

# Keeping it Classical: A Christian Response to LGBTQ+ Ideology

Mike Dellaperute

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## Introduction

In a 2011 Barna research article entitled “Six Reasons Young Christians Leave the Church,”<sup>2</sup> the authors identify reason three as, “Churches come across as antagonistic to science.”<sup>3</sup> Four years later, Sarah Kropp Brown, writing on behalf of the National Association of Evangelicals, confirmed these findings when she observed, “Evangelicals are more than twice as likely as the general public (29 percent vs. 14 percent) to say that science and religion are in conflict and that they are on the side of religion.”<sup>4</sup> The anti-science bias of evangelical Christians when addressing cultural issues coincides with the rise in popularity of presuppositional apologetics,<sup>5</sup> defined by Boa and Bowman as grounding “reason and fact on the truth of the Christian faith, rather than trying to prove or defend the faith on

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Mike Dellaperute, is a Ph.D. candidate at Baptist Bible Seminary and author of the book *The Danger of Puberty Suppression*. He is the Lead Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Little Egg Harbor, NJ. Mike can be reached at colossians1@comcast.net.

<sup>2</sup> “Six Reasons Young Christians Leave Church,” *Barna Group*, September 27, 2011, <https://www.barna.com/research/six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Kropp Brown, “Are Evangelicals Anti-Science?” *National Association of Evangelicals*, July 14, 2016, <https://www.nae.net/evangelicals-anti-science/>.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 221.

the basis of reason or fact.”<sup>6</sup> The tendency to dismiss evidence from science or reason when it appears to conflict with Scripture or personal experience has resulted in a clichéd response to cultural issues, summarized by retired American Baptist minister and *USA Today* columnist Oliver Thomas, “The Bible says it ... that settles it.”<sup>7</sup> However, like many of his contemporaries, with regard to LGBTQ+ ideology Thomas is quick to add, “The church got it wrong.”<sup>8</sup> To substantiate his support of LGBTQ+ behavior, Thomas attempts to demonstrate how both science and reason “contradict Scripture.”<sup>9</sup> If dispensationalists discount science and reason when addressing Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) issues in the culture, the result will be a loss of credibility both with the next generation of believers who already look to the church with skepticism and with the remainder of the culture who embraces LGBTQ+ ideology.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate the value of a classical approach to apologetics when addressing SOGI issues in the culture. Boa and Bowman define classical apologetics as “logically coherent and supportable by sound arguments.”<sup>10</sup> This two-step method for defending the faith begins with science, reason, philosophy, or facts in step one and leads to a literal understanding of Scripture in step two.<sup>11</sup> Due to the prevalence of SOGI issues in the culture, this article will interact with a wide range of media sources, both popular and scholarly, in order to expose, analyze, and respond to the conflicting assertions of

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 35. It is not the intent of this author to cast a presuppositional approach to apologetics as a whole in a negative light, but rather to demonstrate that, when addressing SOGI issues in the culture at large, a classical approach is beneficial.

<sup>7</sup> Oliver Thomas, “American Churches Must Reject Literalism and Admit We Got It Wrong on Gay People,” *USA Today*, April 29, 2019, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/04/29/american-church-admit-wrong-gays-lesbians-lgbtq-column/3559756002/>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Boa and Bowman, *Faith*, 49. Here a presuppositional epistemology should be distinguished from presuppositional apologetics.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 34. A literal approach to Scripture being one of Ryrie’s three sine qua nons of dispensationalism.

LGBTQ+ advocates. The intent of this article is not to attack individuals, but rather to challenge the ideas used to justify LGBTQ+ ideology through the evaluation of seven case studies. Although this paper will primarily focus on contradictions produced by transgender ideology,<sup>12</sup> due to the phenomenon of intersectionality, the entire LGBTQ+ spectrum will be examined in order to demonstrate the scientific, logical, and philosophical inconsistencies within a comprehensive LGBTQ+ system. Rather than pitting biblical teachings on marriage and human sexuality against LGBTQ+ ideology, this paper will set the contradictory and incoherent assertions of LGBTQ+ advocates against one another in a manner similar to the Paul's appeal to the Pharisees and Sadducees (Acts 23:6–7). Only then will these inconsistencies be contrasted with the consistent and coherent nature of a biblical worldview in order to illustrate the reasonableness of the Christian faith.

In conclusion, this article will demonstrate how dispensationalists who intend to address SOGI issues in the culture will realize four distinct benefits by initially appealing to general revelation and common grace in order to expose the fallacies of LGBTQ+ ideology. First, a classical approach will encourage believers to remain informed and active in the culture. Second, a classical approach will help Christians gain confidence when defending a biblical position. Third, this approach will enable evangelicals to gain a hearing in a culture that is growing increasingly hostile toward Christianity. Finally, a classical approach will address the anti-science concerns of young believers. Sole reliance on a presuppositional apologetic when interacting with SOGI issues will likely lead to the fulfillment of the prophetic words of *Time Magazine's* Mary Eberstadt:

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<sup>12</sup> "GLAAD Media Reference Guide--Transgender," *GLAAD*, December 7, 2019, <https://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>. The acronym GLAAD stands for Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. This organization embraces and promotes LGBTQ+ ideology in the culture. Every effort has been made to follow the preferred terminology listed in GLAAD's media reference guide except when said terminology conflicts with science or Scripture, as in the term biology.

“Regular Christians are no longer welcome in American culture.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Case 1: The Intersection of Transgender Ideology and Biology**

In 2015, an NBC News headline read, “Malisa’s Story: Growing up Transgender and a Grandfather’s Pride.”<sup>14</sup> The story begins by explaining how a prenatal ultrasound revealed that Malisa Philips was as a biological male. However, from a young age, Malisa chose to identify as female. Malisa’s tendency to embrace feminine stereotypes, such as dressing and acting like a princess, is the primary evidence used to substantiate Malisa’s gender-nonconformity. Next, Malisa’s parents point to a transformative moment of self-realization that occurred at the age of six when Malisa donned a wig for the first time. Malisa’s parents were then advised to affirm their child’s gender identity by allowing Malisa to begin to transition from male to transgender female. Finally, by the age of eight, and with the support of family, teachers, therapists, and pediatric endocrinologists, Malisa formally began gender transition.

The gender transition process for children like Malisa can be classified into three stages. Stage one involves social transition. In this stage, the child is encouraged to dress and act in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) *Standards of Care*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., defines gender identity as “a person’s

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<sup>13</sup> Mary Eberstadt, “Regular Christians Are No Longer Welcome In American Culture,” *Time*, June 29, 2016, <https://time.com/4385755/faith-in-america/>.

<sup>14</sup> “Malisa’s Story: Growing up Transgender and a Grandfather’s Pride,” NBCNews.com, *NBCUniversal News Group*, May 2, 2019, <http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/malisa-s-story--growing-up-transgender-and-a-grandfather-s-pride-432490051892>. The grandfather referenced in this news article is Representative Mike Honda, a former congressman from California and DNC vice chair. Honda became the subject of an ethics investigation that questioned his use of taxpayer funds in 2015. Honda subsequently lost his seat in 2016 after eight terms in office. The article, dated April 2015, coincides with the investigation conducted by the US House Ethics Committee.

intrinsic sense of being male (a boy or a man), female (a girl or woman), or an alternate gender (e.g., boygirl, girlboy, transgender, genderqueer, eunuch).”<sup>15</sup> The behaviors associated with social transition include name change, participation in cross-sex activities, and preferred restroom access. After an indeterminate time in stage one,<sup>16</sup> children pursuing gender transition proceed to the chemical stage. This second stage of transition consists of two distinct phases for children like Malisa. Phase one of chemical transition involves the administration of puberty suppressors in order to prevent the undesired physical changes associated with adolescence. Phase two involves cross-sex hormone therapy in order to produce the desired physical characteristics that are surgically enhanced in stage three. Both chemical phases in stage two of gender transition yield permanent results coupled with an array of side effects. Stage three entails surgical transition. Surgical transition involves a myriad of procedures that are also considered irreversible.<sup>17</sup> Due to the graphic, costly, painful, and largely ineffective nature of these surgeries, GLAAD’s Media Reference Guide advises,

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<sup>15</sup> World Professional Association for Transgender Health, *Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Non-conforming People*, Version 7 (2011), 96, [https://www.wpath.org/media/cms/Documents/SOC%20v7/Standards%20of%20Care%20V7%20-%202011%20WPATH.pdf?\\_t=1605186324](https://www.wpath.org/media/cms/Documents/SOC%20v7/Standards%20of%20Care%20V7%20-%202011%20WPATH.pdf?_t=1605186324). On their website, WPATH.org, WPATH self-identifies as an “Interdisciplinary professional and educational organization devoted to transgender health.” The claims of evidence-based medicine by an organization that embraces LGBTQ+ ideology has resulted in WPATH becoming the industry standard for gender affirmation treatment of transgender children and adults. Many of the WPATH contributors stand to gain financially from the growing number of gender transitions.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. WPATH maintains that children must remain in stage one of gender transition for an extended period of time in order to receive counseling and resolve all comorbid factors. In practice, however, due to the rise of a new condition referred to as, “Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria” (ROGD), children as young as Malisa are now proceeding to stage two after a single visit to a gender clinic.

<sup>17</sup> For a more detailed account of social, chemical, and surgical transition, see my article “The Church and the Transgender Issue,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 20, no.1 (Spring 2016): 76–122.

“Journalists should avoid overemphasizing the role of surgeries in the transition process.”<sup>18</sup>

When NBC News first posted Malisa’s story, Malisa was about to enter puberty. Due to inherent biological factors, if Malisa’s parents did not intervene, then Malisa would begin to develop undesired masculine features. However, Malisa’s family learned that they could provide their child with puberty suppressors. This initial phase of chemical intervention allows children like Malisa to remain as androgynous as possible until estrogen therapy and a series of complicated surgeries can provide a more convincing visible transition from male to transgender female. Malisa’s story illustrates the dominance of the ethical principle of autonomy in contemporary culture.<sup>19</sup> By appealing to autonomy at a young age, children like Malisa are permitted both to self-diagnose and to dictate their preferred course of treatment. Under LGBTQ+ gender affirmation guidelines, the role of medical and psychological experts is primarily to guide children like Malisa through gender transition. Due to the uncontested supremacy of autonomy in contemporary culture, LGBTQ+ advocates deem it unethical to deny a childlike Malisa full access to gender transition.

The primary rationale used to support Malisa’s transition from male to transgender female is derived from the prevailing presupposition that gender is assigned at birth. This is the premise behind the burgeoning term “natal gender.” Implicit in the term natal gender is the belief that gender is a social construct. Some proponents of LGBTQ+ ideology, such as GLAAD, promote the concept of a fluid and artificial gender spectrum by making a sharp distinction between sex and gender. Sex, according to GLAAD, is, “The classification of a person as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy.”<sup>20</sup> Gender, on the

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<sup>18</sup> GLAAD Media Reference Guide.

<sup>19</sup> Tom Beauchamp and James Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford U P, 2013), 101. Beauchamp and Childress define autonomy as “self-rule that is free from both controlling interference by others and limitations that prevent meaningful choice.”

<sup>20</sup> GLAAD Media Reference Guide.

other hand, is understood as a “deeply held sense”<sup>21</sup> of being male, female, both, or neither.

Not all LGBTQ+ advocates are willing to exclude biology from the gender conversation. Homosexual apologist and NY Magazine author Andrew Sullivan represents an element within the LGBTQ+ system who is challenging the prevailing transgender narrative on the basis of biology. In his article, “The Nature of Sex.”<sup>22</sup> Sullivan observes, “Abolishing clear biological distinctions between men and women is actually a threat to lesbian identity and even existence because it calls into question who is actually a woman.”<sup>23</sup> Sullivan further argues that approaching gender as a social construct, “Undermines the fundamental legal groundwork for recognizing and combating sex-based oppression and sex discrimination against women and girls.”<sup>24</sup> Sullivan insightfully warns of the brewing internal conflict within the LGBTQ+ system:

If you abandon biology in the matter of sex and gender altogether, you may help trans people live fuller, less conflicted lives; but you also undermine the very meaning of homosexuality. If you follow the current ideology of gender as entirely fluid, you actually subvert and undermine core arguments in defense of gay rights ... Contemporary transgender ideology is not a complement to gay rights; in some ways it is in active opposition to them.<sup>25</sup>

Sullivan’s appeal to biology is borrowed from a biblical understanding of a fixed gender binary of male and female (Gen 1:27). This appeal to a naturally occurring and observable gender binary exposes what Sullivan later admits to be “internal tensions and even outright contradictions”<sup>26</sup> in LGBTQ+ ideology. For if LGBTQ+ advocates continue to exclude biology from the gender

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Sullivan, “The Nature of Sex,” *Intelligencer*, February 1, 2019, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/02/andrew-sullivan-the-nature-of-sex.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

conversation, then gender dysphoric children like Malisa will be granted additional autonomous rights. However, as Sullivan also notes, these rights will likely come at the expense of women and others who identify as LGBTQ+.

Evidence of Sullivan's unheeded warning concerning the danger of disregarding biology is presently reverberating throughout the culture. Michael Levenson and Neil Vigdor of the *NY Times* report on a lawsuit filed by three biological females who challenged the rights of transgender athletes to identify and compete as females.<sup>27</sup> Ryan Mayer of CBS News explains that by abandoning biology in matters of sex and gender, Connecticut's Interscholastic Athletic Conference permitted transgender athletes to participate as females, resulting in two male-to-female transgender teens "dominating the competition at Connecticut's girls track and field state competitions."<sup>28</sup> The dominance of these transgender athletes came, as Sullivan predicted, at the expense of biological female competitors. If, as GLAAD insists, LGBTQ+ ideology is permitted to continue on its current trajectory, more female athletes, scholars, actresses, coaches, professors, and executives can expect to experience similar setbacks for the sake of transgender rights. However if, as Sullivan suggests, the LGBTQ+ community "abandons the faddish notion that sex is socially constructed or entirely in the brain, that sex and gender are unconnected, that biology is irrelevant,"<sup>29</sup> then children like Malisa and the Connecticut transgender athletes will be forced to sacrifice their rights for the sake of feminists, lesbians, and gays. This quandary poses a serious internal conflict with potentially devastating implications for LGBTQ+ advocates at the intersection of gender as either biology or social construct.

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Levenson and Neil Vigdor, "Inclusion of Transgender Student Athletes Violates Title IX, Trump Administration Says," *The New York Times*, May 29, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/29/us/connecticut-transgender-student-athletes.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Ryan Mayer, "Transgender Track Athletes Win CT State Championship, Debate Ensues," *CBS New York*, June 13, 2018, <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2018/06/13/transgender-track-athletes-win-connecticut-state-championship-debate-ensues/>.

<sup>29</sup> Sullivan, "Nature of Sex."

For many who embrace LGBTQ+ ideology like Levenson and Vigdor, denying the autonomous rights of transgender people like Malisa or the Connecticut athletes constitutes discrimination.<sup>30</sup> This accusation has produced a growing schism in the LGBTQ+ system. Valerie Richardson of the *Washington Times* explains how these internal inconsistencies have forced lesbian advocates to turn against transgender advocates, as in the case of former outspoken lesbian and tennis great Martina Navratilova. Navratilova was “stripped of her Athlete Ally Ambassador title ... for calling it ‘cheating’ to allow transgender females to participate in women’s sports.”<sup>31</sup> As Sullivan observes, these two competing ideologies cannot coexist in the same comprehensive system without contradiction and, ultimately, conflict. This growing tension over the relationship between biology and gender within the LGBTQ+ community threatens to undermine the entire system, as evidenced in the case of J. K. Rowling.

### **Case 2: J. K. Rowling’s TERF**

Although she is best known as the mastermind behind the Harry Potter series, J. K. Rowling is also a self-ascribed liberal feminist and social activist who attempted to gain approval from LGBTQ+ advocacy groups by retroactively labeling one of the central characters in her fictional series as gay in 2007.<sup>32</sup> Recently, however, Rowling has garnered only angst from LGBTQ+ proponents for making Navratilova-esque comments that transgender journalist Grace Robertson of *Vanity Fair*

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<sup>30</sup> Levenson and Vigdor, “Inclusion of Transgender Student Athletes.”

<sup>31</sup> Valerie Richardson, “Martina Navratilova Slammed for Calling Out Transgender ‘Cheating’ in Women’s Sports,” *AP News*, February 20, 2019, <https://apnews.com/979971281249864b6ba3ed469e2fbb84>.

<sup>32</sup> Kim Renfro, “Why Devoted ‘Harry Potter’ Fans Feel Betrayed by J. K. Rowling and the ‘Fantastic Beasts’ Franchise,” *Insider*, February 2, 2018, <https://www.insider.com/fantastic-beasts-jk-rowling-dumbledore-lgbt-backlash-2018-2>. Rowling’s decision to retroactively assign an LGBTQ+ identity to one of her characters reflects a growing trend in popular media. Other recent retroactive assignments include Lando Calrissian of the *Star Wars* series being labeled “Pansexual” in *Solo* and *Beauty and the Beast*’s LeFou being labeled gay in recent adaptations.

describes as “Feminist Transphobia.”<sup>33</sup> *USA Today*’s Charles Trepany reports that Rowling was criticized for coming to the aid of Maya Forstater, a cisgender female who was fired from a research facility for her controversial statement: “My belief ... is that sex is a biological fact and is immutable. There are two sexes. Men are male. Women are female. It is impossible to change sex. These were until very recently understood as basic facts of life.”<sup>34</sup> By defending Forstater’s appeal to biology, Rowling became the subject of a public-shaming and virtue-signaling campaign that further confirmed Sullivan’s suspicions by pitting LGBTQ+ advocate against LGBTQ+ advocate. In the wake of Rowling’s comments, GLAAD’s head of talent Anthony Ramos released the following statement: “J. K. Rowling, whose books gave kids hope that they could work together to create a better world, has now aligned herself with an anti-science ideology that denies the basic humanity of people who are transgender.”<sup>35</sup>

In the process of defending fellow feminist Forstater and, by extension, the role of biology in determining sex and gender, Rowling had three derogatory labels affixed to her by the LGBTQ+ champions of gender as a social construct. First, like many of her Christian contemporaries, GLAAD designated Rowling as anti-science. This demonstrates how an appeal to biology provides common ground for Christians and some LGBTQ+ advocates. Therefore, when addressing SOGI issues in the culture, dispensationalists can begin by deferring to the arguments of Sullivan and Rowling in a manner similar to the way Paul deferred to the Pharisees in order to defend his belief in the resurrection (Acts 23:9). Second, GLAAD interpreted Rowling’s support of Forstater as an attack on the basic

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<sup>33</sup> Grace Robertson, “Where J. K. Rowling’s Transphobia Comes From,” *Vanity Fair*, June 12, 2020, <https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2020/06/jk-rowling-transphobia/feminism>.

<sup>34</sup> Charles Trepany, “J. K. Rowling Sparks Controversy for Transgender Comments; GLAAD Responds,” *USA Today*, December 20, 2019, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/celebrities/2019/12/19/j-k-rowling-transgender-comments-maya-forstater-glaad-response/2701579001/>.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

humanity of transgender people. With regard to this accusation, Christian apologists who address SOGI issues in the culture must carefully maintain the distinction between ideas and individuals by consistently seasoning their response with gentleness and respect (1 Pet 3:15). Finally, Rowling’s opponents from within the LGBTQ+ community proceeded to brand her as a “TERF.” Sullivan explains that this defamatory acronym stands for, “Trans-Exclusive Radical Feminist ... one minority that is actively not tolerated by the LGBTQ establishment, and often demonized by the gay community.”<sup>36</sup> According to Trepany, “The hashtag #JKRowlingIsATerf was a top trending topic that day.”<sup>37</sup> Sullivan further reveals that radical feminists, including many lesbians, are labeled TERFs if they hold the position that sex is “fundamentally biological, and not socially constructed, and that there is a difference between women and trans women that needs to be respected.”<sup>38</sup> The angst from the LGBTQ+ community expressed in ad hominem toward one of their own illustrates how Christians who engage SOGI issues must be prepared to face repercussions (1 Pet 3:16–17). The internal inconsistencies in LGBTQ+ ideology over biology, feminism, and gender is evident in its selective appeals to biology. The tension created through interactions within the LGBTQ+ spectrum as a whole is further demonstrated in the following relationship scenarios.

### **Case 3: “B” is for Bisexual and Other Alphabetical Inconsistencies in the LGBTQ+ Relationship Soup**

Within the inclusive and affirming LGBTQ+ continuum that is often playfully referred to as “Alphabet Soup,”<sup>39</sup> the letter “B” stands for bisexual. In her historical presentation of the bisexual movement, GLAAD’s Miranda Rosenblum explains that bisexual persons have frequently endured oppression at the hands of both

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<sup>36</sup> Sullivan, “Nature of Sex.”

<sup>37</sup> Trepany, “J. K. Rowling Sparks Controversy.”

<sup>38</sup> Sullivan, “Nature of Sex.”

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, California’s San Mateo county commission LGBTQ glossary: “LGBPTTQQIIAA+ (Alphabet Soup),” accessed December 31, 2020, <https://lgbtq.smcgov.org/lgbtq-glossary>.

the culture at large and an LGBTQ+ subculture that is dominated by exclusively lesbian women and gay men.<sup>40</sup> According to Garden State Equality (GSE), a bisexual is “a person who is romantically, emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to both men and women.”<sup>41</sup> While a cursory reading of this definition may appear innocuous, the inherent problem that “B” poses to the remainder of the LGTQ+ system concerns the fact that “Bi,” as carefully defined by Rolling Stone’s Zachary Zane, “means two.”<sup>42</sup> The existence of the “B” in LGBTQ+ ideology implicitly affirms an innate gender binary with a biological and biblical basis, something that members of the “T” community vehemently deny.

Ironically, the intrinsic acknowledgement of a gender binary that forms the foundation for both bisexuality and a biblical understanding of gender is confirmed explicitly by the GSE definition that restricts the sexual attraction of bisexuals to the two genders of male and female. Therefore, in order to identify as a bisexual in a community where labels matter, an individual who includes males and females in their list of sexual attractions must do so to the exclusion of all other genders on the socially constructed LGBTQ+ spectrum, including transgender persons. For if a bisexual, defined as a person who is attracted to both males and females, is also attracted to someone who claims to be either another gender or transgender, then are they still able to identify as bisexual? While the answer derived from GLAAD’s definition and Zane’s article is a simple “No;” the problems

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<sup>40</sup> Miranda Rosenblum, “The U.S. Bisexual+ Movement: a #BiWeek History Lesson,” *GLAAD*, April 10, 2019, <https://www.glaad.org/blog/us-bisexual-movement-biweek-history-lesson>.

<sup>41</sup> “About,” *Garden State Equality*, accessed July 18, 2020, <https://www.gardenstateequality.org/about>. According to their self-description, the Garden State Equality is New Jersey’s statewide advocacy and education organization for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. As of this writing, GSE has successfully lobbied for 222 laws that support or promote LGBTQ+ ideology.

<sup>42</sup> Zachary Zane, “What’s the Real Difference between Bi- and Pansexual?” *Rolling Stone*, October 4, 2019, <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/whats-the-real-difference-between-bi-and-pansexual-667087/>.

resulting from that answer trigger complicated inconsistencies to ripple throughout the LGBTQ+ community. Zane reports that many LGBTQ+ individuals are reluctant to surrender their hard-earned titles of “L” or “G” or “B”.<sup>43</sup> As a result, the self-proclaimed “inclusive” LGBTQ+ community is now forced to answer the question: Is it necessary for an individual to exclude transgender persons from romantic relationships and sexual attractions in order to maintain the title bisexual, gay, or lesbian?

*Psychology Today*'s Dr. Karen Blair observes that transgender people are in fact being excluded from the dating scene in practice, if not in theory, both in the LGBTQ+ community and among cisgender heterosexuals.<sup>44</sup> This marginalization, according to Tatyana Bellamy-Walker of NBC News, results in emotional trauma for transgender people, including an increase in anxiety and depression.<sup>45</sup> Some, like transgender activist Brynn Tannehill, even suggest that refusing to date a transgender person is transphobia, a form of prejudice and discrimination akin to denying a transgender person access to gender transition or excluding transgender persons from sports competitions.<sup>46</sup> Tannehill even questions whether or not it should be illegal to refuse to date a transgender person.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, others within the LGBTQ+ movement disagree with Tannehill. Sullivan insists, “It is not transphobic for a gay man not to be attracted to a trans man.”<sup>48</sup> However, when one considers the long

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Karen Blair, “Are Trans People Excluded from the World of Dating?” *Psychology Today*, June 16, 2019, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/inclusive-insight/201906/are-trans-people-excluded-the-world-dating>.

<sup>45</sup> Tatyana Bellamy-Walker, “For Nonbinary People, Struggle for Recognition Extends to Romantic Relationships,” *NBCUniversal News Group*, August 3, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/nonbinary-people-struggle-recognition-extends-romantic-relationships-n1038876>.

<sup>46</sup> Brynn Tannehill, “Is Refusing to Date Trans People Transphobic?” *Advocate.com*, December 14, 2019, <https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2019/12/14/refusing-date-trans-people-transphobic>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Sullivan, “Nature of Sex.”

and hard battle that lesbians, gays, and bisexuals fought for identity, recognition and most notably pride in the culture, the question now arises within the LGBTQ+ community: Who would be willing to relinquish their title of lesbian, gay, or bisexual by dating transgender people?

While the preceding question may appear puerile on the surface, a deeper analysis actually creates a great deal of tension within LGBTQ+ ideology. As GLAAD explains, a lesbian is by definition “a woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women.”<sup>49</sup> In a similar manner, Sullivan insists, “Gay men are defined by our attraction to our own biological sex. We are men attracted to other men.”<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, according to Live Science’s managing editor Tia Ghose, lesbian, gay, and bisexual attractions are inherent and immutable, meaning the individual did not choose and cannot change the object of their sexual attraction.<sup>51</sup> Evelyn Schlatter and Robert Steinback of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) support the enduring assertions of Ghose and GLAAD by identifying two of the top ten anti-gay myths as, “No one is born gay ... (and) ... Gay people can choose to leave homosexuality.”<sup>52</sup> LGBTQ+ apologists like Schlatter and Steinback often cite biological evidence in order to substantiate the claims that sexual attraction is both innate and immutable.<sup>53</sup> However, this supposition raises yet another question concerning internal inconsistencies: Is it appropriate for LGBTQ+ philosophy to appeal to biology in order to validate sexual

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<sup>49</sup> “GLAAD Media Reference Guide - Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual Glossary of Terms,” *GLAAD*, October 26, 2016, <https://www.glaad.org/reference/lgbtq>.

<sup>50</sup> Sullivan, “Nature of Sex.”

<sup>51</sup> Tia Ghose, “Being Gay Not a Choice: Science Contradicts Ben Carson,” *Livescience*, March 6, 2015, <https://www.livescience.com/50058-being-gay-not-a-choice.html>.

<sup>52</sup> Evelyn Schlatter and Robert Steinback, “10 Anti-Gay Myths Debunked,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, February 27, 2011, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2011/10-anti-gay-myths-debunked>.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

attraction while simultaneously rejecting biology in matters of gender? Is all biology anti-science?

Concerning biological evidence to support LGBTQ+ ideology, Ghose reluctantly acknowledges, “No studies have found specific gay genes.”<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, some LGBTQ+ scientists, like transgender evolutionary biologist Joan Roughgarden, vehemently oppose the notion of gay or transgender genes. Roughgarden fears that the potential discovery of said genes would likely initiate a cisgender-heterosexual-led genocide of LGBTQ+ persons through “the selective abortion of gay babies.”<sup>55</sup> However, lack of biological evidence does not prevent Schlatter and Steinback from asserting, “Modern science cannot state conclusively what causes sexual orientation, but a great many studies suggest that it is the result of both biological and environmental forces, not a personal choice.”<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, LGBTQ+ advocates who appeal to biology for support like Ghose and Roughgarden must rely on actual or perceived LGBTQ+ activity in the animal kingdom in order to provide biological validation for its presence in humanity. Appealing to lesbian, gay, or bisexual activity between animals provides LGBTQ+ advocates with a scientific basis for same-sex and bisexual attractions among humans. However, before examining the validity of this claim, it must be acknowledged that this biological assertion still fails to answer the question: If a lesbian is sexually attracted to a transgender person, then is she still a lesbian?

Technically, according to most LGBTQ+ advocates, the answer to the above question is another “No.” As Sullivan explains, “Transgender ideology—including postmodern conceptions of sex and gender—is a threat to homosexuality, because it is a threat to biological sex as a concept.”<sup>57</sup> For, if a woman who was at one time sexually attracted to other women becomes romantically involved with a transgender person, then

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<sup>54</sup> Ghose, “Being Gay Not a Choice.”

<sup>55</sup> Joan Roughgarden, *Evolution’s Rainbow* (Berkeley: University of CA Press, 2009), 294.

<sup>56</sup> Schlatter and Steinback, “10 Anti-Gay Myths Debunked.”

<sup>57</sup> Sullivan, “The Nature of Sex.”

she can no longer claim to be a lesbian. In this scenario, her sexual fluidity has caused her to transition from lesbian to a non-traditional expression of bisexual. Zane explains this conflicting view of fluid sexual attraction in LGBTQ+ ideology as follows: “Fluid, in this case, meaning that sexual attractions have the capacity to change over time and can be dependent on different situations.”<sup>58</sup> The implications of Zane’s appeal to sexual fluidity in order to defend bisexual activity threaten to undermine the entire LGBTQ+ system by lending support to the much-maligned arguments over reparative/conversion therapy<sup>59</sup> or spiritual transformation (Rom 12:1–2). For, on the one hand, some LGBTQ+ proponents like Zane and *Psychology Today*’s Karen Blair argue in support of sexual fluidity.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, organizations like the SPLC and GLAAD insist that sexual attraction cannot be changed or controlled.<sup>61</sup> So the question remains: Can someone’s sexual attractions ever change? The coherent answer from a biblical worldview is yes (1 Cor 6:9–11), and Christians who defend this position would be wise to begin by appealing to sexual fluidity. However, the conflicting answer from within the LGBTQ+ community is hotly contested.

Not only does LGBTQ+ ideology conflict over whether or not gender and sexual attractions are either socially constructed and fluid or biological and fixed, but internal contradictions also prevent a coherent system from developing. Zane, a self-professed bisexual, admits,

The truth is, however, there’s confusion even among members of the LGBTQ community as to what these words mean, particularly when it comes to bisexuality. In fact, the bisexual community doesn’t even agree on what it means to be bisexual. The term

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<sup>58</sup> Zane, “What’s the Real Difference?”

<sup>59</sup> “Conversion Therapy,” *GLADD*, accessed July 18, 2020, [https://www.glaad.org/conversiontherapy?response\\_type=embed](https://www.glaad.org/conversiontherapy?response_type=embed). GLAAD defines conversion therapy, “Conversion therapy is any attempt to change a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.”

<sup>60</sup> Karen Blair, “4 Ways That Sexuality Can Be Fluid,” *Psychology Today*, December 29, 2019, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/inclusive-insight/201912/4-ways-sexuality-can-be-fluid>.

<sup>61</sup> “Conversion Therapy.”

pansexual was birthed out of the confusion, and to create a definitive and more inclusive label. This has led to in-fighting between members of the community, who are upset that their bisexual identity is being replaced by another label.<sup>62</sup>

As a result of internal inconsistencies surrounding the concept of sexual fluidity, the LGBTQ+ community remains at an impasse over the simple question: If a lesbian is attracted to a transgender person, does that make her bisexual, pansexual, queer, sexually fluid, still a lesbian, or something else? Furthermore, if she is reassigned another title like bisexual, pansexual, or queer, then does this imply that she is a former lesbian? More importantly, can a lesbian ever stop being a lesbian? These are the questions that LGBTQ+ ideology fails to resolve satisfactorily. For if, on the one hand, sexual attraction is fluid, as a segment within the LGBTQ+ system clearly maintains, then who can rightly insist that said (former) lesbian who found herself attracted to a transgender person will not someday be attracted to a natal male and live out the rest of her days as a heterosexual female? Philosophically, LGBTQ+ advocates who promote gender and sexual fluidity like Tannehill, Blair, and Zane cannot allow for the possibility of a lesbian sexually transitioning to heterosexual without undermining the entire system. On the other hand, if a lesbian's attraction to other females is inherent and immutable, then back to the initial question: Should lesbians be permitted to date males or transgender people once they identify as lesbian? The implicit solution in the arguments of Sullivan, GLAAD, and the SPLC is that exclusion is necessary in order to maintain internal consistency. Lesbians need to pursue romantic relationships exclusively with biological women, and gays need to pursue romantic relationships exclusively with biological men while the rest need to adopt the inclusive and comprehensive title of "pansexual" in order to avoid any further inconsistencies. However, not only would this practice force lesbians and gays to discriminate against transgender people, but even the term "pansexual" has its coherent limitations.

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<sup>62</sup> Zane, "What's the Real Difference?"

### Case 4: Out of the Frying Pansexual

As Zane reports, the term pansexual was conceived by LGBTQ+ advocates in an attempt to create a classification that would resolve the internal conflict surrounding the various sexual identities and attractions highlighted in the preceding section. According to the GSE, a pansexual is “a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to members of all genders, identities and/ or expressions.”<sup>63</sup> Like “queer,” this umbrella term was originally intended to be broad enough to encompass any past, present, or future addition to the LGBTQ+ spectrum. However, the tensions created by appealing to the all-inclusive claims of pansexuality produce two additional internal inconsistencies for LGBTQ+ advocates, beginning with the law of noncontradiction.

Sproul et al. define the law of noncontradiction as “‘A’ cannot be ‘A’ and ‘non-A’ at the same time and in the same relationship.”<sup>64</sup> This philosophical axiom mandates that pansexuality cannot claim to be inclusive of all sexual attractions, genders, identities, and expressions while simultaneously excluding or condemning some sexual attractions, genders, identities or expressions. The inconsistencies exposed by the law of noncontradiction stem from the fact that, according to LGBTQ+ advocates, there are some sexual attractions, identities, and expressions that no individual or society should ever tolerate. These attractions and behaviors include incest, rape, bestiality, pedophilia, and necrophilia, among others (IRBPN+). With regard to these immoral behaviors, Schlatter and Steinback confirm that the majority of the LGBTQ+ community condemns necrophilia and pedophilia,<sup>65</sup> and the Advocate’s Trudy Ring describes any attempt to link bestiality to the LGBTQ+ movement as “simply

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<sup>63</sup> Garden State Equality, “About.”

<sup>64</sup> R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 72.

<sup>65</sup> Schlatter and Steinback, “10 Anti-Gay Myths Debunked.”

absurd and deeply offensive.”<sup>66</sup> However, in the process of deeming some sexual attractions, identities, or expressions on the IRBPN+ spectrum as morally unacceptable or offensive, LGBTQ+ ideology undermines any potential for comprehensive application of the term pansexual. Pansexual must encompass every sexual attraction, identity, and expression if it is to mean anything.

Philosophy is not the only obstacle that the pansexual solution fails to hurdle. A second inconsistency arises when scientists like Ghose and Roughgarden appeal to the animal kingdom in order to find biological support for LGBTQ+ behavior in human beings. The problem, consistently ignored in LGBTQ+ scientific research and reporting, is that the spectrum of IRBPN+ behaviors frequently occur in nature. In a study focused on non-reproductive sexual behavior in animals, Ina Jane Wundram reports, “A male dolphin carried a dead female for about five hours, copulating with her several times.”<sup>67</sup> Greg Palmer documents a myriad of species of insects, birds, fish, reptiles, and primates that engage in forced copulation, evolutionary biology’s contemporary euphemism for rape.<sup>68</sup> For some animals like the elephant seal, a creature Roughgarden celebrates in support of LGBTQ+ ideology as “exceedingly active in same sex genital behavior,”<sup>69</sup> the fact that forced copulations are so common that they actually constitute normative breeding habits is selectively omitted. Palmer affirms, with regard to the elephant seal’s sexual activity, “Rape is by far the most common type of copulation in this species.”<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, rape is not the only aberrant sexual behavior

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<sup>66</sup> Trudy Ring, “Right-Wing Pundit Says 'B' in 'LGBTQ' Stands for 'Bestiality',” *Advocate.com*, July 18, 2018, <https://www.advocate.com/media/2018/7/18/right-wing-pundit-says-b-lgbtq-stands-bestiality>.

<sup>67</sup> Ina Jane Wundram, “Nonreproductive Sexual Behavior: Ethological and Cultural Considerations,” *American Anthropologist* 81, no. 1 (March 1979): 101.

<sup>68</sup> Greg Palmer, “Rape in Nonhuman Animal Species: Definitions, Evidence, and Implications,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 26, no. 3 (August 1989): 364.

<sup>69</sup> Roughgarden, *Evolution’s Rainbow*, 141.

<sup>70</sup> Palmer, “Rape in Nonhuman Animal Species,” 366.

witnessed in seals. In several instances, seals have been observed participating in inter-species sexual activity. De Bruyn et al. document instances of forced copulation by fur seals upon king penguins.<sup>71</sup> A final act of IRBPN+ sexual activity in nature that is excluded from LGBTQ+ scientific presentations involve the behavior of animals with their own offspring or juveniles of the same species, a form of incest and pedophilia referred to as inbreeding. Among primates, David Lester reports that incest has been documented between mother and son.<sup>72</sup>

LGBTQ+ advocates who selectively appeal to animal behavior as scientific justification for related activities or pansexuality in human beings are confronted with a very complicated epistemological problem. Sexual activity in the animal kingdom, the same biological criteria used to justify LGBTQ+ activity in human beings, can also be used to validate IRBPN+ activity among human beings. Therefore, aside from an appeal to Cyrenaic hedonism, proponents of LGBTQ+ ideology fail to provide any epistemological justification for deferring to some sexual behaviors in the animal kingdom in order to substantiate human sexual behavior while simultaneously disregarding or condemning other sexual behaviors in the animal kingdom as immoral for human beings. By comparison, few Christians would argue with the conclusion that sexual behaviors such as incest (Lev 18:6), rape (Deut 22:25), and bestiality (Exod 22:19) are sinful and immoral. In addition, the principles established from the biblical definition of marriage as one man and one woman (Matt 19:5) coupled with the clear prohibition of sexual activity outside of marriage (Heb 13:4), the grave warning for those who would harm children (Mark 9:42), and the biblical ban on necromancy (Lev 20:27) allow Christians to confidently and consistently defer to Scripture in order to identify pedophilia, necrophilia, and a host of other sexual behaviors as sinful and immoral. LGBTQ+ ideology, on the other hand, must selectively

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<sup>71</sup> P. de Bruyn, Cheryl Tosh, and Marthán Bester, “Sexual Harassment of a King Penguin by an Antarctic Fur Seal.” *Journal of Ethology* 26, no. 2 (May 2008): 295.

<sup>72</sup> David Lester, “Incest,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 8, no. 4 (November 1972): 270.

appeal to nature to justify some behaviors while ignoring or condemning others. Furthermore, this inconsistent double standard does not just exist in LGBTQ+ theory, but also in practice, as evidenced in the case of James Younger.

### **Case 5: Inconsistency in 3-D... Desistence, Dead-naming, and Double Standards**

James Younger was a typical 7-year-old boy who loved superheroes and pretend sword fights.<sup>73</sup> However, like many children in contemporary culture, James was raised in a broken and dysfunctional home. After his parents divorced, James became the subject of a very bitter, very public custody battle. James's mother, convinced that her son was a female trapped in a male body, began to lead James through the process of social transition. Along with subjecting James to intensive gender-affirmation counseling, James's mother also changed her son's name to Luna. James's situation came to a head in a Dallas courtroom during the summer of 2019 when his mother sued for sole custody so she could begin stage two of gender transition by administering puberty-suppressing hormones to James. A shocked nation watched as a judge initially ruled in her favor. James's father immediately appealed the decision and won. As a result, James was permitted to choose his own gender identity and, as Aaron Feis of the *NY Post* reports on November 7, 2019, James declared to the world, "I am a boy."<sup>74</sup>

In spite of the fact that James chose to accept and identify as his natal gender, not all LGBTQ+ advocates were as quick to acknowledge his right to autonomy as they were to defend Malisa Philips or the Connecticut transgender athletes. Some, like *Vox*'s openly transgender reporter Katelyn Burns, decried the court's decision to permit James to embrace a cisgender existence in the

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<sup>73</sup> For in-depth commentary on James Younger and gender dysphoria, see my article "Saving James: Casualties in the War on Gender," *The Baptist Bulletin*, March/April 2020.

<sup>74</sup> Aaron Feis, "Texas Child in Gender-Transition Court Battle Attends School as Boy," *New York Post*, November 7, 2019, <https://nypost.com/2019/11/07/texas-child-in-gender-transition-court-battle-attends-school-as-boy/>.

article, “What the Battle Over a 7-year-old Trans Girl Could Mean for Families Nationwide.”<sup>75</sup> Throughout the commentary, published November 11, 2019, four full days after the *NY Post* disclosure, Burns insisted on referring to James either as a female named Luna, or with the feminine pronoun “she.” Burns’ reluctance to affirm James’s autonomous gender identity due to its conflict with LGBTQ+ ideology demonstrates that the contradictions within the LGBTQ+ system are not just in theory, but also in practice.

In a 2015 *Vox* article, senior correspondent German Lopez addressed, “4 Common Mistakes Made about Caitlyn Jenner and Transgender People.”<sup>76</sup> First, since the concept of a pronoun transcends simple etiquette and encompasses affirmation, Lopez warned, “Don’t use a pronoun someone doesn’t want you to use.”<sup>77</sup> Lopez, writing in defense of Jenner’s male-to-female transition, rebuked what he identified as the micro-aggressive tendencies of an element within contemporary culture that either unintentionally or intentionally misgendered Jenner as a “he.” Next, Lopez advised, “Avoid using a trans person’s deadname.”<sup>78</sup> The act of dead-naming, according to Lopez, “could be taken as an attempt to undermine (their) identity.”<sup>79</sup> Therefore, according to the rules of conduct established and practiced by *Vox*, a person’s autonomous rights concerning their individual gender identity should be respected, so long as their beliefs align with LGBTQ+ ideology. However, if a child like James Younger experiences a period of gender dysphoria followed by desistance, then, as Burns demonstrates, inconsistent application of these rules by LGBTQ+ proponents is permissible without accusation of micro-aggression, anti-science, denying the basic human

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<sup>75</sup> Katelyn Burns, “What the Battle Over a 7-Year-Old Trans Girl Could Mean for Families Nationwide,” *Vox*, November 11, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2019/11/11/20955059/luna-younger-transgender-child-custody>.

<sup>76</sup> German Lopez, “4 Common Mistakes Made about Caitlyn Jenner and Transgender People,” *Vox*, June 2, 2015, <https://www.vox.com/2015/6/2/8706745/transgender-issues-mistakes>.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

rights of the child, or other forms of defamation. The tensions created by the double standard LGBTQ+ advocates apply to dead-naming and pronoun use appear more difficult to resolve than the actual condition of gender dysphoria.<sup>80</sup>

Gender dysphoria, as defined by WPATH, is “distress that is caused by the discrepancy between a person’s gender identity and that person’s assigned sex at birth.”<sup>81</sup> This condition is not uncommon in children. Furthermore, by WPATH’s own standards, the fact that a child questions biological gender or even prefers to dress as the opposite gender is not sufficient criteria for a gender dysphoria diagnosis.<sup>82</sup> However, even in cases of actual gender dysphoria, the overwhelming majority of children who experience a period of distress over their biological gender, like Malisa Philips and James Younger, will ultimately desist. Dr. Kenneth Zucker, in his article, “The Myth of Persistence,” explains that children who continue to exhibit distress over their natal gender are labeled persisters, while those whose distress resolves are considered desisters.<sup>83</sup> Although the statistical data on persistence and desistance varies, all parties inside and outside the LGBTQ+ system agree, if gender dysphoric children are not subjected to gender affirmation, then the majority will desist. WPATH recognizes a persistence rate of 6 to 23 percent, indicating an admission by a leading LGBTQ+ science-based organization that gender dysphoric children like Malisa and James will desist as often as 94 percent of the time.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Mary Jackson, “Fighting to Let a Boy Be a Boy,” *World Magazine*, August 21, 2020, [https://world.wng.org/content/fighting\\_to\\_let\\_a\\_boy\\_be\\_a\\_boy](https://world.wng.org/content/fighting_to_let_a_boy_be_a_boy). After this article was initially submitted to the Council on Dispensational Hermeneutics for a September 2020 reading deadline, James’s mother took additional legal steps to secure custody of James and reintroduce gender-affirmation treatment with the intent to transition.

<sup>81</sup> WPATH, *Standards of Care*, 96.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Kenneth Zucker, “The Myth of Persistence: Response to ‘A Critical Commentary on Follow-up Studies and ‘Desistance’ Theories About Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Children” by Temple Newhook et al.,” *International Journal of Transgenderism* 19, no. 2 (April/June 2018): 232.

<sup>84</sup> WPATH, *Standards of Care*, 11.

Only one contemporary study by radical transgender advocates Temple-Newhook et al. suggests that the desistance rate is consistently lower than 80 percent.<sup>85</sup> This controversial report, which has been challenged by LGBTQ+ advocates and adversaries alike, suggests a desistance rate of 59 percent, which still represents a majority of cases.

### **Case 6: The Curious Case of Kenneth Zucker**

Dr. Kenneth Zucker is a renowned psychologist and transgender activist who has been in the business of transitioning females into transgender males and males into transgender females for decades.<sup>86</sup> According to Jesse Singal, Zucker's accomplishments include holding a leadership position at Toronto's prestigious gender clinic, serving as editor of the *Journal Archives of Sexual Behavior*, developing the DSM-5 guidelines for gender dysphoria, and contributing to WPATH's *Standards of Care*.<sup>87</sup> However, when Zucker was asked to comment on Temple-Newhook et al.'s desistance data, he deferred to science and reason in order to conclude, "The 59 percent figure could be interpreted as implying that as many as 41 percent of the potential participants could have been persisters, which is an absurd inference with no empirical basis."<sup>88</sup> Zucker's challenge to the gender affirmation model has caused him to incur the wrath of LGBTQ+ advocates. Singal explains, "Some trans activists ... believe that desistance is a transphobic myth."<sup>89</sup> With regard to the presupposition that

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<sup>85</sup> Temple Newhook, Julia, Jake Pyne, Kelley Winters, Stephen Feder, Cindy Holmes, Jemma Tosh, Mari-Lynne Sinnott, Ally Jamieson, and Sarah Pickett, "A Critical Commentary on Follow-up Studies and 'Desistance' Theories about Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Children," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 19, no. 2 (April/June 2018): 212.

<sup>86</sup> Jesse Singal, "How the Fight over Transgender Kids Got a Leading Sex Researcher Fired," *The Cut*, February 8, 2016, <https://www.thecut.com/2016/02/fight-over-trans-kids-got-a-researcher-fired.html?mid=twitter-share-scienceofus>.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Zucker, "Myth of Persistence," 233.

<sup>89</sup> Singal, "Fight Over Transgender Kids Got a Leading Sex Researcher Fired."

desistence rarely or never occurs, Singal rightly observes, “While these activists ... have tried to poke holes in the consistent findings about gender dysphoria desistance, they just haven’t come up with scientifically convincing explanations.”<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, due to the fact that he deferred to empirical data that supported desistence at the expense of the gender affirmation model, Zucker was fired from his position at Toronto’s gender clinic. The curious case of Kenneth Zucker demonstrates that the inconsistencies within the LGBTQ+ system do not just set LGB against T, but also run deep enough to create a schism between fellow transgender activists like Zucker and Temple-Newhook. Although LGBTQ+ advocates are quick to label dissenters anti-science, the irony of Zucker’s double standard is that, like Rowling and Navratilova, he was ostracized by a movement he helped build based on his appeal to science and reason.

### **Case 7: To Science We Shall Go**

A scientific evaluation of puberty suppression reveals the dangerous and damaging consequences of LGBTQ+ ideology on children. When gender dysphoric children like Malisa Philips and James Younger reach the age of puberty, the administration of synthetic puberty-suppressing hormones can repress undesired biological side-effects that naturally accompany adolescence.<sup>91</sup> From a biochemical perspective, Hruz et al. explain how puberty is a three-step process.<sup>92</sup> Step one involves adrenal maturation. Between the ages of six to ten, the adrenal glands begin to secrete androgens in healthy human children. These hormones cause oily skin, acne, body odor, and hair growth, all of which indicates an early stage of puberty. Step two involves gonadal maturation. This phase normally begins between the ages of eight and fourteen with the release of gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH). The third and final chemical process of puberty

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> For a detailed ethical evaluation of puberty suppression, see my book, *The Danger of Puberty Suppression* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019).

<sup>92</sup> Paul Hruz, Lawrence Mayer, and Paul McHugh, “Growing Pains: Problems with Puberty Suppression in Treating Gender Dysphoria,” *New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology & Society* 52 (Spring 2017): 8–9.

involves the secretion of human growth hormone (HGH). This hormone interacts with the hormones present in phases one and two to produce a growth spurt resulting in physical and sexual maturity.<sup>93</sup> Puberty suppressing hormones inhibit the body's natural release of hormones in phase two of puberty.

Gonadal maturation begins in the brain with the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland.<sup>94</sup> When a child begins gonadal maturation, the hypothalamus releases bursts of GnRH. These fluctuating blood levels of GnRH trigger the pituitary gland to release follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH) respectively.<sup>95</sup> FSH and LH are trophic hormones. They work together with GnRH and androgens to turn on the gonads. Gonadal maturation ultimately leads to sexual maturity, which results in the masculinization of males and the feminization of females in healthy human beings.<sup>96</sup> However, not everyone experiences normative puberty in three successive and complementary stages.

A rare but serious condition known as precocious puberty occurs when children experience premature gonadal maturation.<sup>97</sup> The long-term effects of premature gonadal maturation include stunted growth, infertility, and shorter lifespans. Puberty suppressors were developed in order to treat precocious puberty. When children are diagnosed with precocious puberty, they are treated with regular doses of synthetic GnRH agonists. These puberty suppressors mask the bursts of GnRH from the hypothalamus by keeping blood levels at a constant high. The constant blood levels of GnRH trick the pituitary gland into shutting down production of FSH and LH, which in turn causes gonadal maturation to slow or cease. Then, when the child reaches normal age for puberty and adrenal maturation begins, administration of synthetic hormones ceases

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Fredric H. Martini, William C. Ober, Judi L. Nath, Edwin F. Bartholomew, and Kevin Petti, *Visual Anatomy and Physiology*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2015), 594.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Hruz et al., "Growing Pains," 10.

and puberty resumes, thereby enabling children with precocious puberty to lead relatively normal lives.<sup>98</sup>

The problem with puberty suppressors does not lie in their treatment of precocious puberty, but rather in their use for treatment of gender dysphoria. As Dr. Michelle Cretella explains, any study that claims puberty suppressors are safe, reversible, medically necessary, have no known side effects, or are tested and approved is only referring to their use for the treatment of precocious puberty, not gender dysphoria.<sup>99</sup> The appeal to precocious puberty in order to substantiate the use of puberty suppressors for gender dysphoric children amounts to ethical sleight of hand akin to appealing to some sexual behaviors in animals in order to justify similar behavior in humans. Administering puberty suppressors to gender dysphoric children constitutes an experimental treatment with irreversible results, as the contributors to WPATH readily admit: “There are concerns about negative physical side effects of GnRH analogue use.”<sup>100</sup> Therefore, it is neither medically necessary, nor evidenced-based, nor ethically defensible to treat gender dysphoric children like Malisa Philips or James Younger with puberty suppressors, even on the grounds of autonomy. Not only is this conclusion founded in scientific evidence, but also in ethical principles, such as the Hippocratic Oath.

For nearly three thousand years, nonmaleficence, also known as the Hippocratic Oath, has been the governing principle of medical ethics.<sup>101</sup> Beauchamp and Childress summarize the principle of nonmaleficence as, “First do no harm.”<sup>102</sup> The origin of this oath, as Nigel de S. Cameron explains, is not from Judeo-Christian values, but rather from Greek pagans.<sup>103</sup> These ancient

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–9.

<sup>99</sup> Michelle Cretella, “Gender Dysphoria in Children and Suppression of Debate,” *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons* 21, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 52.

<sup>100</sup> WPATH, *Standards of Care*, 20.

<sup>101</sup> Beauchamp and Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 13.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>103</sup> Nigel M. de S. Cameron, “Bioethics: The Twilight of Christian Hippocratism.” In *God and Culture*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 324.

physicians, imbued with common grace, were able to recognize the intrinsic value of human life and vowed not to injure their patients in the course of medical treatment. Christians can readily adopt the concept of nonmaleficence due to biblical teachings that prohibit harming other human beings (Rom 13:10). The administration of puberty suppressors to gender dysphoric children when as many as 94 percent would desist is a clear violation of the most ancient governing ethic that LGBTQ+ advocates attempt to override by appealing to autonomy.

### **The Conclusion of the Matter**

In January 2019, Governor Phil Murphy signed bill C.18A:35-4.35 into law, mandating that all NJ public school curriculum include the contributions of LGBT people beginning September 2020. This controversial decision was lauded by LGBTQ+ advocates, including GSE executive director Christian Fuscarino.<sup>104</sup> By the fall 2019, the GSE began to promote a comprehensive curriculum that would force schools to incorporate LGBTQ+ ideology into all subjects, bypassing any potential parental opt-out. This all-inclusive curriculum was piloted in twelve NJ schools during the spring of 2020. One of the school districts chosen to test the LGBTQ+ pilot curriculum was Pinelands Regional in Little Egg Harbor, NJ, the small Jersey Shore town where I have served as pastor at Calvary Baptist Church for the past twenty years. As Bill Spaeda of NJ101.5 explains, I was unexpectedly placed in a position where I was forced to challenge the intentional indoctrination of Pinelands students with LGBTQ+ ideology.<sup>105</sup> What began as reasoned and respectful opposition to the decision of a local Board of Education has led to opportunities to challenge SOGI issues on both the local and state level, sometimes as an

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<sup>104</sup> Brooke Sopelsa, "N.J. Governor Signs LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Bill into Law," *NBCUniversal News Group*, February 1, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/n-j-governor-signs-lgbtq-inclusive-curriculum-bill-law-n965806>. Brook Sopelsa is the editorial director of NBC Out, the LGBTQ digital destination of NBC News.

<sup>105</sup> Bill Spaeda, "NJ Pastor Fights Back against Forced LGBTQ Curriculum," *New Jersey 101.5*, February 7, 2020, <https://nj1015.com/nj-pastor-fights-back-against-forced-lgbtq-curriculum-opinion/>.

individual, and other times as part of a larger group. These interactions were only profitable when a classical approach was employed.

Christians who engage the culture over SOGI issues must adopt a classical approach in order to be effective. This involves interacting with culture, science, reason, and philosophy to defend the literal teaching of Scripture. Those who default to an apologetic model that begins with “The Bible says it” when interacting with LGBTQ+ ideology in the culture will find that their approach falls on deaf, or worse, combative ears. This article intended to demonstrate that it is both possible and productive to defend a biblical worldview by appealing to science, philosophy, and reason. Throughout this article, seven case studies were presented in order to expose the inconsistencies and internal conflicts within the LGBTQ+ system through an analysis of the culture. In the process, this article focused on evaluating the ideas used to support LGBTQ+ ideology, rather than vilifying the individuals who embrace this system. Furthermore, this article sought to demonstrate that believers who employ a classical approach will benefit by staying informed, increasing confidence, gaining a hearing in the culture, and addressing the concerns of young Christians. In conclusion, it is the hope of this author that this article will encourage other dispensationalists to challenge the dominant but inconsistent and incoherent LGBTQ+ system in the culture with gentleness and respect, beginning with science and reason.