

### The Church, Transgenderism and Transsexuality

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe an individual whose internal feelings of gender do not mesh with the gender assigned to him or her at birth. This is usually, but not always, coupled with a desire to live as the opposite gender, and may be accompanied by cross-dressing. Some individuals, however, choose instead to live inter-gender, identifying as neither male nor female, or as both together. Transgender people may also express a variety of sexual desires and may self-identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual or asexual.

Transsexual individuals identify as, or desire to be accepted as, a member of the opposite gender assigned at birth, and they usually seek to alter their bodies to align with these inner feelings. This is most often accomplished through sex reassignment therapy, which includes hormone therapy to repress or develop secondary sexual characteristics such as breasts and facial hair and sex reassignment surgery (SRS) to deconstruct and be-build sexual organs. Such people are often described as having “transitioned” from male to female, or vice versa.

In order to qualify for and obtain SRS, individuals must usually be diagnosed with “gender identity disorder,” according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association. The psychiatric field also concedes that persons diagnosed with schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, dissociative identity disorder, and other harmful psychological conditions may also seek this surgery. The benefits of the surgery are therefore debated in scientific and medical circles.

Although there are several genetic, hormonal and psychological theories, there is currently no known cause of transgenderism or transsexuality.

Scripture and Christian tradition broadly recognize that transgenderism and transsexuality deny the integrity of God's good creation by attempting to blur or mar the sacred image of maleness and femaleness formed by God. Sexual reassignment surgery is especially problematic. It is expensive and painful and radically alters healthy body parts. It is often followed by a lifelong regimen of hormonal treatments. While it does not change the male or female chromosomal inheritance, fertility is nonetheless destroyed.

Advocates often claim that they are merely choosing to honor that part of their body where their "true self" exists – the brain. This argument recalls the Gnostic heresy and assumes an anti-body dualism – if inner feelings are at odds with physical reality, the latter is insignificant and expendable. In contrast, Scripture views the whole body as integrally related to the understanding of self. In the ancient world, men who attempted to transform their masculinity into femininity often did so under the influence of gender-ambiguous deities. Jewish teaching was negative against this foreshadowing of current cultural developments and it specifically condemned cross dressing and bodily mutilation.

Transgenderism and transsexuality attempt to override the structures of maleness or femaleness created by God and present in the chromosomes, sexual organs and numerous other external features, hormones, and at least some dimorphic brain structures. The human body, including its intrinsic sex, is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Efforts to alter its sex are a tragic mutilation of the temple. Jesus Christ, and not any innate human impulses, is Lord. His resurrected and glorified body is itself the supreme divine illustration of the sacredness and eternal worth of the human body, including the gift of sexual identity.

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Add new resolution to the Book of Resolutions: The Church, Transgenderism and Transsexuality  
Financial Implications: None

Therefore, be it resolved, that in faithfulness to Scripture and Christian/Jewish tradition about God's gift of male and female, and out of deep compassion for persons struggling with gender and sexual identity issues, we do not recognize transgenderism or transsexuality as part of God's good intentions for humankind and we oppose sex reassignment therapy (hormonal or surgical) as a solution to these conditions. We urge the church to offer God's grace, counseling and sound teaching to all persons who self-identify as transgender or transsexual, including those who have already undergone sex reassignment therapy.

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