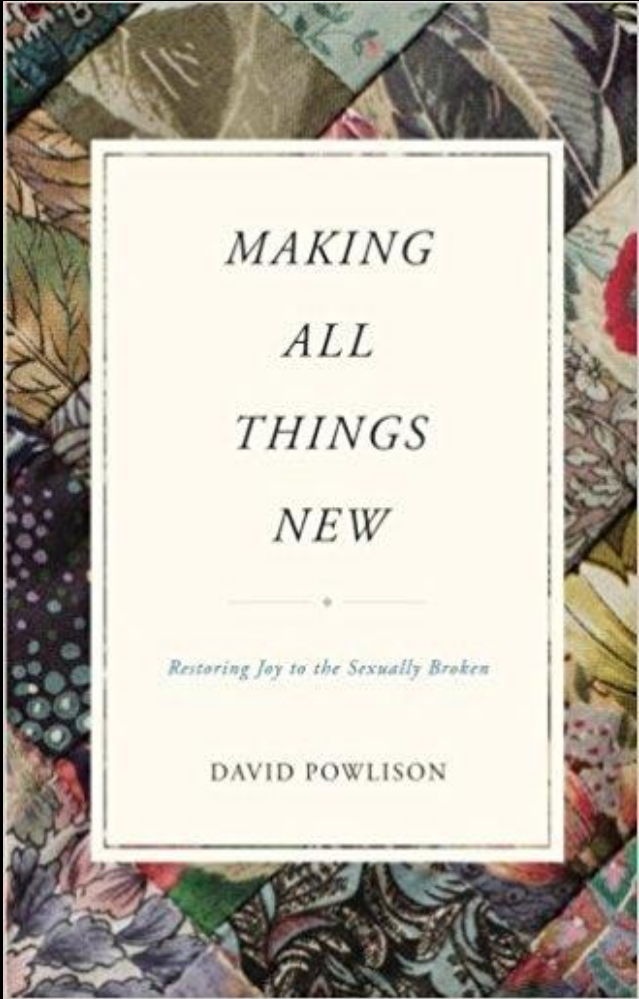
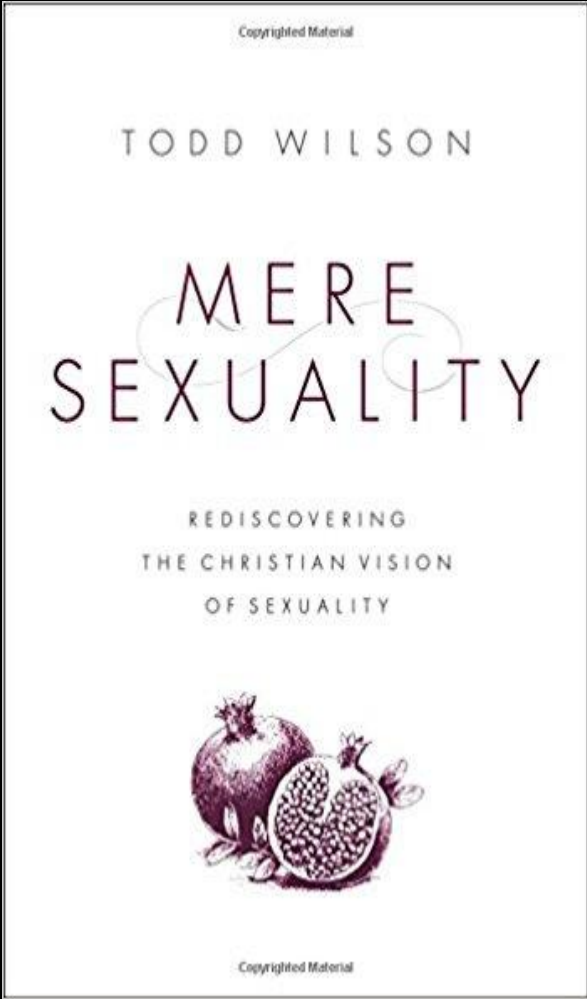
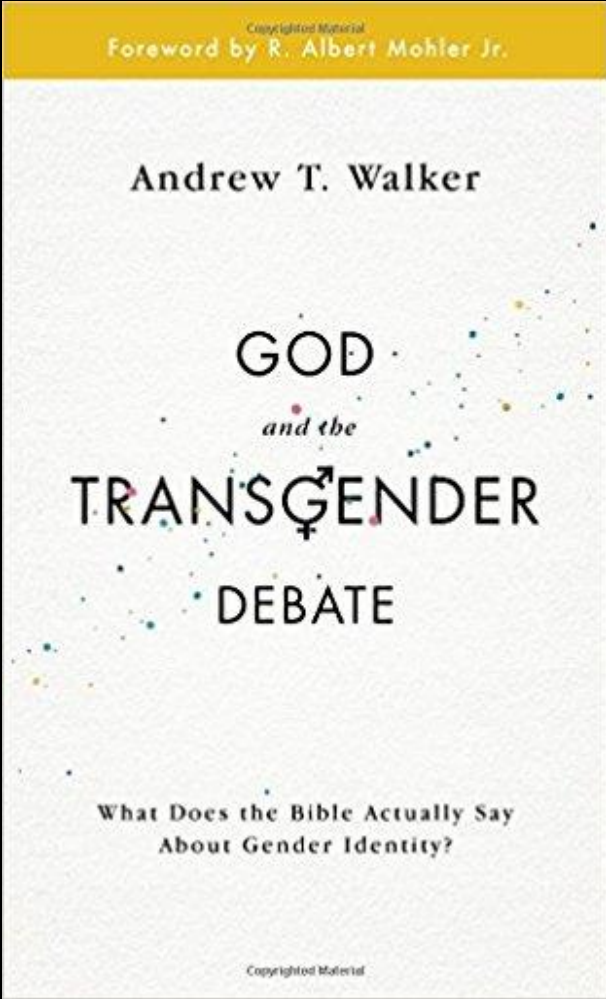
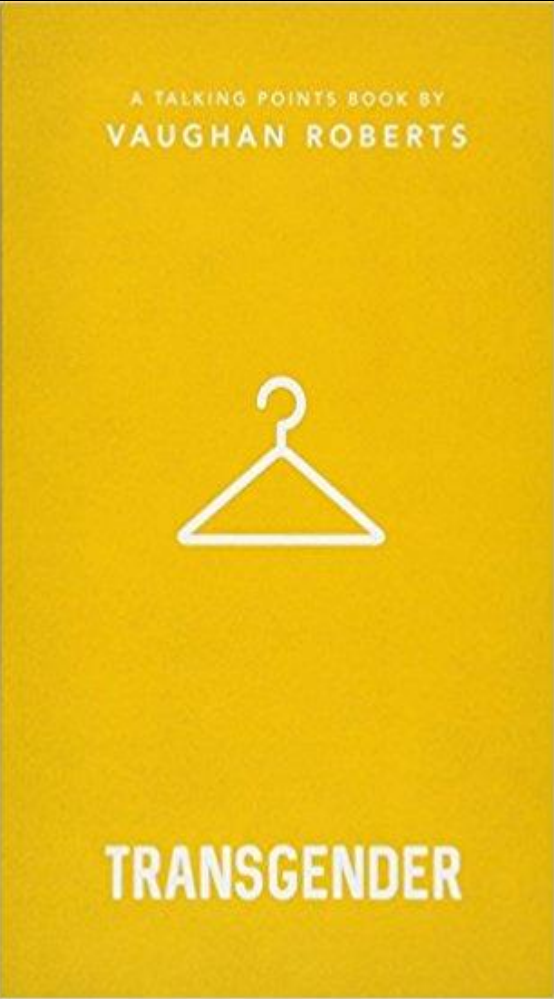


APOLOGETICS: GIVING A REASON FOR OUR HOPE

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)

FALL 2017

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- Bruce Jenner, 2015
 - Interview with Diane Sawyer – revealed that all his life he believe he was really a woman. Defined himself as transgender.
 - Vanity Fair Magazine – “Call Me Caitlyn”
 - A reality TV show started, documenting the transformation
 - The Message: “Men can become women if they perceive themselves to be women, and vice versa.”
 - Within a few years while everyone was still catching up with same-sex marriage, gender identity became the most fashionable social-justice issue of our day.
- Obergefell v. Hodges, 2015
 - The landmark civil rights case in which the US Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have a fundamental right to marry
 - Basically sealed settled the “LGB” issue and now we’re on to the “T”
- Since 2015
 - Facebook offers over sixty gender options to its members
 - Debates about restroom usage, sports, etc. fill the news and social media
 - Some states like New York are fining citizens who fail to use the preferred pronoun of transgender citizens.

WHY TALK ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM?

- Most of our interaction with transgenderism happens in political/cultural discussion
- So why should we think about this issue?
 - It is an issue we should understand and be ready to respond to biblically
 - Joe Dallas, Christian Research Journal (2008), *“Kim was the most handsome client to ever step into my office. As a pastoral counselor, I work with men wanting to overcome sexual sins, many who, as a first impression, present themselves as self-absorbed male-model types. So an attractive man asking for help wasn’t unusual, but tall, muscular and square-jawed Kim immediately stood apart. ‘Since this is your first appointment,’ I said while Kim completed a form, ‘let’s talk about the problem that brought you here.’ The new counselee signed a form, fixed a steady gaze on me and dropped the bomb. ‘The problem is my chromosomes. I was born female.’ I was astonished, and after two decades of counseling porn addicts, homosexuals, prostitutes, and an occasional sex offender, I didn’t shock easily. ‘I’ve lived most of my life as a man,’ she continued, ‘and it’s worked. I’ve finally had sex-change surgery three years ago, and I’ve been living with a woman since then. But two weeks ago I got saved at a Harvest crusade. I’m a new Christian, so now what?’*

OVERVIEW

(1) Definitions

(2) Some basic facts to orient us to the cultural situation

(3) Eight theses about transgenderism

DEFINITIONS

- Biological Sex – refers to a person being male or female according to their chromosomes (XY or XX) and their internal and external physiology.
 - Historically, gender has been attached to biological sex; if your biological sex is female, then your gender is female.
 - Today: people see gender as unattached to biological sex. Your biological sex may be female, but that does not necessarily mean that your gender is female.
- Gender – the psychological, social, and cultural manifestations of maleness and femaleness.
 - Illustration: to be a mother is to be more than just a female biological parent; our concept of motherhood contains gender ideas that go beyond just the biological aspect.
 - Some aspects of gender are cultural relative
 - Examples: 13th century Scottish warriors, colors associated with masculinity/femininity, wearing makeup

DEFINITIONS

- **Gender Identity** – a person’s internal sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (non-binary).
 - Similar to sexual orientation, this is a phrase that has been used to change peoples’ understanding of gender.
 - Core Idea: All people have a gender identity. Some people feel that their gender identity aligns with their biological sex, but some people experience distress, inner anguish and discomfort from a sense of conflict between their biological sex and their gender identity.
- **Gender Dysphoria** – a felt mismatch between a person’s biological sex and gender identity.
 - In varying forms of degree, this is a genuine experience people have. People feel that they should be or would feel better as the gender that is opposite their biological sex, or no gender all.
 - People who experiences distress over their gender identity are not perverts or freaks. For many it is an unchosen, unwanted experience.
 - Research indicates that there are degrees of dysphoria, ranging from “mild” to “severe”.

DEFINITIONS

- **Trans/Transgender** – a broad umbrella term used to describe a person who experiences or expresses a different gender identity than his/her biological sex.
 - A transgender person lives out/expresses a sexual identity other than their biological sex.
- **Transitioning** – the steps a transgender person may take to live in the gender with which they identify.
 - Transitions vary: for some this involves hormone therapy or medical intervention (gender reassignment surgery), but not all trans people want or are able to have this. For many, transitioning involves: telling friends and family, dressing differently, and changing official documents.

FACTS AND STATISTICS

- 0.3-0.6% of U.S. adults identify with a gender other than their biological sex (3-6 in every thousand identify as trans)
 - However, the number of adults who are clinically diagnosed with gender dysphoria is much lower (1 in 10,000 males and 1 in 30,000 females)
- Among children who experience gender dysphoria before puberty, the vast majority discover that the dysphoria decreases as they pass through adolescence.
 - For some, this remains an ongoing distress

FACTS AND STATISTICS

- What causes gender dysphoria?
 - Answer: No one knows.
 - The debate revolves around nature/nurture discussions.
 - Nothing close to a scientific consensus on what causes gender dysphoria.
- People who identify as transgender are at a significantly higher risk of mental health problems.
 - Varying explanations for this statistic, but it is a fact.
 - Similarly, suicide rates are at a significantly higher rate than they are for the US population in general.

FACTS AND STATISTICS

- There is a growing movement within our culture and government, to include transgender rights under the umbrella of civil rights
 - The civil rights movement: racial equality
 - The feminist movement: sexual equality
 - The LGB movement: marriage equality
- Now, the transgender movement is pushing for so-called transgender rights, and these rights are recognized as conflicting with religious freedom at certain points.
 - People on both sides are recognizing this conflict
 - Either certain religious freedoms are going to have to be given up or transgender people will be denied their civil rights.

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(1) How you think about transgenderism will depend on your anthropology which depends in turn on your broader worldview.

- Anthropology – our view of human nature, human origins, human purpose – who we are, what we are, and what we are supposed to be.
- Our understanding anthropology is connected with our larger worldview.

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(2) The mainstream narrative on transgenderism has been shaped and supported by secular worldviews that are committed to human autonomy.

- The mainstream narrative: In the past, people assumed that things were very simple. Your biological sex determined whether you were male or female. But now we know better. Now we know that human sexuality and gender are more complex. There's a difference between biological sex and gender identity. Some people have a different gender identity than their biological sex.
 - Gender should be viewed on a continuum.
 - Main point: a person's gender identity is their real identity. Therefore, a person should be able to express their gender identity without fear of disapproval or discrimination. It's a basic human right to express one's gender identity. Gender identity expression trumps everything else.
 - Conclusion of mainstream narrative: a person should be able to express their gender identity and everyone else should accommodate it.

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

- Identifying the supporting worldview(s) of the cultural narrative
 - Worldview of Naturalism – the view that the natural universe is all there is. We are basically, fundamentally just evolved biological organisms. Gender identity is basically a matter of brain chemistry which determines how you feel, how you think about yourself.
 - Worldview of Postmodernism – reality is what we make it. We construct the world through our thoughts and language. Gender is not an objective thing. Gender is a social construction. We are free to define it as we wish and we're free to define ourselves as we wish because we have that power.
 - Both of these worldviews are used to justify the narrative of the transgender movement.
 - Notice: these explanation are incompatible. Yet many people hold to both of these worldviews simultaneously without recognizing the conflict. Is it brain chemistry or are we free to determine reality with our thoughts and language? These are very different claims and the way they justify transgenderism is very different.
 - What they share in common: human autonomy – we define ourselves, we make our own laws, and there is no divine authority that defines what we are and how we should live.

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(3) A consistently Christian approach to transgenderism must start with a biblical worldview and a biblical anthropology.

- We have to be aware of the ways the secular worldviews are shaping the narrative, and we have to be sure we have our framework and foundations right before we draw our own conclusions and then engage in discussions.

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(4) A biblical anthropology has to be grounded in Genesis 1-3.

- It must acknowledge the order and design of creation.
- It must acknowledge the disorder and dysfunction introduced by the fall.
- Genesis 1:26-27: “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness....So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”
 - Binary, gendered personhood
- Genesis 1:28: “And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”
 - Note the important place procreation plays in the creation mandate
 - The creation mandate presupposes a binary gendered personhood
- Genesis 2:18: “Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”
 - A complementarity is established between man and woman
 - Male and female are designed for one another

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(4) A biblical anthropology has to be grounded in Genesis 1-3.

- Genesis 2:24: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”
 - Binary gender undergirds the institution of marriage
- Genesis 3 – the fall of man
 - Genesis 3 itself doesn’t go into a lot of detail about the specific consequences of the fall, the ways humanity was corrupted, but the rest of the Bible gives those details.
 - Romans 1 – bent toward idolatry, darkened hearts, corrupted experiences, corrupted self-perception, and sexual confusion in particular.
 - WCF 6.2: By this sin [eating the forbidden fruit], they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.
- Genesis 1-3 provides a theological and worldview context for thinking about transgenderism

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(5) Gender dysphoria is a genuine condition which is best understood as a psychological disorder or dysfunction.

- That is not to say there is not a spiritual dimension.
- Gender dysphoria isn't something that's consciously chosen.
- That should influence how we think and talk the issue.

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(6) The different aspects of transgenderism call for different kinds of Christian responses.

- We should distinguish between a cultural response from a pastoral response.
- Both are interrelated, but we should not allow one to drive the other.

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(7) Since the biblical view is that there is only two sexes, and since biological sex is the primary indicator of gender, any treatment of gender dysphoria should proceed on the assumption that a person's biological sex, rather than their gender identity, defines whether they are truly male or female.

- Biological sex should be taken as the indicator of a person's sex rather than a person's gender identity. The aim: to bring a person's psychology into line with their physiology rather than the reverse.

THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(8) The sexual revolution and the LGBTQ movement don't merely invite God's judgment, they are themselves a manifestation of God's judgment (Romans 1:18-32)

- We tend to look at the culture and say, "Look at how things have gone. Judgment is coming."
- God gives societies over to this kind of confusion and disorder for their idolatry. We are further along in the Romans 1 logic than many of us assume.

QUESTIONS: WHAT ABOUT INTERSEX?

- Intersex – individuals with a chromosomal abnormality or some other birth disorder. Such individuals have a physiology that does not correspond to either male or female. They may have male chromosomes but female sexual organs.
 - The important thing to note: Intersex is a physical condition while transgender is a psychological condition (their bodies are male/female)
 - The vast majority of people with intersex conditions identify as male or female rather than transgender or transsexual.
 - We should not allow people to use intersex cases as though they are representatives of transgenderism.
 - Counseling an intersex person is going to be person variable.

A CULTURAL RESPONSE TO: TRANSGENDER IDEOLOGY

- Basic idea: By replacing biological sex with gender identity, transgender ideology eviscerates the gender categories on which it relies. If a person's mental state determines their gender, then the categories of male-female cease to be a meaningful terms.
 - Transgender ideology relies on the categories of male and female, but if transgenderism were to enjoy complete legal success in replacing the relevance of biological sex with a state of mind, the means for recognizing those states of mind would disappear!
 - Jeff Shafer, "Supreme Incoherence: Transgender Ideology and the End of Law," "Consider: names (Gavin changed hers), wardrobe selection (she changed this, too), single-sex restroom access (which she demands in her lawsuit)—these are all dependencies of the publicly meaningful sex-binary. While aiming to replace sex with gender identity, Gavin insists on access to the male facilities that exist only because the public acknowledges the meaningfulness of bodies that she denies have meaning. Her novel theory of identity and her claim for restroom access are mutually refuting."

A PASTORAL RESPONSE TO TRANSGENDER PERSONS

- “Jesus answered, ‘The most important [commandment] is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other command greater than these.” – Mark 12:29-31
 - Love must be the foundation for our interaction with others experiencing gender dysphoria or who have embraced a trans identity.
 - A biblical response begins by seeing transgender people as our neighbors whom we are to love.
- What will this love look like?
 - Love promotes dignity (Genesis 1:27)
 - The truth that all people are made in God’s image means that all people possess God-given dignity and worth.
 - To see the full dignity of transgendered persons means we ought to abhor and reject any mocking humor or abuse.

A INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE TO TRANSGENDER PERSONS

- Love requires empathy
- Love shares the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6)
 - There is a way to speak biblical truth in a way that is unloving – truth speaking motivated by self-righteousness, pride, or fear.
 - Speaking the truth in love means no arrogance, no dismissal, no harsh words, no jokes, no trite sayings.
- Love produces compassion
- Love is patient