

# EFCC Position Paper on Transsexualism

The aim of this statement is to clarify the biblical, theological, and pastoral approach to transsexualism. The statement emphasises that all humans, regardless of their sexuality, are made in the image of God with innate worth and dignity, that we have all sinned, and that human sin is expressed in many ways including transsexualism. A transsexual person must not be treated differently, or placed in a different category, and such a person's principal need is for the Gospel of Christ. This position paper, based with permission on a policy document written by Stephen Clark, is designed to be read against the background of the EFCC basis of faith.

## Definitions used in this Document

1. Transsexualism denotes the situation where someone who is biologically male or female lives, or wishes to live, as someone of the opposite sex, regardless of whether they have undergone a surgical procedure to 'reassign' their gender. Biologically male denotes someone who has XY chromosomes and corresponding genital anatomy; biologically female denotes someone who has XX chromosomes and corresponding genital anatomy.
2. Intersex, as distinct from transsexualism includes a range of conditions where the chromosomes in the individual's cells are not simply XY or XX, or where, having XY or XX chromosomes, the individual is born with ambiguity with respect to their internal and external genitalia.

## Biblical Principles

1. All human beings are made in the image and likeness of God and are therefore possessed of inherent and innate worth and dignity. It is God's will that we treat fellow humans according to this principle.
2. All human beings have fallen short of God's glory and are sinners. This does not eradicate the image of God nor take away our innate worth and dignity; it does mean that we all fall short of God's ideal.
3. Prior to sin entering humanity, God made humans to be male and female. Therefore, in addition to the equality we all share in terms of our dignity and depravity, there is also a diversity. The Bible indicates that the anatomical and physiological differences which distinguish male from female give rise to divinely ordained differences of function within the family and the church.
4. Human sin brought death to humanity as a divine judgment. Furthermore, God pronounced a curse upon the earth, so that frustration is a characteristic of human existence in the world.

5. The presence of sin in humanity is expressed in many ways and in different aspects of human experience. One area where sin is expressed is in sexual behaviour. The divine ideal is that sexual relations be practised between man as male and woman as female within monogamous marriage. The practice, both mental and physical, of sexual behaviour – between male and female outside of monogamous marriage, or between male and male or female and female is contrary to the divine ideal.
6. Transsexualism, as distinct from intersex, involves an element of sin on the part of the transsexual person. This in no way puts the person, before God, into a different category from any other sinful person – which is what we all are. This means that a transsexual person is to be treated in the same way as any other person: that is to say, as a human being in God's image and possessed of inherent worth and dignity, and as a sinful person who has fallen short of the divine ideal. In this sense, the transsexual person is no different from the heterosexual person who sins by being materialistic or dishonest or sexually promiscuous, etc. This having been said, different patterns of sinful behaviour sometimes demand that we respond to different people in different ways. In this way, we treat a person as possessed of dignity without denying the particular pattern of sinful behaviour which they exhibit. For example, to supply alcohol to a person with an alcohol abuse problem is to fail to express true compassion and care for that person and evidences a failure to appreciate their dignity as God's image bearer. Both biological and environmental factors contribute to an individual's behaviour. This is part of the reality of the divine judgement upon humanity and the divine curse upon the earth.
7. God has provided in His Son Jesus Christ the only and perfect Saviour from sin. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners – and this means sinners of every type and class and condition. The person who practises a transsexual lifestyle is, at this point, no different from any other sinful human. Just as Western society is accepting of materialism, but this is condemned in the Bible and categorised as sinful; so the fact that Western society endorses transsexualism does not alter the fact that these lifestyles are condemned in the Bible and categorised as sinful.
8. The church must make clear to all people the message of salvation: this demands that Christians accept that they are sinners who have been saved by Christ; it equally means that we fail our fellow humans if we do not identify as sinful and as less than God's ideal that which the Bible classifies as sinful and less than God's ideal. If people's sinful behaviour is endorsed and affirmed rather than categorised as sin of which they need to repent and from which they need to be saved, then we fail to show true care and compassion for our fellow humans and deny them the message of salvation.

9. People who practise a transsexual life-style have the same basic human needs as any other humans and should be able to satisfy those needs. Therefore such people should not be discriminated against in areas such as housing provision, being served in shops, restaurants, etc. Classifying such behaviour as sinful does not and must not justify discrimination against people who practise such behaviour. Nondiscrimination, however, does not entail the proposition that one is obliged to do that which effectively endorses transsexualism, or the sinful lifestyle of any person. Non-discrimination in the area of employment or voluntary work does not entail that a church allow a transsexual life-style to be practised by a church member or be taught within the church either by example, by modelling such a lifestyle, or by teaching that such a lifestyle is permissible before God or is biblically permissible.
10. Jesus Christ has commissioned His church to make disciples of all kinds of people. This means that it is biblically mandatory to make the gospel known to transsexual people. Such people who arrive at the church building should be welcomed and received in the same way in which any other person is welcomed and received. We want them to meet Christian people and to hear the gospel. It is also surely right and proper to invite such people into our homes for meals and to be friendly towards them.
11. How Christians are to relate to transsexual people before they come to faith in Christ involves a certain tension and may well be an area where the individual consciences of Christians will vary from each other. For example, a man who wishes to be identified as a woman and to be called by a woman's name and identified by the female pronoun 'she' is expressing something which is contrary to God's will. However, it may not be sinful to address such a person in accordance with this request. One Christian may feel that to accede to such a request is effectively to endorse and affirm such sinful behaviour; another Christian may believe that it is permissible to do so. For example, a Christian who provides an ash tray for a chain smoker in his home is not necessarily approving of that person's abuse of the body, he is simply acknowledging that a state of affairs exists and is responding in the light of it. Should the chain smoker come to faith, the believer may then use every means to encourage the individual to break from their habit. Another Christian may feel that to provide an ash tray is effectively endorsing that individual's habit. We must allow for differences of conscience.

In general, we are to deal with people where they are at, all the while urging upon them repentance and faith in Christ. In other words, we must not think that a woman presenting as a man or vice versa is the thing which we need immediately to identify as that of which the individual needs to repent; neither, however, should it be treated as 'the elephant in the room', the obvious thing which one dare not mention. Wisdom and sensitivity must go hand-in-hand with biblical convictions.

12. Faith in Christ and Christian conversion demand a change of lifestyle. This means that the transsexual person should live in the light of his or her genetic, anatomical and physiological gender. Christian care and compassion are to be exercised in a way that helps and encourages a transsexual person to identify their transsexual behaviour as sin that is incompatible with confession of faith in Christ, just as heterosexual sin is similarly incompatible with confession of faith in Christ.
13. Christian conversion may not necessarily turn a transsexual person or a homosexual person into someone who experiences heterosexual attraction. Such Christians are to be encouraged and urged to live celibate lives. While temptation to engage in transsexual behaviour or homosexual activity is not sin, entertaining the desire to do such is sin. In this respect the Christian converted from transsexualism or homosexuality is no different from someone converted from a heterosexually promiscuous lifestyle.
14. It is an essential element of the doctrine of the humanity of Christ that, as to His human nature, He had a biological gender. Although He was completely sinless and never yielded, to any temptation, the Bible teaches that He was tempted in all ways as we are yet remained without sin. In His case the temptations always arose externally. It remains the case, however, that since He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, He must have been tempted sexually. This glorious truth should encourage sorely tempted Christians. The believer can confess any sin to Christ, however disgusting or degrading that sin may be. Moreover, the believer who is tempted may ask Christ for grace and may rest assured that He will be met and heard by one who will sympathise because Jesus was also tempted.
15. Where someone has undergone surgical gender re-assignment and may even have married someone of their same genetically determined biological sex and is subsequently converted, considerable pastoral issues will then have to be addressed.

This document was adopted as a Position Paper of the EFCC at the Annual General Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021.