



THE GENDER



REVOLUTION



A BIBLICAL, BIOLOGICAL AND
COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE



PATRICIA WEERAKOON
with Robert Smith and Kamal Weerakoon

How can you show love to someone who feels that their gender identity does not match how God made them—especially amid loud social messaging that says compassion and disagreement are incompatible? How do we keep the conversation grounded in reality? How do we lead others away from the harmful desire to transform their body into something it can never truly be? Why would hearing an explanation of God’s design for our bodies and his guidance for sexual expression be good for them, and how could you possibly begin that conversation?

Transgender ideology has quickly become pervasive in our broader culture, and many Christians prefer to avoid issues of sex and gender altogether. But if we’re not prepared in advance to show care and compassion to people questioning their gender identity or declaring a new one, we are unlikely to do it well when the moment arrives (as it inevitably will).

The Gender Revolution provides the biblical basis for a contemporary Christian response to the complicated feelings and experiences of gender dysphoria. Grounded in the latest scientific findings, this much-needed book is the fruit of decades of thorough research, medical practice and pastoral experience from the authors. It offers clear and compelling reasons for why God’s voice matters, and how it can be used to disciple others in truth.

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Contemporary discussion of sexual and gender issues faces a plethora of challenges: the changing meaning of words, the revolution in perceptions of reality, the personal investment that countless millions of people have made in one position or another, the emotional intensity that drapes the chasms that divide us, the increasingly complex legal and social pressures that shape the debate, and much more. That is why this book by Patricia Weerakoon and two associates (one of them her son) is so welcome: here is the clarity of thought and writing one expects of experts. Agree or disagree with their arguments, but you will come away better informed, and better able to engage in the discussion with more light than heat. They may even change your mind!

DA Carson

Emeritus Professor, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL
Theologian-at-large and Co-founder, The Gospel Coalition

This book gives a very clear and accessible explanation of transgender ideology and the confusion it is causing in society. Patricia Weerakoon and her co-authors give us a compelling argument for why we need to oppose this phenomenon if we truly want to love our neighbour, and how we can best care for those in our midst suffering from gender incongruity. They explain what it means to be made male or female in the image of God, and how we can find our true identity in Christ. This book deserves widespread attention, whether you are grappling with your gender identity or seeking to support those who are.

Dr Megan Best

Associate Professor of Bioethics, Institute for Ethics and Society,
The University of Notre Dame Australia
Honorary Associate Professor, Sydney Medical School, Faculty of
Medicine of Health, The University of Sydney
Director of Ethicentre

Throughout history, challenges to Christian belief and practice have inspired thoughtful and capable responses that have become key markers of the progress of the church. They have helped to clarify vital aspects of biblical truth for a new generation. This is such a book. It is written by able scholars with a sincere desire to informatively, sanely, and compassionately help readers to understand what is happening in connection with the gender revolution, and it gives helpful guidelines on how to respond to it. It meets the urgent need.

Ajith Fernando

Teaching Director, Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka

Author, *Discipling in a Multicultural World*

Calvin once complained to Bullinger: “If I simply said it was daytime at high noon, they would begin to doubt it”. Denying the obvious has always been a human failing. When it comes to matters of sexuality and gender, the sad trajectory is, as Kevin DeYoung said, ‘from silence to complexification to capitulation’. Here is a book that avoids all these traps; it is clear, unafraid, simple, biblical, scientific, and helpful—a masterly response to the main issues. Truth and compassion are found on every page. This is a most welcome work.

Peter Barnes

Moderator-General, Presbyterian Church of Australia

What do you get when you combine a sexual-health academic, a theologian, and a pastor? Patricia Weerakoon, Robert Smith and Kamal Weerakoon serve churches well in this book. Together they provide a much-needed voice of reason and compassion as they explore the gender revolution that has taken hold of society. This book is biblical and pastoral, and gives careful consideration to the scientific debates surrounding sex and gender. *The Gender Revolution* is a valuable resource for pastors and church members as we seek to faithfully navigate one of the big issues of our time.

Murray Campbell

Pastor, Mentone Baptist Church, Melbourne

I remember being asked by some worried parents about five years ago whether they needed to consider puberty blockers when their seven-year-old reached 11 or 12. I was completely out of my depth. I wish I'd had this book at hand. It is a fine resource for parents, teachers, youth workers and pastors. The authors speak with an authority based on research and experience. The issues they are dealing with, unimaginable even a decade ago, are of high present significance, and we need to be assured by an approach based on both Scripture and science. I commend it warmly.

Peter Jensen

Anglican Archbishop of Sydney 2001-2013

Author, *The Life of Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*

This book is a valuable resource for navigating the complexities of the transgender phenomenon. The experience and expertise of the authors lay a properly useful foundation for parents, pastoral workers, and children's and youth ministers to not only understand the issue, but also hold forth a coherent biblical vision for human sexuality that is ultimately more compelling and fulfilling. They have managed to concisely articulate transgender ideology and its incoherence, its implications for human sexuality, and its contradictions with human biological science, while at the same time speaking with compassion towards those who suffer with gender dysphoria and those who care for them. There is no naivety about the deeply personal distress and longings faced by individuals and communities that make sexuality and gender the bedrock of identity and belonging—a weight that it is unable to bear.

This book is a much-needed companion for anyone on the long, slow journey of supporting and truthfully loving those who are grappling with the dysphoria of sexual and gender confusion.

Mike Dicker

Principal, Youthworks College, Sydney

This book provides an authoritative and contemporary perspective of the author and the Christian church to pervasive transgender ideology. Written by a well-respected senior sexologist, using objective scientific argument, the book expresses a compassionate, accepting position using “God’s word on sex, gender and identity”. It provides new thinking from a modern church previously considered hostile to the expression of sexual or gender diversity. Whilst the perspectives and ‘truths’ will be challenged by some academics, clinicians and trans people for multifarious reasons, this book offers insight into a more welcoming, comforting, and reformed institution. By sharing perspectives, this book encourages tolerance of difference with informed discussion and debate from several sectors within our continually changing postmodern society.

Professor Kevan Wylie FRCP FECSM

Past President, World Association for Sexual Health

At a time when biology and biblical truth are being upended by ideology, activism and confusion, this book is essential reading for parents, pastors and community leaders as they come to grips with the transgender agenda infiltrating our schools and society in general. The book is seasoned with a perfect balance of truth and grace, pushing back on the harmful ideology and activism but with a pastoral heart towards those caught in the middle of this culture war. *The Gender Revolution* is superbly researched and presented, and will assist the reader in understanding the ideology, the impact (especially on young people), and the appropriate response that protests against the ideology, not the person. I highly recommend it.

Bob McCoskrie

CEO, Family First New Zealand

In this beautifully and clearly written book, Patricia Weerakoon and her co-authors combine rigorous scientific analysis with biblical wisdom to point to the grave dangers inherent in transgender ideology. As the authors point out, this movement demands changes in language so that words mean whatever people want them to mean, promotes changes to bodies with irreversible effects that some will later regret, and seeks to change our society by demanding that the rest of us go along with their beliefs. The costs of the transgender movement will be huge, particularly for women and girls, but also for the vulnerable children and young people of both sexes who get caught up in this cult-like movement. The book ends with wise pastoral advice about how to care for and respond to those who experience gender incongruence. This problem is not going away: we all need to understand the unscientific ideas that have been accepted so uncritically, and by so many people who ought to know better.

Patrick Parkinson AM

Emeritus Professor of Law, University of Queensland

This book could not be more timely. Every week, literally every week, I am hearing heart-rending stories of young people who've been swept up by the gender ideology of this cultural moment and are, therefore, tragically unable to celebrate what it is to be male and female. Wonderfully, here is a short book that gives the biblical and scientific principles that enable a response of clarity, grace and compassion. I will be giving it out to many, both inside and outside the church family.

Rico Tice

Senior Minister (Evangelism), All Souls Langham Place, London
Founder, Christianity Explored Ministries
Author, *Honest Evangelism*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Patricia Weerakoon is a renowned medical doctor, counsellor, sex therapist, speaker, writer and academic. She holds a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Colombo (Sri Lanka), a Master of Science (Biomedical Sciences: Reproductive Health) from the University of Hawaii, and a Master of Health and Personal Education from the University of New South Wales. She retired in 2012 after a long academic career at the University of Sydney. During this time, she served for eight years as the director of an internationally renowned graduate program in sexual health. She has also practised as a sex therapist in both her native Sri Lanka and her adopted home of Australia. Since her retirement from academia, she has written several non-fiction books, including *Teen Sex by the Book* (2013) and *Talking Sex by the Book* (2020). A popular conference speaker, she has also published three novels.

Robert Smith has lectured in theology, ethics and music ministry at Sydney Missionary & Bible College since 2002. His PhD thesis was titled 'Identity and embodiment: An evangelical assessment of transgender theory'. He is the author of *How Should We Think About Gender and Identity?* (2022) and has written and edited numerous articles on a wide range of theological and ethical topics. He has served as a pastor for more than 30 years, and spent 17 years as Assistant Director of Ministry Training & Development for the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. An accomplished musician and songwriter, he has written numerous congregational songs that are sung in churches around the world, and is a producer and director at Emu Music. He is the author of two books on music and Christianity: *Songs of the Saints* (2016) and *Come, Let Us Sing* (2020).

Kamal Weerakoon is Patricia's son. He is currently Missions Director at Gracepoint Presbyterian Church, Sydney. His Master's thesis explored biblical views of sexuality, and he has recently completed a PhD on multiethnic ministry in today's globalized, culturally diverse world. He is an adjunct lecturer at Christ College Presbyterian Theological Centre, Sydney, and a visiting lecturer at Youthworks College in Sydney, the Reformed Theological College in Melbourne, and Morling (Baptist) College in Sydney. He is a long-term member of the NSW Presbyterian Church's Gospel, Society and Culture committee, which seeks to equip the church to respond to trends in contemporary culture.

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The Gender Revolution

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Internet: matthiasmedia.com.au

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To Professor Milton Diamond—‘Mickey’ to those who know and love him. Thank you for inspiring me to venture into the field of sexology when I was a conservative Christian Sri Lankan Tamil woman of 29 years.

—Patricia

To the many courageous same-sex attracted and gender dysphoric brothers and sisters who know the goodness of God and his word, and are faithfully fighting the good fight, despite their feelings and temptations.

—Rob

To the Irish Methodist missionaries who planted Kollupitiya Methodist Church in Sri Lanka, a church which significantly shaped me as a young Christian boy.

—Kamal

“Blessed are those who find wisdom ...
She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her”
(Proverbs 3:13, 18)

Note for readers

At the time of publication, in some jurisdictions (such as the Australian state of Victoria) it can be legally problematic to discuss with someone their sexual orientation or gender identity, even if that person is open to the discussion or requests the discussion. We urge readers to know the legal framework that applies to them and to exercise wisdom and discretion.

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PREFACE: WHY *THIS* BOOK AT *THIS* TIME?

In today's world, deciding to write a book about the 'gender revolution', as we have called it, would seem automatically to mark us out as card-carrying 'culture warriors'. Fair enough. There is a war going on in Western culture, and gender is one of the chief battlefronts.

However, none of us sees ourselves in such terms. We are all followers of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ and believers in his life-giving gospel. If we had our way, we'd be writing a book about Christ, not engaging in the gender debate that has captivated and confused so much of the contemporary West.

So why is this book needed at this time?

Sometimes a particular cultural moment calls not only for clear statements of the truth, but also for a strong rebuttal of false and dangerous ideologies that oppose the truth. This is not only part of loving our neighbours and promoting social good, but also part of the gospel call to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). There are moments, then, when the only way to love others truly is to speak the truth with clarity.

In our judgement, this is such a moment. This is partly because of the aggression and vehemence with which many transgender ideologues argue their position. It is also because this flawed ideology is taking hold of too many hearts and minds. But mostly it is because hurting and vulnerable people, *especially children*, are

being left damaged and scarred (in more ways than one) by this ideology. This is not the moment to be silent or to put our heads in the sand.

In the course of our medical, theological and pastoral work, each of us has spent a great deal of time assessing ‘transgender ideology’ in its various forms, analysing the movement from biblical, biological and ethical perspectives. We have read, watched and listened to the stories of those who have fallen victim to these radical new ideas. As we came together to pool our insights and write this book, we found ourselves in agreement: transgender ideology is not a 21st-century discovery of a truth about gender identity that every prior generation has somehow missed. It is, rather, a false and dangerous error. It comes from a worldview that ignores the truth about God, about humanity, and about science. It therefore needs to be refuted, and a better way needs to be presented.

For this reason, we pray that all readers (Christian or otherwise) will not miss the book’s core message about the love, compassion and hope that are found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. For what transgender ideology falsely promises, only Jesus can truly provide.

It is also important to stress that our protest in this book is not against people; it is against an ideology. This may seem a subtle distinction, given that ideologies are developed and promoted by *people*. But as far as we are able, we have sought to attack ideas, not those who embrace or promote them. Even more to the point, our critique of transgender ideology stems from a desire to protect vulnerable people. We long to promote health and wellbeing among all people, along with clarity of thought and compassion of heart. Our prayer is that our gracious God would use our efforts, imperfect as they no doubt are, to achieve this good end.

1 | A WORLD AWHIRL WITH WORDS

A tool for manipulating reality

Words matter. Words are powerful. Words carry meaning. They shape our understanding of ourselves, our relationships with each other, and our engagement with reality. So, when new words or new combinations of words appear, it signals that something important has happened. Our understandings of ourselves, each other and the world has changed. Philip K Dick, one of the most famous science-fiction writers of the 20th century, said, “The basic tool for the manipulation of reality is the manipulation of words. If you can control the meaning of words, you can control the people who must use them.”¹

The manipulation of words and their meanings has become a fundamental part of transgender ideology—the theory that each person has an innate ‘gender identity’, which may or may not match their biological sex. Furthermore, we are instructed to accept that sex is not binary, that gender is a spectrum, and that gender identity is immutable. There is now a vast array of gender terms that fit under the transgender umbrella. These terms include: ‘non-binary’, meaning not exclusively man or woman; ‘pangender’, meaning a fluid mix of all genders; ‘omnigender’, meaning

1 See his speech ‘How to build a universe that doesn’t fall apart two days later’, given in 1978 and first published in 1985 (urbigenous.net/library/how_to_build.html).

many discrete genders simultaneously; ‘agender’, meaning no gender at all; and ‘xenogender’, meaning that one identifies as non-human. The World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH) has added the term ‘eunuch’ to their 2022 ‘standards of care’ guidelines; the term refers to a biological male who wishes to be castrated.² An online ‘trans language primer’ reveals the extent of the language now brought under the transgender umbrella—not to mention revealing a certain level of confusion—by including terms such as ‘ableism’ (discrimination against people who are disabled), ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’.³ In this environment, people who are transgender—those whose inner sense of gender is not congruent with their body’s biological reality—are situated as oppressed victims. Those whose inner sense of gender is congruent with the biological reality of their body are given the label ‘cisgender’; they are often situated as the oppressors, and are accused of perpetuating ‘cisheteronormativity’.⁴

And then we have the notion of ‘preferred pronouns’—most commonly ‘he/him’ and ‘she/her’—referring to a person’s gender identity (while ‘male’ and ‘female’ refer to biological sex). ‘They/them’ are the most common singular pronouns for those who identify as non-binary, but there are also non-gendered ‘neopronouns’ such as ‘ze/zir’, ‘xe/xem’, ‘ze/zim’, and many other combinations—including ‘kitten/kittenself’ for a non-human kitten identity. Some are now insisting that the word ‘pronouns’ should be used instead of ‘preferred pronouns’, “as the latter implies that ‘gender identity is

2 J Ely, ‘Eunuch is a gender, says prominent pro-trans advocacy group’, *Daily Mail Australia*, 20 September 2022 ([dailymail.co.uk/health/article-11227887/Eunuch-gender-says-prominent-pro-trans-advocacy-group.html](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-11227887/Eunuch-gender-says-prominent-pro-trans-advocacy-group.html)). All websites cited in this book were accessed on 22 January 2023.

3 See The Trans Language Primer, *Full Index*, TLP, n.d. (translanguageprimer.com/full-index).

4 *Cisheteronormativity* combines the ideas of *heteronormativity* (that it is normal to be attracted to the opposite sex) and *cisnormativity* (that it is normal for gender to align with sex). It is regarded as a type of discrimination against people who identify as LGBTQ+.

a choice”.⁵ Andrew Doyle, host of the *Free Speech Nation* podcast and author of the book *The New Puritans*, has said:

Declaring our pronouns has become the most common way in which we are expected to pledge allegiance to the new identity-obsessed religion that has captured most of our major institutions ... When you ask someone to declare pronouns, you are doing one of two things. You are either saying that you are having trouble identifying this person’s sex, or you are saying that you believe in the notion of gender identity and expect others to do the same.⁶

On top of all this, we are seeing the erasure of biology—especially female biology. “Trans women are women”, we are told. And words that were the domain of adult human females are converted to include anyone who self-declares themselves to be a woman. We have phrases such as ‘pregnant person’, ‘menstruator’, ‘uterus owner’ and ‘chestfeeder’. While emphasizing that trans people should be able to live full lives that are “free from discrimination, harassment or violence”, journalist and author Helen Joyce says our society is currently facing “a fundamental redefinition of what it means for *anyone* to be a man or woman—the supplanting of biology and a total rewrite of society’s rules, with far-reaching consequences”.⁷

The aim of transgender ideologues and activists is to create a new normal—a new understanding of ourselves, each other and

5 J Warren, ‘American, grandfather, brave and master: Words Stanford University includes in its index of “harmful language” because they are “ableist, sexist or racist”’, *Daily Mail Australia*, 21 December 2022 (dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11558067/Woke-Stanford-University-publishes-list-harmful-language-want-eliminate.html).

6 A Doyle, ‘The liberal case against pronouns: There’s nothing progressive about compelled speech’, *UnHerd*, 2 March 2022 (unherd.com/2022/03/the-liberal-case-against-pronouns).

7 H Joyce, ‘Why it’s wrong—and profoundly damaging—to make us all agree that someone is whatever gender they say they are’, *Daily Mail Australia*, 5 July 2021 (dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9753017/HELEN-JOYCE-argues-gender-self-identification-lobby-harming-children-women-trans-people.html), emphasis added.

our world based on the severing of sex and gender and by giving ultimate authority to a person's self-declared gender identity. Even more disturbingly, within this new framework there is a desire to make the misuse of these terms punishable: using the wrong pronoun has become the offence of 'misgendering', and using the name given at birth has become the crime of 'deadnaming'. Refusing to accept a 'trans woman' as a 'real' woman results, for many, in online abuse and harassment, and, for some, loss of career, relationships and social status.

Words, reality and transgender ideology

Words matter. They matter because God uses them to describe himself, us, the relationship between himself and us, and the ways we humans relate to each other. Jesus is famously God's 'Word' incarnate (John 1:1, 14). That means the word 'word' is adequate to describe God himself! God describes his act of creating the whole universe as an act of speech: he spoke, and it happened (Genesis 1). We live in a word-shaped world. The Bible is divine communication, which is why it is called "the word of God" (Heb 4:12; see also 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21). And we relate to each other as humans, for good or ill, through words. James speaks of the power of words when he says, "with the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness" (Jas 3:9).

Words are powerful and important. God created the world, and humans as his image bearers, in such a way that the words we use both describe reality and also shape our engagement with reality. And that's what makes transgender ideology both tragic and, frankly, dangerous. Transgender ideology hijacks language to create a pseudo-vocabulary of words and phrases that are not grounded in reality. They come from the illusory inner world of individual feelings and desires. Proponents of transgender ideology call this

inner world their ‘authentic self’, ‘the real me’ or even their ‘inner essence’. They insist that this neo-terminology represents an unassailable truth and must be accepted and practiced by everyone. It would be one thing if such ideas were able to be discussed, debated and contradicted in the public sphere. But in far too many cases, they’re not. Transgender ideologues commonly censor, oppress and threaten those who disagree with their view of reality. Those who stand for objective truth are slandered as being cruel, hateful bigots who deny trans people their existence and so have no right to express their opinion. Transgender activists frequently try to ‘cancel’ or prosecute those who disagree with them.

This is a tragedy, because reality cannot finally be ignored. You may honestly believe that you are a bird (known as ‘xenogender’), but please don’t leap off a 20th-floor balcony! Real birds have bones, muscles, wings and feathers that permit their bodies to do things our human bodies simply can’t do. The reality of gravity will impose itself on your beliefs very quickly. The same is true of transgender identities. A man may genuinely believe he is a woman, but he will never be able to menstruate or fall pregnant.

Transgender ideology is a new, quasi-religious view of humanity and the world. But because it is a false view, it has profoundly destructive consequences. It tragically blinds people to the wonderful realities of their bodies, encourages them to believe myths about themselves, and, perhaps worst of all, leads to the persecution of anyone who dares to love others enough to speak the truth. It is therefore not good for anyone—least of all for those who genuinely experience a disconnect between their body and their internal sense of self. Transgender ideology destroys individuals, families and societies.

It’s important to realize, however, that the transgender community is not uniform. Not everybody who sits under the transgender umbrella is an activist or an ideologue. Many adult transgender people accept that they are biologically their birth sex and do not

participate in activism. In 1980, I (Patricia) spent time working with Milton Diamond, one of the world's best-known gender researchers, at his clinic in Honolulu. Most people that we saw in the clinic were adult men—known at the time as transsexuals. These men accepted their biological sex as male, but wished to have medication and surgery to look like and live life as females. Based on everything I witnessed at the time, I can confidently say that these men would have been horrified at the extreme behaviour of current transgender ideologues.

What's more, the internal experience of being transgender is not uniform. Not all transgender people are distressed by the disjunction between their feelings and the reality of their body. When people do experience distress, this condition is called *gender dysphoria*. We readily acknowledge that the distress felt in gender dysphoria is real. But part of the danger and tragedy of transgender ideology is that it misleads vulnerable, hurting people by indoctrinating them to ignore the significance of the biological reality of their body. It gives people who experience gender dysphoria a false hope. It tells them that their body is malleable—like plastic, like putty, which can be shaped according to our internal desires. And then, when people discover that changing their body has solved nothing—in fact, it often increases their pain⁸—the transgender community throws them out. Transgender ideologues consider those who experience 'gender change regret' and therefore seek to 'detransition'—to change back, as best they can, to their original gender—to have never been 'truly trans'. They are regarded as unworthy of being part of, or supported by, the transgender community. And so, having deceived vulnerable people who experience gender dysphoria, transgender ideologues refuse to support those who discover the deception.

8 See, for example, A Van Mol, MK Laidlaw, M Grossman and P McHugh, 'Correction: Transgender surgery provides no mental health benefit', *Public Discourse*, 13 September 2020 (thepublicdiscourse.com/2020/09/71296).

The purpose of this book and the ‘gender tree’

This book will help you understand the complex and seemingly ever-changing belief system of transgender ideology. It will introduce you to current research and will explore how this research compares with God’s word on sex, gender and identity. This information will enable you to respond with clarity, grace and compassion towards those who struggle with their gender identity, while also giving you the skills and insights to critique the transgender ideology pervading our culture and our schools.

In parts of the book, we use the analogy of a tree to describe a model that features four distinct elements:

- biological sex
- gendered behaviours or expressions
- sexual orientation
- gender identity.

We will discuss each of these aspects of the model from scientific, psychological, sociological and theological viewpoints. At certain points, the discussion will become quite scientifically detailed. This is both good and necessary, for a robustly scientific approach is largely being lost in the face of transgender ideology. While the Bible takes centre stage in our discussion, it is also important that we look carefully at what science teaches us—and has been teaching us for many years.

But why the analogy of a tree?

We live in Australia, a nation that is home to more than 900 species of eucalyptus, also called the gum tree. Each species, from the gnarled snow gum to the mighty mountain ash, has its own distinctive appearance. Within each species, each tree has its own unique beauty. The bark, branches, leaves, gumnuts and flowers hold together in harmony—a harmony which simultaneously identifies the species that a particular tree belongs to and displays the unique beauty of that tree.

Of course, the beauty which we can see wouldn't exist if it were not for the parts of the tree we can't see—the root system, dug down deep in the soil, which nurtures and supports what we see above the ground.

That's why the tree is an effective picture of human sexuality: just as there are different parts of a tree, there are different elements to our sexuality.

The first element of this model is the biology of our body, which is either male or female. We call this *biological sex*. It is discerned objectively through the techniques of normal scientific medicine. (When a person's biological sex does not fit into the normal binary pattern, it's called a disorder of sex development—we'll discuss this below.)

We use our body to do things in particular ways as male or female. We often refer to these behaviours as masculine or feminine ways of acting, thinking and responding. These are called *gendered behaviours or expressions*, and they can be observed through the social sciences. This is the second element of our model. The third element, *sexual orientation*—whom you desire romantically, or whom you wish to be sexually intimate with—is an internal feeling which can be measured in the laboratory based on sexual arousal patterns and evaluated by observation and interviews. But the fourth element, *gender identity*—which gender you feel you are—is determined solely by internalized feelings and desires. It is subjective and self-declared, and cannot be measured.

But underlying and supporting all this is what happens in the womb before you are born—the time from conception to birth. This process has been observed and documented in precise detail through the techniques of medical science. And what science observes makes Christians recall King David's famous words: we are "fearfully and wonderfully made", and we marvel at the way the Lord "knit [us] together in [our] mother's womb" (Ps 139:13-14).

As we will see when we examine our model in more detail, transgender ideology cuts the branches off the tree trunk. It

disconnects behaviour, orientation and identity from the reality of our bodily biology. It then chops off the tree trunk at the roots by ignoring the way that our development in the womb directs and influences that embodied reality. Finally, it throws all these broken-up bits of sex and gender into a woodchipper to turn it into unrecognizable mush. It places three of the elements—*biological sex*, *gendered behaviour* and *sexual orientation*—under the umbrella of the fourth element, *gender identity*. In so doing, it ignores the important differences between the four elements, causing confusion instead of clarity. It introduces the notions of sexual and gender liquidity— notions which have become popular in our time, but which are deeply and tragically destructive.

But there is hope. There is light at the end of this dark tunnel. As we will show, contemporary science is demonstrating the truth of a traditional understanding around the differences between sex, behaviour, orientation and identity. Much more importantly, we will see how the Christian concept of objective reality—of our created, embodied biology—harmonizes with the rest of our self. We will see how the Christian worldview offers clarity and comfort in the face of confusion. We will see how the Christian gospel offers light and hope to those who are trapped in darkness.

Who is this book for?

If you are a Christian pastor or teacher, we hope you will be able to integrate the scientific and cultural information discussed in this book into your preaching and teaching on the biblical view of sex and gender (and on God's good plan for sexuality in general).

For all Christians, we expect that understanding the contemporary issues surrounding sex, gender and identity will:

- encourage you to conduct yourself sexually in accordance with a Christian worldview and a biblical understanding of what it means to be a man or a woman

- ensure that you do not ‘deconstruct’ your faith by believing in the current cultural fads of gender fluidity and radical autonomy, but that instead you continue to trust the truth and goodness of God’s word
- help you to avoid being intimidated, silenced and demoralized by pressure from activists, lobby groups and others in society who are seeking to aggressively impose transgender ideology on everyone
- enable you to treat with love and compassion those who truly struggle with gender dysphoria and other similar concerns
- give you the concepts, language and confidence to speak the truth with a godly blend of boldness and love
- equip you to show others the goodness and rightness of the biblical, Christian view of human sexuality
- enable you to teach children of the goodness of God’s plan for sex and gender so that they can withstand the transgender ideology of our current cultural moment
- renew your confidence in the goodness of Jesus Christ, so that you continue to worship and live for him.

Although this book is written for the purpose of helping Bible-believing Christians, it is possible that it might also end up in the hands of someone who wouldn’t include themselves in that category. If that’s you, we don’t expect you to agree with everything in this book. Some of what we say may surprise or even annoy you. But if you decide to read on (and we hope you will), please do so with an open mind, because we hope this book will:

- show you how the traditional Christian view of gender and sexuality motivates Christians to be compassionate towards those whose experience of gender and sexuality does not fit the traditional binary pattern
- help you understand that this compassion motivates Christians to actively oppose all forms of oppression and bullying

- encourage you to critically re-evaluate the current cultural fads of gender fluidity and radically autonomous self-constructed views of sexuality
- persuade you of the goodness of the biblical, Christian view of gender and sexuality
- show you the goodness of Jesus Christ, and invite you to put your trust in him as Lord and God.

What's in this book?

The following chapter provides a broad analysis of how we reached this cultural moment: what characterizes the modern Western world's attitudes to authority and identity, how did we get here, and how does this worldview differ from a Christian worldview? From there, we move into a discussion of the biblical, Christian view of the body. We will introduce our analogy of a tree to describe four elements of sex and gender: biological sex, gendered behaviour, sexual orientation and gender identity. We will see how the biblical view of binary sexuality integrates these four aspects of sex and gender, and how it harmonizes them by recognizing the ways in which the two sexes, male and female, complement each other—especially in sexual activity between one man and one woman in marriage. This binary, harmonious view of sexuality leads to personal and communal peace and harmony—within our physical and psychological selves, our families, and society in general. We will contrast that peace and harmony with the conflict and distress which transgender ideology causes.

We will then present an integrated discussion of the biological, scientific, social and biblical views of those four aspects of sex and gender. The final chapter of the book offers a framework for a Christian response to people whose sex, sexuality and identity does not fit this traditional cis-hetero-binary pattern. It will

demonstrate how the traditional Christian view motivates care and compassion as we wait in hope for the day of resurrection, when all forms of disorder and distress will be banished forever. We will examine how genuine hope can be found by discovering our true identity in Jesus Christ, and by recovering confidence in the goodness of the biblical pattern of binary sex and gender.