



# SIBYLS NEWS

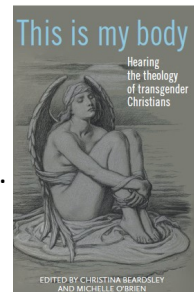


Issue no. 75 March 2016



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NEXT COPY DATE 5th June 2016.

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# THE SIBYLS

## *Christian Spirituality Group for Gender Variant People*

c/o 10, Ffordd Las, Rhyl, LL18 2DY

[www.sibyls.co.uk](http://www.sibyls.co.uk) E-mail: [enquiries@sibyls.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@sibyls.co.uk)

The Sibyls is a UK-based confidential Christian spirituality group for transgender people, their partners and their supporters. It offers companionship along the journey, and information/advocacy to churches.

Sibyls seek to fulfil the two great commandments of Jesus: To love God and love one another. To achieve this we provide opportunities to meet in safe and friendly establishments. We promote the freedom to talk, to learn, to pray and to seek God's will.

If you are having difficulties reconciling your faith with being transgendered or are concerned about acceptance in your church then maybe Sibyls is what you have been looking for. It could be that you just need to talk with fellow Christians who understand what it is to be transgendered, or simply wish to be yourself as you worship in fellowship and in a safe environment.

If you are looking for an accepting church, it maybe useful to visit our website, where there is a resource for this. Go to the Resources page on <http://www.gndr.org.uk/sibyls5/indexmain.htm> Click on the "Pastoral" and then on the "Churches" tab. This is being updated, but has useful links. Especially supportive are the MCC Churches.

We like to know of churches which welcome transgender people. Also if you would like more information to give to your church please do contact us.

We welcome new members, young and old. There is no membership fee or annual subscription, and no commitment, except confidentiality. Your details are held in total confidence and will not be given to any other members without your permission.

To contact us in confidence, either write to us or send us an email. [enquiries@sibyls.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@sibyls.co.uk)

### Sibyls Website - [www.sibyls.co.uk](http://www.sibyls.co.uk)

- Dates and information on future events are posted on the website
- You can pre-order the new Sibyls Book from the website
- A full range of resources is also available. Click on the "Resources" tab on the right of the top banner on the website to access these.

There is also a member's section for which a Username and password is required.

The current username for the member's section is **SibylsWeb** (all one word). The password is **4All-Members** (All one word: use uppercase and lowercase as indicated)

### Forthcoming Sibyls events:

**St. Anne's, Soho** The dates for the 2016 London Evening Meetings are: **14 April, 9 June, 11 August, 13 October, 8 December**. From the start of 2016 the time of the service has changed to 6:00 p.m.

**13th - 15th May 2016 !! Windermere, with Sibyls' Launch of 'our book'!**

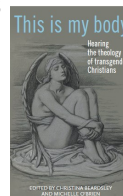
**Couples Weekend** - Options are still under discussion

**Sparkle weekend** 8 - 10 July 2016 - on the Sunday will be a Community Workshop. Elaine is willing to speak on behalf of Sibyls

**Another reflective day is being planned for September 2016**

**28- 30<sup>th</sup> October 2016 - Weekend at Hilfield**

Both Juniper and Leo house have been booked so there is accommodation for 19. The Franciscans ask for donations rather than payment, and for this coming year their requested donation will probably be between £55-£66 per person, for the complete weekend.



**Are you interested in attending this year's conference of the Euroforum of LGBT Christian Groups, being held in Gothenberg from May 5 - 8? Elaine Sommers went to last year's meeting and was so impressed with the set-up that she is going again.**

It would be good to have another Sibyls member to join her, and the possibility of room sharing could reduce accommodation costs.

For more details, go to:

<http://www.euroforumlgbtchristians.eu/index.php/en/annual-conferences/2016-goeteborg>

You can also contact Elaine at [elainesommers007@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:elainesommers007@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Annie is booked to undergo her GRS operation on 16th March.**

There was a long time during which Annie could not come to Sibyls meetings, but she was able to attend the first full day of Hilfield last year. She would welcome your prayers and kind wishes, for her and her beloved.

### **Janet Marcia - 5<sup>th</sup> May 1921 - 25<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

*a brief obituary from Rev. Tina Beardsley.*

*Our sister and great friend, the erudite, endlessly original and highly amusing Janet Marcia has recently died. The end of an era.*

We are sorry to announce the death of much-loved elder Sibyl, Janet Marcia, born in London in 1921, and whose life was lived on three continents (Europe, Australasia, and North America). A brilliant linguist and inveterate traveller, Janet studied languages and ancient history at the University of Melbourne and did her teacher training at Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, which her beloved Lucy Maud Montgomery (author of Anne of Green Gables) had attended, and Newland Park College of Education, Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire. Janet served first in the Australian Army and then as a meteorologist in the British Navy during the Second World War. After the War she worked as a nurse, including mental health nursing, then as a teacher in some of the toughest schools in London, latterly as a carer, and finally as carer to Marjorie who is in a nursing home now and has been for some time.

Her health had been failing for a while, and she was no longer attending events in central London, like the Sibyls London meeting, of which she had been a stalwart – and who among those present could forget the occasion she ordered lobster?! Sunday attendance at St Anne's, Soho, which she loved, and where she was cherished by the congregation (and by congregation members at St Martin-in-the-Fields) was also out of the question, so she went more often to her local church, St James, West Streatham, where she was also known. Rob, the vicar and the ministry team, took great care of Janet in her last few years, and persuaded her to begin to put her affairs in order, on the grounds that, in her early nineties, she might not have too many years left! Even so it took several months after her death before things were finally sorted, and hence her funeral only took place just a few weeks ago, on January 19<sup>th</sup> 2016, at South London Crematorium. The Sibyls were represented by Jay and Tina, along with the Revd Simon Buckley, Rector of St Anne's, Soho. Also present were members of St James Church; and her many friends from a social group she attended in Wimbledon brought a collage of photographs of Janet on various trips and outings, and the poems she had written in celebration – she described herself as the group's 'poet laureate'. The collage had pride of place in front of the catafalque, and some people were wearing Janet's colourful hats chosen from a selection on offer at the entrance to the chapel, which lent a rainbow hue – and how Janet loved the rainbow – to the gathering. As Sibyls we thought we knew and loved Janet well, but we were not alone, as her funeral demonstrated, and the joy she brought to so many people was palpable on the cold, sunny day we said goodbye to her.



### **EDITORIAL**

**10th March 2016**

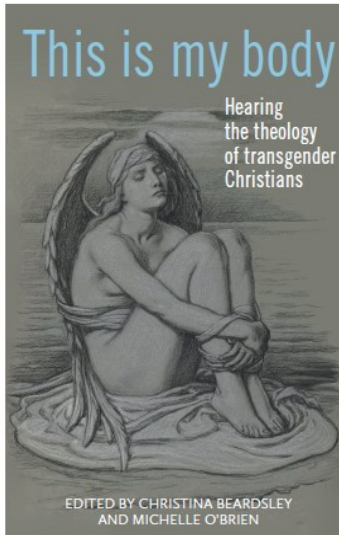
Welcome to the first issue of my third year as the Newsletter editor. I want to thank all our fantastic contributors once again. As ever, please keep your comments and queries coming, and remember that a *nom de plume* is perfectly acceptable if you wish to publish, without being too public!

Chris Dowd has generously continued his exposition of his Doctoral thesis work, which is so close to many hearts, and Susan has contributed a chunky piece of detailed scholarship on a topic which worries many Sibyls.

Central to this issue are the linked themes of the Sibyls book, which is due out in May, and the Windermere weekend in May, when the book will receive its Sibyls launch. It would be a wonderful affirmation of the huge effort by many people, which has gone on over several years, if we could sell our whole allocation of 250 copies. But it must not be a question of buying as a duty - it really is one of the most personally touching and relevant books which many of us are likely to see in our lifetimes. It is our book.

As usual, for any details about headline items - please ask me.

[carol.nixon2012@btinternet.com](mailto:carol.nixon2012@btinternet.com)



## ***This is my body: Hearing the Theology of Transgender Christians***

Edited by Christina Beardsley and Michelle O'Brien

Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 2016. ISBN 978-0-232-53206-7

It's been so long in the making that it's hard to believe that the Sibyls' book will finally appear in May, but everything seems to be on track for that. The manuscript has been copy edited, and Mish and I are now checking the proofs: we are pleased to confirm that the format of the book looks very attractive.

So many people have contributed to what will be a landmark text – there's nothing quite like it – and we're grateful to Helen Savage and the late Michele Le Morvan, who were the original editors, for the contributions they collated, as well as to those like Helen Belcher, Mercia McMahon and Chris Dowd who Mish and I invited to contribute more recently. Their chapters appear with the other analytical items in the first part of the book; the second part contains stories and reflections by Sibyls members. We're especially grateful to those who have shared their journeys, like Jay, whose story is inevitably wrapped up with the founding of Sibyls.

I'm particularly pleased that the book will contain an outline of the late Janet Marcia's life. Janet died last October at the grand old age of 94. She had tantalised us at Sibyls weekends and meetings with fascinating snippets and anecdotes about her life. Eventually she agreed to tell it to me in more detail in three long interviews. These resulted in a long narrative that has been specially edited for the book. Janet was happy for it to appear there as long as I changed her name, so look out for the pseudonym – it won't be difficult to guess which chapter records her life! There were lovely tributes at Janet's funeral from friends from her church and local community but the bulk of the eulogy was based on this chapter. As Dr Susanah Cornwall notes in her Foreword to the book, 'This kind of social history is all too often lost, and its inclusion here is testament to the book's long journey to fruition and its thorough attention to the genealogy of Sibyls as a movement.'

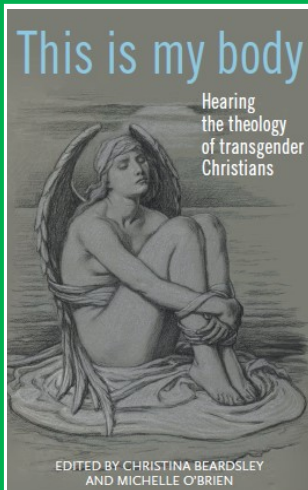
We are expecting further commendations from other respected authors like Malcolm Johnson – who prompted Jay to found the Sibyls – Professor Adrian Thatcher, Professor Stephen Whittle, the Revd Duncan Dormor, the Revd Dr Cameron Partridge (of TransEpiscopal in the US) and Surat Shaan Knan. Their support will help us to promote the book with a wider audience.

Surat, who has recently project managed *Twilight People: Stories of Faith & Gender Beyond the Binary* (in which Jenny-Anne Bishop and I are featured and which is still recruiting I think), has provided the opportunity for the book's initial launch, which will be at a conference on faith and gender at Warwick University on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

**The Sibyls' own launch of the book will take place at the Windermere Weekend, 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May,** when the programme will be based around the book's themes and contents, and we will have an opportunity to explore and reflect on them together.

There will be further 'launches' or promotions of the book, in Hull, where Chris Dowd is based, and where the University has a lively gender studies department, and the London and Southwark Changing Attitude group are keen to 'launch' the book at one of their meetings at St Martin-in-the-Fields.



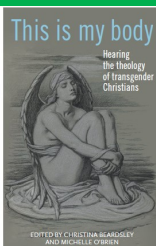


As you'll recall, DLT originally agreed to publish the Sibyls book as an e-book, but members were keen to purchase a paperback version, which means we are committed to purchasing 250 copies at the special discount price of £10, which includes postage and packing (the full retail price will be £14.99).

Many thanks indeed to those of you who have already ordered (and paid for) your copies. As the publication date draws near we now invite those who haven't yet placed orders to do so as soon as possible.

*This is My Body: Hearing the Theology of Transgender Christians* is a volume you will be proud to have on your book shelves, and that you can purchase as a gift for friends and family, or to pass on to your church leadership. It documents nearly two decades of thinking, reflecting, research and activity, and is a record of the transforming power of faith in trans people's lives. Buy it; read it; buy lots of copies! Promote it and share it! It is your book – the Sibyls book.

*Tina Beardsley*



#### HOW TO ORDER, HOW TO PAY :

- Cheques for the special price of £10 (includes p&p) per copy to be made payable to: 'Carol Nixon (Sibyls Book)'
- Please send cheques and order to:  
Carol Nixon (Sibyls Book), Tyngwndwn, Penuwch, Tregaron, Ceredigion, SY25 6RA.

- Alternatively payment can be made to the account by credit transfer (please reference it with your name) Sort Code 20-18-41. Account number: 53920267 - if you do this, we shall still need details of your order, which can be sent by email to [carol.nixon2012@btinternet.com](mailto:carol.nixon2012@btinternet.com)

#### THE ORDER DETAILS WE NEED ARE:

- **your name**
- **number of copies ordered**
- **amount paid**
- **the address to which the book(s) should be despatched upon publication.**

#### The United Nations has issued a new set of stamps promoting LGBT rights. 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016

It's a little known fact that the body has its own postal service, which issues postage stamps and stationery, in the three main United Nations offices around the world.



On 5<sup>th</sup> February, the United Nations Postal Administration issued a new set of stamps dedicated to equality, in collaboration with the UN's Free & Equal Campaign. The stamp's feature artistic representations of LGBT people – with same-sex couples, a butterfly representing transitioning gender, and a person who is half-red, half-white, possibly representing bisexuality or intersex people. Free & Equal is a global public education campaign dedicated to raising awareness of homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination globally.

## The Sibyls Windermere weekends offer so much. By Elen



For a start there's the Centre itself, a lovely old mansion sympathetically converted into a retreat house, with comfortable bedrooms and delicious meals (you certainly won't go hungry!).



Then there's the location, close to Lake Windermere. There are lovely walks to be had in the area, and in May the weather has a good chance of being pleasant. For those who wish to venture further afield, there are steamer trips on the lake, plus all the usual tourist attractions, .....



.....and for those who enjoy preserved railways (I know there are a few of them in Sibyls!) there are two significant railways within driving distance.

And last – but definitely not least – there's the company!

Sibyls always put on a special programme of interesting talks and workshops, there's an evening of entertainment, and – of course – there's the intimate spirituality of the Sibyls community. As you will see on another page, the programme will be linked this year to the launch of the Sibyls Book, which should be specially interesting.

Why not come and share in this wonderful weekend?  
There is a form on the next page.

## SHOULD WE (as individuals of course) BACK THE FOLLOWING PETITION?

The following petition was started 3 weeks ago. It attracted 30,000 signatures in the first week. At the time of publishing, 33,289 people have signed, which indicates that the momentum is going out of it. I understand that it has been forwarded round the Sibyls – is there any other way we should be doing what we can to further this petition? Or is it not our business?



**I'm Charlie, I'm 23 and I'm transgender.** (Photo credit- Bobby Cray) 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016

*Prior to transitioning I was in a dark place and woke up most days contemplating suicide so I turned to my GP for help. I was surprised to find out that he didn't know what the word transgender meant, but even more surprised with how he treated me once I explained what it did mean. He moved away from me, looked at me in disgust and told me there was nothing he or the NHS could*

*do to help. I had to see another two GPs before I found one who would help me. Even then they didn't know what to do to help a patient like me and I had to tell them what the next steps were. [That's why I've started my petition for this to change.](#)*

*I've since found out that my experience was normal - the parliamentary report into Transgender Equality, released in January, found that **routinely GP's are mistreating transgender people or illegally refusing to treat them** because of personal belief or a lack of understanding. This is an opportunity for change, but if we don't act now we will miss the moment. The General Medical Council set the standards for what GP's have to learn, so I am asking them, along with NHS England [to make in-depth training on treating transgender patients a compulsory part of the GP curriculum.](#)*

***This isn't about special rights, this is about human rights.***

*I know that if enough people get behind this petition we can do something that will change thousands of trans people's lives, but **you don't have to be trans to [sign this petition](#)- you just have to believe in equality.***

*[So please join me by signing this petition to train GP's on treating transgender patients.](#)*

*Thank you so so much for your support!*

*Charlie Craggs*

[https://www.change.org/p/nhs-england-end-transphobia-in-the-nhs-teach-gp-s-how-to-deal-with-trans-patients?utm\\_source=action\\_alert&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=522522&alert\\_id=IPniZvZqYV\\_BPYR7PEhXvSvfj%2BzCUHDR6cZTesN5pKaTzDmERWVbtA%3D](https://www.change.org/p/nhs-england-end-transphobia-in-the-nhs-teach-gp-s-how-to-deal-with-trans-patients?utm_source=action_alert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=522522&alert_id=IPniZvZqYV_BPYR7PEhXvSvfj%2BzCUHDR6cZTesN5pKaTzDmERWVbtA%3D)

**THE SIBYLS**, Christian Spirituality Group for the Transgendered,

12 Ffordd Las, Rhyl, Denbighshire, LL18 2DY

01745 337144

**WEEKEND AT THE WINDERMERE CENTRE 13-15 MAY 2016**

Name .....

Required - Single/twin room (delete as appropriate)

Name of other occupant in room .....

Willing to share with .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Phone No. ....

Email address .....

Please reserve for me the following number of places:-

Full weekend (Friday night to Sunday lunch) £145.00 .....

Other (please specify):.....

*If you are not coming for the full weekend please telephone Elen on the number above and you will be quoted a price.*

**Cheque payable to "Peter Raftery – The Sibyls" enclosed £.....**

Any special dietary requirements? .....

Any other special needs? .....

Do you need help with transport to The Windermere Centre? .....

**As Benjamin Franklin said:**

**'In wine there is wisdom,  
In beer there is freedom,  
In water there are bacteria'.**



A 65 year old woman had a heart attack and was taken to hospital. While on the operating table she had a near death experience ... Seeing God She asked "Is my time up?"

God said, "No, you have another 33 years, 2 months and 8 days to live." Upon recovery, the woman decided to have a face-lift, liposuction, breast implants and a tummy tuck. While she was in the clinic she even had her hair colour changed and her teeth brightened! Since she had so much more time to live, she felt she might as well make the most of it.

After her last operation, she was released from the clinic. While crossing the street on her way home, she was killed by an ambulance. Arriving in front of God, she demanded, "I thought you said I had Another 33 years? Why didn't you pull me from out of the path of the ambulance?"

God replied..... "Oh Dear! I didn't recognize you!"

**'Service'**

I became confused when I heard the word '**service**' used with these agencies:

Banking '**Service**' Postal '**Service**' Telephone '**Service**' Pay TV '**Service**'

State & Public '**Service**' Customer '**Service**' Bureaucratic '**Service**'

This is not what I thought '**Service**' meant.

Then I visited my uncle, he's a farmer, and he hired a bull to '**Service**' his cows.

**Suddenly WOW!** It all became clear. Now I understand what all those agencies are doing to us!

## The Sibyls Receipts & Payments Account: Year ended 31.12.2015

	2015		2014
	£		£
<b>Weekends / Days away *</b>			
Receipts from members	120.00		2,755.00
Paid to House	-	120.00	-
Surplus / (Deficit)		-	39.00
<b>Advance bookings</b>		nil	nil
<b>Donations **</b>		68.32	186.63
<b>Newsletter costs</b>			
Duplication, envelopes & postage			
	-	28.94	-
<b>Other costs</b>			
British Monomarks Box Number			
	-	65.80	-
IT students to Sibyls committee meeting			
	-	106.40	-
Mail Shot April 2014			183.20
Domain renewal	-	8.38	-
Use of group funds for members to attend meetings		-	-
<b>CASH SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>141.20</b>	<b>-</b>
		deficit	deficit
Opening balance at HSBC Bank	1,469.04		1,530.04
<b>Closing balance at HSBC Bank</b>	<b>1,327.84</b>		<b>1,469.04</b>

\* Not all moneys go through the Sibyls bank account as different organisers have different approaches

\*\* Donations are down compared to previous years. This maybe because the 'begging bowl' has not been passed round recently but maybe this could become a regular part of events. Otherwise the small annual deficits will whittle away the bank balance.

\*\*\* The British Monomarks box number is now closed.



### Scientists discover 'genderfluid' lioness who looks, acts and roars like a male 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015

Mmamoriri the lioness is said to exhibit the physical characteristics of both genders. Scientists discovered the lioness on the plains of the Okavango Delta in Botswana, southern Africa. Experts say evolution is to thank, as the lioness has naturally adopted the characteristics of her male counterparts in order to survive. She has grown a mane to fool invading prides into thinking she is male, as well as developing a deeper and more masculine roar.

However, Mmamoriri – who was first discovered back in 2012 – is not alone. The scientists believe she is one of five lions in the area with the same adaptations. In addition, they say that the phenomenon will pass down to the next generation; an evolutionary twist that will ensure future prides can survive at their most vulnerable, if the alpha male is killed or dies.

### New information repeated from the last issue

1. A new handbook on **Trans inclusion** compiled by **Quiltbag**, (the UK Fire & Rescue Service support network for sexual and/or gender identity). It can be viewed on <http://www.quiltbagfire.co.uk/>
2. The [National LGBT Partnership](http://www.national-lgbt-partnership.org/) is gathering and compiling information about what LGBT\* people want from health and care services. You can help by completing their survey, called 'I Statements', which can be accessed at:  
<http://www.surveymzmo.com/s3/2451646/National-LGB-T-Partnership-I-Statements>



Oral history is increasingly valued as a resource for future historians, especially in the case of minorities like ours, given that many people's journeys have had to be made in secret. Surat Shaan Knan successfully managed the LGBT oral history project 'Rainbow Jews' prior to leading the specifically transgender project 'Twilight People: stories of faith and gender beyond the binary'. Both projects have been supported by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. 'Twilight People' has recruited (and is still recruiting) people from across the faith traditions to record their stories, pose for photographs, and describe a significant object or ritual that symbolises the spiritual character of their transition or self-understanding.

<http://www.twilightpeople.com/category/watch/>

The stories will be archived at the Museum of London, but the amazing photo portraits, by photographer Christa Holka, have just been on display at the Islington Museum during LGBT History month, and are due to go on tour. These utterly stunning images – soulful, powerful, optimistic and joyful – are accompanied by significant biographical information and key sentences from the person's story. Some of the symbolic objects have also been on display or are discussed on video. Once the tour itinerary is known we will let Sibyls know as this is an exhibition not to be missed: a vivid celebration of the integrity of faithful gender variant people.

**If the title 'Twilight People' puts you off, here are some helpful thoughts from Rabbi Indigo Jonah Raphael's sermon at the Interfaith service that marked the launch of the touring exhibition:**

*Twilight is about: in between, possibility, renewal and transformation as Czech author Bohumil Hrabal in his book, "Too Loud a Solitude"<sup>1</sup> wrote:*

*"I always loved the twilight: it was the only time I had the feeling that something important could happen. All things were more beautiful bathed in twilight, all streets, all squares, and all the people walking through them; I even had the feeling that I was a handsome young man, and I liked looking at myself in the mirror, watching myself in the shop windows as I strode along, and even when I touched my face, I felt no wrinkles at my mouth or forehead. Yes, with twilight comes beauty."*

*With Twilight People you have given voice and visibility to your stories. These are both your stories and our stories. "Yours", by virtue of them being uniquely yours, "ours" because they are transgender and gender variant stories and part of the richness of who we are as human beings.*

*We cannot live our lives for other people, we cannot sacrifice who we are for their sake, to protect them from potential confusion, shame or pain. Nor can we live other people's lives. We can only live our lives and seek to fulfil our unique potential – for only then can we make a congruent contribution.*

*May these empowering stories provide hope and be enlightening across communities. Twilight People is trans-denominational in the fullest sense of the word! Let us merge our strengths, embrace our allies and celebrate our stories with pride.*

*May people whoever they are and however they define themselves: realize their potential, have faith in themselves and find and create safe, inclusive spiritual spaces, welcoming of diversity and manifold identities.*

***Then, we will truly emerge: from the Twilight... with Radiance!***

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/50071.Bohumil\\_Hrabal](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/50071.Bohumil_Hrabal)



## Wait your turn!

By Elaine Sommers

In the last six months, most of my trans-related thoughts have been eclipsed by the topic of Shared Conversations, centring on the issue of same-sex marriage, and which will continue through much of 2016. What I have gleaned from the reports coming out of the meetings so far, my hopes that transgender would be part of the discussions were, to say the least, a little over-optimistic. Issues of sexuality are, I am told, centre stage at the moment, and transgender will have to wait.

Waiting, being patient, and understanding that 'this is not the right time', are notions which I have heard many times before, especially as I try to encourage churches and individuals to become more welcoming and open to trans people. So, I am stating here and now that I have had enough of standing on the side-lines and quietly waiting my turn. In fact, I actually think that there has never been a better time to address matters of gender identity, and how we should respond to those who are different from 'the norm'.

Now, in case you hadn't noticed, transgender has had a higher profile in the media during the last twelve months than ever before. It was named as one of Collins Dictionary's 10 Words of the year for 2015, with 100% increase in usage. But in the midst of all this flurry of media attention, in November we heard of one news story which disturbed me profoundly. This concerned Tara Hudson, a 26 year old transwoman who was found guilty of assault, and sent to an all-male prison in Bristol. I was angered at the inappropriateness of this action (brought home to me as the prison was located just down the road from me), so I willingly signed an online petition to get Tara moved. 150,000 signatures were gathered, and after a week Tara was transferred to a women's facility.

Within a month, two other transwomen in other parts of the country who had suffered the same indignity, were so badly abused by their fellow inmates that they were driven to take their own lives. How awful. It was only when Tara had finally been released from prison herself that she was able to describe the hell that she had been through, and that it had brought her close to suicide too.

Tragic stories, I hope you'll agree, and we must apply pressure to the Prison Service to change its policy on trans prisoners as a matter of urgency. But how should we as Christians respond to hearing about such events? I believe we should ask ourselves how we would receive trans people who come into our churches. Would we welcome them, would we embrace them? And would we encourage them to be the authentic people they feel they are inside? Or would we expect them to be the people we would like them to be?

Friends, I don't believe asking people to wait is the answer. Trans people deserve better than that. If we want to enable them to be honest and open, let's make sure that our church fellowships are safe spaces for them, like any other vulnerable or marginalised people, and to be fully welcoming - and let's do it now.

Elaine

### THE STRANGER

A few years after I was born, my Dad met a stranger who was new to our small town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around from then on. As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind, he had a special niche. My parents were complementary instructors: Mom taught me good from evil, and Dad taught me to obey. But the stranger... he was our storyteller. He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies. If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present and even seemed able to predict the future! He took my family to the first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry.

The stranger never stopped talking, but Dad didn't seem to mind. Sometimes, Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say, and she would go to the kitchen for peace and quiet. (I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave.) Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honour them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home - not from us, our friends or any visitors. Our long time visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears and made my dad squirm and my mother blush. My Dad didn't permit the liberal use of alcohol but the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (much too freely!) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked ... And NEVER asked to leave.

More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you could walk into my parents' den today, you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures. His name. We just call him 'TV.'

## **For and Against - two early views on transfolk** by Chris Dowd

### **Introduction**

From the beginning of the Church's discussion about Transfolk there have been two conflicting voices in the theological discussion. Two of the earliest voices are those of Oliver O'Donovan and David Horton. Oliver O'Donovan begins a chain of thought that appears in both The Evangelical Alliance and Anglican viewpoints that we will explore in a later article. These denominational responses borrow heavily on O'Donovan's work and recycle his arguments. In order to be able to understand and critique their assumptions and arguments it is important to go back to their primary source document.

In contrast, Horton is one of the earliest voices arguing for inclusion. While we may not completely agree with his assumptions and arguments, it is important to remember that the context in which we find ourselves is vastly different to 1994 when it was published.

### **O'Donovan -Transsexualism and Christian marriage.**

#### **Main arguments**

On the surface O'Donovan is primarily concerned with investigating whether postoperative transsexuals should be allowed to marry in their acquired gender. He is unsure if they pose a potential threat to heteronormative marriage (1982:6) because the marriage of a postoperative transsexual may be de facto gay marriage (1982:8).

In order to clarify his concern, O'Donovan investigates whether transsexual people can change their gender through medical intervention. This becomes his principle aim and the majority of the pamphlet investigates if this is possible. O'Donovan concludes that transsexuals cannot change their God-given chromosomal gender and so they remain in their natal gender and therefore cannot marry.

O'Donovan believes gender dysphoria is a psychological illness (1982:17) that can be cured by the acceptance of the God-given (natal) gendered body. He dismisses medical interventions such as hormones and GRS as "plastic", concluding that they produce only a facsimile rather than a genuine change of gender (1982:16). He is unsure if healthy bodies should be altered to conform to what he considers a mental illness. He does advocate surgery as a treatment of last resort to relieve the profound distress experienced by some transsexuals (1982:17).

O'Donovan writes that the "transsexual claim" is based on three assertions:

- *my body is an accident that has befallen the real me*
- *the real me has a true sex, male or female*
- *I know immediately what that sex is without needing anyone to tell me.* (1982:10).

His arguments to refute these claims are not satisfactory. While he may believe the "gender accident" is psychological rather than physical in nature, he is unable to provide proof of this. O'Donovan's attempt to refute transfolk's assertion of their real gender does not recognise the value of lived experience and he casually dismisses the importance of self-identity. His third point misses the reality that the heteronormative gender system teaches clear gender roles for men and women and transfolk have more than enough information to make an informed decision about which gender they are.

O'Donovan also introduces a puzzling charge of Gnosticism against transsexuality (1982:11). He argues that the body is not something that is divorced from the spirit, but that both body and spirit should inform each other, and that gender dysphoria is a sign of the rending apart of this psychosomatic unity. He asserts that transsexualism is a gnostic withdrawal of the spirit from matter. This is a peculiar argument because it ignores the Christian tradition of asceticism that seeks to allow the spirit to triumph over the body. Several of the authors discussed later in this chapter have disputed this position and their objections will be explored in the discussion of their work.

#### **Use of Sources**

In considering transsexual marriage O'Donovan's main source of authority is neither medical nor theological but legal, quoting Corbett vs Corbett. While it is recognised that this ruling set the precedent for the legal status of transfolk until the 2004 Gender Recognition Act, O'Donovan seems unaware that this ruling could be overturned by subsequent rulings more favourable to transfolk.

When considering gender change itself, O'Donovan mainly refers to the work of John Money and the Johns Hopkins medical centre.<sup>1</sup> He disagrees with Money's position on the causation of transsexuality (that it is a form of intersexuality and sex can be reassigned) but fails to cite dissenting opinions or authors to prove his assertion (1982:17). In this he discards the only medical evidence he presents. The weakness of O'Donovan's thesis about the causes of transsexuality is that it is completely uncorroborated by medical evidence and is entirely the personal opinion of someone with no expertise in the area of transsexualism.

O'Donovan also quotes sources selectively. A case in point is the testimony of Nicholas Mason (Mason 1980) about the struggles he faced in transitioning gender. O'Donovan completely ignores this biographical account and merely uses it to show that some doctors refer to the natal rather than assumed gender of transfolk. Not engaging

with this piece of published literature shows the paucity of his use of source materials to frame his argument.

### Scripture

The key Scripture used is Genesis 1:27. O'Donovan sees this as the basis for a God ordained binary gender. His contention is that transsexuality disrupts this order and as a result should be resisted (1982: 6). Other Scripture is not explored in depth but rather quoted as a set of self-evident assertions. In this way he uses Mark 10.6 on marriage (1982:6) and 1 Corinthians 6.18, claiming that there is an analogy between Paul's condemnation of fornication and transsexualism (1982:16). He uses the tale of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1-11) as an analogy about transsexual marriage. He contends that marriage leaves transsexuals exposed in judgement for forsaking their natal gender (1982:19), as were those two early converts who did not give all they possessed to the Church. He argues that conducting these para (sic) marriages (1982:21) devalues (sic) both the vocations of singleness and heterosexual marriage. This is stated as a fact rather than explored in a way that would allow the reader to understand the thinking that lies behind this perplexing assertion.

### Contribution

O'Donovan is the first church-based writer to explore transsexualism in any detail. His contribution to the debate is important because the arguments he formulates form the basis of the Anglican and Evangelical Alliance's position on transsexuality. Nevertheless, his arguments are not compelling. He rejects expert opinion on the causation of transsexuality in favour of his own assumptions even though he is unable to cite alternate expert opinion to support them. He does not explore Scripture with any rigor but rather quotes Scripture selectively without discussing its applicability. But it is the lack of pastoral concern for transfolk that is particularly troubling; O'Donovan is intent on expounding his theories with no concern about the impact on the people he is so quick to dismiss.

## Horton - *Changing Channels: A Christian Response to the Transvestite and Transsexual.*

### Main arguments

Horton wrote the Grove booklet *Changing Channels: A Christian Response to the Transvestite and Transsexual* in 1994. His aim was to provide a pastoral response to people who cross-dress or who are transsexuals. Horton believes there is a large, undiscovered community of transfolk within Britain. He writes with some knowledge about organisations such as the Beaumont Society<sup>2</sup> and the difference between transgenderists (those who do not seek GRS), and transsexuals (those who do). He also mentions analogous people in other cultures such as the lady-boys of Thailand, and the Berdache of the First Nation Peoples of the Americas. He considers that gender dysphoria may be something like left-handedness (1994: 50). He disagrees with O'Donovan about the given-ness of binary gender and considers that people may be both physically and psychologically intersex (1994: 45).

Horton argues that there are many ways for women to express gender variant feelings in our society such as dress or occupation but there are no similar outlets for men. He believes the Church has a role to play in seeking justice for transfolk in society, and laments that support and help for them are found in the gay community rather than the Church (1994:48). He also speaks with insight, saying transfolk should be encouraged to integrate their whole selves and their histories in gender change. He makes the observation that people need to become whole people and not caricatures of their assumed gender (1994:49). Like O'Donovan, he is concerned about the decoupling of body and spirit but considers that surgery is better than the lasting distress and risk of suicide he has observed in his pastoral work with those who are unable to get treatment to resolve their gender dysphoria. Horton is also concerned with honesty. He is clear that potential partners need to be told early about gender dysphoria, and that wives need time and help to adjust to any disclosure. He believes that faith can be an enormous support for both transgendered people, their families and friends.

Horton argues for the inclusion of transgendered people within the Church, but also considers that "odd" people may drive away children and families. He considers that it may be more acceptable for transfolk to appear as their natal gender at church or be given chaplaincy services in their home. Of particular interest is his challenge to the reader when he asks:

***Do we represent Christian values to those who are different, or do we merely seek their conformity to our patterns of behaviour to save ourselves embarrassment?*** (1994:56)

### Sources

Horton discusses the work of Prof Louis Gooren. Gooren has published many articles on the topic of brain structure, hormones and transsexualism in which he argues there is a biological basis of transfolk. The work is summarised in an article he published with other researchers the following year (Zhou et al 1995).

### Use of Scripture

Horton explores Scripture in detail and concludes there is no biblical impediment to transsexualism. He considers Deuteronomy 22:5 and concludes that, if Christians ignore the prohibition against mixed fibres in Deuteronomy 22:11 and the injunction to make tassels for cloaks in 22:12, it is likely 22:5 is also not applicable. To counter this



prohibition he selectively quotes Matthew 6:28<sup>3</sup> "And why do you worry about clothing". This text is used incorrectly as it is in the context of an admonishment not to worry about obtaining clothing rather than worrying about what type of clothes to wear. This selective quotation does not seem a valid counter argument and his comments about applicability to culture seem more valid.

He also discusses Deuteronomy 23:1, arguing that Isaiah 56:4 and Daniel 1 show that this prohibition no longer applies (1994:42). Horton also counters an exclusive interpretation of Genesis 1:27, arguing that this can be read inclusively and that any combination of gender is also created in the image of God. Horton also explores Matthew 19:12 and Acts 8:26-39. He concludes that these texts about eunuchs may be cautiously used to infer that there is no biblical bar to transsexualism.

### Contribution

Horton writes with knowledge about pastoral issues transfolk and their families face and discusses organisations that exist to support them. While some of his pastoral conclusions such as excluding transfolk from public worship if they are "odd" are not supported by this author, he attempts a balance between practicality and compassion in his advice. He also attempts to engage with a breadth of Scripture exploring both possible prohibitions and possible opportunities to see scriptural characters such as eunuchs as forerunners to modern transfolk. Horton is quoted in both Holder and Watts (also discussed in this section) but only briefly in Anglican Church reports. He is also listed as "further reading" in the EA's *Transsexuality*. It is sad that this early attempt at a pastoral conversation about the care of transfolk is not as widely quoted as its fellow Grove Booklet by O'Donovan.

### Conclusion

While these article may seem like ancient history. Their effects are still with us. I particularly believe that O'Donovan's work is a seed that has borne bitter fruit in the Church. He begins a habit of ignoring the evidence of those who work with transfolk and also transfolk themselves in favour of arguments not based either on evidence or experience. This unfortunately has continued to plague the theological conversation about transfolk and has led to much distress and discrimination.

While I feel a little uneasy in places reading Horton, it is important to see it as a brave and pioneering attempt to add a more reasonable voice to the argument. It is sad that his work is so little known and appreciated. These first attempts are important because they both begin a conversation that we are still having. In my next instalment I will look at some of the works that have come after these and explore how these also have added to the Church's understandings.

**Horton D.** 1994. *A Christian response to the Crossdresser and Transsexual*. Nottingham: Grove Books.

**Mason, Nicholas** 1980 "The transsexual dilemma: being a transsexual." *Journal of Medical Ethics* 6: 85-89.

**O'Donovan O.** 1982. *Transsexualism and Christian marriage*, Bramcote Nottinghamshire: Grove Books.

**Zhou, J, Hofman M, Gooren, L, Swaab, D.** 1995. *A sex difference in the human brain and its relation to transsexuality*. *Nature*, Vol 378, pp68-70.

### Footnotes:

1. Referenced as Money, John 1969 "Sex reassignment as related to hermaphroditism and transsexualism." Pp. 91-113 in Richard Green & John Money (eds.), *Transsexualism and Sex- Reassignment*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. and Pauly, Ira B. 1969 "Adult manifestations of male transsexualism." Pp. 37-58 in Richard Green & John Money (eds.), *Transsexualism and Sex- Reassignment*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

2. From their website <http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk/history/> accessed 15.3.15

"Originally founded in 1966, the Beaumont Society originally started as a UK Chapter of the secret American organisation "Full Personality Expression" (FPE). The aim of the society then, is remarkably similar to those of the society now :-

1. To provide information and education to the general public, the medical and legal professions on transvestism and to encourage research aimed at fuller understanding.
2. To provide TV's with an opportunity for a social life together.

From these roots, the UK Chapter eventually became the Beaumont Society, taking the name of the Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont. Originally, all members had to be sponsored by an existing member and had to be vetted before being accepted – but this is no longer the case."

3. Matthew 6:28 New International Version (NIV) "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin."

**“A woman shall not wear a man's apparel, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does such things is abhorrent to the Lord your God”. (NRSA)**

Some people will consider that the statements contained in Deuteronomy 22:5 condemn every type of role where cross-dressing is involved<sup>1</sup>. However this passage needs to be examined in more detail<sup>2</sup>. One of the most relevant sources for this is an Early Church Father, Clement of Alexandria. Around AD 195 Clement wrote: *“What is the purpose in the Law's prohibition against a man wearing woman's clothing? Is it not that the Law would have us to be masculine and not to be effeminate in either person or actions - or in thought and word? Rather, it would have the man who devotes himself to the truth to be masculine both in acts of endurance and patience - in life, conduct, word, and discipline”*. This statement would reflect the understanding of the early Roman Church. In the *Paedagogus* ('The Instructor') Clement gives an extensive discussion which defines the appropriate standards for Christian clothing and behaviour<sup>3</sup>. This makes it clear that maintaining the respectability of the Church is the major concern. It is the attack on the male dominated social structure which effeminacy presents, and not cross dressing by itself. Those issues relating to respectability are extensively examined in other parts of this analysis<sup>4</sup>.

The Jewish concern in this passage is not about creating or reinforcing gender differences but in preventing the gender associations of clothing, or possibly body hair from being used to deceive others for those purposes which lead to sexual immorality or to dishonest behaviour. No literal interpretation has ever been applied. Care is needed in translating Deuteronomy 22:5 in order to preserve the differences in the words, for unfortunately many of the freer translations of the Christian bible do not<sup>5</sup>. A literal translation reads: “A man's item shall not be on a woman, and a man shall not wear a woman's garment; whoever does such a thing is an abhorrence unto Adonai”. Here there are three clauses. (a) A man's item shall not be on a woman; (b) a man shall not wear a woman's garment and (c) whoever does such a thing is an abhorrence unto God. The first two of these clauses are not identical in structure; and these differences are reflected in the various Jewish interpretations of the verse. One of the oldest documents - which is known as Targum Unkul<sup>6</sup>, (ca100 to 200 AD) interprets the verse as a prohibition against women carrying weapons, and against men using the “vessels” of a woman. Rabbi Eliezar ben Ya'akov (ca 226)<sup>7</sup> declares that: “A woman must not wear instruments of war or go to war.” The word used in the first statement (Keli) means “Mens” things i.e. clothes, armour, weapons and tools rather than just the clothes, while the word for women's things (Simlah) which is used in the second statement describes a type of women's outer clothing. The interpretation of the first clause as relating to “war gear” rather than clothes is also found in the Midrash Mishlei<sup>8</sup>. Josephus (ca. 37-100) states “Take care, especially in your battles, that no woman use the habit of a man, nor man the garment of a woman”.<sup>9</sup> In a further attempt to identify quintessential “Men's items,” Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob (ca. 80–110) is quoted in the Talmud (edited c. 800 C.E.)<sup>10</sup>, asking: “What is the proof that a woman may not go forth with weapons to war?” He then cites this verse, which he reads to say: “A warrior's gear may not be put on a woman”<sup>11,12</sup>.

Another of the Jewish Aramaic texts, Targum Yonatan ben Uziel<sup>13</sup>, which was written around the same time as Targum Unkul<sup>6</sup>, interprets the verse to be a ban on women wearing the tzitzit (tallit or prayer shawl) or the tefillin (phylacteries or prayer amulets worn by traditionally observant Jews) and on men trimming their groin or underarm hair. This regards “Men's items” as the tzitsit and the tefillin. This interpretation has gained the widest acceptance among the Jewish sages whose views are reflected in the mainstream legal codes<sup>14</sup>. The Shulhan Arukh (Yore De`a) says that the prohibition of a man wearing simlat isha “women's dress” or “women's fashion” refers to wearing a women's hairstyle, which includes specifically shaving one's underarm or pubic hair. Men may not shave their armpits and genital regions as women do, unless it is the local custom for men to do that<sup>15</sup>. The tzitsit and the tefillin are the quintessential “men's items”. It is considered that these rules are imposed by the Halakha (Jewish law) and condemning the incorrect wearing of these or the inappropriate trimming of hair is the purpose of the verse.

The third major set of Jewish interpretations is concerned with the control of status and immoral activity. Ibn Ezra<sup>16</sup> (ca 1140) stated that “Womankind is not created for anything other than procreation, and were a woman to go with men to war she would fall into prostitution en route.” Other commentators take up these views on gender discrimination and sexual immorality. For example the Rabbi Shlomo Yizchaki (Rashi) (ca.1040-1105), who was one of the most highly-regarded Talmudists and Biblical commentators of all time, stated that: “(A woman dresses) that she should resemble a man in order to mingle with the men, which cannot be for any reason other than to fornicate”. Rashi also argued that “A man's item should not be on a woman so she can go out among men, for this is only for the purpose of adultery.” Likewise, he says, “A man shall not wear a woman's garment: so he can go and be among the women.”<sup>17</sup> The same analysis is presented in the Shulhan Arukh<sup>18</sup>. This is the 16th century law code that has become a standard law text for most of the traditionally observant Jewish people. According to the analysis the danger of “cross-dressing,” is that it might allow men to enter women's groups and women to enter men's groups. In this view the intent of the law is to prevent men and women from associating with what would normally be a single-sex group of the other gender under false pretences, in circumstances which might lead to adultery, or “abhorrent” behaviour<sup>19</sup>. In societies in which gender segregation and inequality was widely observed, this subterfuge was seen as a real danger. However in its discussion of the laws of the festival of Purim, the Code says men and women may cross dress during the festival because it is for the purpose of gaiety<sup>20</sup>. In all of these interpretations it is not the cross dressing itself that is being condemned, it is the purpose of the act.

The Bible makes it clear that cultic prostitution had no place in Judaism. There is a wide variation given to the interpretations of Deuteronomy 22:5 and to Leviticus 18:33 and 20:13<sup>21</sup> in the present day. Some fundamentalist churches take a simple literalist view. However other modern Christian interpretations tend to assume that the motives for cross dressing prohibited in Deuteronomy 22:5 and same-sex intercourse condemned in Leviticus 18:33 and 20:13 were always connected with temple prohibition and inappropriate sex. In all of today's interpretations little account is taken of contrast between the privileges of power exerted in dominant societies and the oppression of submission in conquered ones: both in terms of the cultural differences that are established, and the use and abuse of sex. Evidence of the high degree of trauma and distress that these power conflicts create is present today: and that extends from the Christian practice of slavery in the Americas to the empires of the ancient world. This means that no examination of Christian theology and its attitudes to all forms of gender and sexually variant behaviour can be complete without taking a full account of the relationships between power and sex, and that is an objective of this study.<sup>22</sup>

The Hebrew Bible uses two different words for prostitute, *zonah* and *qedesha* or *kedeshah*. The word *zonah* simply meant an ordinary prostitute or loose woman, but the word *qedesha* literally meant "consecrated (feminine form)".<sup>23,24</sup> The actions of the Jewish king Asa (913-910 BC to 873-869 BC) are described in 1 Kings 15:12 where it states: "He put away the "male temple prostitutes" out of the land, and removed all the idols that his ancestors had made." A later king, Josiah (641/640 to 610/609 BC) demanded the exclusive worship of Yahweh and he outlawed all other types. According to the biblical account, Josiah destroyed the living quarters for the "male cult prostitutes" which were in the Temple. He also destroyed the pagan objects in the Temple which were related to the worship of Baal or Asherah, "And all the hosts of the heavens"<sup>25</sup> (2 Kings 23). Deuteronomy 23:18-19 says that: "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a *qedesha*, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a *qadesh*. You shall not bring the hire of a prostitute (*zonah*) or the wages of a dog (*kelev*) into the house of the Lord your God to pay a vow, for both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God". The Hebrew word "*kelev*" may also signify a male dancer or prostitute.<sup>26,27</sup> Around 622 BC Josiah ordered the High Priest Hilkiah to renovate the temple. During this time Hilkiah claimed to have discovered the lost scroll of the "Book of the Law", which was written by Moses. Most modern scholars consider that this scroll was a compilation of texts which are now found in Deuteronomy and Leviticus in their present form. The other books of the Pentateuch may have been codified at this time. Other passages may also be relevant. In an earlier pogrom Jehu (ca 842-815 BC) called an assembly of all the worshippers of Baal in Israel. In 2 Kings 10:21-22 it says that "They crowded into the temple of Baal until it was full from one end to the other. And Jehu said to the keeper of the wardrobe, "Bring robes for all the servants of Baal." So he brought out robes for them". After he was certain that only worshippers of Baal remained in the temple, he slaughtered them.

Judaism had to deal with some very unpleasant adjacent gods. Molech<sup>28</sup> was a Canaanite god whose worship according to the bible required children to be sacrificed to him by "Passing through fire". He is condemned four times in the bible, (see Leviticus 18:21, Leviticus 20:2-5, 2 Kings 23:10 and Jeremiah 32:35). The medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides said "Men in his day put on women's clothing to invoke the aid of the goddess Venus and he found it was commanded in the books of the idolaters that men, when they are in the worship of Venus, and the Astarte or Ashtarothe of the Phoenicians<sup>29</sup>, should wear the dress of women, and that women, in the worship of Mars, and of Moloch of the East, they should put on the armour of men".<sup>30,31</sup> The prophets railed against the importation of such beliefs and the acts of immorality into Jewish life. However in 1 Kings 11:7 it is said that Solomon built a high place for the worship of Molech in the mountain "That is before Jerusalem". It is generally accepted that in the last days of the Jewish kingdom human sacrifices were offered at a place called Topheth, "In the valley of the children of Hinnom." to Yahweh, as King or the Counsellor of the nation<sup>32</sup>. In the standard biblical interpretations, the act of cross dressing is intimately linked to temple prostitution and to unacceptable sex. The Hebrew scripture also identified the surrounding states and religions as centres for all kinds of despicable activities and sexual acts. This evidence would have seemed incontestable before the discovery of the clay tablets and inscriptions found in Ugarit, which was one of the nearby city states that worshipped the same Canaanite gods. The religious and mythological texts give a comprehensive view of Canaanite religious practice and belief. They present an extended picture of the type of fertility religion, characteristic of an agricultural people, which many Israelites adopted in most periods of Israelite history. There is also much less evidence of the gross immorality and the strong sexual obsession that would have been expected from the Hebrew accusations<sup>33</sup>, and the main targets for the Jewish invectives could instead have been the practices of the dominant goddess religions of Middle Eastern society. It appears that these Jewish conflicts with other religions could be regarded as rehearsals for the later problems that the early Christian Church would face.

There is however a different way of reading Deuteronomy 22:5. This passage is found in the Holiness Code section of Leviticus, which is directly concerned with the behaviour of the priests. In this interpretation it is a direct instruction to the priests in their practice of worship. It also forms part of the rules of the Second Temple and when that temple fell in AD 70 those rules ceased to have their effect. This priestly understanding does not preclude any more general expositions when it is applied to other situations, and this can be observed in the different interpretations which have been given. Every interpretation condemns cross dressing for dishonest or destructive action. None of them prohibit it for just purpose, and this passage is rightly put in the section of the Holiness Code in Leviticus which deals with deceit.

Although the prohibitions contained in Deuteronomy 22:5 implicitly support the condemnations of the Gallae by Augustine and the others, they are directed to the purpose of cross dressing, rather than to the act of cross dressing itself. The use of the specific condemnation of cross dressing in Deuteronomy 22:5 would be far more relevant to a Jewish audience than to a Greco/Roman one, and this may be why it does not seem to have a prominent place. Even though sexual impropriety and effeminacy

may have been the stated reasons for the condemnations of the Gallae by Augustine, Maternus and others, another, and perhaps a more accurate reason, may have been that of maintaining the respectability of the Church<sup>34</sup>.

This is part of a much larger investigation<sup>35</sup> which fuses the results of a neurophysiological and psychological analysis with the theology of the Church. An extended analysis of the teaching of Jesus is separately given<sup>36</sup>. Paul outlines that teaching in Galatians 3:26-28 when he states: "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". This statement can be tested both from the scientific and the theological perspectives. The neurophysiological and psychological study demonstrates that as wide a range of moral attitudes exist among gender and sexually variant people as there are in the population at large. Jesus makes exactly the same distinction in his teaching in the Gospels and the New Covenant, where the prohibitions that were previously based on the letter of the Law are now to be interpreted in the context of love and on the intention of the acts. It is demonstrated that in the teaching of Jesus, all transgendered, transsexual, lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, and who seek to express their own identities in roles that are true to themselves; must be accepted alike. All behaviour is governed by the purity of intention and there is no automatic condemnation of any cross-gender or same-sex act.

Over the centuries a great deal of effort has been put into determining the correct interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5. However it is also clear that the accepted interpretation of the verse has changed as society changes. The use of one single Old Testament verse also gives a very weak foundation for the different fundamental theological and pastoral judgements which have been applied to it, especially in light of 1 Samuel 16:7 "God does not see as mortals see: they look on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart".<sup>37</sup>

*This paper is extracted from section 17 of: Gilchrist, S: (2013g): Gender, Sexuality and the Christian Church:*

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/015B-GenderSexualityChurch.pdf>

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**NOTES:** <sup>1</sup>In the Revised Standard version of the Bible, Deuteronomy 22:5 states "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God". Young's Literal translation reads "The habiliments of a man are not on a woman, nor doth a man put on the garment of a woman, for the abomination of Jehovah thy God [is] any one doing these".

<sup>2</sup>This article is extracted from: Gilchrist, S. (2015c): "Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church": Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

<sup>3</sup>The Paedagogus (Clement of Alexandria) (ca 195) The Instructor (Book III)

Translated by William Wilson. From Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.) Also available 27 November 2012 at: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0209.htm> <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02093.htm> See also: Bercot, David W. Ed. (1998) Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs p.445. Hendrickson ISBN-10: 1565633571 ISBN-13: 978-1565633575 ISBN 1-56563-357-1

<sup>4</sup>See Gilchrist, S. (2015c): "Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church": Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

<sup>5</sup>This can be a major problem. For example the New International Version of the Bible states. "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".. See [www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Deuteronomy%2022:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Deuteronomy%2022:5) [accessed 16/11/2015]. Similar concerns are found elsewhere. See Section 3:6 of Gilchrist, S. (2013): *An Unfinished Reformation*: Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

<sup>6</sup>Targum Unkul's. <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/>

<sup>7</sup>Babylonian Talmud, Nazir 59a, Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov (2nd - 4th C CE)

<sup>8</sup>Proverbs 31:19

<sup>9</sup>Josephus (ca 97) Antiquities, Book 4, 8:43 <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/josephus/ant4.html>

<sup>10</sup>Eliezer ben Jacob, sometimes referred to as "the Elder" lived in the second part of the 1st Century. He was regarded as an authority on the Temple which he had seen, and because he was familiar with matters pertaining to Temple services and practices (e.g., Yoma 16b). Rashi claimed that his statements are few but they are reliable. The Babylonian Talmud states that his Mishnah was small in quantity but trustworthy (Yeb. 49b).

<sup>11</sup>Talmud: B. Naz. 59a. Access the Talmud at: <http://halakhah.com/>

<sup>12</sup>See also Horton, David (1994) "Changing Channels? A Christian Response to the Transvestite and Transsexual" Grove code: E92-ebook. ISBN: 1851742581. This book is now out of print but it may be bought online at: [http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/cart.php?target=product&product\\_id=16755&category\\_id=346](http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/cart.php?target=product&product_id=16755&category_id=346)

<sup>13</sup>on Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:5 <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/>

<sup>14</sup>Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen on Cross Dressing and Deuteronomy 22:5 accessed at <http://www.beki.org/crossdress.html> 6 December 2012.

<sup>15</sup>Tur, Yoreh De'ah, Chapter 182 (14th century) Prohibitions on cross-dressing are defined by local fashion. In Shulhan Aruch Yoreh Deah 182:5 Rabbi Joseph Karo discusses if a male is allowed to remove under arm hair. The Ben Ish Hai, Rabbi Yoseph Haim of Baghdad (Rav Pealim 3 Yoreh Deah 18) addresses the issue of men shaving their body hair.

<sup>16</sup>The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch: Deuteronomy. Translated by Shachter Jay F. (2003) KTAV Publishing House, Inc. ISBN 0881257451, 9780881257458

<sup>17</sup>Babylonian Talmud Nazir 59a (2nd - 4th C CE)

<sup>18</sup><http://www.torah.org/advanced/shulchan-aruch/>

<sup>19</sup>Babylonian Talmud Nazir 59a (2nd - 4th C CE)

<sup>20</sup>Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayyim 696:8)

<sup>21</sup>Leviticus 18:22: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination". Leviticus 20:13: "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them". (NRSVA)



<sup>22</sup>See Gilchrist, S. (2015c): *Science, Sex and Gender Variation in the Christian Church*: Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

<sup>23</sup>The meaning of the male form kadesh or qadesh is not entirely clear. In different bible translations the word has been defined in different ways, some of which are: Sodomites (5), male cult prostitutes (2), male prostitutes (2), shrine prostitutes, male shrine prostitutes, male temple prostitutes, sacred prostitutes, men of women's conditions, whoremongers and perverted persons.

<sup>24</sup>Elements of the behaviour of the Qedeshim appear to closely match those of the Gallae priests of Cybele. As male priests dedicated to the female goddess Asherah they might be expected from the example of other religions to cross dress as well. This has been indicated by Maimonides (see later). However there is disagreement over the question of self-castration. Roscoe and Murray argue that they did not do this on the grounds that the qedeshim seem to have lived within temple precincts. Others point out that the place where the "Women weave clothes for Asherah" (2 Kings 23:7) could also be beside the temple and not in its inner precinct. (This is not clear from the original text, and the bible translations differ) Hebrew law also forbade castration, and there is no direct evidence for the practice. (See: Murray, Stephen O; Roscoe, Will. (1997). "Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature" NYU Press, ISBN 0814774687, 9780814774687) Kufler on the other hand presents arguments for the adoption of the practice (see Kufler: "The Practice of Self-Castration in Early Christianity: The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity" (Chicago, 2001). A summary article is available (30 November 2012): at

<http://www.transchristians.org/archive/the-practice-of-self-castration-in-early-christianity>

<sup>25</sup>Alan Hooker contributes an interesting blog on this topic. He argues that the context of 2 Kings 23:4-7 does not, in his opinion, legitimate a translation of "male temple prostitutes." The problem with these translations is that qdš denotes holiness, and a more fitting translation would be "holy ones," or "consecrated ones." (See the descriptions in this article of the Gallae priests). He notes that in King Josiah commands the accoutrements of Baal, Asherah, and the šēbā haššāmāyim ("heavenly host") to be taken away from the Temple. He puts away the priests, he removes the cult statue of Asherah from the Temple and he burns it in the Kidron valley (2 Kgs. 23:4-6). He also destroys the "houses of haqqēdēšim" which were in or by the Temple, where "the women weave clothes for Asherah." (2 Kings 23:7) Since the haqqēdēšim were located where the women wove for Asherah, it is probable, in his opinion, that haqqēdēšim, or the "Hosts of Heaven", are male priests consecrated to Asherah. See <http://awhooker.wordpress.com/tag/sacred-prostitution/>, accessed 28 November 2012.

See also: Olyan Saul M. (2010) "What Do We Really Know about Women's Rites In The Israelite Family Context?" Department of Religious Studies, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912-1927 Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden. Also available online at: [http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/docserver/15692116/v10n1\\_s3.pdf?expires=1354221085&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=C1008E53B58E5FEB73B2FB0E5457D559](http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/docserver/15692116/v10n1_s3.pdf?expires=1354221085&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=C1008E53B58E5FEB73B2FB0E5457D559)

<sup>26</sup>Cross dressing and self castration was widely practiced in the Middle Eastern religious traditions. The priests of the very male god Hercules cross-dressed as women in honour of his time in service dressed as a woman to Queen Omphale. The gods could also appear in other genders. In The Odyssey Athena is described as often going to the aid of people in the guise of men. In the cult of Aphroditus, worshippers of both sexes cross-dressed, men wore women's clothing and women dressed in men's clothing. Ritual cross dressing is found in Canaanite fertility religion. Lucian of Samosata and Eusebius write of masquerade in the worship of Astarte, and in the Mishne Torah of Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Deuteronomy 22:5. is debated under the section dealing with idolatry. Gender transgression including self-castration is common to many religious traditions. However cross dressing may be carried out in honour of the god or goddess is being worshipped rather than sex. See ("The Works of Lucian of Samosata: Volumes 1, 2, 3 & 4 (Forgotten Books)", Fowler F. G. (Translator), Fowler H. W. (Translator) (2007). Print Edition: Publisher: Tredition (11 Nov 2011) ISBN-10: 3842462611 ISBN-13: 978-3842462618. Available free on Kindle.) also (Maimonides RN45, RN171; Meir MN28, MN164; Chinuch C467, C468).

<sup>27</sup>An interesting aside is given by Cyrus Gordon, in his book "The Bible and the Ancient Near East" (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997), p. 160. Gordon wrote that: "Another biblical law that now can be explained through recourse to the Ugaritic texts is the prohibition against transvestism in Deuteronomy 22:5. This act is described in the Epic of Aqhat as well. After the hero is slain, his sister Pughat seeks revenge against Anat for the murder. To do so, Pughat disguises herself as a male, replete with rouge (the coloration of males, especially warrior heroes), man's clothing and weaponry. The Israelite reaction is to forbid transvestism, another aspect of Canaanite society that they found reprehensible. Again, one needs to place this in its proper context. No doubt the average Canaanite male or female dressed in proper fashion throughout most his or her life. But since Canaanite epic literature describes transvestism in a noble manner, we may conclude that this act not only was practiced but also was countenanced".

<sup>28</sup>Although the Bible refers directly to Molech as the God of the Ammonites, little is known about this god. Phoenicia and Carthage were noted (or notorious?) for the practice. Other gods who demanded child sacrifice were Tanit, Cronus/Saturn and Set. However caution should be exercised. Child mortality was high in ancient societies and stillbirth was present. The discovery of a child cemetery near Carthage suggests at least some of these might have been ceremonies honouring children who already had died. Lobel Jarrett A. (2011). Child Burials - Carthage, Tunisia: *Archaeology Archive*: Volume 64 Number 1, January/February 2011 <http://archive.archaeology.org/1101/topten/tunisia.html>

<sup>29</sup>The distinctions between gods and goddesses such as Astarte and Asherah are not always kept sharp. Often the two are combined and they are treated as the same. However it is also clear from their histories that they have to be treated as separate goddesses. Nevertheless in Ugarit Astarte, Baal's consort, Athtarat was also known as Ashtoreth. In Ugarit she also appears as Anat, where she is both the sister and the spouse of Baal. In this context she is the goddess of battle and she personified the planet Venus. However she was also "the female power of fertility operative in the production of offspring as well as the fertility of the soil" (Toombs, Lawrence. (1983) "Baal, Lord of the Earth: The Ugaritic Baal Epic, "In the Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth" p621). Ashtoreth was additionally known as the western Semitic equivalent of the Roman Cybele or the Babylonian Ishtar, (see Drower, Margaret. (1975) "Ugarit," in the Cambridge Ancient History, 3rd edition, II.2, 154). Genealogy gets confusing with the gods!

<sup>30</sup>Townley, James. (2001). "The Reasons of the Laws of Moses from the "More Nevochim" of Maimonides. With Notes, Dissertations, and a Life of the Author". London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1827. Reprinted 2001 by The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd. LCCN 00-066334. ISBN 1-58477-168-2.

<sup>31</sup>However this might help explain one interpretation of the first clause in Deuteronomy 22:5 which associated women who cross dress with wearing the apparels of war.

<sup>32</sup>Jewish Encyclopaedia: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10937-moloch-molech>

<sup>33</sup>In the Canaanite texts from Ugarit the equivalent term for Qedeshim is used to describe cultic singers and diviners. Deuteronomy's prohibition of qedeshim and qedeshot has been widely interpreted as referring to ritual prostitution, and the attempted link to homosexuality is evident in the translations of Deuteronomy that render qedeshim as "sodomites." However the evidence supporting for this evaporates on closer scrutiny and the majority of scholars do not link this role to cultic prostitution in any way. The qedeshim in Ugarit were an important and esteemed class of sacred people whose status ranked immediately below those of priests. References to sexual behaviour of any sort are

rare and incidental. Apart from one extremely doubtful passage there is no supporting evidence whatever from Ugarit that cultic prostitution or anal penetration was engaged in, either for the joy of sex or lustful acts. There are two texts from Ugarit which suggested that bestiality may have occurred. Prostitution is one of the oldest industries in the world and no doubt it was frequently practiced. Like the Gallae there may have been a duality between the followers who took the way of darkness and those who took the way of light. There are many points of commonality between the Jewish and the Ugaritic religious traditions. However morality has to be judged by the standards of the society in which questioned acts have taken place. No combination of the terms for prostitution and that for the sacred is found in any ancient texts and all of the ancient sources which describe cult related activities as "prostitution" are descriptions of outsiders. None of the passages in the Bible, with the possible exception of Deuteronomy 23:18 provide a contextual link between the qedeshim, prostitution and associated malpractice. However these biblical condemnations are associated with reforming Kings who sought to rid Judaism from the influence of foreign worship practices. For that to work it is necessary to assume the all of the other religions around the Jewish state were centres of depravity and irresponsible sex. The evidence that is now available does not demonstrate this and it has to be questioned as to whether the qedeshim who were within the Judean religious tradition were as immoral as the bible leads people to expect. (See: Kimuhu, Johnson M.(2008) "Leviticus: The Priestly Laws and Prohibitions from the Perspective of Ancient Near East and Africa" Peter Lang. ISBN 1433102005, 9781433102004. See Also Greenspahn, Frederick E. (2002) "Homosexuality and the Bible" CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly <http://data.ccarnet.org/journal/1102fg.pdf> and Balch, David L. (1999) "Homosexuality, Science, and the Plain Sense of Scripture" Erdmans. ISBN-10: 080284698X ISBN-13: 978-0802846983)

<sup>34</sup>Gilchrist, S. (2013a): *An Unfinished Reformation*: Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

<sup>35</sup>Gilchrist, S. (2015 a): "Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process": Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

<sup>36</sup>See sections 7 and 8 of: Gilchrist, S. (2015 a): *Personality Development and Gender: Why We Should Re-think the Process*. Other analyses are given in: Gilchrist, S. (2014a): *Christianity and Crisis: An Overview of Gender and Sexual Difference in the Early and Modern Christian Church* and Gilchrist, S. (2013a): *An Unfinished Reformation*: Access via: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/index.htm>

## Some C of E bishops have condemned a play that features Jesus as a transgender woman. 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016

The one-woman show, 'The Gospel According To Jesus, Queen Of Heaven', is fronted by trans playwright Jo Clifford – who portrays Jesus returning to Earth as a woman. First shown in 2008, the play was staged at St Chrysostom's Church, Manchester as part of the *Queer Contact* festival.

Some evangelicals have attacked the play's subject matter, claiming it "distorts" the Christian faith – and hit out at the Bishop of Manchester for failing to block it. The former Bishop of Rochester Michael Nazir-Ali told the Mail on Sunday: "It is quite clear from the Gospels that the identity of Jesus is male, his 'mum' is Mary and he always refers to God as 'Father', so to suggest otherwise is contrary to Christian teaching. In cases in which a play is to be staged in a church building, the bishop is perfectly entitled under Church law to direct the cleric in charge to ensure the content will be consistent with Christian teaching and not offensive to the public."



A second bishop said: "This play is wholly inappropriate for performance in a consecrated building. I am sure that many people will be looking to the Bishop of Manchester to take action, as he is required to do by Church law."

The Bishop of Manchester said that while he thought the venue was not entirely appropriate, he did not seek to ban the performance. "That an artistic performance is offensive to Christians does not of itself amount to grounds for seeking to prevent it taking place. In a richly diverse society, of which Manchester is a proud standard bearer, none of us has the right to be protected from being offended. It is only when offence reaches the level of incitement to hatred that the law properly comes into play. However, there are particular sensitivities surrounding theatrical performances in churches beyond what might properly apply to any other venue. The process for approving a performance in a church, together with the criteria that should inform the decision, are set out in canon F16, which is part of the laws of the Church of England. The responsibility clearly lies solely with the local minister, unless he or she elects to refer it to the bishop for determination."

"That I cannot support this particular performance, and have urged that consideration be given to transferring it to a less contentious venue, in no way weakens the support I and my colleagues continue to give to the transgendered members of our community and our churches, not least during the annual Sparkle weekend in the city centre."

## C of E bishop Alan Wilson wants gender 'affirmation' services for trans people 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016

The New Chapel (Unitarian and Free Christian) in Greater Manchester recently enacted changes to allow trans people to get baptised again after changing their gender. According to the Telegraph, Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham, said it could be possible for the Church of England to introduce something similar, as he launched church group LGBTI Mission. He said:



"I'm not into 'rebaptising' – as an Anglican I think you are baptised once – but I think if people change gender that should be acknowledged and affirmed. If Bob is now Carol the person you are talking to is now Carol not Bob. In terms of how you mark a transition and what is the right way to do it I think it is an emerging area. We just have to provide a liturgy which is truthful and personal and sensitive." He also called for the church to actually take action to end its divisive anti-LGBT record, rather than simply apologising for it. The Bishop, a strong supporter of same-sex marriage, said: "Lots of people are going around saying sorry, it's great fun saying sorry – but what has actually changed? The LGBTI Anglicans say we can't carry on as we have done – you can't say 'can we carry on having blacks-only beaches' if you say you want to dismantle apartheid. Repentance is about change of mind and renewal. There is plenty of evidence of a change of mind, there is a genuine wanting to move on but if you want to move on you have to go somewhere different to where you are now. In a lot of this I don't think the Church has to change its doctrine of marriage – it just has to apply it to same-sex couples."

Simon Sarmiento of the LGBTI Mission said: "Now is the time for the Church of England to practise what it preaches and show love towards its LGBTI neighbours. We've seen the Church make huge strides towards equality in recent years, most notably through the 2014 legislation enabling women to become bishops, and it's now essential that LGBTI equality is similarly cemented in our institution. We know that this is what most people in the Church of England want. We believe that each of the asks we've outlined is achievable and, frankly, essential."

## **A split in the global Anglican church could bolster anti-gay churches. 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

The Archbishop of Canterbury hosted church leaders from around the world, as he attempted to avoid an entire breakdown of the Anglican Communion. While the C of E is relatively moderate when it comes to gay rights, a number of other churches within the global Anglican Communion remain militantly opposed – leading to tensions particularly with some African churches. In the Telegraph, Stonewall CEO Ruth Hunt voiced her concerns about the possible divide in the Anglican Communion – which could free more extreme churches to pursue an even more anti-LGBT agenda. “The Church and its leaders are right to stand up to some of the more conservative elements and support LGBT communities. “There are 85 million people across the world that belong to the Anglican Communion. A split would be incredibly dangerous for the thousands of LGBT people – and their families – who live in countries where being lesbian, gay, bi or trans is illegal or punishable by death. People who live, work and pray in fear that they cannot divulge their true identity. People who feel that their family – the Church – is no longer a place for them.”

The roots of the divide between the two sides go back decades – but the current debate flared up in 2003 when the US Episcopal Church ordained its first openly gay Bishop, Gene Robinson. The last meeting of the Anglican Communion meeting in 2008 descended into farce, when some evangelical African Churches refused to attend alongside gay Bishops. The Archbishop has not called a meeting since.

Last month, over 100 senior Anglicans signed a letter to the Archbishop calling for “repentance for accepting and promoting discrimination on the grounds of sexuality, and for the pain and rejection that this has caused. “We, the Church, need to apologise for our part in perpetuating rather than challenging ill-informed beliefs about LGBTI people.”

In the past, Hunt – who is Catholic – spoke about reconciling her faith and sexuality, writing: “[Faith] is doing significant damage to people’s mental health – we have to do something about it. There are also many faith leaders who are gay and many faith leaders who are distressed by the constant exclusion of LGBT people from their communities and parishes.”

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has strived to reconcile the two sides on the issues of LGBT rights. He claimed earlier this week: “Certainly I want reconciliation. Reconciliation doesn’t always mean agreement, in fact it very seldom does. It means finding ways of disagreeing well. There is nothing I can do if people decide to leave the room. It won’t split the communion. The Church is a family and you remain a family even if you go your separate ways. A schism would not be a disaster, God is bigger than our failures, but it would be a failure.”

## **The Ugandan Church will boycott global Anglican events yet again – after the church’s leader accused Western Archbishops of ‘betraying’ Biblical principles. 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

The Archbishop of Canterbury has gone to extremes to keep the global Anglican Communion from fracturing, despite the deep divides between hard-line homophobic African Churches and its more liberal members.

In a bid to appease the anti-LGBT churches, last month the Anglican Communion voted to ‘punish’ the US Episcopal Church for its affirmation of same-sex weddings. But in an address this week, the Archbishop of Uganda said that leaders hadn’t done enough on the issue – and that his church will boycott the next Anglican meeting as a result. He said: “It was



only a symbolic vote; it was not a substantive vote. Recent statements from TEC and other leaders in the Anglican Communion have since made this clear. The Presiding Bishop of [The Episcopal Church] stated during the Primates Meeting that TEC would not change its position on offering ‘marriage’ to same-sex couples, and he has repeated TEC’s commitment to a definition of marriage the Bible does not recognize. In other words, the Primates decision will have no impact on TEC.”

Referencing a previous boycott over the consecration of a gay Bishop, he said: “Brothers and sisters in Christ, it is like we are back in 2003 where we continue to be betrayed by our leaders. The Primates voted to bring discipline to TEC and, yet, we now see that the leadership of the Anglican Communion does not have the will to follow through. This is another deep betrayal. The Church of Uganda’s Provincial Assembly has resolved that the Church of Uganda will not participate in meetings of the Anglican Communion until godly order is restored, including demonstrating that it is capable of restoring godly order. This has not yet happened. The Church of Uganda, therefore, will not be participating in the upcoming April meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in Lusaka.” *Archbishop Stanley Ntagali*

## **Pope Francis has called for the Catholic Church to be more welcoming to LGBT people. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

In the new book ‘*The Name of God is Mercy*’, an account by Andrea Tornelli of his long private interview with the Pope on the subject of mercy, Pope Francis says that the Church needs to be more compassionate to a “wounded humanity”. He reiterates the statement he is often quoted on, when he said “who am I to judge”, about gay people. “People should not be defined only by their sexual identities.”

The book was released on 12<sup>th</sup> Jan, (to coincide with the Jubilee Year of Mercy, a year in which Catholics are called on to seek forgiveness, as well as to forgive others.

“The Church does not exist to condemn people but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God’s mercy,” he writes, “humanity is wounded, deeply wounded”.

Francis criticised those in the Church “who are only used to having things fit into their pre-conceived notions and ritual purity instead of letting themselves be surprised by reality, by a greater love or a higher standard.”

However, Pope Francis remains reluctant to address the issue of homosexuality as anything other than a sin.



## 60 years together

Their three kids, all successful, agreed to a Sunday dinner in their honour.

"Happy Anniversary Mum and Dad," gushed Son No. 1. 'Sorry I'm running late. I had an emergency at the hospital with a patient, you know how it is, and I didn't have time to get you a gift.'

"Not to worry," said the father. "Important thing is we're all together today."

Son No. 2 arrived. "You and Mum look great, Dad. I just flew in from Montreal between depositions and didn't have time to shop for you. 'It's nothing,'" said the father. "We're glad you were able to come."

Just then the daughter arrived.

"Hello and happy anniversary! Sorry, but my boss is sending me out of town and I was really busy packing so I didn't have time to get you anything."

After they had finished dessert, the father said,

"There's something your mother and I have wanted to tell you for a long time. You see, we were really poor, but we managed to send each of you to college. Through the years your mother and I knew we loved each other very much, but we just never found the time to get married."

The three children gasped and said, "WHAT? You mean we're bastards?"

"Yep", said the father. "Cheap ones, too . . ."

**Army Life** (Make sure you read right to the very end )Text of a letter from a kid from Eromanga to Mum and Dad.  
(For those of you not in the know, Eromanga is a small town, west of Quilpie in the far south west of Queensland )

Dear Mum & Dad,

I am well. Hope youse are too. Tell me big brothers Doug and Phil that the Army is better than workin' on the station - tell them to get in bloody quick smart before the jobs are all gone! I wuz a bit slow in settling down at first, because ya don't hafta get outta bed until 6am. But I like sleeping in now, cuz all ya gotta do before brekky is make ya bed and shine ya boots and clean ya uniform. No bloody horses to get in, no calves to feed, no troughs to clean - nothin'!! Ya haz gotta shower though, but its not so bad, coz there's lotsa hot water and even a light to see what ya doing!



At brekky ya get cereal, fruit and eggs but there's no kangaroo steaks or goanna stew like wot Mum makes You don't get fed again until noon and by that time all the city boys are buggered because we've been on a 'route march' - geez its only just like walking to the windmill in the bullock paddock!!

This one will kill me brothers Doug and Phil with laughter. I keep getting medals for shootin' - dunno why. The bullseye is as big as a bloody dingo's arse and it don't move and it's not firing back at ya like the Johnsons did when our big scrubber bull got into their prize cows before the Ekka last year! All ya gotta do is make yourself comfortable and hit the target - it's a piece of p...!! You don't even load your own cartridges, they comes in little boxes, and ya don't have to steady yourself against the rollbar of the roo shooting truck when you reload!

Sometimes ya gotta wrestle with the city boys and I gotta be real careful coz they break easy - it's not like fighting with Doug and Phil and Jack and Boori and Steve and Muzza all at once like we do at home after the muster.

Turns out I'm not a bad boxer either and it looks like I'm the best the platoon's got, and I've only been beaten by this one bloke from the Engineers - he's 6 foot 5 and 15 stone and three pick handles across the shoulders and as ya know I'm only 5 foot 7 and eight stone wringin' wet, but I fought him till the other blokes carried me off to the boozier.

I can't complain about the Army - tell the boys to get in quick before word gets around how bloody good it is.

Your loving daughter, Susan

**The first trans woman to work for the Premier League as a photographer has said she thought she would never work in football again.** 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Sophie Cook, 48, said she was unsure how her colleagues would react to her transition. She said she was actually amazed how her announcement was received by colleagues at AFC Bournemouth. "I had built the whole thing up so much in my head and I don't know what I was expecting but when they were told all the guys started clapping and the captain said 'Let's go and train'. Some of the guys came up afterwards and showed their support. They have been amazing."





## The new head of the Shakespeare's Globe theatre has pledged to bend gender – and bring in more cross-dressing roles for women. 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016

Emma Rice began her term as the theatre's new artistic director this month, and has plans to shake up the famous theatre – a reproduction of the original Globe, where many Shakespeare works were staged. As well as pledging to bring Shakespeare to the modern masses, Rice this week said she would also work to bolster the role of women. However, rather than insert new female characters into the Bard's work, given Shakespeare's scarcity of female characters, Rice's solution will take theatre back to its roots. Cross-dressing in Shakespeare would definitely be nothing new – originally women were not allowed to perform on stage, meaning that all female roles were originally played by men.

But Ms Rice explained: told the Times: "There is a target. I'd love for it to be 50-50. There's no reason why Gloucester [in *King Lear*] can't be a woman. If anybody bent gender it was Shakespeare, so I think it just takes a change of mind-set."

Ms Rice pointed out that female characters make up just 13 per cent of the lines in in Shakespeare's works – with women's lines dipping under 10 percent in popular works such as *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar*. She explained that the Bard's influence had also led to a reduced role for women in modern theatre, adding: "When I was applying for the job I stumbled across research that said, on average, there's 30 per cent women [as a proportion of theatre casts] at any given time. There are some who think that's because Shakespeare is the blueprint."



## '1977': Story of transgender pioneer Angela Morley broadcast on BBC R4 on 27.2.16

She was an Oscar-nominated, Emmy-winning composer from Yorkshire whose triumphs ranged from *Watership Down* to *Dallas*. But Angela Morley was also a transgender pioneer who faced the incomprehension of the music industry when she transitioned in the 1970s. Now Morley's story has been dramatised in a BBC play starring Rebecca Root, the star of the BBC sitcom *Boy Meets Girl*.

Born Walter Stott in Leeds in 1924, the composer and conductor provided the orchestral arrangements for films including *Peeping Tom* (1960) as well dozens of albums, from Noël Coward to Dusty Springfield. Working for BBC radio, "Wally" Stott wrote and directed the musical arrangements for *The Goon Show's* sketches and created the tuba introduction for *Hancock's Half Hour*.

In 1972, however, Stott withdrew from the recording world and then emerged, to the amazement of contemporaries, as Angela Morley. After undergoing what was then called a "sex-rectifying operation", she faced innuendo in the recording studios.

The Radio 4 drama, *1977*, first broadcast on 3 December, and repeated on 27th Feb., portrays a turning point in Morley's career. In 1977, the bestselling children's novel *Watership Down* was made into an animated film. Malcolm Williamson, Master of the Queen's Music, was hired as the composer. However, under extreme pressure he dropped out, handing over only seven minutes of music three days before recordings were due to begin.

Sarah Wooley, who wrote *1977*, said: "They asked Angela to see what she could make of Williamson's sketches and compose the rest of the film at very short notice. She took a lot of persuading. She'd turned down a lot of work after her transition; she operated in a very macho music world in a less-enlightened time and wanted to work under the radar. But this would be a high-profile task. Something changed her mind. She watched the *Watership Down* footage and read the book. It's a quest story, about finding a new home. There was something she saw in it. She went and composed a fantastic score inside two weeks."

Morley's evocative, melancholic score was a crucial part of the film's and her own subsequent success. Oscar-nominated for her work on *The Little Prince* and *The Slipper and The Rose*, Morley then moved to Los Angeles, where she scored popular TV shows including *Dallas* and *Wonderwoman*, winning three Emmy awards, and assisted John Williams on his compositions for blockbuster movies including *ET*.

Morley, who died in 2009 aged 84, was supported throughout by Christine Parker, the woman Wally Stott married in 1968. She helped Wooley with background information and is a character in the play. Morley once said: "It was only because of her love and support that I was able to deal with the trauma, and begin to think about crossing over that terrifying gender border."

Root said: "I've loved the *Watership Down* film since I was a kid, but I wasn't aware of Angela's story before the play. I hope it will spread greater knowledge and understanding and allow Angela to take her rightful place among the trans community pioneers. A lot of trans people will relate to the uncertainty she faced about how she would be accepted ... in public. Should she come out of that self-imposed retirement or remain in obscurity? It was very brave of her to go public."

Wooley hopes her radio play can be adapted for the screen. "The story is right for a biopic, or a stage production," Root said, adding: "There are so many parallels between Angela's life and *Watership Down*."

Max Geldray, the harmonica player who featured in *The Goon Show*, said on Morley's death that the person he knew had "a lifelong mental struggle with gender identity", a fact that, for years, he had kept sealed tightly inside himself. It didn't take me very long to find out that, in all the ways that mattered, the person I found now was still the person I had known. Morley and Parker represented an extraordinary story of two people's love and devotion which has gone far beyond the barriers of what most of us have faced in our lives".



## A review of *The Danish Girl* by Nick Duffy (Pink News) 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016

You have to hand it to the creators of the Danish Girl... either they didn't do much research ahead of casting, or they simply didn't care about the inevitable hostile reaction from trans activists. 'Dallas Buyers Club' was roundly criticised for putting an established male actor (Jared Leto) in the role of a trans woman. 'Transparent' came under fire for the same (Jeffrey Tambor). 'Stonewall'... actually, we best not mention 'Stonewall'. And yet the Danish Girl went one further – they didn't just cast a male actor in a trans role, they cast *Eddie Redmayne*: a former Eton pupil and heir to a business empire.



While it's easy to critique the film on a basic level – it's been made now, and it's a huge cinematic risk from King's Speech director Tom Hooper. Does it live up to expectations? Well... sometimes.

The setting is a loving recreation of 1920s Europe, as artist Einar Wegener adopts the guise of his 'cousin' Lili Elbe. Redmayne's transformation for the film is remarkable, and it's without a doubt that his emotionally raw performance carries the entire production. It would be easy for the film to portray Elbe as a straight-up pioneering hero, but Redmayne brings nuance: Elbe is selfish, but because she is single-minded. She has no option but to put herself before others – and brings a mixture of guilt, terror and earnest excitement to every line.

Redmayne also goes to lengths to portray Elbe's emotional vulnerability through his own, with full-frontal nudity in the middle of one of the film's stand-out emotional scenes. It's a mature take on a role that attempts to capture many facets of Elbe, and not just those that are now so celebrated. The film mercifully steers away from most cheap gender gags, offering a straight-faced snapshot of Lili's transformation, from modelling stockings for wife Gerda to undergoing the first gender reassignment surgery. Lili's wife Gerda Wegener (Alicia Vikander) manages to stay just the right side of annoying, juggling devotion, exasperation and inner turmoil throughout.

Vikander does a lot with little in terms of her performance, managing to equal Redmayne's two personalities with her one. LGBT aficionados will also spot a few familiar faces peppered throughout: *London Spy* star Ben Whishaw steals every scene he's in, in a role that's all-too-brief and yet has a lasting impact on the tone. 'Boy Meets Girl' actress Rebecca Root also pops up for a few moments later on, presumably because someone somewhere thought it might be a good idea to have an actual transgender person in a film about transgender people.

At first, Lili is simply a game that Einar and Gerda play, giving early scenes a light-hearted, playful feel – as the pair construct her in secret and then in public by trial-and-error. There is always the promise of upcoming scandal in these scenes, but Elbe seems to have the Clark Kent effect early on: no-one can recognise her because the plot demands it. But it isn't just a game to Einar, who slowly becomes Lili full-time. Transitioning isn't as easy as just putting on make-up, though, and there's plenty of darkness for Redmayne to make sad-eyes for later on.

At times this darkness can give way to pure bleakness – and it's at these points the film often seems to fall down a similar trap to director Tom Hooper's last big film 'Les Misérables'. Just as 'Les Mis' did not really *need* the over-the-top sea of excrement in the infamous sewer scene, sometimes *The Danish Girl* gives the feeling that its own awards-chasing excrement is obfuscating actual details of Elbe's story.

It might be poetic to portray Elbe as Icarus flying too close to the sun – but crucial details are often blurred or twisted to fit this lens. The film changes vital details of Lili's surgery to fit its own narrative, which robs the story of its authentic climax. Meanwhile, history is twisted to hand another character an implied happy ending in place of a bleak one in reality. – Despite the film's shortcomings, Redmayne gives an excellent performance and hopefully brings some knowledge of Elbe to a wider audience. *The Danish Girl* is not an instant classic, and it's definitely not the definitive take on transgender filmmaking – but it's a well-meaning, earnest attempt.



## Eddie Redmayne: 'I felt so vulnerable playing a trans woman'

4<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Talking to *The Sun*, Eddie Redmayne described his experience of portraying a trans woman in *The Danish Girl*. He said he now has a limited insight into how transgender people live.



"It leaves you feeling very exposed and vulnerable. The set itself felt very safe when I would be walking around as Lili but there was still this sense of people watching you and feeling judged. Imagine what it must be like for trans women who are constantly facing such judgment as well as discrimination and violence in many cases."

Tom Hooper, the director of *The Danish Girl*, has said that he cast Eddie Redmayne in the lead role because of the actor's 'gender fluidity'. He then went on to say that he hopes the casting of Redmayne in the role will highlight the lack of diversity in Hollywood. Redmayne has been very outspoken on the subject of transgender issues since his casting, saying that it is "shocking" that trans issues haven't improved much since Lili Elbe and calling for people to become more educated on trans issues.

U.K.

**The UK government has been urged to build a specialist unit to house transgender people – after a series of scandals surrounding women in men’s prisons.** 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Transgender woman convicted of raping a teenage girl is sent to men’s prison** 8<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**A poll has found that a majority of British people think that trans women who go to prison should be housed in women’s facilities.** 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**Justice and equalities minister Caroline Dinenage has said that the government remains committed to protecting transgender people in prisons, after a number of high-profile failures.** 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**Former Conservative equalities minister Maria Miller, who now chairs the Women and Equalities Select Committee, has said that the trans people are still being “let down”.** 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015

**A report from the Women and Equality Select Committee has called for radical reforms to the UK’s gender laws – and strongly rebukes the government for failing to make progress.** 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**The former Culture secretary says she was shocked by backlash from some women following the ground breaking report.** 24<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Maria Miller has criticised the “extraordinary” hostility from women claiming to be “feminists” following her report into the treatment of trans people across the UK. Ms Miller insisted that the “overwhelming” reaction to the report – published by the Women and Equalities Committee last week – has been largely positive, but “the only negative reaction that I’ve seen has been by individuals purporting to be feminists.” She said that many of these ‘feminists’ are angry with her suggestions that women’s refuges also ensure equal access to people who have transitioned from male to female.

The backlash follows on from Germaine Greer’s recent remark that transgender women “can’t be women.” Ms Miller could not disagree more with Greer – pointing to a recent report by The Fawcett Society as proof that the majority of feminists support trans equality. The study found that two-thirds of feminists agree that gender is fluid. “Of course, that would cut across what Germaine Greer is saying,” Ms Miller told The Independent. I think that all of us who are feminists know that equality for other groups of people, and a fairer deal for other groups of people, is good for us as well. If we live in a fairer society, where opportunities are not cut off because of your gender or sexuality or race or religion, then that is going to be good for women as well as good for everyone else. We should all be fighting for a fairer society. I find it extraordinary that somebody wouldn’t acknowledge that. But there seems to be an undercurrent of opinion among some that trans people shouldn’t be treated equally and that in some way this is a threat to women. I simply reject that.”

**Spectator columnist Melanie Phillips has claimed that Tory MP Maria Miller is trying to turn unsuspecting children transgender.** 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016

**Dr Victoria McCloud is the first trans woman appointed as a leading judge in the High Court.** 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016

**Ellen Murray the first ever out transgender candidate in all of Ireland is to stand for the Green Party in West Belfast in May’s Stormont Assembly poll.** 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**The process to legally change gender in the UK would get much simpler under new proposals.**

4<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Recommendations made by the House of Commons women and equality committee, would dramatically overhaul the gender recognition process for trans people. Whereas in the past transgender people have been made to undergo a lengthy process including medical and psychiatric evaluations, the new process would allow people to change gender by filling in a form.

**A transgender man has been sentenced for obtaining sex by deception – for using a fake penis to have sex with his girlfriend without revealing he is trans.** 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**Trans ‘conversion’ clinic realises it is out of touch and shuts down, apologises** 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**Almost half (44%) of the UK population now believe that gender is non-binary, but can be expressed as a range of identities.** 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**A private school has made a change to its uniform policy in order to make trans students feel more welcome.** 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016

**Blatchington Mill Senior School in Brighton gives pupils 23 options to define their own gender** 29.1.16

**Edinburgh University Students ban cross-dressing and ‘camp’ Halloween outfits** 22.1.16

**Children’s publisher Buster Books has announced plans to publish all future books under gender neutral titles.** 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016

**A Scottish transgender woman to walk 30 miles in stilettos and underwear to raise awareness of the community and transphobia.** 16<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**The winner of the Miss Transgender UK pageant was stripped of her crown for not being “full-time” transgender, the organiser has claimed.** 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**Times columnist Janice Turner has questioned plans to allow trans women to compete in the Olympics without undergoing surgery beforehand.** 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016

In a bid to resolve some of the issues previously facing trans and intersex athletes, the International Olympic Committee is set to adopt a new policy on “Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism”. Trans women will still face some obstacles when taking part in women’s events – requiring a consistent testosterone level “below 10 nmol/L” – but there will no longer be restrictions placed on those who haven’t undergone gender surgery.

Turner says this is “great news – unless you are a woman athlete. A male-to-female athlete will be allowed to have more than three times the upper range of this performance-enhancing hormone than a born woman,” she writes in The Times. “And while taking female hormones reduces male muscle mass and bone density, many biological advantages remain. Men have bigger skeletons, longer stride, larger lung capacity, and a narrower pelvis — unhindered by female reproductive organs — all better suited for speed. Although the change may be more inclusive, it risks being exploited by some – and may even damage trans equality in the future. This is bound to be exploited by medal-hungry male athletes in unscrupulous nations. The Iranian women’s football team already contains eight trans-females. Nor am I convinced this will help the transgender cause since an Olympic women’s event won by a strapping former man will provoke a mocking global backlash. But even questioning this risks the fury of the vociferous trans lobby. Not a single sportswoman has yet dared to say the obvious: this is unfair.”

However, trans medical expert Joanna Harper – who helped shape the guidelines – disagrees. “The new IOC transgender guidelines fix almost all of the deficiencies with the old rules. Hopefully, organizations such as the ITA will quickly adapt to

**A bill has been introduced in Indiana which would fine people \$5,000 dollars to go to the ‘wrong’ bathroom.** 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Representative Mark Cole (Virginia) has defended a bill which could require teenagers to have their genitals ‘checked’ to ensure they correspond to the bathroom they are using.** 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**South Dakota has passed a bill that will ban transgender people from using their preferred bathrooms.** 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**David Omdahl, a state Senator in South Dakota, has said he is sorry for the trans community, saying they are “so twisted”.** 7<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**The Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio, has granted transgender people the right to pee without being harassed.** 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016

*I came across this story which was originally published in March 2014. I found it very striking:*

**A private Christian school claimed an eight-year-old girl was in violation of “Biblical values” by looking like a boy.**

**North Carolina’s largest city, Charlotte, has voted to extend transgender rights – despite Governor Pat McCrory threatening state intervention.** 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016

**The first case of a man using new laws that allow trans people to use the bathroom associated with their gender identity, has been reported in Washington.** 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**The state of Washington has responded to a man who undressed in a women’s locker room with a pretty simple explanation.** 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016

**Chelsea Manning has released her own podcast from prison – in which she opens up about her life, from being the victim of homophobic bullying to her transition.** 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**Campaign launched for teens wanting to express their chosen gender on prom night** 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**Finance company settles trans discrimination case** 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016

**This boy fulfilled his dream of becoming a drag queen – thanks to his supportive mum and a professional make-up artist.** 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Trans children with supportive families have good mental health, according to a study published last month.** 1<sup>st</sup> Mar.2016

**A young girl scout has sold thousands of cookies despite receiving abuse from a neighbour because she is trans. She refused to allow transphobia to stop her helping others.** 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016

**Trans activist Jazz Jennings has said what it is like to date as a transgender 15-year-old.** 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Jennings spoke to Oprah Winfrey that “boys aren’t really accepting” of her, but that she still gets herself out there. She said: “I just go with the flow and see what happens. For the most part boys aren’t really accepting of me because I’m transgender. And therefore not many guys have crushes on me, at least at my school. They think that if they like me they’ll be called gay by their friends because they like another ‘boy’. They don’t see me as a girl.”