



“TRANS SUBSTANTIATIONS” - THE SIBYLS BOOK – ADVANCE NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

Fifteen years ago Sibyls members were displeased with what the Evangelical Alliance had to say about trans people in its so-called report, “Transsexuality”*, and then, just three years later, there was similar disappointment with the Church of England’s fence sitting, contained in Chapter 7 of its report on “Some Issues in Human Sexuality”**. We were annoyed that other religious people kept writing things about us while our own experience as transgender Christians was nowhere represented in this literature.

What we needed was a publication of our own. In it we would tell our stories, outline the latest scientific evidence, and set the theological record right as far as being transgender was concerned.

That’s how the idea of the Sibyls Book was born. Sibyls members began to send in their contributions and chapters were gathered from relevant specialists. We are pleased to announce that the book has been accepted for publication by the internationally-respected religious publisher: Darton, Longman and Todd. <http://www.darton-longman-todd.co.uk/>. The book’s title is “Trans Substantiations” and it is due to be published in February in two formats: an e-book version and a paperback version. The recommended retail price of the paperback is anticipated to be £14.99 plus postage and packing, and we are hoping that people will buy at least one copy, as well as additional copies to pass on to their friends and church leadership.

The book has four sections:

- Transsexualism: Culture, Science and Society
- The Bible, Theology and Transsexualism
- Recollection and Testimony
- Working with Trans Identity and Spirituality

Jasmine Woolley’s chapter is about the social construction of gender. Terry and Bernard Reed of GIRES*** bring us up to date with the latest scientific background. Chris Dowd dissects common misunderstandings of what it means to be trans. Helen Savage writes about the value of ordinary, as distinct from academic, theology. Mercia McMahon contributes a chapter on Trans Liberating and Queer Theology. The Trans Awareness Group from a member’s parish engages with Chapter 7 of the Church of England Report on “Some issues in Human Sexuality”. Jay Walmsley describes the early days of Sibyls, the late Michelle Le Morvan considers the essence of her spirituality, and Sibyls tell their own stories of faith. Helen Belcher, on the other hand, ponders how transition can lead to loss of faith. Elaine Sommers ‘Faith, Gender and Me’ can be found between the book’s covers as can Susan Gilchrist’s ‘Living with Difference’ which proposes a radical new approach to the issues of gender and sexuality. Michelle O’Brien, one of the editors, explores intersex perspectives on medicine, diversity, identity and spirituality, while Tina Beardsley, who is the other editor, adds some history (including a brief biography of an older Sibyls member) and theology, and there is more about the Sibyls’ workshop, Gender, Sexuality, and Spirituality. For further information and ordering details, please see the website:

<http://www.gndr.org.uk/sibyls5/headlines/SuF0317a-SibylsBook.htm>

* Please note that the Evangelical Alliance have kept the conclusions of their report on their website while removing the main body of the report. <http://www.eauk.org/church/resources/theological-articles/transsexuality-report.cfm>

** <http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/uploads/documents/0715138685.pdf>

***Gender Identity Research and Education Society www.gires.org.uk/