CRITIQUING COMMON THEMES IN LGBT-AFFIRMING PSYCHOLOGIES WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORKS

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APPROVAL SHEET

CRITIQUING COMMON THEMES IN LGBT-AFFIRMING PSYCHOLOGIES WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORKS

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For Marie, bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh

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PREFACE

The subject at hand is dear to me for many reasons. Foremost has been my ongoing experience of same-sex attraction and the many evidences of God's grace in providing the theology, people, ideas, ministries, and community to guide me along the way. My experience meets LGBTQ+ issues and the major interlocutors of orthodox sexuality in a unique way. The foundation of my soul-care training in seminary came from biblical counselors, and I have been deeply influenced by a heart-oriented mindset. I have also participated with and led a Living Waters group, a vestige of the ex-gay movement. This experience has impressed on me the importance of prayer-focused group care, the centrality of Christ, and the importance of transformation. I have also learned from "Side B" Christians over the last seven years. I have friends on the three major sides of this issue and my hope is that we may find unity in the common cause of reaching LGBTQ+ people with the transformative gospel of Jesus Christ. My hope for this work is a charitable and critical dialogue with these and other groups. My prayer is that I will be challenged and edified, refined by each group's salient arguments.

I am deeply thankful for my experience at Southeastern Seminary where I learned to see every group through the lens of the Great Commission. I am also indebted to Sam Williams, and his gentle guidance, past and present. I am also grateful to have been supervised by Eric Johnson at Southern Seminary. From him I have learned that conformity to Christ means growth in holiness and wholeness. Jeremy Pierre has also been a significant source of encouragement and edification during my time at Southern. Seminars with Bob Jones and David Sills and Keith McKinley's feedback sharpened my thinking as well. Tom Schreiner's guidance in this last stretch has been vital as well. I am

also grateful for edifying conversations with the following people throughout the doctoral process: Brian Zumwalt, Jonathan Medlin, Cory German, Nate Collins, Mark Yarhouse, Steve Goble, Wesley Hill, Kyle Smith, Drew Ham, and Christopher Yuan. The remaining weaknesses are my responsibility. Additionally, I want to thank those who provided me special assistance in acquiring sources: Emilee Smith, Stanton Jones, Denny Burk, Wesley Hill, Greg Mathias, Keith Plummer, Kyle Smith, Titus Willis, The Library at Southeastern, Duke University Libraries, NC State University Libraries, and UNC Chapel Hill Libraries. Finally, this project has been aided by the support of my parents and a grant from the Vince Taylor Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Personally, this dissertation is the culmination of a long, "unexpected journey" through doctoral studies. I started this journey as a single man and ended it married with two children and a mortgage. For this reason, I am immensely grateful for my wife, Marie, who has endured a scholastic marriage of seminars, exams, research, writing, ministry, and indeterminate periods of unavailability. Marie, I am eager to begin our journey together on the other side of graduation.

Finally, I am grateful to our Triune God. Our God and Savior Jesus Christ holds all things together (Col 1:17), and he has held me together throughout this project. "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence" (2 Pet 1:3 ESV).

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May 2021

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The BBC show *Queer Britain* (Khalaf, 2017) opens with a preacher proclaiming, "To me, LGBT stands for, 'Let God burn them.'" He continues, "You say, 'Well, it's LGBTQ.' Well, then, you can say, 'Let God burn them quickly.' God hates fags. What part of that don't you understand?" The congregation laughs and affirms the sentiment. The narrator, Riyadh Khalaf, is a gay man who grew up Muslim, and he asks, "Can you bring together your religion and your sexual identity even though the Scriptures say that you're wrong? Does God really hate queers?" Khalaf scoffs at a Christian service in which man proclaims himself delivered from attractions to men, having exchanged them for interest in women. He then interviews a Christian orientation-change therapist and rejects the therapist's assumptions that something must be "lesser or wrong" with people's sexual identity or sexuality. He opines, "I find it deeply, deeply insulting that anyone, even a therapist, would say that my sexuality is interchangeable."

The episode concludes with a pansexual-identified individual finding love and acceptance in an affirming church and another gay man concluding that his Jehovah's Witness upbringing is incompatible with his sexual identity. Khalaf's final statement about faith is telling: "Of course an LGBT person can have faith, but how they choose to live in that faith and practice it is an extremely personal thing." This thirty-minute episode presents secular caricatures: Christians perversely enjoy God's judgment of LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people, orientation-change therapies affront human dignity, gay-affirming churches are ideal, and faith is a personal construction. Notice how identity is an embedded theme in both this presentation and

LGBTQ+ rhetoric. Interpreting LGBT labels[1] is a necessary work in the Christian soul care of the same-sex attracted (SSAd) and gender incongruent (GIt). Wading through the misconceptions LGBTQ+ people have about the church, Christianity, and Scripture is vital to gospel dissemination.

Statement of the Problem

Most evangelical Christians who have contributed to the conversation about LGBTQ+ issues have done so by bulwarking sexual ethics and the exegesis of crucial biblical passages. However, few pastoral theologies have addressed LGBTQ+ issues from a traditional Christian standpoint, even though LGBT-identified people frequently intersect with the local church and its community and form a significant part of the US population. In the CDC's (Centers for Disease Control) latest national survey in the US, 6.8 percent of women and 3.9 percent of men identified themselves as homosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Copen et al., 2016).[2] Though not necessarily LGBT-identified, a larger percentage of respondents did not report an experience of exclusive opposite-sex attraction: 17.7 percent of women and 7.3 percent of men.[3] Also utilizing data from the CDC, Flores et al. (2016) estimated that 0.6 percent of the US population identifies as transgender. Whether or not they integrate their experiences into LGBT identities, SSAd and GIt people are a population in need of targeted evangelism, discipleship, and soul care. Complicating matters, Christians experiencing same-sex attraction (SSA) or gender

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[1] According to the American Psychological Association's (2020) most recent publication manual, "LGBT" is an obsolete description of "sexual and gender minorities" (p. 146). The initialism is nevertheless used in this project because this dissertation focuses specifically on these four sociocultural labels. In keeping with APA style, I will sometimes speak broadly about LGBTQ+ people, communities, and issues, but I will often limit our focus to LGBT identities/labels and the people who use them. See "Delimitations."

[2] These numbers are the sum of the reported percentages of those who selected "homosexual, gay, or lesbian" and those who identified as "bisexual" in the survey (Copen et al., 2016, p. 9).

[3] These percentages are the sum of those who indicated the following experiences of sexual attraction: "mostly opposite sex," "equally to both," "mostly same sex," and "only same sex" (Copen et al., 2016, p. 8).

incongruence (GI) often conceal their experiences, leading pastors to assume they do not exist inside the church (Marin, 2016; B. Stith, personal communication, August 22, 2018).

Historically, modern psychiatry and psychology laid the foundation for LGBT identification. Today, some of the most prominent advocates of LGBT-identified people are LGBT-affirming therapists,[4] and LGBT-affirming psychologies speak with cultural authority on LGBTQ+ issues. When treating Christian clients, affirming practitioners uncritically facilitate identity constructions that often promote self-understandings and behaviors at odds with historic Christianity (see chapter 5). Christians who experience a conflict between their LGBT identity and their religious identity are particularly vulnerable to the false doctrines of affirming psychologies. LGBT psychologies also have a reciprocal relationship with LGBT people (cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1979), studying and impacting the LGBTQ+ community at the same time. Given their influence in Western culture, LGBT-affirming therapies are in want of significant Christian interpretation, analysis, and critique.

Pastoral theology is broader than the counseling and care performed by pastors alone. Various counseling, discipleship, and para-church ministries have served as the main conservative voices on LGBTQ+ issues. Exodus International, a defunct network of evangelical ministries addressing homosexuality, was the most visible during its tenure until its closure in 2013. In the popular American imagination, Exodus became associated more with reparative therapies than Christ-centered transformation. After Exodus, the five main evangelical approaches to LGBTQ+ issues included: (1) Christian LGBTQ-affirming; (2) integration-based; (3) sin/repentance; (4) transformation-focused; and (5) chaste gay Christian.

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[4] While LGBT-identified individuals viewed MHPs (mental health professionals) skeptically during the era of conversion therapies, affirming psychologies and therapies have mended the rift.

Despite promising developments in articulating biblical sexual ethics and delineating complementarian theology, the traditionalist conversation has stalled at questions surrounding the practice of LGBT-identification. Both biblical counseling and transformational healing advocates communicate the perceived dangers of labeling one's SSAs as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or labeling one's gender incongruence as a transgender experience. Other group, such as Spiritual Friendship, use LGB language and labels, arguing they can be reclaimed to communicate faithful Christianity. They would argue that identifying as such is a mark of authenticity in Western culture. A soul-care process for LGBT-identified individuals that promotes Christocentric transformation and capitalizes on the West's interest in authenticity remains to be articulated.

Thesis

In this dissertation, I investigate inductively three prominent themes of LGBT-affirming psychologies,[5] survey evangelical engagement with these themes, and propose three alternatives rooted in a biblically-based, Christian worldview. The three selected themes capture how LGBT-affirming psychologies conceptualize LGBT identities. First, I will propose *Christian critical essentialism* as an appropriate Christian alternative to the major theoretical frameworks (modern essentialism, social constructionism, and personal constructivism) that inform LGBT-affirming psychologies and LGBT identities. Second, I will argue that the biblical script outlines how to perform one's sex and gender in a fallen world and contextualize one's God-given maleness or femaleness. These *biblical narrative performances of the sexual self* challenge the LGBT identity formation approaches and norm-defying narratives of secular culture and psychology. Third, I will suggest that *Christian narrative transformations of the sexual self* are an alternative to the Christian/LGBT identity integrations promoted by affirming psychologies.

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[5] Accessing social science in pastoral theology while preserving orthodox Christianity is difficult. See appendix 2 for an analysis of these challenges.

Methodology

This first chapter states the problem, definitions, thesis, and methodology. This chapter also includes a brief survey and evaluation of contemporary Christian literature regarding SSA and GI to help the reader navigate how evangelicals have engaged these issues.

An Overview of Subsequent Chapters

In the next chapter, we will explore three foundations for addressing presenting LGBT labels in Christian soul care. We will first establish the biblical themes that inform a Christian understanding of sexuality and gender. Then we will survey Christianity's past engagement with same-sex eroticism and cross-dressing, establish evangelical Christianity's engagement with homosexuality in the twentieth century, and observe common emphases among contemporary evangelicals as they engage LGBT labels. Finally, we will explore sexuality and gender theologically by reflecting on the biblical metanarrative and the Christian's union with Christ's story.

In the third chapter, we will trace the historical development of modern psychology's tradition of inquiry regarding what Westerners now call LGBTQ+ issues. We will identify the theoretical frameworks that have informed contemporary LGBT-affirming psychologies and have challenged Christian assumptions about sexuality and gender that necessitate Christian engagement and alternatives.

During the fourth chapter, we will identify and traverse the main secular frameworks that inform LGBT psychologies (the first theme), evaluate these frameworks from a Christian perspective, and survey and assess how evangelicals have engaged these frameworks. *Christian critical essentialism* will be proposed as an alternative Christian framework.

Addressing the second and third themes, the fifth chapter will detail how LGBT psychologies conceptualize LGBT identity development and how they address the religious conflicts created by LGBT identities. We will also survey and assess how

evangelicals understand the origin and development of LGBT identities and experiences, and we will also detail and evaluate how evangelicals relate same-sex attraction and gender incongruence to Christian identity. We will arrive at two Christian alternatives—*biblical narrative performances of the sexual self* and *Christian narrative transformations of the sexual self*—that will be expounded upon in chapter 6.

Finally, the sixth chapter expands upon the three alternatives proposed in chapters four and five. First, we will explore *Christian critical essentialism* as a worldview guide for gender and sexuality. Second, we will explore how the biblical metanarrative and Christ's story serve as scripts for improvisatory male or female performances. Finally, we will explore how the biblical narratives reorganize the self and transform how Christians communicate and narrate their stories of same-sex attraction and gender incongruence.

Delimitations

For the sake of space, we will only interact with exegetical/theological studies of gender and sexuality and sexual ethics insomuch as it is necessary to do Christian soul care for the LGBT-identified. Therefore, first, we will not perform detailed exegetical studies of biblical passages explicitly addressing homosexual practice, manhood and womanhood, and cross-dressing. Second, this study is not a study of Christian sexual ethics regarding sexual identities and gender identities. Third, we will constrain this study to research populations experiencing SSA (often LGB-identified) and GI (often transgender-identified). As a result, this research will acknowledge but not focus on other presenting sexual-identity labels (e.g., queer or asexual) or gender-identity labels (e.g., nonbinary or bigender). Similarly, we will not address transgender identities arising out of abnormal karyotypes, mosaicisms of the sex chromosomes, or disorders of sexual development (DSDs). These labels represent populations that warrant study in other projects. We would do well to note here that not everyone who identifies as transgender

meets the diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria. Similarly, not everyone who experiences GI meets the diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria. Therefore, fourth, we will only discuss transgender individuals experiencing GI to clarify the core experience of transgender identities. Fifth, while LGBTQ+ psychologies constitute a large corpus of literature and engage many themes, this study will focus on affirming therapies' engagement with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) identities and will consider other themes only as they relate to identity concerns. Sixth, we will primarily examine twenty-first-century LGBT-affirming texts, utilizing the most recent works in this literature in chapters 4 and 5.

Definition of Terms

In some sense, this entire project works toward comprehending and translating the terminology surrounding LGBT culture for Christian engagement. Here, we consider some preliminary clarifications for the terms and concepts used throughout this work. See appendix 3 for a list of these terms and their abbreviations.

First, we will benefit from an introduction to Johnson's (2007) four orders of discourse. Each of these orders "possesses an internal coherence—its own logic, vocabulary and grammar—and each provides a legitimate, meaningful perspective on human life and experience" (E. L. Johnson, 2007, p. 334). In other words, these orders are different ways of speaking about phenomena and spiritual realities. The lowest level, the biological order, entails discourse about the brain, genes, and biological development. The next level, the psychosocial order, includes discourse about "the immaterial dynamic structures that originate in social interaction but are gradually internalized within the individual human being, developing throughout life and giving definition and dynamic form to the embodied human" (pp. 336–337). Johnson uses this category to speak of what typically falls under the rubric of psychology. However, he extends it to language, culture, relationships, and the developmental context encompassing all of these

immaterial phenomena. The ethical order includes principles such as personal agency, the conscience, freedom and responsibility, creativity, vice and virtue, and most importantly, God's law. The spiritual order entails language about salvation and last things and holistically provides ultimate meaning for all of life. These orders relate to each other in a rule-based manner. One of the rules stipulates that lower orders be transposed[6] into the spiritual order. This project aims to interpret lower-level concepts—like sexual identity—with an orthodox Christian perspective.

With these four orders in mind, we can organize the terms used in this project. A foundational notion in biological discourse is *biological sex.* This term "refers to a person's biological status and is typically categorized as male, female or [in rare cases] intersex" (American Psychological Association, 2015; S. L. Jones & Jones, 2019).[7] These differences include chromosomes, hormones, primary sexual characteristics (e.g., gonads, sexual organs, and reproductive systems), and secondary sexual characteristics like facial hair in males and enlarged breasts in females (S. L. Jones, 2018).

As we examine LGBT identities throughout this project, we will find that many facets of these self-presentations belong to the psychosocial order. A foundational notion of self begins with *biological sexual identity*. This basic idea is one's self-understanding of his or her biological or physiological sex.[8] Helpfully, Vanhoozer (2009)

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[6] Since many scientific concepts originate from lower orders of discourse, higher levels of discourse (i.e., the ethical and spiritual orders) transform them. This process entails "recontextualizing and resignifying" these terms and concepts such that they approach God's holistic perspective (Johnson, 2007, p. 366). Transposition guards against modification of Christian teaching by modifying concepts and ideas instead. Thus, in this process, Christian orthodoxy transforms other kinds of discourse. These other kinds of discourse do not modify Christian teaching. The relationship between the two is hierarchical, not egalitarian. The transposition stage benefits the translation of concepts in Western cultures where reigning ideologies separate the *noumena* (things inaccessible to the senses, e.g., spiritual realities) from the *phenomena* (things accessible to the senses, the empirical) (Kant, 1787/1998; E. L. Johnson, 2007; Stang, 2018).

[7] While intersex conditions are puzzling phenomena, we will only use the term *biological sex* in this work to refer to the fundamental physiological differences between males and females.

[8] Sexual identity may include biological sex, gender identity, social sex role, sexual orientation, intention, and valuative frameworks (Shively & De Cecco, 1977; Yarhouse, 2001; Yarhouse, Tan, et al., 2005; Risen, 2016). Teasing out these facets as separate notions of identity serves our purposes

calls this the "chromosomal marker," and this project will use sex chromosomes as the most definitive mark of biological sexual identity (p. 192). *Gender* will refer to "the psychological, social and cultural aspects of being male and female" (Yarhouse, 2015a, p. 17), or more specifically, the sociological concepts of masculinity and femininity (Vanhoozer, 1998/2009). More experiential, *gender identity* will denote "how you experience yourself (or think of yourself) as male or female, including how masculine or feminine a person feels" (Yarhouse, 2015a, p. 17). Gender identity, as a construct, should not be confused with individuals' public presentation of their gender. For instance, a biological woman may experience a male gender identity but still identify as a woman socially. We will use *gender expression* (see below) to denote these social choices.

The term *same-sex attraction* elicits many connotations and eludes accurate definition. For example, some clinicians use the term while offering therapies to change a client's sexual orientation (J. M. Hallman, 2008; National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, 2010; Shidlo & Gonsiorek, 2017). More, when style guides began recommending *gay* instead of *homosexual,* Yarhouse (2005) recommended the term *same-sex attraction,* because it describes an experience rather than "who the person 'really is'" (p. 203). Shaw (2015) prefers the term because it communicates his sexual orientation but not his intentions. Allberry (2018) agrees and notes, along with Eileen (2017), that the term is used most often in Christian discourse. Further, Burk (2015) equates the term *same-sex attraction* with the sinful desire of concupiscence.

Even though the term *same-sex attraction* frequently appears in Christian discourse, it is not absent from modern psychological literature. A phenomenological approach to SSA emphasizes its physiological and psychological components. According to the sexological literature, "attraction" is a biopsychosocial phenomenon that may

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better. Even though Yarhouse et al. (2005) illuminated the overlapping nature of these elements, breaking them down allows for more precise discourse.

include an aesthetic response, an approach response (the tactile desire), and an autonomic-somatic response involving functions like heart rate and genital arousal (Singer, 1984). Attraction may also involve "feelings of exhilaration, intrusive thinking about the love object, and a craving for emotional union with this partner or potential partner" (Fisher, 2000). Despite these nuances, a reductive definition that indicates interpersonal attraction will suffice: "feelings of sexual or emotional interest in" a member of the same biological sex (Yarhouse & Tan, 2014, p. 296).

The term *same-sex attraction* offers a *descriptive* starting point. Yarhouse's (2005) three-tiered approach demonstrates the value of having another tier that explains sexual identity development and disidentification with gay and lesbian identities. The disadvantage consists in that it may refer to desires for friendship or desires for sex such that "it obscures the crucial difference between virtue and vice" (Belgau, 2014b). Far removed from the current context, an earlier psychological study of adolescents uses the term to measure the popularity of males and females among their same-sex peers (H. Horowitz, 1967)![9] Because the term has so many possible connotations, *we will use it descriptively throughout this work*. Christians will do well to use other terms to make ethical determinations of vice or virtue because of this ambiguity.

Continuing the above trend, *same-sex orientation* will describe "the consistent directionality of one's experiences of sexual attraction, that is, the attractions are consistently same-sex in such a way that we think of the person [sic] attractions as *oriented* to the same sex" (Yarhouse, Tan, et al., 2005, p. 204). Some experience same-sex attractions consistently and with significant intensity, so they can be described as *same-sex oriented* (SSOd). Another term used in this project, *sexual orientation identity*,

[9] Importantly, Horowitz's (1967) study demonstrated the feasibility of a psychological construct in which attraction between members of the same-sex is relational, not sexual in nature. This study, with its cultural distance from modern LGB issues, lends credibility Belgau's (2014b) distinction between a virtuous desire for friendship and a sinful desire for sex. The perennial problem, as argued by Burk (2015), is in redefining "gay" to refer to the first use and not the second.

will refer to the "acknowledgement and internalization of sexual orientation and reflects self-exploration, self-awareness, self-recognition, group membership and affiliation, culture, and self-stigma" (American Psychological Association, 2009, p. 30). This term will be preferred over *sexual identity* when highlighting the social identity of LGBTQ+ people because it does *not* refer to one's intentions with his or her sexuality.

In discussing the phenomena often at the core of transgender identity, I use the terms *gender incongruence* or *gender dysphoria*. According to Yarhouse's (2015a) tiered framework, terms like *gender dysphoria* provide *descriptive* language to characterize gendered experiences without describing *how* or *who* a person is. When used, *gender dysphoria,* will denote a diagnosis as described by the DSM-5. Primarily, we will use *gender incongruence* instead of gender dysphoria. GI emphasizes the mismatch experienced between one's biological sex and gender identity. This term is more useful in pastoral discourse because it does not require diagnosis by an MHP (mental health professional). Additionally, an individual may experience GI yet have subclinical gender dysphoria. Thus, GI addresses a core experience for many transgender people without having to factor in other diagnostic criteria. The *gender incongruent* (GIt) are the people who experience this phenomenon. These uses should not be construed to have identity-constituting implications. *Transgender identity* (and sexual identity below) will communicate something of one's intentions (e.g., hormones, sexual reassignment surgery). We, like Yarhouse (2015a), will distinguish between identity uses ("I am transgender") and adjectival uses ("I am a transgender person") (p. 137). The former connotes core identity, and the latter communicates social identity.

Discourse in the psychosocial order primarily entails concepts and experiences that do not directly involve personal agency. In the ethical order we speak more directly about choices, intentions, and values. The perennial problem with *sexual identity* is its capacity to refer to our *intentions* and our *values* (Yarhouse, 2001; Yarhouse, Tan, et al.,

2005), in addition to many lower-order constructs.[10] Early on, Yarhouse et al. (2005) described sexual identity, saying:

> It appears to entail one's *biological sex* (as male or female), *gender identity* (one's psychological sense of being male or female, *sex role* (degree to which one adheres to social expectations for one's sex), *sexual orientation* (the direction and persistence of one's experiences of sexual attraction), and *intention* or *valuative framework* (what one intends to do with the desires one has in light of one's beliefs and values) (Althof, 2000; Shively & DeCecco, 1977; Yarhouse, 2001) (p. 3).

While I have chosen to highlight these facets separately to facilitate more specificity, this broad definition of sexual identity is employed in this project. Eight years after the preceding definition, Yarhouse (2013) described sexual identity as "the act of 'labeling' oneself based on one's sexual attractions or orientation" (p. 26). We will use a new term to describe the activity of labeling of attractions and orientations: *sociocultural labels* or *sociocultural labeling.*[11] Thus, this project differentiates between *sexual identity*—with its entailed intentions regarding sexual activity—and *sociocultural labels* as an indicator of social identity.[12] Relatedly, *gender expression* will refer to "the presentation of an individual including physical appearance, clothing choice and accessories, and behaviors that express aspects of gender identity or role" (American Psychological Association, 2015, p. 861). It also entails the individual's chosen pronouns (Singh & dickey, 2017b, p. 5). The words people use to name their gender identity and gender expressions are *gender-identity labels*.

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[10] Levine (2016) illustrated the role of intention in sexual identity: "Sexual behavior stabilizes our sexual identity. Sex allows us to feel that we are confident as a man or a woman. It helps us to refine and stabilize our identity as a heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual person. It clarifies our intentions as consisting of peaceable mutuality or varieties of sadomasochism or fetishism" (pp. 5-6).

[11] Yarhouse's (2013) observation informs this term: "The third level, gay identity, is the most prescriptive. It is a sociocultural label that people use to describe themselves, and it is a label that is imbued with meaning in our culture" (p. 41).

[12] Collins's (2017a) emphasis on social identity and his rejection of both sexual orientation and sexual identity further support this distinction. Yarhouse (2013) adjusted his approach from his earlier works to accommodate the emergence of chaste, LGB-identified Christians. Despite this accommodation, Collins rejected Yarhouse's conceptualization of this community with the term *sexual identity*. Collins's quibble may indicate that Yarhouse's conception of this community (chaste, LGB-identified Christians) has not fully accounted for their discontinuity with the secular LGB community and their developing self-identifications.

In this project, we will distinguish between *sociocultural gender roles* and *contextualized gender roles*. First, the term *sociocultural gender roles* will denote the degree to which a person embraces "cultural expectations for maleness/masculinity or femaleness/femininity" (S. L. Jones, 2018, p. 17). As Rekers (1991/2006) noted, sociocultural gender roles may be biologically-, morally-, or culturally-defined. Importantly, some culturally-defined gender roles may be immoral or harmful. Given this challenge, contextualized gender roles will refer to gender expressions that properly apply divine standards for gender in each context.

The phrase *contextualized gender roles* is more accurate than *biblical gender roles* because the latter may stall us at the sociocultural gender roles in Scripture's cultural contexts rather than move us along to application in contemporary situations. As Hiebert (2009) said, "the gospel must not be equated with any particular human context, not even the biblical cultural context" (p. 31). We see the importance of this distinction when applying Paul's imperative, "Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss" (1 Thess 5:26 ESV). In first-century Thessalonica, men properly greet each other with a kiss. However, contextualized gender roles would require applying this text in an American context in which men do not kiss unless they are gay! Therefore, through application, a contextualized gender role would promote affectionate greetings (e.g., a handshake or hug) between Christian men in the American context. Thus, *sociocultural gender roles* refers to gender expressions in various contexts: the ancient near east, first-century Corinth, or twenty-first-century North Carolina. A contextualized gender role would be the appropriate gender expression in each of these locations with an eye toward transcultural, divine truth.[13]

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[13] While many have written on the application or contextualization of biblical passages, Nida (1990), Hesselgrave (2009), Osborne (2006), and Hiebert (2009) influence the distinctions here. Hiebert and Osborne argued that the truths revealed in Scripture are transcultural or supracultural. They also recognized that those truths are contextualized differently across cultures. More, Nida and Hesselgrave realized that three cultures are at work in any missionary encounter: the Bible's culture(s), the missionary's

When speaking of Christian positions regarding sexual and gender ethics, we will distinguish between *orthodox Christianity* and *affirming Christianity*. Orthodox Christianity prohibits same-sex sexual activity, same-sex sexual relationships, cross-dressing, and cross-gender or nonbinary identification.[14] Affirming Christianity permits and often celebrates these activities. LGBT[15] (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, when used individually) will be used only to describe people who label themselves as such. *Gay* or *gay-identified* will serve as a shorthand for LGB-identified people. Another form is *LGBT-identified* or *people who LGBT-identify*. Thus, person-first language is a priority (Yarhouse, 2019). When referring to orthodox Christians who utilize LGB labels, we use the term *chaste gay Christians.*

While Christian discourse spans all four orders, biblically-informed language serves us well. When discussing the myriad of sexual or erotic activities between biologically-sexed men or sex between biologically-sexed women, the term *same-sex sexual activity* will suffice.[16] Given that *homosexual and homosexuality* tend to connote behaviors more than identities (cf. American Psychological Association, 2020, p. 147),

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culture, and the recipient culture. The missionary's challenge is decoding Scripture's message from its cultural medium and encoding it within the respondent culture, all the while limiting the influence of his own culture in the process. Contextualizing gender expressions and roles requires navigation through these hermeneutical issues regarding divine truth and human contexts. Complementarian theology and an orthodox sexual ethic constrain this project's conceptualization of gender roles. Ultimately, a contextualized gender role is one that God desires for a specific people at a specific place during a specific time.

[14] See chapter 2 for a biblical and historical survey of orthodox sexual ethics.

[15] LGBT is no longer the inclusive acronym it once was. DeBord, Fischer, Bieschke, and Perez (2017) used sexual minority (SM) and transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) to describe this population. They chose these terms because "many people in these communities shun the use of labels," and terminology is "a complex issue loaded with political implications and emotional valence" (p. 8). However, the ongoing Christian discussion surrounding these labels justifies their use in this project despite these limitations. Following Yuan (2016) and Dallas and Heche (2010), we should avoid the term *gay lifestyle*. Since most people refer to *same-sex sexual relationships* or *same-sex eroticism* with this term, they are better alternatives.

[16] Explaining why his work focuses on *sexual activity* rather than *sexual orientation*, Gagnon (2001) argued, "[This] is a reflection of the Bible's own relative disinterest toward motives or the origination of same-sex impulses. What matters is not what urges individuals feel but what they *do* with these urges, both in their fantasy life and in their concrete actions" (p. 37-38). A broader theological framework will clarify the origins of these impulses. However, Gagnon focuses our attention on sexual activity in the body *and* the heart.

we will only use these terms when describing sexual actions and behaviors. Sometimes historical sources will make *homosexual* and *transvestite* the appropriate terms. Mindful of Grenz's argument (1997), we will distinguish between *social desire* and a *desire for sex*.[17] When using the term *same-sex sexual desire*, we will have in mind the sinful capacity to desire sex with someone of the same biological sex (cf. Jas 1:13-15). When emphasizing the active, personal agency in sexual desire (cf. Matt. 5:28), these terms are more helpful: *desiring sex* or *same-sex desiring.* Lastly, we will use *male-female marriage* to label the biblical archetype for sexuality.

While these terms may seem overly atomistic, these distinctions help us distinguish between biological, psychological, sociocultural, and ethicospiritual forms of discourse. Notably, being initially descriptive or phenomenological means describing people as they describe themselves as well.[18] Further evaluation, deconstruction, translation, and composition will occur across this dissertation.

Types of Essentialism and Constructionism/-ivism

As we explore sexual orientation and gender, we will engage the secular essentialist/social constructionist debate on the nature of sexual orientation and gender. Notably, *this debate has very different implications for sexual orientation and gender*, and Christians will engage the debate differently when speaking about these topics.

Introducing the Debate

When considering *sexual orientation*, essentialist scholars argue that humans can be categorized according to natural kinds: homosexuals, heterosexuals, and

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[17] Grenz (1997) distinguished between "sexual desire" and "the desire for sex." Given that he described *sexual desire* as "the need we all share to experience wholeness and intimacy through relationships with others," Most readers will connect with this idea when it is named *social desire* (p. 20-21).

[18] As an exception to this principle, we will distinguish between people's biological sex—when it is discernible—and the gender they identify as.

transsexuals (E. Stein, 1999, p. 97; Prentice & Miller, 2007). Essentializing discourse dominated texts on sexuality and gender as German medical scientists applied scientific categories to them in the nineteenth century (E. Stein, 1999, p. 100). These scientists often believed homosexuality was determined by biology, development, or both.[19] According to Stein (1999), social constructionists argue that the categories—like sexual orientation—that humans employ are social kinds (p. 84ff). Humans create categories like homosexuality and heterosexuality through social intention and interaction (p. 85). In other words, categories like homosexual and heterosexual have no essence; they are only as real as the social exchanges that employ them. Both perspectives have shaped contemporary understanding.

In contemporary secular discussions, essentialism holds that *gender* "is resident within the individual, a quality or trait describing one's personality, cognitive process, moral judgment, etc." (Bohan, 1993, p. 6). As Bohan explained, "Essentialist models, thus, portray gender in terms of fundamental attributes that are conceived as internal, persistent, and generally separate from the on-going experience of interaction with the daily sociopolitical contexts of one's life" (p. 7). Thus, humans are either male or female by nature. For Bohan, the *source* of gender (e.g., biology, socialization, or culture) is a different question entirely (cf. Stein, 1999). Social constructionism (SC), Bohan suggested, argues "that gender is not a trait of individuals at all, but simply a construct that identifies particular transactions that are understood to be appropriate to one sex" (p. 7).

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[19] The reader may find it strange that developmental views of homosexuality could be considered essentialist. Stein (1999) helpfully explained that both *nativist* (ascribing homosexuality to genes) and *environmentalist* (ascribing homosexuality to psychosocial development) readings can both be essentialist. He said, "If, once the environmental factors have had their effects, a person has a naturalistically determinate sexual orientation and his or her brain instantiates a particular psychological state in virtue of which he or she is a heterosexual or homosexual, then certain scientific laws apply to this person" (p. 102). Thus, even if the current brain state is malleable, essentialist discourse may still be used to describe that state.

Historical Development and Types

Essentialism and constructionism are the descendants of a philosophical problem that has taken many forms throughout history (depicted in figure 1). Boswell (1982/1989) sourced it to the ancient problem of universals: "Do categories exist because humans recognize real distinctions in the world around them, or are categories arbitrary conventions, simply names for things that have categorical force because humans agree to use them in certain ways?" (p. 18). As Klima (2017) explained, both Plato and Aristotle conceptualized universals differently. Plato believed universals were archetypal Forms, and Aristotle believed we discern universals in our minds as we organize our experience of particulars. Christians like Augustine and Boethius harmonized these seemingly contradictory stances by "placing universal ideas in the divine mind as the archetypes of creation" and reinterpreting the Forms as a "universal manner of understanding" (para. 35). The problem of universals reached its zenith in the medieval period as a debate between the realists and the nominalists, and it continued as a debate between modern essentialists and constructionists/-ivists in the twentieth century (cf. Boswell, 1982/1989).

DeLamater and Hyde (1998) have differentiated between the *classical essentialism* (CE) of Plato and Thomas Aquinas—the ancient and medieval forms of essentialism in figure 1—and the *modern essentialism* (ME) of twentieth-century sexologists.[20] They argued that ME assumes "a biological basis—usually a biological determination—of sexual behavior" (p. 11). Below, we suggest other variants of modern essentialism. Relatedly, Neimeyer (1995) and Fassinger (2017) distinguished between *constructionist* and *constructivist* approaches. According to Fassinger, the former focuses on the social level of reality construction, and the latter refers to the personal level.

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[20] According to DeLamater and Hyde (1998), Platonic forms (*eide*) were renamed "essences" by medieval Thomists: "Constancy and discontinuity were the crucial properties of essences" (p. 10). Historically, feminists and queer theorists have dubbed the Western assumptions about gender they wish to critique "essentialism."

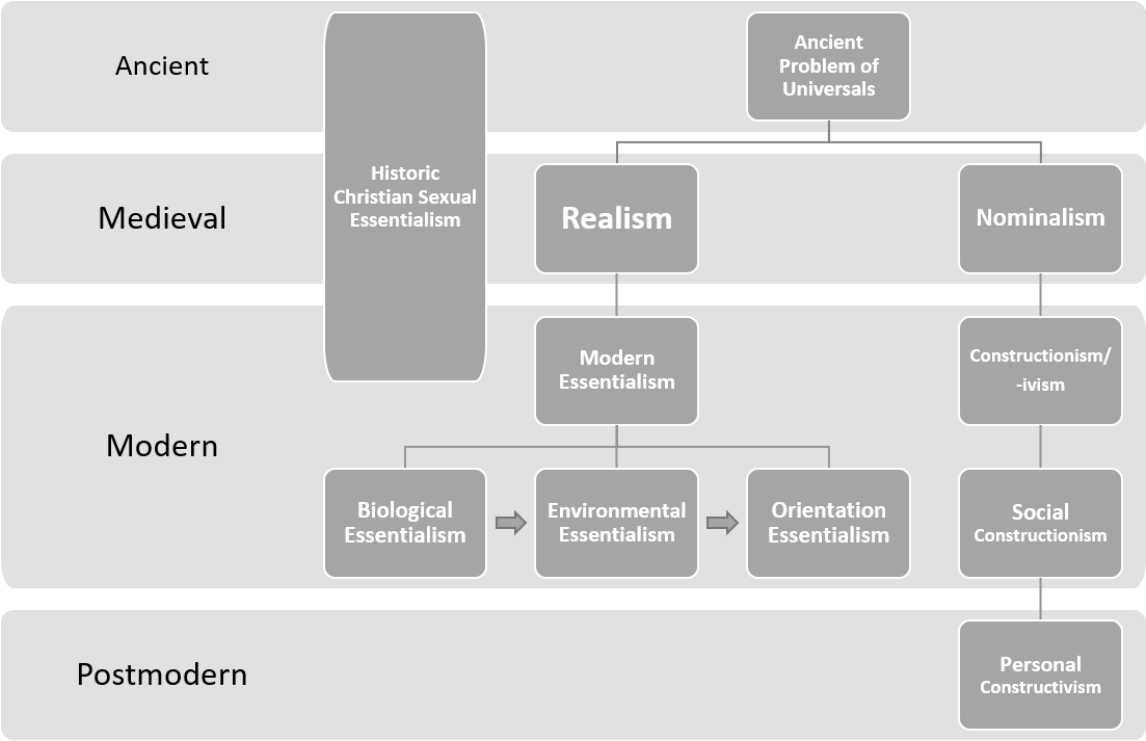

Figure 1. A lineage of essentialism and constructionism/-ivism

Neimeyer believed that *constructivism* preserved personal agency more so than *constructionism.* Even though Russell and Bohan (1999) did not see the warrant for this distinction, they characterized the *constructivist* approach in terms of personal meaning-making. Sometimes the literature uses these terms interchangeably.

This work assumes a distinction between a historic Christian sexual essentialism and a ME of either gender or sexual orientation.[21] As an umbrella term, ME will denote the tendency for Westerners to categorize others and themselves rigidly based on their sexual orientation or to govern gender expressions by sociocultural gender expressions alone. ME leads people to confuse gender essences with gender stereotypes. Concerning sexual orientation, ME holds that it is an intrinsic property of individuals, and heterosexuals and homosexuals are fundamentally different kinds of people. Perhaps

[21] See chapters 3 and 4 for the research supporting the following distinctions between different kinds of essentialisms and constructionisms.

we could also call it "scientistic essentialism" due to its source in twentieth-century taxonomies and materialism.[22] Concerning gender, modern essentialists understand males and females as different kinds with mutually-exclusive properties rather than two complementary forms of the same species. Similarly, they promote sociocultural gender roles that often conflict with Christian virtue and *contextualized gender roles* (see definition above). That said, the Christian form of essentialism argued in this dissertation will preserve maleness and femaleness as discrete categories and conserve God-ordained roles for the sexes.

Modern essentialism has at least three variants; they are listed in order of their appearance historically. Influenced by naturalism, evolutionary theory, and evolutionary psychology (cf. Looy, 2001), *biological essentialism* distinguishes orientations and genders by appealing to differences in genotype (e.g., sex chromosomes and epigenetics) or phenotype (e.g., differences in hormone production, brain structures, and anatomy). Typically, Christians appeal to biological essentialism to explain sexual differentiation and to criticize same-sex sexual activity. Ironically, secularists have fused naturalistic determinism with biological essentialism to justify same-sex relationships. *Environmental essentialism* indicates an emphasis on socialization and the internalization of sociocultural gender roles to explain differences between genders and sexual orientations. While this form of essentialism focuses on developmental pathways and is similar to constructionism in that regard, it also assumes biological differences are essential. Finally, Jones and Yarhouse (2007) believed a strong form of modern essentialism made sexual orientation a vital aspect of personal identity. Using Hannon's (2014) term, we will refer to this type of essentialism as "*orientation essentialism*" (p. 27,

[22] Thanks to Eric Johnson for suggesting this term. When science becomes scientistic, it becomes a belief system and a worldview rather than a tool for certain kinds of knowledge. Scientistic essentialism uses empirical methods and rationality alone to describe and classify essences. Appropriately, Yarhouse and Jones (1997) believed materialism undergirded much of what we are considering ME.

italics mine). In the late twentieth century, essentialism became the most commonly held view of sexual orientation (Laumann et al., 1994).

Constructionism, on the other hand, has two variants in this project. Since some sources differentiate constructionism and constructivism, we will distinguish between *social constructionism* and *personal constructivism*. While social constructionism emphasizes cultural categories, symbols, and beliefs, personal constructivism emphasizes personal agency and meaning-making. *Constructionism/-ivism* will be used as shorthand for both.

Charting the Evangelical Landscape

Categorizing Christian soul care related to LGBTQ+ issues is not a tidy operation.[23] Many authors do not fit into discrete categories, and their agreements and disagreements are not easily grouped. Thus, *thematic centers* best describes the emphasis of each soul care tradition. These seven soul care traditions[24] fill the contemporary Christian landscape: (1) chaste gay Christian; (2) integration-based; (3) LGBTQ-affirming; (4) reorientation therapies; (5) Roman Catholic; (6) sin/repentance-focused; and (7) transformation-focused. Proponents of the third approach affirm same-sex relationships and transgender practices. Adherents of the second and fourth approaches occupy a peculiar place as licensed MHPs. Licensing boards and professional associations often restrict MHPs from unduly influencing clients with their personal religious beliefs about sexual orientation and gender identity. However, many integrationists and reparative therapists personally hold orthodox beliefs about gender

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[23] In this literature review, we will survey the dominant approaches emerging since the year 2000. This review situates this project's thesis in a contemporary context. A more comprehensive historical review is in chapters 2 and 3. Also, we will not survey secular works on integrating Christian and LGB identities; we will examine this literature in chapter 5.

[24] In this section, these traditions are listed alphabetically. Since we will be assessing these positions along two dimensions (cultural appropriation and Christian saturation), it would be reductive to organize them according to one continuum.

and sexuality. Finally, the remaining four centers (first, fifth, sixth, and seventh) affirm traditional sexual ethics and develop their care approaches accordingly.[25] Table A1 in appendix 1 organizes these approaches and their positions.

Chaste Gay Christian Approaches

The writers of the blog *Spiritual Friendship* are some of the most widely known representatives of chaste Christians who use LGB labels. Started by Anglican Wesley Hill and Roman Catholic Ron Belgau, this group has utilized LGB terminology, subtracted a "desire for sex" from *eros*, and navigated the relational challenges faced by the SSOd. According to Belgau (2012b), the blog was inspired by the work of the Cistercian monk Aelred of Rievaulx (1974/2008) on spiritual friendship. He appealed to spiritual friendships as essential relationships for chaste living.[26] Belgau (2014a) also argued that he could introduce himself as "gay and celibate" while "engaging people with the claims of the gospel" without making his sexual orientation "the most fundamental aspect" of his personhood (para. 7).[27] Other writers have similarly defended their use of LGBT labels (Selmys, 2009; Tushnet, 2014; Sprinkle, 2015), but Hill (2017) has documented labels' missional liabilities as well.

One of the founders of Revoice, Nate Collins's (2017a) work on Christianity and LGB issues addressed a wide swath of related topics: aesthetic orientations, desire, friendships, social identity, and the implications of intersectional theory. Chaste gay Christians have also narrated their experiences: Hill's (2010) struggle through reconciling

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[25] While the Roman Catholic Church's dogma preserves orthodox gender and sexual ethics, many Catholics take affirming approaches.

[26] Belgau (2018) has stated that neither he nor Hill assumed that spiritual friendships should be between two same-sex attracted men. Hill has written about his friendship with a married couple, and Belgau has recounted his relationship with a straight friend.

[27] Similarly, Hill (2010) referred to himself as a "gay Christian," though he interchanged this construction with other variations. He described his adjectival uses of "gay" or "homosexual," saying, "In this way, I hope to send a subtle linguistic signal that being gay isn't the most important thing about my or any other gay person's identity. I am a Christian before I am anything else" (p. 21).

Christianity with his attractions, Coles's (2017) process of arriving at a celibate gay identity, and Bennett's (2018) conversion story detailing his old life as a gay activist. Other chaste gay Christians and their advocates have contemplated transgender issues as well. Coles (2018) commended "pronoun hospitality" to facilitate dialogue with people who prefer a specific pronoun (para. 2).[28] In a position paper on transgender identities, Sprinkle (2018) affirmed the role of sexually-differentiated bodies in constituting male and female identities.

Integration-Based Approaches

Integration-based care has excelled by conducting evangelical research on the Christian population experiencing SSA and gender dysphoria. Many integrationists participate in the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC). The AACC's *Code of Ethics* (2014) affirms orthodox beliefs about sexuality and gender and does not sanction sexual/gendered practices associated with affirming Christianity. Jones and Workman's (1989) foundational work answered basic questions about the relationship of homosexuality, behavioral sciences, and the church from an integration perspective. Importantly, they questioned the notion that sexual expression is a necessary aspect of human flourishing. Similar works have criticized affirming Christianity's misuse of science and psychology in the ecclesial debates about sexual ethics (e.g., Jones & Yarhouse, 1997, 2000; Yarhouse & Jones, 1997; Jones & Kwee, 2005; Jones, 2012). Jones and Yarhouse (2007, 2011) also studied the assertion that sexual orientation change is *impossible* for *all* people in a longitudinal study of religiously-meditated sexual

[28] Space does not allow for sufficient engagement with Coles's view. As an alternative to Coles's approach, I advocate for "pronoun avoidance" when discourse about a transgender person entails non-Christians. Christians can also gently explain to a transgender person that their values do not permit them to use the individual's chosen pronoun, and they can ask the individual for permission to use a pronoun they find more appropriate.

orientation change efforts (SOCE).[29] They found that *some* sexual orientation change was possible for *some* people and failed to find an increase in psychological distress resulting from ministry programming.

Making unique contributions to a Christian understanding of SSA, Yarhouse emphasized sexual identity as a prime issue (Yarhouse & Burkett, 2003; Yarhouse, 2010, 2013); discerned distinctions between attractions, orientations, and LGB identities (Yarhouse, 2005); and theorized and researched the milestones in sexual identity development (Yarhouse, 2001; Yarhouse & Tan, 2004; Yarhouse, Tan, et al., 2005; Yarhouse et al., 2018).[30] Yarhouse has also contributed to the Christian integrationist literature on gender dysphoria, transgender identity, and novel gender identities (e.g., Yarhouse & Carr, 2012; 2015; Yarhouse & Houp, 2016; Yarhouse, Houp, Sadusky, & Zaporozhets, 2016; Yarhouse & Sadusky, 2020). Other integrationist works on gender identity have included Looy's (2002) work on intersex conditions, Looy and Bouma's (2005) analysis of gender identity in transgender and intersex people, and Looy's (2005) research on the relationship of gender identity and SSA.

Warren Throckmorton and Mark Yarhouse developed the sexual identity therapy framework (SITF) to "respect client personal values, religious beliefs, and sexual attractions" (2006, p. 2). SIT, an application of the SITF, is value-flexible (Yarhouse, 2019). Serving as the flagship approach in integrationism, SIT helps clients struggling to integrate their sexual orientation with their religious identity. When mainstream psychologists follow this approach, SSOd clients with a traditional sexual ethic would be affirmed in their religious values and encouraged to integrate them with their sexual identity. However, when clients arrive at gay-affirming values, SIT facilitates congruence

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[29] They studied participants in para-church ministries, not clients receiving reparative therapy with licensed practitioners.

[30] Notably, Yarhouse, Dean, Stratton, and Lastoria's (2018) latest study of same-sex attracted college students noted an uptick in labeling one's experience as "gay."

with them (see Yarhouse, 2008). Thus, SIT helps clients make decisions without interventions from the therapist.

LGBTQ-Affirming Approaches

Generally, affirming pastoral theologians[31] have sanctioned LGB-identification practices, sexual behaviors, and gender-based physiological modifications. Revisionist or affirming theology has underwritten the moral concerns of affirming pastoral care as well. Recent scholarly texts arguing against the application of Scripture's condemnations of same-sex sexual activity have included James Brownson (2013), Mark Achtemeier (2015), and William Loader (2014). In addition to affirming same-sex marriage, Megan DeFranza (2015, 2016) constructed a religious revision of the male-female binary based on her studies of intersex issues. Similarly, Baptist ethicist David Gushee (2017) reversed his position on sexual ethics to support same-sex marriage and gender-affirming interventions. In terms of transgender issues, Susannah Cornwall (2009) led the way in transgender-affirming theology. She refuted the notion that intersex conditions are biological and transgender phenomena are non-biological. In effect, removing this distinction makes gender transition for transgender people more acceptable. Cornwall (2010) also argued for the acceptability of sex reassignment surgery (SRS) for transgender people based on the challenges of intersex conditions. Vines (2014) and Hartke (2018) popularized affirming interpretations of Scripture on same-sex relationships and transgender behaviors, respectively. Affirming Christian scholars have also appealed to modern science and psychology to justify same-sex relationships (e.g.,

[31] As presented above, the affirming approach began with biblical revisionism, a movement to reinterpret Scripture concerning the moral status of same-sex sexual activity. While "revisionist" and "traditionalist" may have described the main two ideological camps in the past, these camps are now referred to as affirming and non-affirming (Sprinkle, 2016). We will avoid using non-affirming in this dissertation to avoid the suggestion that traditional approaches are less concerned with the personhood, value, and dignity of LGBTQ+ people. See "Definition of Terms" above.

Myers, 1996, 2010; Helminiak, 2004).[32]

Affirming pastoral care of LGBTQ+ people draws from multiple ideologies: queer theory and its interrogation of normalizing discourses about sexual binaries (i.e., heterosexual versus homosexual) and gender binaries (e.g., Sanders, 2012; Marshall, 2017); constructive theology (e.g., Hays, 2013); and feminist theory and process theology (e.g., Gorrell, 2017). A leading scholar on affirming pastoral care, Joretta Marshall (2001, 2006, 2010) drew more from cultural and psychological sources than theological or biblical ones in her works. In one monograph on counseling lesbian couples, Marshall (1997) contemplated lesbian identity formation. She argued that naming oneself "lesbian" can be a positive theological activity (pp. 20–21). Engaging transgender identification, Marshall (2006) recommended pastoral counselors "re-think the basic concepts of male and female" (p. 118) and form "a theologically fluid understanding of sexuality and gender" (p. 120). Marshall (2017) resisted sin as a category to describe SSA and same-sex sexual relationships and favored more culturally-acceptable interpretations of sin.

Reorientation Therapies

According to Murphy (1992), reorientation therapies[33] (RTs) have attempted to "reorient persons from a homoerotic to a heteroerotic orientation" (p. 501). He cited diverse approaches: "behavioral, psychodynamic, hormonal, pharmaceutical, and surgical methods" (p. 501).[34] RTs are not uniquely Christian in composition or function, though

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[32] In Johnson (2010), Myers defended the levels-of-explanation approach. This way of describing the relationship between theology and psychology maintains the two fields as discrete fields of inquiry.

[33] Names for this category abound: conversion therapies (Haldeman, 1994), reparative therapies (J. M. Hallman, 2008), sexual orientation change efforts (SOCEs) (S. L. Jones & Yarhouse, 2011), and sexual orientation change interventions (SOCIs) (Shidlo & Gonsiorek, 2017). While Hallman considers reparative therapy one of many catchall terms for this category, this use of the term underappreciates the unique development of reparative therapy as a psychodynamic intervention and its pathogenetic assumptions. Using reorientation therapy as a broader category underscores that reparative therapy is a specific type.

[34] Popularly, reorientation therapies have been conflated unjustly with the more barbaric and invasive treatments (e.g., pharmacological, surgical, and electroconvulsive) used during the twentieth

some of their assumptions comport with a Christian worldview. For this reason, the approach may appeal to traditional members of many religions, including Mormons, orthodox Jews, and Muslims, as well.[35] Reparative therapy is *one type* of psychodynamic reorientation therapy that has been used by Christian therapists and applied in Christian ministry. Drawing from other psychotherapies, practitioners have integrated dialectical behavior therapy (Patton, 2009); eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (Carvalho, 2009; Nicolosi, Jr., 2018); coaching with cognitive, behavioral, and spiritual components (Rosebush, 2009); and interpersonal theory (Byrd, 2009) in their care for same-sex attracted people. Addressing SSA in women, Patton (2009) described RT with lesbian and bisexual women, and Hallman (2008; 2009) focused on gender nonconformity, emotional development, and relational growth[36] in SSOd women. Nicolosi Jr. (2018) formulated a therapeutic protocol that primarily treats addiction and trauma; it does not seek reorientation as an outcome but welcomes it as a possible secondary effect.

Reparative therapy of male SSA draws from the mid- to late-twentieth-century clinical literature concerning male gender identity, family dynamics, and the psychodynamic treatment of male homosexuality (Nicolosi, 1991; see also Nicolosi, 2001; Nicolosi & Nicolosi, 2002). Nicolosi's (1991) earlier work understood homosexuality as "the drive to repair the original gender-identity injury" developed in childhood through gender nonconformance and paternal and peer relationships (p. xvi). Nicolosi (2009/2016) later conceptualized SSA more widely as a "striving to repair self-

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century. Christian engagement with sexual reorientation has been almost exclusively psychodynamic and focused on behavior management.

[35] As Hallman (2008) described the possible uses of her work on female same-sex attraction: "I hope that the principles and recommendations in this book can be applied across a variety of faith-based traditions as well as non-faith-based professional settings. Second, I believe that the spiritual frameworks, at least from a Christ-centered theology, have been adequately covered elsewhere" (p. 13).

[36] Hallman (2009)—following Rentzel's (1990) warnings about unhealthy friendships—suggested breaking free of emotionally dependent relationships and "solidifying a sense of self" (p. 150).

deficits [italics original]" (p. 16). He also drew from attachment theory as he led clients to work through significant emotional trauma, though a focus on gender remains. More specifically, Nicolosi (2009) highlighted "self-identity" (p. 30), encouraging clients to revisit their identity in therapy.[37] In this work, he envisioned the homosexual self as a false self and led the client to embrace a new self more attuned with his manhood. While there are no significant works addressing gender dysphoria from a reparative perspective, Nicolosi (2009) cited literature attributing male gender identity disorder to separation anxiety and maternal insecure attachment.

Roman Catholic Approaches

In its teaching rooted in the sixth commandment, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2000) argued against same-sex sexual activity, citing Scripture, tradition, natural law, and the fecundity of opposite-sex sexual intercourse with a sensitive pastoral tone. For the SSOd, the Catechism specifically emphasized chastity, virtues of self-control, "disinterested friendships," prayer, and the grace received through the sacraments (p. 566). In its *Letters to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (1986), the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) disputed revisionist readings of Scripture, called on the SSOd to relate their suffering to Christ, crucify their desires for sex (Gal. 5:22-24), and live chastely.

American bishops have also discouraged primary LGB-identification, saying, "Persons with a homosexual inclination should not be encouraged to define themselves primarily in terms of their sexual inclination, however, or to participate in 'gay subcultures,' which often tend to promote immoral lifestyles. Rather they should be encouraged to form relationships with the wider community" (United States Conference

[37] Remarkably, Nicolosi (2009) described his work with gay-identified clients, saying, "I affirm them in their right to define themselves as they wish, and I accept them in their gay self-label" (p. 31).

of Catholic Bishops, 2006, p. 22). An edited volume by Janet Smith and Father Paul Check (2015) revealed the diversity of approaches to SSA amongst those who hold to the Church's teachings. Some writers challenged identification with one's sexual desires and recommended avoiding the term "gay" (Lu, 2015; Schuchts, 2015; Savage, 2015; T. G. Lock, 2015). However, Tushnet (2015) labeled SSOd Christians "gay Christians" while admitting the imprecision of the term in her article (p. 193).

While the Catechism does not address gender dysphoria or transgender identification directly, it said in its teaching on the sixth commandment: "Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life" (Catholic Church, 2000, p. 560; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2017). The Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) has recently released a document criticizing gender theory's corrosive effects on "the biological difference between male and female" (p. 3). It cautioned against "the separation of sex from gender" (p. 8) and argued for "the *centrality of the body* as an integrating element of personal identity and family relationships" (p. 13, emphasis original). It also criticized notions of "transgender" or "intersex," believing they obscure "sexual difference" and neglect "the suffering of those who have to live situations of sexual indeterminacy" (p. 14).

Sin/Repentance-Focused Approaches[38]

Those emphasizing sin and repentance usually critique mainstream culture and modern psychology, and they prefer biblical language and concepts (e.g., sin, lust/desire,

[38] We should not take "sin/repentance" here to mean that the other approaches do not have similar emphases. While many evangelicals grouped elsewhere share the core convictions of this Protestant group, other organizing factors make separating them prudent. Most of these authors associate with the conservative churches of the baptistic and Reformed tradition. Most, if not all, in this category also maintain strong critiques of secular psychology, significantly beyond the critiques offered by the integration movement. Some in this category stand in the stream of the biblical counseling movement,

temptation, and repentance). While biblical counseling is a significant constituent of this group, the sin/repentance category includes those communicating conservative practical theologies in general. Overall, this bloc has diverse perspectives on cultural engagement and the appropriation of modern psychology. A good number in this group have narrated their experiences with SSA while emphasizing sin and repentance, holiness, and accurate communication (see Yuan & Yuan, 2011; Allberry, 2013; Butterfield, 2015; Shaw, 2015; Perry, 2018). Other writers have framed transgender issues with Scripture-centered frameworks (e.g., Mason, 2017; Roberts, 2017; Walker, 2017).

Biblical counselors[39] have critically engaged the etiologies proposed by Christian therapists, reframed discourse using sin and repentance, redefined psychological terms with biblical categories, and often called for better church-based care.[40] In two foundational resources for contemporary biblical counseling of homosexuality, Ed Welch (1995, 2000) defended the traditional interpretation of homosexual passages, questioned secular and Christian etiological models, offered a biblical etiology model, and concluded with suggestions for improving ecclesial care. Welch designated the sinful heart as the first cause of SSAs, relegating biopsychosocial

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having some continuity with its various institutions. Others stand in a tradition of evangelicals who value biblical critiques of cultural developments (e.g., LGBTQ+ issues).

[39] The label *biblical counseling* often serves as an umbrella term for conservative pastoral care. Its adherents vary in their approaches. Johnson (2007) distinguished between traditional biblical counseling (TBC) and progressive biblical counseling (PBC). The former focus on behaviors and polemics while the latter highlight desires of the heart and take a dialogical approach. While critical of Johnson's taxonomy, Lambert (2012) also affirmed conceptual, methodological, attitudinal advances in biblical counseling since Jay Adams. A third iteration emerged at Southeastern Seminary and could be termed "clinically informed biblical counseling" (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019, para. 1). As they explained, "We believe that insights from the social sciences, understood through the spectacles of Scripture, can assist us in understanding and counseling a person's mental condition. However, lasting and God-glorifying change comes when people overcome their problems and mature in the context of a living, vital relationship with Christ and his church." Thanks to Sam R. Williams for this three-fold distinction.

[40] Biblical counselors' progenitor, Jay Adams (1970), drew from Scripture as he characterized homosexuality primarily in terms of sin. Writing before the American Psychiatric Association's 1973 vote to remove homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, Adams repudiated the notion of homosexuality being a mental disorder. For Adams, this conceptualization minimized sin and offered no hope to the homosexual people. Biblical counselors, following Adams, made sin a *first principle* in understanding the SSOd.

factors to a secondary position. Biblical counselors have also critiqued psychodynamic interpretations of SSA (Powlison, 2003b), distilled secular and Christian psychologies of SSA (Williams, 2011), set ministry priorities for SSOd people (Emlet, 2014), conveyed the SSOd experience to the opposite-sex attracted (Hambrick, 2016a, 2016b), provided biblical responses to transgender family members (Geiger, 2017), and emphasized the role of epistemological authorities and the moral implications of transgender issues in the Western cultural context (Lambert, 2017).

The complementarian perspective also emphasizes sin and repentance. Denny Burk (2012) and Owen Strachan (2014b, 2015, 2016) have addressed SSA and gender dysphoria in the journal of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW). Burk and Strachan, along with Heath Lambert, equated SSA with sin and argued that repentance marks the only biblical response (e.g., Burk, 2015; Burk & Lambert, 2015; Strachan, 2015). In 2017, the CBMW released the Nashville Statement, a doctrinal statement mostly addressing LGBTQ+ issues from a Christian perspective. Referring to what seems to be secular LGBT identities, the statement denies that "adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purpose in creation and redemption" (Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, 2017).

Transformation-Focused Approaches

Various theologically-conservative ministries have emphasized transformation or healing for SSOd or GIt people. Many of these groups were once associated with the now-defunct para-church ministry, Exodus International. Other salient influences have included Leanne Payne (1981, 1985), Elizabeth Moberly (1983), Andrew Comiskey (1989), and reorientation therapists. Recent authors have addressed LGBTQ+ issues by focusing on spiritual transformation, psychological etiologies, and disidentification with LGBT identities.

Anne Paulk's (2003) transformative approach for SSOd women focused on

gender development, support networks, temptation, and abuse. While ministries taking this approach have historically exaggerated orientation change, Paulk's approach commended "realistic change" (p. 117). Paulk emphasized the role of sanctification and "inward identity change" during the woman's journey to embracing her God-created female identity (p. 118). Similarly, Andrew Comiskey (2003) highlighted the importance of secure gender identity. In his model, fostering wholesome relationships with the opposite sex is essential. Engaging the true self/false self distinction developed in secular psychology, he emphasized the false self and the true self when describing the difficulties of both heterosexual and homosexual brokenness. Comiskey proposed that sexual and relational brokenness has layers: shame, sin, wounding, and weakness. Using Paul as a model for addressing weakness (1 Cor 12:7, 9), he defined weakness as a propensity toward habitual sin.[41] Comiskey also cautioned against cultivating the "gay self," arguing that its eventual fruit is same-sex sexual activity (p. 185).

Joe Dallas and Nancy Heche (2010) composed a comprehensive work covering cultural issues, possible etiologies, and counseling strategies. The authors did not address LGBT identities directly but indicated that genuine Christian strugglers rarely use LGB terminology. Denise Shick's (2014b) work on what she termed "gender confusion" included transformational narratives from Christians who have experienced gender dysphoria and cross-dress. Shick's (2014a) recommendations included disidentifying as transgender and examining one's emotional and relational history. She argued that identifying as transgender denied one's God-given gender.

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[41] Comiskey's Living Waters program has preserved an ethicospiritual approach, preserving the "language of sin" instead of culture's "secular language of recovery" (p. 94). In the past, Leanne Payne challenged Comiskey's ministry to strengthen their engagement of sin through the cross. Comiskey reported their response to this seminal event, saying, "Since then, we have made the cross, and confession of sin, [sic] central to all we do" (p. 95).

Evaluating Select Approaches in the Christian Community

In general, Christians respond to culture with different strategies and levels of cultural accommodation (see Niebuhr, 1951; Keller, 2012). Many authors consider the way the Christian message is communicated in a particular culture "contextualization" (e.g., Hesselgrave & Rommen, 2000; Osborne, 2006; Brown, 2007; Hiebert, 2009; Moreau, 2012).[42] This section will evaluate the various ways Christians contextualize their messages about the SSOd, the GIt, and LGBT identities, and we will plot each soul care tradition along a spectrum of cultural engagement.

Soul Care Traditions Along a Spectrum of Cultural Engagement

Plotting contextualization along a continuum, Tennent (2006) depicted two pernicious extremes of contextualization: extractionism and syncretism. Extractionism[43] contextualizes minimally or not at all (cf. Hiebert, 2009); it is an excessive cultural separation that renders the Christian message incomprehensible to a target population. On the other hand, higher levels of contextualization can devolve into syncretism, compromising the Christian message with too much cultural accommodation. By modifying Tennent's contextualization spectrum, we can map the main soul care traditions along two axes.[44] Figure 2 plots these and other approaches. Insomuch as each Christian approach represents a contextualization attempt, we can plot each's potential for extractionism and syncretism; orthodox and heterodox sexual ethics; and explicitly

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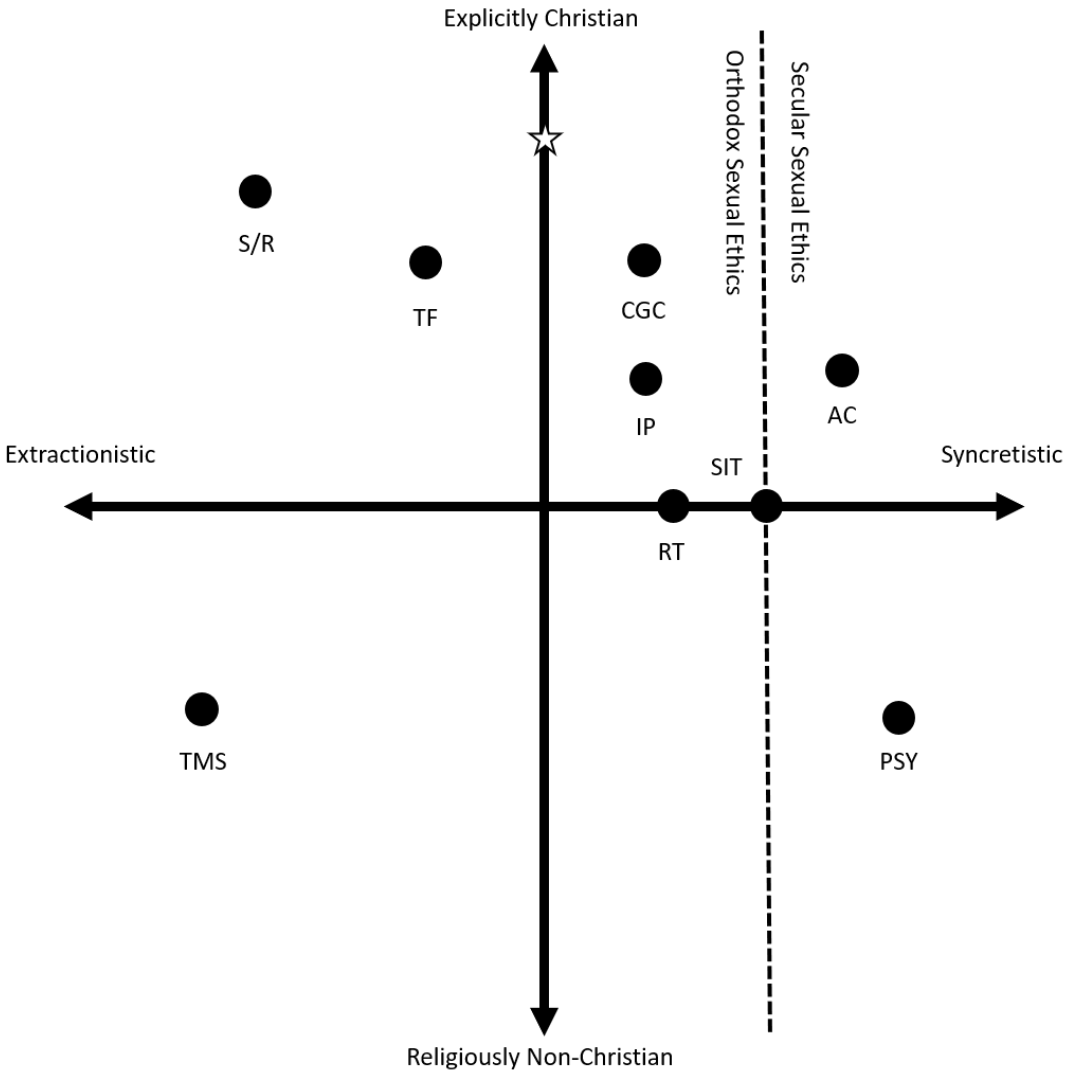
[42] Contextualization may generally refer to the "various ways groups have rejected or accommodated or embraced the particularities of a local context" (Tennent, 2006, p. 103)

[43] Tennent (2007) defined extractionism as the "excessive separation from one's cultural context" (p. 198). It occurs when "*either* the missionary insists that a person leave their culture or when new believers on their own accord leave their culture because they think it is inherently evil and cannot sustain Christian faith" (Tennent, 2006, p. 114, emphasis original).

[44] As noted earlier in this chapter, the Roman Catholic tradition is diverse and will have proponents across the spectrum. Figure 2 is admittedly reductionistic; its purpose is introductory. More detailed, nuanced analysis is warranted in future research.

Christian and religiously non-Christian emphases. Non-Christian approaches serve as comparisons. For instance, traditional Muslim sexuality will be extractionistic in Western contexts while at the same time promoting non-Christian beliefs. LGBT psychologies are similarly non-Christian but more fused with Western culture, thus syncretistic.

The soul care perspectives that maintain orthodox sexual ethics strike closer to the goal this project seeks. Figure 2 does not suggest a lack of quality contextualization among them but illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of each position. Antipathy develops among orthodox Christian views because these traditions do not share the same concepts and terminology. As MacIntyre (1988) observed, good communication relies on shared beliefs, institutions, and traditions of inquiry (p. 378). As interpretive



AC = Affirming Christianity
CGC = Chaste Gay Christians
IP = Integrationist Practitioners
PSY = Secular LGBT Psychologies
RT = Reorientation therapies
SIT = Sexual Identity Therapy
Star = Goal
S/R = Sin/Repentance-Focused
TF = Transformation-Focused
TMS = Traditional Muslim Sexuality

Figure 2. Approaches to LGBTQ+ issues on a spectrum of cultural engagement

communities, orthodox Christian approaches interpret terms like attraction, orientation, sexual identity, gender identity, essentialism, and integration differently.[45] Thus, we must

[45] Compare Frame's (1987) "quest for a reconciling theology": "We can analyze ambiguities, for often two positions that appear to be opposed are really compatible with one another, and we can see that compatibility once we express the positions more clearly. Also, we can be more self-critical. Self-criticism is a form of biblical humility that is necessary when we seek to rebuke others (Gal. 6:1; Matt. 7:1-5)" (p. 328).

translate across these subtraditions of historic Christianity and discern an approach that maximizes both faithfulness to the gospel and appropriate cultural accommodation.[46] The star in figure 2 plots a common goal for all Christian approaches.

According to Hiebert, Shaw, and Tiénou (1999), missionaries have multiple tools at their disposal as they strive for contextualization (p. 27).[47] As they observed, new believers *retain many practices* because they are inconsequential to the Christian life. Local churches will decide to *reject some practices* entirely given the "deep, hidden meanings of their old customs and their significance in the culture" (p. 28). Other beliefs may need *modification* or *explanation* (cf. Johnson, 2007) to present precise Christian meanings. Christians may also *substitute* their beliefs and practices by borrowing Christian practices from other cultures. Finally, believers may *invent rituals and symbols* that express Christian meaning using extant cultural forms. Hiebert et al. implored Christian leaders to "arrange the practices they have chosen into new ways that express the *Christian* meaning of the event" (p. 28). Johnson (2007) called this practice *transposition*—reconstituting ideas, terms, and practices within the Christian tradition.[48]

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[46] Hiebert (1987, 2008) argued that an ecclesial hermeneutical community puts a check on biased misinterpretations of Scripture and assists us as we approximate the external, transcendent reality.

[47] Compare Hiebert's types of contextualization to Johnson's (2007) appropriation of MacIntyre's (1988) translation across traditions. Johnson identified four types of translation: (1) transliteration, (2) paraphrase, (3) ideas/terms with explanation, and (4) substitution. First, some ideas may be transliterated into Christian psychology because they create minimal worldview conflicts and have no equivalent in the Christian tradition. In LGBT psychology, an example could be primary or secondary sexual characteristics. Additionally, the translator may paraphrase when two traditions signify the same referent. When referring to sexual interest in someone, Christians may prefer lust or desire to attraction. Anticipating transposition, Johnson warned that direct equivalence is rare. Too, the translator may need to supply an explanation or an "interpretive glosses" (MacIntyre, 1988, p. 379). Johnson explained that the translator might need to underscore additions, subtractions, or modifications made to ideas and terms as he translocates them from psychology into Christian discourse. Finally, some concepts or practices may be incommensurable. However, "the incommensurability of two schemes of belief in no way precludes their logical incompatibility" (MacIntyre, 1988, p. 380). Additionally, when translated ideas and concepts may compromise the primary tradition, substitution is appropriate. Hiebert's (1984, 1985, 1987) form of contextualization is called *critical contextualization*, and it enables missionaries to take cultural context seriously while faithfully proclaiming the gospel. Hiebert (2009) favors this approach because it avoids two pitfalls: the uncritical introduction of cultural forms into Christian practice and poor adaptation of the gospel in a target culture. This process is "critical" because "old beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination" (Hiebert, 1985, p. 186).

[48] Since many concepts and habits originate from lower orders of discourse higher levels of

Thus, five tools are available to the Christian: (1) retaining practices, (2) rejecting practices, (3) modifying or explaining practices, (4) substituting practices, or (5) creating new practices. The way Christians engage culture may determine the frequency with which they use specific contextualization tools. Across the following analysis, we will assume that all Christian approaches are engaging LGBT identities with one or more of these tools.

Evaluating Hill and Collins: Examples of the Chaste Gay Christian Approach

When conceptualizing sexual orientation, Hill (2013) helpfully recognized two ways of speaking (i.e., two languages) about sexual orientation. In one sense, we speak about the givenness of our maleness and femaleness and God's creative intent for our sexuality. Using this language, we can say that God did not create anyone gay or lesbian. In another sense, we speak about our experience of sexual orientation in a fallen world and what God, through his permissive will, intends for us to discover in our fallen condition. According to this language, having SSA is an opportunity to discover God's grace in our weakness (see Hill, 2016; 2 Cor 12:7-10). Thus, Hill often *explains* his orientation in this second sense. For him, sexual orientation describes his Christian life lived with reoccurring SSAs. Additionally, Hill (2014) believed that overusing repentance language would force SSOd Christians "to parse, ever more minutely and obsessively, how much of their desires for friendship, intimacy, companionship, community, etc. are a result of their sexual orientation" (para. 7). Hill feared that overemphasizing sin and repentance leads the SSOd to confuse holy social desires with desires for sex, dismissing good desires along with evil ones. Hill, then, observed a

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discourse (i.e., the ethical and spiritual orders) transform them. This process entails "recontextualizing and resignifying" these terms and concepts such that they approach God's holistic perspective (Johnson, 2007, p. 366). Transposition guards against modification of Christian teaching by modifying concepts and ideas instead. Thus, in this process, Christian orthodoxy transforms other kinds of discourse. These other kinds of discourse do not modify Christian teaching. The relationship between the two is hierarchical, not egalitarian.

consequential phenomenon: relational desires are complex for the SSOd.

On the other hand, Collins placed LGB-identification in a new category for the evangelical discussion: social identity. For Collins (2017a, 2017b), gay and lesbian identities are secondary gender identities (SGIs), while God's creative intent for maleness and femaleness are primary gender identities (PGIs). He argued Scripture's use of "virgin" and "widow" denote significant gender considerations beyond basic maleness and femaleness when a cultural context requires such usage. Overall, Collins shifted the discussion from sexuality to gender, considering gay an SGI. Also, Collins (2017a) affirmed the primacy of one's union with Christ as the basis of one's core identity. In a brief treatment of transgender issues, Collins pointed to Western culture's destabilizing effect on gender as the source for GI. He cautioned against medical treatments for transgender people, and he also challenged the notion that GI is a mind-only problem. In saying this, Collins highlighted possible physiological causes of GI; however, he did not promote gender-affirming treatments.

Finding *sexual orientation* and *sexual identity* as Freudian categories that restrict personhood, Collins (2017a) *invented*—or perhaps discovered and named—a concept to replace sexual orientation and sexual identity with a notion he considers more amenable to theology: an aesthetic orientation (AO).[49] This term describes the desire "that God set within the human heart the moment he created the first man and woman" to behold the beauty of others (p. 150). While problems attend Collins's application of this concept (see below), the concept helpfully describes the instinct that causes people to desire the other sex for marriage and the same sex for friendship. It considers our social nature more essential to our creation than our sexual desires. Collins also believed that LGB labels were sociocultural constructs. Rather than understanding "gay" as a kind of

[49] In terms of contextualization tools, Collins "invented" aesthetic orientation. This concept accompanies his belief that sexual orientation and sexual identity are too Freudian for Christian retrieval; they are *rejected* in his contextualization attempt.

person, Collins explored the effect of gayness on personhood. He concluded that SSAs were a kind of disability, specifically that same-sex orientations have "disordered elements" that inhibit healthy same-sex friendships and result in wrongly directed erotic desires (p. 190, 195). Overall, Collins *modifies* LGB identities and *transposes* them into a Christian discursive system. Collins helps us stop viewing gay people as a discrete kind and disrupts LGB labels as they are constructed in secular culture and affirming Christianity.

Beneficially, Collins's hierarchical model for gender identity makes God's creative intent for humanity primary and gendered experience in a fallen world secondary. The Christian faith, Collins argued, necessarily transforms the meaning of *gay* because the latter is contingent. Collins also differentiated between *Christian identity* and *the identity of a Christian*. Doing so, he adroitly exposed the problem of speaking of union with Christ primarily in terms of social identity. The master status he gives to union with Christ relegates the meaning of the gay self to a subservient position.

However, Hill and Collins's attempts to transform gayness may render it incommunicable to audiences both in the church and the LGBTQ+ community. Missing from their transformation of LGB labels is a clear exposition that differentiates the old self from the new self (e.g., Johnson, 2017). While they assume original sin and its pluriform effects on the SSOd, their articulation of sin is usually anemic.[50] Moreover, along with Coles (2017), Collins gives the impression that God made the SSOd with a fundamentally different personality.[51] This notion is problematic because same-sex

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[50] For an exception, see Collins and Coles (2017).

[51] Coles's (2017) memoir narrated the process through which he navigated his sexual orientation. As he reflected on his experience with SSA, he wondered what it looked like on the other side of the Fall (p. 46-47). He pondered if what made him different from straight people could be attributed to something unique about his creation. Collins is less explicit: Does his AO distinguish straight and gay people before or after the Fall? In other words, does he use the language of creation norms or phenomenology? He did explain that AOs may be transformed by the flesh so that they lead to sin. For Collins, gayness is not attributable to volition, childhood experiences like sexual abuse or bad parenting, exhibiting gay stereotypes, or being hypersexual.

orientations are multifactorial developments (cf. Yarhouse's (2010) term "equifinality"). Because we cannot identify a singular etiology, the only common factor all SSOd people share in a fallen world is the attractions themselves (see Burk, 2015).[52] While Collins believed an AO allows us to distinguish straight people and gay people,[53] this application of the concept is its Achilles heel. The concept fails to explain the case of a straight man who prefers the company of men or a straight woman who prefers the company of women. As Yuan (2018) argued, such possibilities cause Collin's fundamental distinctions between gay and straight people to collapse. Hill does better to root *difference* of SSAs in phenomenology rather than creation. Since chaste gay Christians use "insider language" like LGB labels and minority terminology, they also *appear* syncretistic to many traditional Christians (cf. Parshall, 1998, p. 407). As a result, this approach falls short of optimal contextualization.

Evaluating Yarhouse: An Example of the Integration-Based Approach

Importantly, Yarhouse assumed the biblical metanarrative while searching for an emic perspective to make sense of experiences like SSA and gender dysphoria (GD). Along with Jones, he also harmonized essentialist and constructionist accounts of the self (see chapter 6). As in Hiebert's phenomenological analysis, Yarhouse helpfully observed his target population and sought an emic, nuanced understanding of Christians who experience SSA. Careful population analysis allowed Yarhouse to observe sexual identity and the different weights individuals assign to its aspects. While secular psychology has

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[52] Gender nonconformity is an important factor, but it is not a universal experience for the same-sex attracted (cf. Yarhouse & Tan, 2004, pp. 72–74).

[53] More fully, Collins (2017a) explained: "If we are to speak of an aesthetic orientation and use it to differentiate between gay and straight, we would say that both gay men and straight women are, for example, less aware (in general) of the beauty of feminine personhood than straight men or lesbians. These general patterns that we discern in the way people experience the beauty of others are now the basis for distinguishing between straight and nonstraight orientations, rather than an impulse toward sexual activity" (p. 150).

sought to de-medicalize SSA and GI, Yarhouse (2008) has seized the moment to emphasize narrative in therapy. Narrative and meaning-making assist conservative Christians as they detangle their conflicts with their religious values. Most imitable, Yarhouse has shown respect for the diversity of conscience that leads to different kinds of orthodox soul-care paradigms.

Yarhouse (2019) described SIT as "implicit integration" and "an alternative protocol to SOCE [sexual orientation change efforts] and gay affirmative therapy" (p. xiii). The space his work made for Christian values in the American public square deserves respect. A secular psychologist following his protocols would respect the religious values of conservative Christians. With SIT, Yarhouse carefully delineated the sexual orientation identities that lead to affirming and orthodox sexual practices. Following distinctions made in the deaf community (see Yarhouse, 2013), Yarhouse (2019) suggested a distinction: "Gay," an identity strongly related to the mainstream LGBTQ+ community; and "gay," a transformed, alternative Christian construction (p. 65). This distinction rests on the generational (and cross-cultural) differences in the meaning of the word "gay" he observed: older individuals tend to associate gay with sexual behaviors and "lifestyles" while younger individuals associate gay with sexual orientation (p. 64). Thus, "It's possible that the speaker will intend one thing while the hearers determine another" (p. 64). In addition to careful label interpretation, Yarhouse (2015a) also suggested a transgender label could be *modified* with further explanations. When it comes to labels, Yarhouse employs a translation method that Johnson (2007) categorizes as *ideas/terms with* an *explanation*. Thus, transcending the impasse between religion and identities in many LGBT psychologies, his work suggests and perhaps warrants that those utilizing LGBT labels *modify them* to transform them with Christian meanings. At the same time, his SIT empowers Christian clients to *reject* LGB labels if their values warrant doing so.

The cost of the SITF has been less deep-level integration with Christian

thought. While Yarhouse (2010, 2015a) conceptualized SSA and GI as products of the Fall, he has been less theologically precise about the extent to which each is sinful. As many in the sin/repentance approach would contend, his conceptualization of SSA and GD underemploys the doctrine of sin (cf. Burk & Lambert, 2015; Butterfield, 2015; Strachan, 2016). While generally capturing GD and SSA's fallenness, he has yet to work out the implications of temptation, desire, original sin, and actual sin in relation to these phenomena. Given its weaker level of integration, SIT cannot serve as a robust soul-care paradigm in ecclesial contexts *by itself*. After all, it ultimately fails to challenge a client with gay-affirming values, and admonition is essential to Christian pastoral care (see Adams, 1970; Oden, 1989). Clients may leave therapy *retaining* their affirming values and pursuing same-sex relationships. Therefore, figure 2 distinguishes between Yarhouse's personal values and writings (and comparable integrationists) and the SIT framework. SIT sits at the border of Christian sexual ethics because it has multiple outcomes. The writings of integrationist practitioners tend to be more orthodox and explicitly Christian than SIT (see figure 2).[54] However, SIT may leave a client's affirming sexual values unchallenged.

Evaluating the LGBTQ-Affirming Christian Approach: An Example of Syncretism

The affirming Christian approach illustrates the pitfalls of excessive cultural accommodation. Contemporary affirming approaches have embraced social

[54] According to the AACC's (2014) *Code of Ethics*, "Christian counselors do not condone or advocate for the pursuit of or active involvement in homosexual, bisexual, or transgendered behaviors and lifestyles. Counselors may agree to and support the desire to work through issues of homosexual and transgendered identity and attractions but will not describe or reduce human identity and nature to sexual orientation or reference and will encourage sexual celibacy or biblically-prescribed sexual behavior while such issues are being addressed. Counselors acknowledge the client's fundamental right to self-determination and further understand that deeply held religious values and beliefs may conflict with same-sex attraction and/or behavior, resulting in anxiety, depression, stress, and inner turmoil" (para. 1-120-f, punctuation altered). As mentioned above, integrationist writings usually fall within the scope of the AACC's code of ethics.

constructionism uncritically—especially its descendant, queer theory—as their philosophical framework (Sanders, 2012; J. D. Hays, 2013, 2016; Sanders, 2016; Hoeft, 2016; I. Lee, 2016). These approaches question both the male/female binary and the heterosexual/homosexual binary that marked earlier approaches. In uncritically adopting this philosophical framework, affirming practitioners use a syncretistic foundation to understand LGBTQ+ people. Their radical cultural accommodation renders their approach largely indistinguishable from secular LGBT psychologies; the vestiges of an orthodox sexual ethic move it leftward in figure 2.[55] Despite this mostly constructionist orientation, Vines (2014) still made an essentialist claim regarding sexual orientation. Criticizing the distinction between sexual orientation with sexual behavior, he argued that personal wholeness for the SSOd is impossible without sexual expression: "Being gay cannot be compartmentalized so easily. Like heterosexuality, gay people's sexuality is a core part of what it means for them to be human" (pp. 168–169).[56] Thus, affirming Christianity employs modern essentialism—by promoting orientation essentialism—and social constructionism—by deconstructing male/female distinctions—in the least orthodox fashion.

In Marshall's (2017) affirming pastoral approach to people "who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer (LGBTQ)," she distanced herself from celibate gay Christians and the orthodox theology that leads them to celibacy (p. 60). Strikingly, Marshall assumed the reality of LGBTQ identification and neglected any discussion about the potential for religious conflict, simply directing readers with a "conserving approach" towards "a progressive or life-affirming perspective" (p. 64). According to

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[55] Affirming Christianity can be distinguished from secular LGBT psychology in two ways: (1) promotion of Christian identity (see discussion below) and (2) promotion of monogamous same-sex relationships instead of promiscuous ones (see Brownson, 2013, pp. 251–255).

[56] Vines is not arguing that sexuality, in general, is a core part of theological anthropology here. He is arguing that one's same-sex orientation *and* its entailed sexual behaviors are a core part of human flourishing.

Marshall, sin, the male-female binary, "the heteronormative understanding of fidelity and faithfulness," and restrictive ethics are obstacles to LGBTQ flourishing (p. 65). As Marshall sees it, orthodox Christian sexuality creates the conflict, and the narratives behind LGBTQ identities can go unexamined.

Affirming theologians have also offered some unexpected conclusions about Christian identity. Kathy Rudy (1997) argued that "our primary identification is and ought to be Christian; any identification that takes precedence over our baptism is to be avoided" (p. 97). In context, Rudy promoted Christian identity to prevent Christian groups from separating based on first-order theological issues like same-sex relationships (see Mohler, 2007). Jensen (2013) similarly used Christian identity to foster unity between gay and straight people. Even though Jensen makes Christian identity primary, he believes it still legitimizes same-sex marriage and the ordination of those in same-sex relationships. For both of these authors, Christian identity unites secular sexual ethics and Christianity (see representation in figure 2). Overall, affirming theologians *retain* practices indigenous to the LGBTQ+ community and *modify* them slightly to mirror monogamous male-female marriages. As a result, affirming Christianity is both syncretistic and severely inconsistent with historic Christianity.

Evaluating Butterfield, Burk, and Strachan: Examples of the Sin/Repentance Approach

Those taking a sin/repentance approach have thoroughly contemplated the role of original sin in constituting experiences like SSA and GI.[57] In doing so, they have preserved Christianity's prophetic voice in Western culture. While adherents of affirming

[57] Twenty-five years ago, Welch (1995) masterfully reorganized prevailing development theories by making one's "sinful orientation" the sufficient cause of SSA (p. 27). He made other potential causes secondary, but he did not dismiss them out of hand. Proponents of the sin/repentance approach made similar arguments in the 2010s, but they have become more agnostic on the etiology of SSA (see Burk, 2015).

Christianity fuse their theology with cultural trends, the sin/repentance approach is appropriately countercultural and mindful of the faith Christians have received. Proponents like Burk (2015) and Strachan (2015, 2016) have probed the Scriptures and historical Christian tradition deeply and scrutinized SSA and GI's moral condition as a result. Inspired by Hannon (2014), Burk (2015) and Butterfield (2015a) have used social constructionism's arguments adroitly to destabilize orientation essentialism. Their pragmatic use of constructionist rhetoric appropriately challenges the idea that our sexual desires—as we know them in a fallen world—are central to our personality.

Those critical of the label "gay Christian," like Burk, Butterfield, and Strachan, define *gay* in terms of a desire for gay sex. Consequently, they rightly argue that Christians who use gay as an identifier might miscommunicate their beliefs about sexuality. Butterfield rightly criticized this construction because it is a "limiting adjective" (p. 115). As she suggested, the adjective "gay" alters the noun "Christian." Indeed, it should be the other way around: a Christian's faith transforms his or her gayness. The construction also does not by itself differentiate between commitments to historic Christianity and affirming Christianity. The sin/repentance approach thus supports *substituting* LGB labels with "same-sex attraction."

However, this approach tends to obscure the *Christian's life lived with* SSA. For those that use them, terms like "same-sex attracted," "same-sex oriented," or "gay" may also evoke associated forms of internal suffering[58] and alienation that correlate with less common sinful desires (Butterfield, 2015, p. 116; Hambrick, 2016; Burrus, 2018; cf. Yuan, 2016, pp. 23–29). At present, SSOd Christians navigate their experiences with rare Christian role models (see Yarhouse, 2015) and grapple with the risk of disclosing their experiences to others. They also wrestle with the shame that their sin struggles are worse

[58] Thanks to T. R. Schreiner for pointing out the difference between internal and external suffering in Scripture. For the most part, "suffering" in this dissertation will refer to internal suffering. The appropriate biblical analog would be "groaning" (see Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 5:2).

than others' (N. Collins, 2017a). They may also associate these terms with harrowing childhood experiences, mostly as others disparaged them as "gay" or "trans," because they did not conform to gender stereotypes (e.g., boys with feminine physical features or artistic interests and girls with athletic builds or mechanical interests). While some may be right that a desire for same-sex eroticism may be at the center of these terms (and a cause for group cohesion in the mainstream LGB community), the full meaning of these terms to many who experience them—whether Christian or non-Christian—is not *merely* the sum of their desires for sex. Since the associations with these labels are more complex than sinful desires, they warrant a fuller biblical approach that addresses the interaction of sin and suffering. Figure 2 depicts the sin/repentance approach as explicitly Christian yet extractionistic because it overlooks the contours of a life lived with SSA or GI in Western cultural contexts.

Additionally, Burk's (2015; see Burk & Lambert, 2015; Strachan, 2015) contention that same-sex temptations qua intrusive same-sex desires always require repentance is questionable as well. James 1:13-15 is often a locus for this discussion. Commentators see similarities between it and the Genesis account of original sin. Whereas the serpent is the obvious tempter in Genesis 3, James says that people tempt themselves when "they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed" (Jas 1:14 NIV). Post-fall, our own "innate tendency towards sin" drags us away and entices us (Moo, 2009, p. 99). While Burk suggested that sinful desires need repentance in the same way sin does, Moo (2009) argued that "desire, in itself is not sin. It is only when a person, by an act of the will, assents to its enticement that sin results" (p. 100). Following James, we can distinguish between a desire being *sinful* and *sinning* when the will joins with that desire (see Piper, 2012; Johnson, 2017; Burrus, 2018). *Intrusive desires* are not the same as *desiring*. When the will joins sinful desires, John Owen (2006) calls this personal act *actual sin*, and he says that "without the consent of the will sin cannot be committed" (p. 333). Attractions qua temptations are certainly moments for faithful, Godward movement

(Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 10:13), but they are not moments for repentance if repentance means turning from actual sin.[59]

Evaluating Comiskey: An Example of the Transformation-Focused Approach

Usefully, Comiskey (2003) commended reinterpreting SSAs as contorted attempts "to secure love from our own gender" (pp. 190–191). Following 1 Corinthians 12, Comiskey (2010) also suggested that the SSOd, by virtue of their "difference" in weakness, edified the stronger members of the body and challenged them to engage the unseen parts of their own brokenness (p. 206). He ascribed a positive role to the SSOd and, by extension, GIt Christian. For Comiskey, striving for wholeness extends beyond the presence or absence of attractions to all people. Influenced by Payne (1991/1996), he argued that "each of us possesses unaffirmed aspects of our humanity that must be identified and integrated into the new self Jesus has raised from the dead" (p. 142).[60] For Comiskey (2003), broken heterosexual people, along with the SSOd, need transformation of their whole personality (see p. 41ff). His argument helpfully disputes the notion that heterosexual sin is "normal."

Comiskey's position challenges popular characterizations of the transformationist perspective or perhaps improves upon the weaknesses of earlier ex-gay emphases. Parallel to the way chaste, LGB-identified Christians have transformed the meaning of *gay*, Comiskey has transformed the meaning of *heterosexual*, by redefining it in nearly pre-sexual terms to refer to something more fundamental about humanity:

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[59] If both attraction and fear are similar as emotion/arousal states, Welch's (2015) comment is in order: "But not all spiritual problems need repentance. Fear, for example, is typically not answered with repentance but with a growing knowledge of God and faith in him. . . . Other spiritual problems call for growth, which typically includes knowing Christ better, understanding what happened in his death and resurrection, living out of that reality and accumulating wisdom" (p. 9). Thanks to S. R. Williams for bringing this text to my attention.

[60] According to Payne (1991/1996), integration entails differentiating the old self from the new self (p. 26).

sexual complementarity. Thus, he *modified* the term's meaning. Whereas some have redefined gay to mean a capacity for same-sex friendship, Comiskey believed "heterosexual" entails the capacity for opposite-sex friendship. Orientation change is not a central emphasis for Comiskey; instead, he emphasized the believer's union with Christ and cross-centered transformation. As for the origin of SSA, Comiskey (2003) recognized it has a "multicausal base" because "biology, family environment, culture, and early sexual behavior all contribute to sexual development" (p. 186). Thus, he moderated the parent-blaming focus of past ex-gay ministries (p. 186).

However, Comiskey's redefinition of "heterosexual" is vulnerable to similar critiques as Collins and Hill's transformation of "gay." The term may connote both moral and immoral forms of male-female sexuality more than the kind of opposite-sex relating Comiskey intends. If we are to communicate God's creational intentions for sexuality as "heterosexuality," the concept needs qualifiers (e.g., "covenanted heterosexuality"). As Comiskey equates the "gay self" with the old self and associates new creation with heterosexuality (p. 191), he may lead some readers to believe that *all* SSOd Christian should prepare for heterosexual relationships even though marriage ceases in the new creation (Matt 22:30 // Mark 12:25 // Luke 20:35).[61] His Barthian point is still well-taken: maleness and femaleness and the relation between the two is essential to creation. Further, his approach to sociocultural labeling tends to have an extractionist relationship with Western culture (see figure 2), though his *replacement* of the secular drive for authenticity with a Christian version of the true self is more in tune—and thus contextualized—with LGBTQ+ experience.

Comiskey relies in part on Nicolosi's reparative therapy (RT). Given its historical associations with evolutionary theory and naturalism (see chapter 3), RT might

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[61] Taken as a whole, Comiskey's writings do not leave this impression. He puts forth both celibacy and monogamous heterosexual marriage as potential paths for the same-sex attracted.

communicate that *any* heterosexual relation is good because the species might be propagated.[62] Due to misconceptions and intentional disparagement, ministries associated with RT are presently missiologically inert in the LGBTQ+ community. Without Christian modification, RT also shares many of the same problems as Yarhouse's SIT. Neither leads a client toward orthodox Christian beliefs about God and sexuality *by themselves*. As a result, they are more useful in the public square than in pastoral situations without significant adaptation. Payne and Comiskey have undoubtedly processed RT through robust theology, but an association with reorientation therapies inhibits Christian witness in many contemporary LGBTQ+ contexts. Nicolosi Jr.'s (2018) reintegrative protocol may provide a way out of this impasse because it does not pursue orientation change from the outset.

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[62] Desiring to avoid a genetic fallacy here, my point is that reparative therapy may not have thoroughly disconnected itself from its predecessors' naturalism and evolutionary assumptions.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL, AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN CHRISTIAN SOUL CARE

Biblical Foundations for Sexuality and Gender

Historically and foundationally, Christian soul care for the LGBT-identified begins with Scripture.[1] The main challenge in reading Scripture with an eye for LGBT identities is hermeneutical. Every text in Scripture has a historical-cultural setting that shaped its terminology. LGBT-identification is a modern cultural artifact, characteristic of late-modern Western culture (Yarhouse, 2010; Williams, 2011). Believing that the God who knows all of history inspired Scripture, we can conclude that Scripture still speaks to contemporary LGBT identification with authority—by way of significance and the illumination of the Holy Spirit—even though it does not name it (Osborne, 2006, pp. 417–420; Vanhoozer, 1998/2009, p. 413).[2] In this section, we will explore Scripture's sexual and gendered themes, both within specific texts and across its overarching narrative.[3] Since Scripture's narratives form personal identity (Stroup, 1981, p. 252), they

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[1] At this point, we should acknowledge the current theological divide on the meaning and significance of same-sex sexual activity in Scripture. Recent works taking an affirming view include Loader (2012), Brownson (2013), Vines (2014), and Lee (2013). Those articulating an orthodox view include Gagnon (2003), Grenz (1998), DeYoung (2015), and Mohler (2014). While investigating the biblical evidence regarding these issues is important, we do not have space to do so. This section reads Scripture with pastoral concern for same-sex sexual activity and gender expression, assuming an orthodox perspective.

[2] We can locate behaviors like same-sex sexual activity, cross-dressing, and gender expression in the biblical writings, throughout church history, and in our modern context. Unlike identities, embodied behaviors are less socially constructed and, therefore, have more transcultural consistency.

[3] Around seven texts speak explicitly about same-sex sexual activity, and about five texts are particularly relevant to the experience of gender incongruence. James Brownson (2013) listed seven texts regarding same-sex sexual activity: Gen 19, Lev 18:22, Lev 20:13; Judg 19; Rom 1:2–27; 1 Cor 6:9; 1Tim 1:10; and Jude 7. In Owen Strachan's (2016) discussion of gender dysphoria, he identified five texts

inform sexual identity—the substructure of sexuality and gender—as well. As the starting point for pastoral theology, Scripture teaches us how to "improvise" our care of LGBTQ+ people with canonical consistency (cf. Vanhoozer, 2005, p. 335).

Genesis 1–2: The Creation Narratives

The first few chapters of Genesis invite us to ask questions about human identity (Lints, 2015). Through narrative, the Scriptures establish our fundamental created identity. More specifically, these texts shape the framework for a Christian sexual essentialism through their discussion of sexual differentiation and procreation. Davidson (2007) highlighted ten facets of sexuality in the OT that begin in these first chapters (and find fulfillment in the NT as well): a connection to the created order, the male-female form, monogamy, equality of the sexes,[4] the wholeness of humanity as male and female, exclusivity, permanence, intimacy, procreation, and the holy beauty of sexuality. In what follows, we will consider those facets most relevant to the formation of sexual and gendered self-understanding: the creation of sex (male and female in bodily form), the creation of gender, the creation of sexual intercourse, the role of procreation in male-female relationships, and the beauty of sexuality.

First, the creation narratives (Gen 1–2) established a straightforward foundation for sex. God made humans in his image (1:26), and the author specified humanity's creation as male and female (v. 27). The exegetical evidence leads some scholars to conclude sexual differentiation—being made male and female—speaks of humanity's creation in the image of God (Grenz, 2001, pp. 269–273; Sailhamer, 1992, pp. 94–96). A relational view of the *imago Dei* reminds us that human sexual differentiation reflects the differentiation of Persons in the Godhead (Barth, 1958, p.

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specifically helpful: Gen 1–2, Gen 3, Deut 22:5, Matt 19, and 1 Cor 11.

[4] While we can agree with Davidson regarding the ontological equality of men and women, we can still argue that Gen 1–2 still establishes male headship (Ortlund, 1991/2006).

186).[5] As Barth (1958) explained, humans share male-female differentiation with animals, but the text's focus on humanity's sexual differences demonstrates how they imitate God. Being male and female is the most basic distinction in human relationships constituting the self-understanding of the whole human community (Westermann, 1987). Immediately following this declaration, the author recalled God's command to be fruitful and fill the earth (v. 28). Illuminating the covenantal purpose of human sexuality in the first creation narrative, Mathews (1996) stated,

> There is no place in God's good order for unisexuality or for any diminishing or confusion of sexual identity. Human sexuality in Genesis is a blessed function in the creative purposes of God, and it is essential for carrying out God's mandate for humanity (cf. 9:1, 7) and for the patriarchs in particular (e.g., 12:1-3; 26:24; 28:3-4). Whereas in the flood story there is reference to the sexuality of animals (7:2-3), in the creation account there is no mention of their sexuality or procreation: human procreation is not intended merely as a mechanism for replication or the expression of human passion but is instrumental in experiencing covenant blessing (pp. 173–174).

Upon a simple reading, we find that Genesis 1 presents a sexual binary (male and female) in the account of the creation of humanity and establishes the male and female's role in procreation. Also, God designed gender identity (one's sense of being male or female) to conform to male and female bodies, which were expressions of his image.

In the second creation narrative (Gen 2), the Lord created man and placed him in the garden "to work it and watch over it" (v. 15 CSB). According to Paul, God's creation of the man first foreshadows their unique roles (1 Tim 2:13). Finding the man's solitary condition inadequate, the Lord God fashioned a "helper corresponding to him" (v. 18).[6] Her status as a helper signified no less dignity than the man, for even God is called a helper (Pss 20:2, 121:2, 124:8) (Mathews, 1996, p. 214). According to Collins

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[5] This statement should not be taken to mean the image of God *is* and *only is* sexual differentiation, per Frame's (1991/2006) critique of Barth (1958). Helpfully, Frame also challenges Barth's premise that the bearer of the image is both male and female. He argues that individuals, as male and female, still bear the image of God. Even with these weaknesses, a relational view of the imago Dei can be seen as one component of our resemblance to God, among others (E. L. Johnson, 2017, pp. 82–87).

[6] Scholars like Gagnon (2003) contend that God separated a binary human into two beings in this narrative, making their subsequent marriage a reunion (p. 61).

(2017a), this second narrative established gender. The unique, Edenic society formed by Adam, Eve, and the Lord God established the first cultural context for masculinity and femininity.

Finally, man's first words in Scripture described the woman as "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (v. 23). The language used is a covenantal formula and speaks of loyalty and solidarity (Brueggemann, 1970). Thus, "a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh" (v. 24). Affirming the significance of physical union and marital fidelity suggested in this verse, Mathews (1996) clarified, "Monogamous heterosexual marriage was always viewed as the divine norm from the outset of creation. Mosaic instruction shows considerable efforts to safeguard this ideal against its dissolution by clarifying what is 'family'" (p. 224). Here, Mathews means that male-female marriage is the norm for sexual expression and family formation. So, the norm established for sexuality is a covenantal, opposite-sex union.

Genesis 3: The Fall of Humanity and the Curse

After the first chapters of Genesis established God's creative intent for sexual identity and gender, the man and the woman's fall has sexually differentiated consequences in Genesis 3. First, Eve was the interlocutor engaging the serpent (vv. 1-5). According to Paul, the serpent deceived Eve but not Adam (2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14). Even so, Eve's husband participated with her in disobeying God's command, eating the fruit, and reaping the consequences of "opened eyes" (Gen 3:6-7 CSB). Paul identified Adam's disobedience as the act which made many sinners (Rom 5:19). Some commentators have speculated that failing to intervene in the serpent's temptation of his wife signaled Adam's abandonment of his God-intended role as the servant leader of their relationship (e.g., Ortlund, 1991/2006). Dispensing judgment to the sinful couple, the Lord God promised Eve intensified affliction in labor and an ambiguous desire for her husband (Gen 3:16). Commentaries disagree on the meaning of the woman's desire

(תְּשׁוּקָה), with some describing it as a desire for his leadership position and others interpreting it as a desire for the woman to be subject to the man instead of his partner.[7] The man is sentenced to difficult labor and consternation as he acquires food (Gen 3:18-19).

Intriguingly, translators identify Adam and Eve as the "man" and the "woman" throughout the discourse of Genesis 3:1-19 (CSB). Mathews (1996) suggested the author purposefully conveys ambiguity about the personal name of Adam because he "is both a person and also Everyman" (p. 215). Overall, the judgment oracle reveals that the man and women have unique roles: the man works the ground for food, and the woman gives birth to children. Thus, the curse has sexually differentiated consequences, affecting man's "cultural responsibility" and the woman's "familial responsibility" (E. L. Johnson, 2018, p. 161). As a result of the Fall, husbands and wives often find themselves tempted to overplay or underplay their roles. Some husbands are tempted to subjugate their wives while others desire to abdicate their headship responsibilities entirely. Some wives are tempted to display servility and inferiority, but others long to seize or undermine their husband's authority.

The Pentateuch

The narratives of the Pentateuch present procreative uses of sex positively and its immoral uses negatively. Adam and his descendants fulfilled God's procreative commandment by "knowing" (יָדַע) their wives, and their wives conceive and bear children (Gen 4:1, 4:17, 4:25). The genealogies of chapter five retell humanity's fulfillment of the command to procreate. Before the flood, "the sons of God saw that the

[7] According to Mathews (1996), since תְּשׁוּקָה ("desire") is a tris legomenon, interpretations vary according to two other uses in Gen 4:7 and Song 7:10. A similar construction in Gen 4:7 leads him to conclude, along with Foh (1975), that this verse "describes a struggle for mastery between the sexes" (p. 251). Davidson (1973) believed the desire was "to bring the woman not into partnership but into subjection (p. 45).

daughters of mankind were beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives for themselves" (Gen 6:2). Sailhamer (1992) rejected competing interpretations of this verse to conclude that Genesis 6:1-4 serves as an epilogue to chapter five, making these verses a positive summary of procreation and marriage (pp. 120–121). God's command to be fruitful and multiply is repeated after the flood (Gen 9:7).

After the tower of Babel, the Lord promised Abraham that his descendants would multiply into a great nation, live in the land of Canaan, and become the means of a global blessing (Gen 12:1-3, 13:14-17, 17:4-8). The sign of this covenant is circumcision (Gen 17:9-14). Circumcision reminded Abraham and his offspring that sex and procreation are a means of fulfilling God's covenant with Abraham (Goldingay, 2003). In fact, circumcision circumscribed the functions of one's sexuality because sexual actions must be "disciplined and dedicated to God" (p. 202). Throughout the narrative, Abraham's settling in the land of Canaan is contrasted with Lot's settling in Sodom with men who "were wicked, great sinners against the LORD" (Gen 13:12 CSB).

Perceiving the pervasive wickedness in Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord searched the cities for a remnant of righteous people (Gen 18:20–33). When two angels visited Sodom, Lot quickly urged them to stay in his house (Gen 19:1-3). Soon, the men of Sodom surrounded Lot's house and demanded to "know" (יָדַע) Lot's guests (v. 5), an act that Lot condemned as wicked (v. 7). The angels determined to destroy Sodom because "the outcry against its people is so great before the LORD" (v. 13 CSB). Commentators disagree over the reason for Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction; some cite socio-economic reasons, and others cite sexual immorality. The Scriptural witness indicates multiple reasons: their blatant sin (Isa 3:9); pride, neglecting the poor and needy despite abundant food, haughtiness, performing abominable acts (Ezek 16:48–50); neglecting hospitality (Luke 10:10-12) (R. A. J. Gagnon, 2001); ungodliness, sensual conduct, and lawlessness (2 Pet 2:6-8); and committing sexual immorality and pursuing σαρκὸς ἑτέρας ("other flesh," Jude 7 CSB). Some texts from the Apocrypha list arrogance

and vice (3 Macc 2:5; cf. Sir 16:8) and not listening to the Lord (4 Esdr 2:8-9). However, the residents' engagement in same-sex sexual activity was a necessary and sufficient cause for these cities' destruction (R. A. J. Gagnon, 2001), and *both* rape and same-sex sexual activity violate God's revealed moral norms (Hamilton, 2014). Sexual immorality was essential to Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction even though their wickedness expressed itself in other ways. Diachronically, biblical texts associate these cities with God's judgment, anger, and wrath (Deut 29:23; Isa 1:9-10, 13:19; Jer 23:14-15, 49:18, 50:40; Lam 4:6; Amos 4:11; Zeph 2:9; Matt 10:15, 11:23-24; Luke 10:12; 17:29; Rom 9:29). Arriving at a wrong interpretation of these verses has disastrous consequences for the soul.

Sexual intercourse became associated with idolatry in the narratives of the Pentateuch. The episode with the golden calf (Exod 32) and the worship of Baal at Peor (Num 25) exhibits Israel's disobedience, despite God's commandment love Him with their whole being (Deut 6:5). Davidson (2007) connected these idolatrous events to sexual immorality. In the golden calf incident, the people "rose up to play" (Exod 32:8 ESV) after offering sacrifices to the idol. Davis (1986) explained that the Israelites' "play" intimates "illicit and immoral sexual activity which normally accompanied fertility rites found among the Canaanites who worshipped the god Baal" (p. 295). When God judged the Israelites via plague and twenty-four thousand died (Num 25:9), Paul attributed these deaths to their indulgence in sexual immorality (1 Cor 10:8). Notably, Baal at Peor was a Canaanite god associated with sexual immorality. Given Israel's propensity for sexual immorality during their pursuit of the promised land, God's laws concerning sexuality come as no surprise.

Through OT law, God prepared souls for his superior therapeutic intervention (Christ's life, death, and resurrection) by giving civil, ceremonial, and moral norms (E. L. Johnson, 2007, p. 30). The Decalogue prohibited both adultery (Exod 20:14) and coveting a neighbor's wife (Exod 20:17). The Levitical law expressly prohibited same-

sex sexual activity, naming it an "abomination" (Lev 18:22, 20:13 ESV). As the divine law established religious practices for Israel, women seemed to be excluded from the priesthood in the Ancient Near East because a female priest might be too closely associated with the pagan fertility rites of the surrounding nations (R. M. Davidson, 2007, p. 106). The law also considered wearing the opposite sex's clothing an "abomination" (Deut 22:5). Also, males with damaged or excised genitals were prohibited from entering the LORD's assembly (Deut 23:1). At this point in Scripture, many readers agonize over what norms still apply today, for non-kosher foods are also considered abominations (Deut 14:30). However, some formerly named abominations, such as making and worshipping idols (Deut 7:25, 27:15) and having honest trading practices (Deut 25:6), still apply. The remaining witness of Scripture affirms these continuing moral norms. In particular, Leviticus 18 called for the Israelites to guard their sexual practices, given the religious influence of the Egyptians and Canaanites (Mohrmann, 2004). At this point, we should notice that the law stipulates norms for sexuality and gender, instructing Israel to avoid the practices of the nations. In this way, the law provides us a moral framework to guide sexual and gender-based behaviors.

The Prophets and the Writings

In the days when every Israelite "did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6; Judg 21:25), a situation oddly similar to the events at Sodom and Gomorrah occurred. A Levite, his servant, and his concubine spent the night in Gibeah (Judg 19:15). After being taken into a sojourner's house, the "worthless" men of the city pounded on the door and demanded an opportunity to "know" the man (v. 22). Knowing their intended activity is "vile" and wicked, the host offered them his daughter and the Levite's concubine, resulting in her rape and the concubine's death (vv. 25-28). This troubling passage depicts the excesses of locals' same-sex lust and the failure of the men to protect their loved ones from rape. As Nidith (1982) explained, a male raping another male is

especially wicked because such intercourse exemplified the disordering of family structures in Israel.

The Song of Songs also features the male-female dyad prominently. In fact, Trible (1978) expounded Canticles through the lens of Genesis 2–3, saying it "recovers the love that is bone of bone and flesh of flesh" (p. 144). Davidson (2007) added that the book affirms the male-female structure for erotic love and hints that sexuality's purpose goes beyond procreation alone. He believed the book itself is the height of an OT theology of sexuality, identifying Canticles 8:6 as the apex of the book. Here, the woman entreated, "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD" (Cant 8:6 ESV). Given the intertextuality and shared language of this passage with Isaiah 6:1-4 and Daniel 7:9-10, Davidson concluded that this verse characterizes sex as "holy love" (p. 630). In fact, "This is not in the cultic sense, as with the sacralization of sex in fertility cults, but 'holy' as God is holy—unique, 'set apart' from the secular and for relationship" (p. 630). Canticles conserves the holiness of sexual practices, setting them in the context of God's creational and ethical goods.

The Gospels and Acts

In the NT, Jesus is the good shepherd (Matt 26:31; Mark 6:34, 14:27; John 10:1-18) whose soul/heart-oriented discussions and healings prepare his hearers for the coming kingdom of God (Matt 13:44; Mark 10:15; Luke 8:10, 9:11; John 3:5). Notably, his commentary on the Decalogue expands sexual immorality beyond behavior to the lusts of the heart (Matt 5:28). Citing the opening chapters of Genesis, Jesus reaffirmed the integrity[8] of God's human creation as male and female (Matt 19:4-5 // Mark 10:6-9).

[8] Yarhouse's (2013) three frameworks influence the use of 'integrity' here (see pp. 44-53). Yarhouse derived the term from Gagnon (2007), who speaks of the "sacred integrity of maleness or femaleness stamped on one's body" (p. 1).

Jews during Jesus' time would have been aware of same-sex sexual practices among the Gentiles, yet he affirmed the male-female precedent for marriage indicated in the Pentateuch (R. A. J. Gagnon, 2001, pp. 193–194). In the same passage, Jesus also recognized those born as eunuchs and those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of God (Matt 19:11-12). Biblical scholars have developed a renewed interest in the eunuch, given the challenges of transgender issues in the postmodern context. The three clauses here (v. 12) indicate three types of eunuchs, two of which correspond to Jewish conceptions (by birth or by man), and the third refers to those who become eunuchs "on the basis of" the kingdom of heaven (Nolland, 2005, p. 777). According to Nolland, Matthew describes a kind of eunuch living out marital abstinence. As he interpreted it, "some people will sense the challenge to forego the possibility of marriage for the sake of the call of the kingdom of heaven" (p. 781).

In the Acts of the Apostles, Philip encountered an Ethiopian eunuch reading the book of Isaiah (Acts 8:26-40). After explaining the Scriptures about Jesus, Philip baptized him (vv. 35-36). In fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 56:3-8), and despite Deut 23:1, Phillip welcomed one of the "outcasts of Israel" into the faith (Wilson, 2014, p. 410).[9] While this does not upend God's previously revealed norms for sexuality and gender as some would wish, it demonstrates that no one is too far from Christ. Later, after Paul addressed the apostles and elders concerning the circumcision of the Gentiles, they wrote this command: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality [πορνεία]. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell" (Acts 15:28-29 ESV). Hays (1996) focused on the term πορνεία and suggested it recalls the sexual

[9] Notably, Wilson's (2014) gender-expanding discussion still uses a masculine pronoun when referring to the eunuch.

prohibitions of Leviticus 18:6-30, the passage prohibiting same-sex sexual activity. He accentuated this passage to show how Gentile converts would have been required to follow "minimal purity prohibitions in order to have fellowship with the predominantly Jewish early church" (p. 383). While a weak argument for abstention today, the apostles' and elders' pastoral teachings suggest the continued relevance of Leviticus 18 to believers in the new covenant.

The Epistles and Revelation

In this section, we will address the texts concerning same-sex sexual activity and gender expression separately.

Texts concerning same-sex sexual activity. In the NT, four texts speak about gay sex: Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:10, and Jude 7. First, set within a broader discussion of God's wrath against human idolatry, Paul addressed same-sex eroticism in Romans 1:18-2:4 with sober pastoral concern. Though scholars of various stripes disagree on what Paul condemned here, Hays (1986) understood it as a condemnation of same-sex sexual activity. Paul censured these acts because they distorted God's created order. Hays (1996) considered this passage "the most crucial text for Christian ethics concerning homosexuality," citing the clarity of its theological exposition (p. 383). Paul explained that the ungodly "exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things" (1:23 ESV). Beale (2008) believed Paul recalls the narrative of the golden calf here. He also noted similar language in Psalm 106:20, which reads, "They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass." The sexual innuendo of Exodus 32 also comes to mind. According to Paul, God released the ungodly "in the lusts of their hearts to impurity" so that they "worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (vv. 24-25). Paul's pastoral concern with same-sex lust and sexual activity is their idolatrous character—robbing God of the glory and worship due him.

Paul continues his exposition on the disorder of same-sex sexual activity, saying that men and women "exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature [παρὰ φύσιν]" (vv. 26-27). According to Gagnon (2003), some affirming scholars have argued that Paul condemns pederasty or abusive relations in the NT, not loving same-sex relationships. However, in ancient Mediterranean culture, female sexual relations (v. 26) did not involve children (R. A. J. Gagnon, 2003, p. 348; Köstenberger & Jones, 2010, p. 214). Paul's use of language from the creation narrative indicates that he saw same-sex sexual activity as an idolatrous reversal of God's creation (Schreiner, 1998). Sorting through other textual evidence in addition to this passage, Schreiner concluded, "Sexual sin, specifically homosexuality, is the product of idolatry" (p. 92). Beale (2008) further connected this passage to Romans 12, saying, "Paul is exhorting Christians to present 'their bodies' in religious 'service' to God instead of participating in an idolatrous liturgical 'service' in which 'their bodies' become dishonored because they present their bodies immorally to others of the same sex" (p. 217). Paul's pastoral aim in Romans 1:18-32 is to challenge self-righteousness and reveal the sinfulness of all people (R. B. Hays, 1996). Thus, his conclusion—"God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance" (Rom 2:4)—is a helpful key in interpreting Romans 1 (Kreider & Mitchell, 2016). Emphasizing sin, idolatry, repentance, and God's glory, Paul reminded the reader of the dangers of sexual lusts and practices.

Paul's two other references to same-sex coitus (1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Tim 1:10), along with Romans 1, comprise the most specific condemnations of same-sex sexual practices in the NT. Paul warned of the eternal consequences of the homosexual vice (i.e., gay sex) while underscoring God's redemption. Paul informed the Corinthians that "the sexually immoral (πόρνοι)," "effeminate males who play the sexual role of females [μαλακοὶ]," and "males who take other males to bed [ἀρσενοκοῖται]" would not inherit the

kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gagnon, 2001, pp. 303–304).[10] Gagnon (2001) described the μαλακοὶ as men who feminized themselves in "appearance" and "manner" to engage in intercourse with men (p. 312). Thus, this passage has implications for both same-sex sexual activity and gender presentations that falsely masculinize or feminize one's appearance. Since Paul likely coined ἀρσενοκοῖται from the LXX, he connected the practice to Leviticus 18:22 and affirmed the law's applicability in the NT age (R. B. Hays, 1996).[11] In 1 Timothy 1:10, Paul used ἀρσενοκοίταις to describe those who practice that which "is contrary to sound doctrine" (ESV). While Paul's pastoral admonitions are dire, his ultimate concern is regeneration, sanctification, and justification in Christ (1 Cor 6:11).

As cited above, Jude recorded that Sodom and Gomorrah "indulged in sexual immorality [ἐκπορνεύσασαι] and "pursued unnatural desire [ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας]" (v. 7, ESV). This statement comes after he condemns false teachers and the imprisonment of false angels. Scholars debate whether or not the "strange flesh" (ASV) refers to the residents' sexual interest in the men because they were actually angels or because they appeared as men. Thus, the nature of the pursuit could be problematic because it was male-male, human-angel, or both. Even Loader (2012), an affirming scholar, leaves open the possibility that Jude was referencing "attempted same-sex rape" when the Sodomites' pursuit of sexual immorality and unnatural desire are taken together (p. 335). Intriguingly, the Testament of Naphtali (T. Naph) from the OT Pseudepigrapha emphasizes Sodom's disruption of the created order, saying they "changed the order of

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[10] We rely on Gagnon's translation given how he translates the two words *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* in 1 Corinthians 6:9, which other translations render as: "male prostitutes, sodomites" (NRSV); "men who practice homosexuality" (ESV); "men who have sex with men" (NIV); "males who have sex with males" (CSB); and "those who . . . are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality" (NLT).

[11] According to Hays's argument, Lev 18:22 used the words ἄρσενος ("male") and κοίτην ("bed") in its prohibition of same-sex sexual activity in the LXX. Thus, Paul likely formed ἀρσενοκοῖται as a portmanteau of these terms.

their nature [ἐνήλλαξε τάξιν φύσεως αὐτῆς]" (T. Naph 3:4).[12] It uses the same word as Romans 1:26, φύσις. As Green (2008) interpreted the otherness of the men's flesh as their angelic nature, he noted, "the sexual nature of the sin" is not emphasized as much as its violation of "the established order of things" (p. 72). Gagnon (2001) locates the same-sex sin in the phrase "indulged in sexual immorality" and treats their pursuit of angelic fresh as a separate but accompanying sin (p. 87-88). Therefore, when reading Jude 7 with Romans 1:26, the sexual pursuits of the Sodomites violated the created order because they were male-male *and* because they were human-angel.

In the NT, Paul also prohibits sexual immorality (often πορνεία) in general and encourages believers to fight it (e.g., Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:13, 18; 7:2; 10:8; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:3). He reminds Christians of their transformed personalities (e.g., old self/new self; night versus daytime) as he encourages them to resist such behaviors (e.g., Rom 13:13-14; Gal 5:16-26; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5-10). Restraint in such matters certainly applies to those who are SSOd and GIt, whether or not the sexual activity in question entails same-sex or opposite-sex people.

Texts concerning gender and its expression. In the NT epistles, several texts discuss gender roles and expressions in the context of church practices (i.e., 1 Cor 11:2-16, 14:33-35; 1 Tim 2:8-15). Paul's discussion of head coverings and worship (1 Cor 11:2-16) displays his pastoral interest in the integrity of male and female identities. Paul asked men not to cover their heads (v. 4) and instructed women to cover their heads while praying or prophesying (v. 5-6). He appealed to the creation and glory-bearing implications for each sex (vv. 7-9). Commenting on verse 7, Blomberg (1994) believed that when men or women distort their gender roles or present themselves in an ungodly manner, they dishonor their spouses (p. 211). He understands verses 8-9 to affirm the

[12] Evans (2008) provides the Greek text, and Evans, Zacharias, Walsh, and Kohler (2008) provide the English translation here.

creation order: Adam was created first, and Eve was made to be his helper. The interdependent nature of men and women established in verses 11-12 undergirds their inherent equality despite them having different gender expressions. Nature is an educator, as Paul said: "Does not *nature* [φύσις] itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering" (1 Cor 11:14-15 ESV, emphasis mine). Schreiner (1991/2006) revealed that "nature teaches, then, in the sense that the natural instincts and psychological perceptions of masculinity and femininity are manifested in particular cultural situations" (p. 137).[13] Hence, Paul rooted his appeal for appropriate gender expressions in both the creation order and the sociocultural context. Paul's high view of male/female differentiation (1 Cor 11:1-6) indicates a kind of essentialism and suggests that accepting our sexed bodies as we receive them is normative (cf. Strachan, 2016).

In 1 Cor 14:33b-35, Paul prohibits women from speaking in church, clearly in the context of gatherings (v. 26). Citing the "law," he suggests they should be in submission and not speak (v. 34), and he instructs them to ask their husbands about any questions they may have (v. 35). Blomberg (1994) suggested that Paul might be referencing the creation order of Genesis 2 when he appeals to the law, because no OT text directly instructs women to be silent. If women were completely silent in churches, that would contradict Paul's earlier statement (11:5), so Blomberg believes Paul refers to the regulation and adjudication of prophecies (vv. 27-33a). In two specific instances in 1

[13] Schreiner continued, "Paul's point, then, is that how men and women wear their hair is a significant indication of whether they are abiding by the created order. Of course, what constitutes long hair is often debated—what is appropriately masculine or feminine in hairstyle may vary widely from culture to culture" (p. 137). As we will later discover, accurately categorizing masculine and feminine attire or activities is notoriously tricky. For one, cultural masculinity and femininity may conflict with biblical masculinity and femininity. Similarly, cultural stereotypes of masculinity and femininity should not be taken to be normative either. Even more, as Western cultures deconstruct both gendered clothing and activities, Christians may grapple even more as they discern the teaching of nature for their sociocultural contexts. Schreiner's point is still well taken: Nature teaches us how to embody gender through both our psychosomatic instincts and our sociocultural contexts. Noetic sin can, of course, cloud both our internal instincts and our readings of our cultural contexts.

Corinthians, Paul regulates how males and females express themselves in church services, arguing they have prescribed roles.

In 1 Timothy 2:8-15, Paul gives sexually-differentiated instructions for the congregation: Men should pray and avoid strife (v. 8), and women should dress modestly and pursue good works (vv. 9-10). Paul then suggests that women should learn quietly and submissively (vv. 11-12) and not have authority over men (v. 12). Paul's justification for this practice is the creation and the Fall: Adam was created first (v. 13), and Eve was deceived (v. 14). The passage ends with a cryptic role for women in general: salvation through childbearing (v. 15). In verse 8, Paul challenges the men to avoid the unrighteous anger (the masculine vice) that has marked so many men in salvation history (e.g., Cain in Gen 4:5; Moses in Exod 2:12; Saul in 1 Sam 18:8; Peter in John 18:10). He specifically disqualifies male overseers marked by this vice as well (3:3).[14] Similarly, women are given countercultural instructions (vv. 9-10): avoid Hellenistic customs for attire at religious services, eschew Roman empresses' scandalous hairstyles, and focus on their Christian character instead (Baugh, 2016). Paul desires this for men "in every place" (ESV; v. 8), and the word "likewise" makes the instructions to the women parallel to those given to the men (Westfall, 2016). This construction may suggest that the vices Paul counteracts were not local to the Ephesians but more systemically problematic across churches in ancient Mediterranean culture. In so doing, he underscores the difference between cultural gender roles and normative, virtuous gender roles.

The next few verses have generated much debate among evangelical scholars. The word in verse 12 is a hapax legomenon, and all references in comparable ancient literature convey some sense of authority (Baldwin, 2005). Given that the next chapter focuses on the qualifications of overseers, we can interpret these verses to mean that Paul

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[14] Paul may emphasize prayer over strife because false teachers were particularly disputatious and bellicose (see 1 Tim 6:3-5) (Lea & Griffin, Jr., 1992). Paul reemphasizes gentleness over quarrelsomeness even in the correction of diabolically-ensnared opponents (2 Tim 2:22-26).

restricts women from holding the office of elder (Baugh, 2016). Thus, the roles men and women *should* play in the church are different. Men *can* be—but are not automatically given the roles of—overseer/elder (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-8) or deacon (1 Tim 3:8-13), and women are likewise given moral direction and teaching responsibilities among other women (Titus 2:3-5). Paul justifies his conclusion by appealing to the creation (v. 13), inferring distinct parts for men and women to play based on the creation order in Genesis 2 (Schreiner, 2005). The appeal to the creation order suggests that these sexually-differentiated roles in the church are supracultural. While Eve was the first to sin (v. 14), it was Adam's sin that brought sin into the world (Rom 5:12ff); he was responsible as the covenant head, and some of his male descendants are given the responsibility of teaching and leading (Baugh, 2016). Finally, we can interpret verse 15 to mean that motherhood is a common, but *not mandatory* (1 Cor 7), role for women that offers an opportunity for salvation to express itself in good works (Schreiner, 2005).[15]

A few texts in the NT prescribe different roles for married men and women in what are known as household codes (Eph 5:22-28; Col 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-8). All of these texts instruct the wives to "submit to" (Eph 5:22, 24; Col 3:18; 1 Pet 3:5) or "be subject to" (1 Pet 3:1) their husbands. Husbands are also commanded to "love" their wives (Eph 5:25; Col 3:19), "not be harsh to them (Col 3:19)," and to live with their wives understandingly so their prayers will not be hindered (1 Pet 3:7). Commenting on 1 Peter, Grudem (1988) points out that the wife's submission to her husband cannot mean she is inferior because verse 7 identifies her as a common heir of grace. He also explains that submission does not mean following a husband into sin. In other NT texts, the principle of mutuality also hedges against the temptation for husbands to dominate or

[15] Danylak (2010) argued convincingly that the OT emphasis on physical childbearing has been fulfilled through the birth of Christ, and all believers "are called to be spiritual parents" regardless of their marital state (p. 141). Thus, as Danylak emphasized, "the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married" (Isa 54:1) because they will be spiritually born. Thus, women struggling with fertility should not be discouraged by this passage. The principle can be honored beautifully as they serve as spiritual mothers.

subjugate their wives (see Powlison, 2003a; cf. 1 Cor 7:3-5; Eph 5:21). The wife's authority over her husband's body prohibits unwelcome physical or sexual abuse.[16] Given that even Christian men still struggle with indwelling sin (cf. 1 John 1:8), the principle of mutuality is vital for performing gender roles.

In another letter, Paul—while interpreting Genesis 2:24—regarded the marital relationship as a mysterious signifier of the relationship of Christ and his church (Eph 5:31-32). Marshall (2015) explained how the Ephesians' concepts of sexuality (union), gender (husband and wife), and bodies (male and female) all coalesce to describe "the mysterious union of Christ and the church, therefore, produces children and heirs who are 'one new humanity.'" (p. 841). While Marshall understood sexuality and gender through the lens of the Ephesians' culture, Genesis 2 explains these concepts better. Paul's notions of sexuality and gender reflected his understanding of Christ's relationship with his bride, so his teaching suggests that believers' gender performances are best modeled after the relationship between Christ and his church.

Other NT texts related to gender do not directly refer to the organization of the church or home. In 1 Corinthians 16:13, Paul commands his readers to "act like men, be strong [ἀνδρίζεσθε, κραταιοῦσθε]" (ESV). Some may be tempted to derive contextualized gender roles from this verse, but three reasons lead us away from this conclusion. First, the expression that comes from ἀνδρίζομαι "did not necessarily connote masculinity" and "was used for courage because most people in antiquity associated courage with masculinity" (Keener, 2014, p. 496). Second, since Paul has been telling the Corinthians to "grow up" in this letter (3:1-2; 13:11; 14:20), it makes sense that he would call them to be men, not children (Thiselton, 2000, pp. 1336–1337). Finally, it makes little sense for Paul to direct his readers to act like men unless he was only addressing the men or desired the women to act like men. Instead, Paul is likely directing men and women to

[16] Thanks to Craig Morrisette for bringing this to my attention.

"be courageous" (CSB) (Westfall, 2016).[17] In this sense, a contextualized gender role here would challenge the notion that men are courageous while women are not; both should pursue this virtue.

Further, some might suppose that Paul obliterated the male-female binary or gender roles when he said, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28 ESV). According to Fung (1988), Paul does not abrogate sexual differentiation. Rather, Paul suggested that the spiritual privileges offered to free, male, Jewish men are now expanded so that all believers have unified access in Christ to salvation. While this text bolsters the inherent equality of men and women, it does not undermine differentiated gender performances.

Finally, Scripture concluded with the apocalyptic marriage of Christ and his church (Rev 19–21). The marital themes found in the beginning and ending chapters of Scripture form an *inclusio*. These bookends create a strong argument for the normativeness of male and female and male-female marriages. John alluded to Isaiah 52 and 62 (Rev 21:2) as he described Jerusalem as a bride dressed for her Husband, donning the garments of righteousness (Beale, 2013). Beale (2013) described the encompassing meaning of this metaphor, saying: "Throughout history God is forming his people to be his bride, so that they will reflect his glory in the ages to come (so Eph. 5:25-27), an idea developed in what remains of Revelation 21 (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2)" (p. 1045). Revelation sums up the meaning of sexuality and gender communicated in Scripture: our pronouns, our dress, and our sexual activity bring God's ethicospiritual salvation plan into focus. Importantly, what Scripture has to say *to* the SSOd and GIt is not limited to what it says *about* them. This brief survey barely explores the meaning and significance of relevant

[17] We can agree with Westfall (2016) that Paul challenged certain cultural stereotypes of his day—like this one—without generalizing it to the household codes or instructions for ecclesial worship as well (cf. Schreiner, 2018, p. 184).

genres (biblical narrative, history, wisdom, prophecy, gospel, epistles, or apocalyptic) and themes (union with Christ, repentance, creation, the Fall, redemption, suffering, flourishing, or perseverance) Scripture contains for the souls of the SSOd and GIt. As we demythologize these experiences, we will identify other points of biblical intersection.

Historical Precedents for Addressing Issues in Sexuality and Gender in Orthodox Christianity

For most of Christian history, writers concerned themselves merely with the lusts (i.e., sinful desires) and behaviors related to these experiences (people defined by vice). Sin grounded their concern. As we trace both the historical Christian witness and the emergence of LGBT identities, we will search our sources for behaviors like same-sex sexual activity and cross-gender expression (e.g., clothing and behaviors) to establish the historical continuity of what we now call LGBTQ+ experiences.[18]

From the Patristic Era to Spurgeon: Same-Sex Eroticism and Cross-Dressing in the Christian Tradition

After the apostles, patristic pastors (bishops) warned against sexual sins—like pederasty—rampant in Roman society and challenged believers to practice sexual intercourse in marriage alone or live celibately (Grenz, 1998). Subapostolic texts like the *Didache* (1885) addressed pederasty between its prohibitions against adultery and fornication, saying, "Thou shall not corrupt boys" (οὐ παιδοφθορήσεις) (p. 168).[19] Boswell

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[18] Stein (1999) identified two ways we can interpret historical sources: *universalizing interpretation* and *localizing interpretation* (p. 94). Universalizing interpretation allows us to use the modern categories of same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria when interpreting texts that predate these categories. However, a universalizing interpretation still recognizes the temporal-cultural variations of these categories. Someone using a localizing interpretation, on the other hand, believes it is anachronistic to apply categories like same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria to people who, in their time and location, would have understand sexuality and gender very differently. Importantly, proponents of localizing interpretation would agree with the universalizing interpreters that activities (e.g., same-sex sexual activity) can be cross-cultural and diachronically identified (p. 97). While cross-gender expression is relative to the cultural milieu, adopting the culturally-typical dress or the gender-specific activities of the opposite sex is still discernable from a transcultural standpoint. A localizing lens helps in identifying the different ways peoples have culturally constructed these activities.

[19] As Schaff (1885) translated this passage, he noted that παιδοφθορὲω does not appear in the

(1981) noted the wide age-range and inconsistent use of the term pederasty in antiquity, noting that it can refer to sexual practices between adults (p. 30). Despite the referent, the patristic writers found these same-sex relations immoral given Romans 1:26-27 (Grenz, 1998).

More generally, pastors like Clement of Alexandria (1991) and Augustine of Hippo described the purpose of sexuality as procreation. In his *Stromateis*, Clement of Alexandria (1991) connected sexual activity with procreation and lauded the celibate person (para. 3.12.81-82). In *The Instructor* (1885/1994), he prohibited men from dressing and altering their bodies (shaving and plucking out beards) to appear more feminine (para. 3.3). Moreover, Augustine (1887/1995) also strongly connected sexual intercourse and procreation as he wrote *On the Good of Marriage*. Cross-dressing was also a reality during the patristic era as the saints Pelagia, Mary, and Hilaria dressed in men's clothes and even passed as eunuchs (Upson-Saia, 2010). Upson-Saia believed these saints desired the life of asceticism over marriage, saying that even though "the disguise is supposed to *conceal* the monk's gender identity, these scenes function to *reveal* to readers the secondary quality of her masculinity" (p. 2, emphasis original). Despite Upson-Saia's depiction of blurred gender in these narratives, these female saints may have merely desired the religious life of male ascetics.

John Chrysostom (1988) expressed his pastoral concern over those who had sexual intercourse with young men. Casting himself as a physician, he wanted to save the young people infected with this "sickness" (3.8).[20] He hoped their parents would hinder their sexual activity and search for a "remedy" for their behavior. The absence of shame

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NT or LXX (p. 168). He connected the practice with the typical homosexual texts (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:27).

[20] Chrysostom's (1988) translator, David Hunter, believed this passage refers to pederasty, translating one passage as: "These men have intercourse more fearlessly with *young boys* than with prostitutes" (p. 142, emphasis mine). However, as Boswell (1981) interprets and translates this passage, he renders it: "These do not consort with prostitutes as fearlessly as they do with *young men*" (p. 131, emphasis mine). Overall, he read the whole passage through the lens of "gay sexuality," not pederasty (p. 131). In any event, Chrysostom found the antecedent practice unacceptable.

or fear among those involved in these practices troubled Chrysostom as well. In a sermon on Romans 1:26-27, Chrysostom (1889/1994) described the tragedy of same-sex lust, saying, "the soul is more the sufferer in sins, and more dishonored, than the body in diseases" (*Homily* 4, para. 1). Chrysostom rooted his moral judgment of same-sex sexual activity in the creation and sexual essences, arguing that the male participants lost their manhood and became women during the act. Notably, Chrysostom highlighted Paul's correction of the women who engaged in same-sex activity as well. Given the harshness of his sermon, Boswell believed Chrysostom to be "personally disturbed by homosexuality" (p. 132). However, Chrysostom was more affected by grief. As he observed, these young men were "such objects of compassion, that others weep over them," especially because "they are unconscious of the plight they are in" (*Homily* 4, para. 2). Chrysostom aimed to awaken his hearers out of lethargy and apathy.

In a letter to a younger disciple, Ambrose of Milan (1881) explained the grim consequences for cross-dressing in Deuteronomy 22:5, possibly drawing on 1 Corinthians 11. Ambrose appealed to nature, saying "nature clothes each sex in their proper raiment. Moreover in men and women, habits, complexion, gestures, gait, strength and voice are all different" (p. 410). As he conceived gender, he incorporated biological, psychological, and sociocultural sources and collected these sources under the heading *nature*. Ambrose permitted Persians, Goths, and Armenians to "follow their national usages" (p. 411). Thus, he recognized a place for cultural relativism when deriving appropriate gender expression cross-culturally. Ambrose referred his recipient to Paul (1 Cor 11) in matters where the "teaching of nature" is ambiguous (p. 411). Overall, Ambrose's appeal to nature governed his pastoral admonitions regarding gendered behaviors.

In his *Confessions,* Augustine of Hippo (1955/2004) harshly condemned "offenses against nature" because "the fellowship that should be between God and us is violated whenever that nature of which he is the author is polluted by lust" (pp. 47–49). Notably, Augustine might have experienced some kind of erotic desire for a male friend

during his youth (Boswell, 1981, p. 135).[21] For Augustine (1887/1995), the husband-wife relationship was fundamental to society. He believed the connection between sexual intercourse and children was so intense that the latter was the "one alone worthy fruit" of the former (para. 1). Overall, Augustine's discussion of sexuality relied on Paul's nature argument and connected sexuality to procreation.

During the medieval period, the penitentials consistently required penance for same-sex sexual activity (Grenz, 1998; Fortson & Grams, 2016). In this era, Peter Damian introduced a new identity for those participating in same-sex sexual activity: "sodomites" (Jordan, 1997, p. 57). Writing the *Book of Gomorrah* in the eleventh century, he condemned the "vice against nature" and its practice among ordained men in the church (1982, p. 27). He saw himself as a doctor, longing for the healing of a patient and warning against the cancer of vice. Damian classified four types of sodomitic sin and ranked them from least to most depraved: "sin with themselves alone," "mutual masturbation," "femoral fornication," and "the complex act against nature" (p. 29). Throughout his work, he evidences a compassionate concern for the souls of sodomites: "O, I weep for you unfortunate soul, and from the depths of my heart I sigh over the lot of your destruction" (p. 66). Like Chrysostom, Damian exhorted the sodomites out of pastoral grief.

Further, pastoral interest in sodomites increased after the Fourth Council of the Lateran emphasized annual confession (Jordan, 1997). In the *Summa Theologiae* (*ST*), Thomas Aquinas reaffirmed the sentiments of his predecessors in his pastoral rebukes. The *Summa* reflects a *scientia moralis*, by which virtues and vices are classified and analyzed (Jordan, 1997, pp. 153–154). Aquinas (1963d) deemed the "unnatural vice"

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[21] Augustine (1955/2004) described this episode with shame, recounting, "Thus I polluted the spring of friendship with the filth of concupiscence and I dimmed its luster with the slime of lust" (p. 38). If Boswell is right on this interpretation of Augustine's experience, Augustine never mentioned succumbing to these desires (Soble, 2002).

(*vitium contra naturam*) a kind of lust (*luxuria*) that fails to bring about procreation (*ST* II-II.154.11). One of these unnatural sins is the sodomitic vice (*sodomiticum vitium)*, or same-sex sexual activity.[22] Further, Aquinas considered same-sex sexual activity a worse offense against chastity than sins like rape and adultery, calling it "an affront to God, the ordainer of nature" (*ST* II-II.154.12).[23] Aquinas (1963a) also argued that unnatural sins hindered a person from drawing correct conclusions from natural law (*ST* II-I.94.6), a Thomistic spin on noetic sin. Importantly, when Aquinas spoke of the sodomitic vice, he referred to it as a vice, not a category for personal identity (Jordan, 1997, p. 155).

Reading 1 Corinthians 6:9, Aquinas (1963c) also opposed the kind of effeminacy whereby men are "soft" like women, especially when being the passive homosexual partner (*ST* II-II.138.1). He even proposed a balanced ideal for manhood, arguing that the "pertinacious" (overly persevering, possibly hyper-masculine) exceed the mean in having opinions that are too strong and the effeminate fall short of the mean by not persevering enough (*ST* II-II.138.2). Aquinas (1963b) also thought the law's prohibition against cross-dressing was intended to deter idolatry and lust (*concupiscentiae*) (*ST* II-I 102.6). Even more, Aquinas (1963e) recognized the role of

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[22] Jordan (1997) argued for the limited applicability of Thomas's discourse for contemporary issues related to sexual orientation. While he is correct that the temporal-cultural construction differs, this should not annihilate correspondence between our time and Aquinas's. Even Jordan recognized Aquinas's argument that vice is the "cause and ground" of an activity (p. 155). Admittedly, modern sexual orientation and sexual desire qua lust (*concupiscentiae*) will not have a one-to-one correspondence. This does not, however, rule out *any* correspondence. If we view sexual orientation as the "cause and ground" for same-sex sexual activity in the modern world, it must have some correspondence with Aquinas's *concupiscentiae.* Further, Aquinas (1963d) clearly defined sodomy as "intercourse . . . with a person of the same sex" (*II-II*.154.11). So, even if we cannot establish correspondence on the basis of orientation, we can certainly validate it on the basis of sexual activity. On another note, Jordan's (1997) discussion of this passage confirmed the rendering of *sodomiticum vitium* as the sodomitic vice (p. 143-147) and agreed that Thomas discusses "same-sex copulation" here (p. 155).

[23] May, Lawler, and Boyle (2011) considered the contemporary implications of Aquinas's point: "The teaching of the medieval theologians that such sexual sins as masturbation, sodomy, and contraception are more perverse, as sexual sins, than fornication and adultery or even rape (the former were said to be *contra naturam* whereas the latter were said to be *praeter naturum*), angers many people today" (p. 91, italics mine). They explained how the medieval theologians distinguished between *contra naturam* (sins against nature) and *praeter naturam* (sins apart from nature), such that "certain kinds of sexual sins more seriously offend the virtue of chastity than do others" (p. 91). However, May et al. clarified that the medieval thinkers believed rape and adultery violated the virtue of justice as well, making these sins ultimately worse than same-sex sexual activity.

culture in gendered clothing and declared cross-dressing wrong except in dire circumstances (*ST* II-II 169.2).

During the Reformation era, Martin Luther (1961) argued that the unclean actions of the body flowed from an unclean heart. The unclean heart fixed on its idolatries rather than the right worship and knowledge of God. Luther associated Romans 1 with 1 Corinthians 6 and contrasted the "unnatural abuse" through same-sex sexual activity with the "glory of the body" in "chastity" and "continence" (p. 32). Through this language, reminiscent of Augustine, he indicated that the natural and moral use of sexuality was legitimate, in contrast to its unnatural uses. Like Aquinas, Luther believed same-sex sexual activity warranted a more severe penalty; it is sin against one's own body and another's. Astonishingly, Luther seemed to define effeminacy as what we today call arousal.[24] His soul-care intervention for arousal of this kind required prayer; the warming of the spirit would allow the body to cool down. Luther's thoughts on those guilty of same-sex sex can be summed up in sin and grace: "It is the purpose of the apostle to show that all were sinners and that all were in need of the grace of Christ" (p. 32).

The Reformation writers continued the patristic and medieval emphasis on *nature* as they pondered sexuality and gender expression. John Calvin appealed to nature as he cared for those engaging in same-sex sexual activity or presenting themselves as another gender. For Calvin, women cross-dressers were guilty of immodesty, while male cross-dressers engaged in feminine activity incompatible with their "nature" (Calvin, 1844/1999c, p. 110). Therefore, gendered activity was more important than the clothing itself. Concerned with the lusts coming from the heart, Calvin (1844/1999a) focused on the "progeny" of the heart when God, in his divine judgment, gave up man over to the

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[24] Luther distinguished between "intentional" (through stimulation) and "involuntary" (spontaneous arousal) types (p. 32). He names a third type "individual" to describe the arousal in same-sex or opposite sex intercourse (p. 33).

evil desires that flow from sin (pp. 76–77). Continuing his commentary on Romans 1, Calvin considered same-sex lusts a reversal of God's created order.

When he considered the effeminate of 1 Corinthians 6:9, Calvin (1844/1999b) spoke of feminized men whose body language, clothing, and speech suggested "unchastity" (p. 208). Calvin connected gender and nature during his discussion of 1 Corinthians 11, continuing the pattern established throughout church history. He discerned gender expectations through "universal consent and custom" but also affirmed that sex distinctions are divinely ordained "ranks" (p. 361). For Calvin, "God is the Source of both sexes and hence both of them ought with humility to accept and maintain the condition which the Lord has assigned to them" (p. 361). Calvin's teaching from Scripture reinforced the spiritual duty—before God—for gendered activity (e.g., attire and body styling) to conform to nature, though the principles for interfacing divine norms and sociocultural norms were not explicit.

According to Crompton (2003), the Enlightenment brought significant changes to Europe as the Catholic nations on the content abolished sodomy laws.[25] However, Crompton also cited strong anti-homosexual sentiment—given the number of capital punishments for sodomy—in the early nineteenth century in England. English pastor Charles Spurgeon's pastoral care for the SSOd and GIt exemplified Victorian refinement: "I dare not explain to you what is meant by the next expression used by the apostle: 'nor effeminate.'" (Spurgeon, 1900/2013, para. 9). Spurgeon's preaching at Metropolitan Tabernacle rarely engaged the Scriptural passages concerning same-sex sexual activity. His exposition of the Sodom and Gomorrah episode skipped Genesis 19:1-11 (Spurgeon,

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[25] Despite the tendency for Protestant denominations to embrace same-sex marriage more so than the Roman Catholic Church in the early twenty-first century, Crompton (2003) found the opposite tendency in the early nineteenth century. Crompton explained, "In revolutionary France, anti-clerical feeling was strong enough to sweep away sodomy laws, and those Catholic lands on the Continent that came under the anti-feudal and anti-ecclesiastical influence of the Napoleonic Code shared in this liberation. . . . In Protestant countries, where the tyranny of the church had been less severe, there was no general reaction against statutes that were religious in origin" (p. 533).

1895/1975). His sermons on Romans curiously avoided Romans 1:26-27, with his most comprehensive sermon ending in verse 25 (Spurgeon, 1892/n.d.). Given Spurgeon's Victorian surroundings and the attitudes of the time, his sense of propriety prevented him from explaining the nature of these sins.[26] Relying on the King James Version, Spurgeon's (1900/2013) sermon on 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 condemned the "effeminate" who did damage to their souls and bodies. He also decried "abusers of themselves with mankind," wishing for the practice to be annihilated as it was at Sodom and Gomorrah. However, Spurgeon concluded by saying the Lord saves "great sinners . . . in order that he may win from them great love, and intense zeal, and much earnestness" (Spurgeon, 1900/2013, para. 25). Spurgeon, like pastors from previous centuries, condemned the depravity of same-sex sexual activity but framed it to highlight God's salvation and grace.

Modern Orthodox Pastoral Care Wrestles with Psychiatry and Social Science

From the medieval theologians to Spurgeon, pastors engaged same-sex sexual activity and cross-dressing with a *scientia moralis*. Their scientific terminology followed moral agency: choices, habits, and vices. As a result, their designations focused on the vice more than the person committing them. However, in the twentieth century, pastors cared for their parishioners in a modern context saturated with what Foucault (1976/1990) called the *scientia sexualis.* Psychiatry and sexology illuminated pastoral care in this era, especially in the wake of World War II (WWII).[27] During this time, pastoral caregivers interacted with psychiatry and the findings of social science,

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[26] Alternatively, Spurgeon may have withheld an exposition of these key verses to mitigate the growth of homosexual practice. In the early thirteenth century, confessors and preachers restrained their discourse about sodomy so that the uninformed would not be introduced to it and tempted by it (Jordan, 1997, p. 113).

[27] While the nineteenth-century pastoral theologians had cited writers ranging from Cyprian to Jeremy Taylor, these postwar writers exchanged classical writers for contemporary psychologists frequently (Oden, 1984).

especially concerning homosexuality and transvestitism. As a result, psychiatric diagnoses and orientation essentialism—among other historical factors—mediated the split between affirming pastoral care and orthodox pastoral care. Largely, this parting of ways began when social science divided theologians' interpretations of key biblical passages. In this chapter, we are tracing orthodox pastoral care; chapter 3 will trace the development of affirming pastoral care.

While many pastoral counselors of the post-WWII era shared Western society's views about homosexuality as undesirable, they advocated for a more humane alternative to criminal punishment: therapy (White, 2015, p. 28). Thus, pastoral clinicians began an era of curing sexuality. Seward Hiltner (1909-1984) inaugurated modern pastoral care and advocated for kinder treatment of homosexual people. Hiltner's (1953) beliefs about homosexuality emerged in his critical engagement of Kinsey et al. (1948, 1953). Overall, Hiltner believed the Kinsey studies revealed the absence of Christian ethics in American society and called it "the occasion of an altar call to repentance" (p. 216). As Hiltner read Kinsey, he saw Freudian[28] notions of sexuality that normalized homosexual intercourse. While Hiltner accepted the normality of homosexual behavior in earlier stages of development, he rejected its "naturalness, normality, or rightness" for mature adults (p. 125). As Hiltner questioned the immorality of "homosexual exploration" by twelve-year-olds, his "we now know" approach invoked the authority of modern psychology (p. 37). Drawing on psychological theories of development, Hiltner appealed to the *meaning* of sexual behaviors (adolescent same-sex sexuality, in this case) while determining their moral quality. Hiltner also resisted Kinsey's accepting posture, preferring a "socially responsible attitude toward homosexuality" instead (p. 126). Hiltner

[28] While Kinsey et al. (1953) recognized "the basic physiologic capacity of every mammal to response to any sufficient stimulus" (p. 447), their developmental theory of homosexuality relied more on behavioral conditioning than Freud's theory of psychosexual development. Hiltner might also have wed Freud and Kinsey because of the commonalities between Freud's bisexual theory and Kinsey's rating scale and data.

welcomed the notion of "fixed homosexuals," yet advocated for those who want to change their "homosexual tendencies" (p. 126). While Hiltner maintained an orthodox sexual ethic, he employed the essentializing discourse of the post-war psychology that surrounded him.[29]

Additionally, Hiltner introduced into pastoral theology the psychological principle that would eventually bind with homosexuality in Western culture: self-realization (Holifield, 1983). Hiltner (1949) drew from Karen Horney, Carl Rogers, and Erich Fromm as he enthusiastically, yet cautiously promoted what he called "the inner-release view" of counseling (p. 28). Hiltner resisted the kind of essentializing discourse that made "inner needs" a product of biology alone (p. 28). He favored social explanations for development of the self and its creative energies instead. Furthermore, he made sexual expression foundational to mental health, saying that we "could eliminate such things as sex from these inner needs only at the peril of clinical contradiction" (p. 28). While trying to bind sexual activity under God's will, Hiltner (1953) still considered sex a necessary part of human fulfillment. As White (2015) argued, the pastoral concern of Hiltner and his contemporaries was to release the true heterosexual self through therapeutic means (p. 28).

Karl Barth wrestled with the implications of psychiatry as well. Initially, Barth (1933/1963) highlighted the idolatrous nature of same-sex sexual activity in Romans 1, saying, "God and the world have become confused with one another" (p. 52). During his anthropological reflection in the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth (1961) classified homosexuality as a "malady" that diminished male-female complementarity (p. 166). For him, the idolatrous vice of Romans 1 diminished the fellowship of the man and woman, creating "a masculinity free from woman and a femininity free from man" (p. 166). Even

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[29] Hiltner (1953) was aware of Kinsey's preference for adjectival and not substantive uses of "homosexual." Despite mostly adjectival uses, Hiltner persisted in describing homosexuals substantively.

more, Barth engaged the concept of sexual orientation when he spoke of "the commanded orientation of the sexes on one another" indicating his belief in a constitutional male-female orientation (p. 167). Moreover, in a letter written on his behalf, Barth (1971) looked to doctors and pastors trained in psychotherapy to alleviate the plight of the homosexual.[30] He also questioned aspects of his writing in the *Church Dogmatics* "in view of the changes and new discoveries that have occurred since its writing" (para. 5). While the evidence of a complete reversal of his position is weak, Barth nevertheless grappled with the intersection of psychiatry and theology in this regard.

British psychiatrist and pastoral theologian Frank Lake (1914–1982) incorporated existing psychological knowledge in his pastoral theology of homosexuality. Lake's (1966) approach was dominantly psychoanalytic and even cautiously employed "abreactive therapy using LSD-25" (p. 935). As Lake studied homosexuality among the clergy, he adapted Kinsey's scale. Unlike Kinsey's participants, pastors usually had frequent same-sex fantasies without sexual activity. Lake followed Freud and Fenichel believing "that male homosexuality is associated with weak or absent fathers and with weak or absent mothers" (p. 961). Too, Lake underscored the relationship with the mother and its role in the formation of the self—especially in terms of maleness and femaleness—during infanthood. Even though homosexual identity had not yet become a clinical focus in Lake's time, he emphasized the new birth and Christ-centered identity formation as a means of restoring the self. He recommended an ecclesial therapy for SSOd men and challenged pastors to take up their responsibility in understanding and treating homosexuality. He used adjectival and substantive uses of "homosexual" and

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[30] George Hunsinger (2002) contended that Barth (1971) reversed his position on homosexuality in a letter written through Eberhard Busch. According to Congdon's (2016) translation, Busch wrote: "Professor Barth is today no longer entirely satisfied and would certainly today write them somewhat differently." Despite expressing regret about his tone and articulation in *Church Dogmatics*, nothing in the rest of Busch's letter describes an affirming position. Retooling a position is not the same as reversing it. At best, Busch's letter is ambiguous. In fact, Busch's main concern is to assure his reader that Barth's writing on the issue does not support the criminalization of or cruel treatment of homosexuals. References to this letter use Congdon's translation.

continued the essentializing discourse of his progenitors. However, Lake commended realistic, Christ-centered transformation for the homosexual—not expecting "matrimony" but "sanctity" (p. 985). Overall, he studied the development of gender identity and its relationship to homosexuality instead.

Evangelical Pastoral Care of Homosexuality in the Twentieth Century

After Carl Henry (1947) called evangelicals into broader cultural engagement, they contemplated issues like homosexuality and transvestitism, and they displayed more affinity for the orientation change tradition than affirming psychology.[31] Clyde Narramore, one of the first well-known evangelical psychologists, integrated psychoanalytic theory and evangelical theology in his work (Powlison, 2010). Unlike the liberal pastoral counselors, Narramore and others connected the pathology model of homosexuality with biblical prohibitions (White, 2015, p. 130). As he considered its etiology, Narramore (1960) drew from the psychoanalytic research of his era and evangelical theology, and he favored familial and spiritual factors. He conflated what would now be differentiated as homosexuality, transgenderism, and transvestism, yet he defined the homosexual in terms of identity and attraction—not behavior. Narramore instructed counselors, saying, "Help the counselee to see that he is not a homosexual by nature, but rather, a person whose life experiences and other factors have caused him to turn to unnatural patterns" (p. 229). He explained both attractions and sexual orientation identity through the lens of developmentalism. This developmental-environmentalist paradigm would then dominate evangelical soul care for the next half-century.

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[31] Carl Henry (1971) engaged the contemporary psychology of his day and favored "psychogenic and personal-dynamic factors" to explain the origins of homosexuality (p. 112). Thus, he embraced psychoanalytic thought and blended it with a creation-sin-redemption paradigm. explaining the relationship this way: "The authentic role of psychiatric analysis is to prepare the way for the gospel, not to dissolve the need for spiritual healing" (p. 113). Believing that "God ordained a heterosexual life for mankind," Henry articulated gospel change within the sexual orientation ideology of his day (p. 110).

The biblical counseling movement also addressed homosexuality. Influenced by behaviorism and social learning, the earliest biblical counselors characterized homosexuality as a "learned activity" (Adams, 1970, p. 35, 1973, p. 404; Mack, 1979, p. 42). Even before the APcA (American Psychiatric Association) deleted homosexuality from the second *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-II), Adams (1970) had already questioned its pathological status (p. 139). Contemporary ambiguity regarding the nature of homosexuality vexed Adams (1973). He dismissed notions of psychopathology and mental illness, preferring the language of sin (p. 95).[32] Adams (1973) also used 1 Corinthians 6:11 to promote repentance, life restructuring, and the abatement of sexual idolatry (pp. 408–412). He believed the psychodynamic focus on "parental socialization" offered little hope for the SSOd (p. 403). Further, Adams saw futility in changing homosexuals into heterosexuals, arguing it exchanged one form of sexual idolatry for another (p. 412). In rejecting psychodynamic approaches and sexual orientation change, Adams transcended the psychodynamic-essentialist discourse of his contemporaries. His variant of essentialism focused on behavioral conditioning more than intrafamily dynamics. As Adams (1970) concluded, homosexuality was not a condition, it was an activity (p. 139n2).

Exodus International formed in 1976, shortly after the APcA's decision to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. Chambers and Chambers (2015) described the meaning of the organization's name: "They believed that like the ancient Hebrews who were enslaved to and then delivered from their Egyptian oppressors, God would provide a way for his group of individuals to escape from what was understood to be the tyranny of homosexuality" (p. 182). This network of ex-gay ministries provided pastoral support and counsel for the SSOd. Etiology, sexual orientation change, and

[32] Given the copyright date of 1973, Adams likely wrote this work when homosexuality was still listed in the 1968 version of the DSM-II.

behavior change were prime foci. In an interview, Frank Worthen (2012), one of the founders of Exodus explained, "When we started Exodus, the premise was that God could change you—*that God could change you from gay to straight*, basically. Although, it's a long journey." Worthen was unclear about the meaning of "change."[33] For this reason, Lee (2013) believed Exodus promoted a "mixed message" regarding orientation change (p. 91). An earlier segment of the interview reveals that Worthen rooted this belief in 1 Corinthians 6:11. From its inception, Exodus contextualized theological notions of conversion and sanctification within the psychodynamic paradigms of sexual orientation change. Thus, for many evangelicals, a heterosexual orientation was hitched to progressive sanctification.[34]

The early years of Exodus were bumpy. Chambers and Chambers (2015) cited a series of challenges: a split between those advocating for sexual orientation change and those advocating for celibacy in 1978, male leaders leaving their wives for each other in 1979, and association with a ministry focused on casting out demons in the 1980s. It would seem Exodus was directed by those whose "theologies of pursuing personal righteousness" lined up with the idea of sexual orientation change (Chambers & Chambers, 2015, p. 183). The challenge for these early pioneers was teasing out what the

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[33] Worthen could have been referring to changes in orientation, behavior, identity, or all three. Contemporary psychologists Shidlo and Gonsiorek (2017) criticized those engaged in SOCI's (sexual orientation change interventions) for conflating sexual orientation and sexual orientation identity. They said, "If a SOCI client eliminates or reduces same-sex sexual behavior, initiates heterosexual sexual behavior, and rejects a gay identity, these do not indicate a change in sexual orientation but rather changes in sexual orientation identity and behavioral expression without altering core components of sexual orientation" (p. 293). Notably, when Yarhouse and Jones (2007) measured orientation change in Exodus participants, they observed *medium to large* movement away from same-sex orientation and *small* movement toward opposite-sex orientation (p. 275).

[34] When Yarhouse and Jones (2007) studied participants in Exodus's ministries, they believed this population "mostly rejected" essentialist beliefs about gay intercourse and attractions (p. 31). While this is an accurate characterization of their beliefs about *sexual orientation identity* qua *personal identity*, Exodus ministries did embrace essentialist beliefs about *sexual orientation*. Searching for the cause and remediation of homosexuality is an endeavor of the modern essentialist (Laumann et al., 1994, p. 285).

gospel and Christian faith required of an experience still considered by many at that time to be a psychological disorder.[35]

During the 1980s, Exodus's member ministries cited Leanne Payne's healing ministry and Elizabeth Moberly's synthesis of theology and psychodynamic therapy. Eclectically influenced by the charismatic/renewal tradition, C. S. Lewis, and developmental psychology, Payne (1985/1996) applied listening prayer to the SSOd, addressing issues like core identity, gender identity, forgiveness, and "gender imbalance" (p. 57). In one of her lasting contributions, Payne interpreted a phenomenon she named the "cannibal compulsion." As she explained, cannibals eat their victims to take on their qualities. Hence, SSOd men seek out "unaffirmed" elements of themselves via sexual fantasies and lust (Payne, 1981, pp. 46–47, 1989, p. 123). For Payne sexualized covetousness was the meaning of SSAs.

Similarly, Moberly (1983) also commended prayer for healing the "relational deficits" gathered through the developmental process (p. 42). Overall, she described homosexuality in etiological terms, targeting attachment issues with the same-sex parent. Moberly contended that an initial rupture in the parent-child relationship would result in the child's "defensive detachment" from the parent (p. 6). Having repressed his attachment needs, the child would develop a reparative desire for the same-sex during adolescence. The transsexual, then, exhibited an extreme form of defensive detachment and disidentification with the same-sex parent and same sex in general (p. 12-13). Payne and Moberly, then, supplied the developmental explanations and the healing protocols used by many Exodus ministries.

In 1982, Bob Davies recalled an Exodus speaker instructing the audience, "You are heterosexual in Christ . . . No matter how deep your homosexual feelings are

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[35] Contemporary readers can relate to the cognitive dissonance of this experience when considering the recent reclassification of Pluto as a dwarf planet (rather than the ninth planet).

deeper still lies your heterosexuality, buried under a thousand fears" (Davies & Rentzel, 1993, p. 95).[36] In the early 1990s, ex-gay ministers adjusted their agenda (Neff, 1992). Specifically, Neff cited new emphases in Andrew Comiskey's ministry. These emphases included avoiding ex-gay identities, expanding ministry to all sexually broken people, and rebalancing uses of psychology so that sin would not be minimized through "psychobabble" (p. 21). Even with this change in emphasis, Comiskey preserved environmental-essentialist psychology as a tool for identifying areas of brokenness. In 1991, when Joe Dallas was president of Exodus International, he offered a more comprehensive answer to the question of sexual orientation change. Dallas (1991) acknowledged those whose attractions had never changed without prejudice and made no guarantees (p. 49). Further he appealed to Kinsey, rejecting substantive uses of "homosexual" and embracing the Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale (p. 118).[37] While not dismissing categorical orientation change, Dallas emphasized change within this continuum. Going further, Dallas believed the continuum deconstructed the homosexual category.

When Bob Davies was president of Exodus International, he claimed to know hundreds who had "overcome homosexuality" (Davies & Rentzel, 1993, p. 11). Later Davies and Rentzel clarified that it could be overcome as "a lifestyle and as an identity" (p. 20). They, too, recommended sloughing off labels such as "ex-gay" and "ex-lesbian" and ultimately exiting the subculture of ex-gay ministries (p. 177). Rather than using the homosexual-heterosexual binary, these authors preferred "former homosexual" and

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[36] As Davies pondered this statement, he rooted identity in Genesis 1:27. While Davies did not fully embrace this phrasing within a sexual orientation framework, he argued: "Each of us, no matter how afflicted, is still created in God's image, created male or female, possessing the full potential for all these words imply" (Davies & Rentzel, 1993, p. 96). Additionally, Paris's (2011) notion of a "sexual identity framework" inspires the use of *sexual orientation framework* here (p. 8).

[37] Importantly, we remember that Kinsey's scale assumed that heterosexual attraction increased when homosexual attraction decreased and vice versa. Thus, Dallas embraced a sexual orientation framework in which change meant that diminishing homosexual attraction *necessitated* increasing heterosexual attraction.

"straight"—the latter describing those who had never experienced SSA (p. 201). They also perpetuated the sexual orientation binary as they identified two biblical options for sexuality: "heterosexual marriage or abstinence" (p. 22). They were unclear about whether "heterosexual" meant a male-female covenant, a marriage of opposite-sex-oriented people, or both. Davies and Rentzel cited Beiber and Socarides for scientific evidence of orientation change, but they relied on Payne and Moberly to explain developmental deficiencies behind SSA. They posited various roots beneath the surface that fed gay identities (p. 42). Overall, these and other Exodus-affiliated ministries sanctified the heterosexual essentialism of the orientation-change psychologists (see chapter 3).

Ministries incorporated environmental essentialism as early as the 1970s when Christian writers and psychologists explored the prevention of homosexuality, transsexuality, and transvestism. Most of the ex-gay interlocutors recognized that the process of discontinuing same-sex relationships, realigning gender identity, and shifting desires and attraction was long and hard. This notion carried across ministry approaches. Biblical counselor Wayne Mack (1979) recounted the aphorism, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" (p. 54). Similarly, Don Schmierer (1998) took up this theme in his prevention monograph: *An Ounce of Prevention: Preventing the Homosexual Condition in Today's Youth.* Mack (1979), much more so than his colleague Jay Adams, pondered the "environmental and intra-familial factors" predisposing children to homosexuality (p. 48). Mack also accepted Bieber's indictment of fathers and mothers in the development of homosexuality. Improving upon psychoanalysts, Mack cited biblical instructions for parenting in his prevention strategy. He also recognized that cultural standards for masculinity and femininity were not fully compatible with biblical gender roles. With these foci, Mack resonated with many of the etiological assumptions at work in Exodus.

Alan Chambers was hired to head Exodus in 2001 and informed the hiring committee that, "Success, to me, looks like Exodus going out of business because the Church is doing its job" (Chambers & Chambers, 2015, p. 179). Around this time, Davies described ex-gays as an "unseen minority, a subgroup from within the gay community" (Davies & Gilbert, 2001, p. 10). Surprisingly, he used minority language and reinforced ex-gays' continuity with the LGBTQ+ community. However, he emphasized their discontinuity by describing them as people who had changed their behaviors. Some of them, he contended, had "changed in the deepest part of their beings, including their sexual feelings" (p. 10). Davies and Gilbert represented Exodus International's beliefs in the early 2000s: "Homosexuality is a surface symptom of more deeply rooted spiritual and emotional issues that must be resolved in order to see real and lasting change" (p. 12). While offering a careful, realistic account of how behaviors, attractions, thoughts, and identity might change, Davies and Gilbert's (2001) discussion focused on the population that would experience shifts in sexual attraction but neglected those who would not experience this shift (pp. 13–16).

As he examined the ex-gay movement in the mid-2000s, Tim Stafford (2007) observed more disciplined communication about SOCEs. He described these ministries, saying, "No hype. Limited faith in techniques. No gay bashing. No detectable triumphalism, religious or political. Just serious discipleship" (p. 51). Stafford found ministries more committed to discipleship than orientation change. Ministry leaders like Comiskey had already recalibrated their ministry approach to use more theological themes than psychological ones. Further, a study by Jones and Yarhouse (2007, 2011) subjected the SOCE claims of ex-gay ministries and their LGB critics to empirical scrutiny. Its sobering results revealed "the average movement away from homosexual orientation may be termed medium to large, and the average shift toward heterosexual

orientation small" (S. L. Jones & Yarhouse, 2007, p. 367).[38] However, in 2013, Exodus closed, in part, due to internal disagreements about the malleability and remediation of SSA (Chambers & Chambers, 2015, pp. 196–198).[39]

Contemporary Evangelical Theological Perspectives on Gender, Sexuality, and Identity

We have already mapped the contemporary ministry landscape in chapter 1. Orthodox approaches hold at least three theological themes in common that we can access in subsequent chapters: (1) the four-part summary of the biblical metanarrative; (2) the sinfulness of LGBTQ+ experiences or behaviors; and (3) seeing SSA as temptation, weakness, or brokenness.

Using the four-fold summary of Scripture's narrative. Writers across approaches have emphasized Scripture's main storyline and themes as the basic framework for interpreting LGBTQ+ issues. Writing from the sin/repentance perspective, Butterfield, Yuan, Geiger, and Roberts have incorporated Scripture's main headings. Butterfield (2015a) argued that Scripture is the foundation for personal identity. Rooting personal identity in Christ's story, she expanded the genesis of personal identity to eternity past (cf. Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:20). She also contemplated how the Fall affects personal identity, and she highlighted the role of original sin in corrupting man's moral capacities. For Butterfield, *sola Scriptura* allows us to "have access to our full history" (p. 43). She contrasted *sola Scriptura* and *sola experiencia*, arguing that Scripture is the interpretive framework for our feelings. Union with Christ and sanctification punctuated Butterfield's survey of biblical identity formation. The image of God secures this union's

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[38] We will survey the important role that Stanton Jones, Mark Yarhouse, and Warren Throckmorton have played in this area of study in chapter 5.

[39] Notably, the efficient cause of Exodus's closure seems to have been Chamber's antinomian doctrine of salvation (R. A. J. Gagnon, 2012; Chambers & Chambers, 2015, p. 214).

possibility, and both positional and progressive sanctification mark the Christian's narrative. As she emphasized, the Spirit also energizes the struggle with temptation and sinful same-sex desires. For Butterfield, the subjective experiences behind LGB identities fit under the heading of temptation and sinful desire. Sexual identity starts in the marriage of Genesis 1–2 and corresponds to Christ's marriage to his church (Eph 5). Butterfield, however, did not push marriage but affirmed the biblical value of singleness.

Yuan (2018) has even more vigorously argued for a Scripture-shaped personal narrative of sexuality. He contemplated the meaning of sexuality across Scripture's central themes: creation, the Fall, redemption, and consummation. For Yuan, identity begins at our creation in the image of God as male and female; it terminates in our conformity to the image of Christ. Same-sex attraction (SSA), Yuan (2018) argued, "finds its root in original sin and as such is not really that exceptional" (p. 38). He prescribed holy sexuality—"faithfulness in marriage and chastity in singleness" (p. 75)—and rejected the potential for homosexuality or heterosexuality to designate our "true identity" (p. 47). Yuan distinguished between good same-sex desires and bad same-sex desires. The desire is bad when its end is sex, and the desire is good when its end is "longings to form deep, nonerotic, *platonic* bonds of friendship with other members of the same sex" (p. 63, emphasis original).

Addressing transgender identities, Geiger (2017) and Roberts (2017) have appealed to the broad narrative of Scripture in their arguments as well. Roberts argued that our creation as male and female could not be understood apart from our embodiment because our bodily identities are a given, not a construction. The Fall means that people with gender dysphoria have disordered minds and disordered hearts. God's rescue in Christ means a new identity but living in a body that awaits its final redemption. Thus, Roberts situated transgender identity within its origins in the Fall.

Integration-based approaches appeal to Scripture's main contours as well. Across multiple works, Jones and Yarhouse have established Scripture's central themes

(creation, the Fall, redemption, and glorification) as a basic framework for interpreting human sexuality, SSA, and GI (see Jones & Yarhouse, 2000; Yarhouse, 2010; Yarhouse & Tan, 2014; Yarhouse, 2015). Concerning gender, Yarhouse (2015a) argued that our embodied, gendered existence is a good thing because it is how God made us. Noting that all of humanity is disordered, Yarhouse transformed the secular concept known as gender dysphoria by reading it through the Fall. He thus understands the mismatch people feel between their birth sex and their gender identity as its product. Elsewhere, Yarhouse (2010) considered sin "the background noise of human existence" and believed "we can adapt to it and forget it's even there" (p. 22). He indirectly argued that same-sex sexual behaviors are sinful because they are outside heterosexual unions. He suggested that "same-sex attractions signal not a categorical distinction among types of persons, but rather one of many reflections of the fall" (p. 189). Also engaging redemption and glorification, his work can be described as an attempt to guide Christians during "the middle of a battle until Christ's victory takes its final form" (Yarhouse & Burkett, 2003, p. 3).

Representatives of the chaste gay Christian approach also engage these biblical categories. Moreover, Collins (2017a) introduced a concept he called an "aesthetic orientation," arguing it could be "coordinated with each of the major stages of redemptive history (creation, fall, redemption, new creation)" (p. 150). We will expound on this in a later section. He also argued that since people have "enculturated bodies," we encounter humanly constructed gender norms that diverge from the divine pattern for masculinity and femininity (p. 216). Collins recognized a dissonance experienced by those who do not align with gender stereotypes. He identified transgender experiences as the extreme form of this dissonance, arguing they come from fallen bodies and cultures. For Collins, redemption means that "Christians no longer belong in the realm of the flesh," and he cautioned Christians from identifying "as gay in a sinful, humanistic sense" (pp. 299–

300). In new creation, he suggested we will not be gay or straight, but we will behold the beauty of other image-bearers.

Finally, writers in the transformation perspective access Scripture's main themes as well. Comiskey (2003) believed "the biblical creation story provides the basis for understanding authentic personhood and relationships" (p. 21). While the creation narrative, he suggested, reveals our male-female design, the Fall narrative accounts for our brokenness, sin, and shame. He centered redemption on our union with Christ and the power of the cross. Knowing Christ, he argued, allows us to recover and realize God's creational intention for our sexuality and gender.

Interpreting same-sex sexual activity or cross-dressing as sin. Many evangelical authors understand the dynamics associated with LGBT identities—SSAs, same-sex orientations, same-sex eroticism, GI, and cross-sex behaviors—as original and personal sin. While they disagree on how these experiences relate to sin, the theme is nevertheless a common factor.

Some evangelicals compare same-sex orientations with original sin and SSAs with sinful desires (as expressed sometimes by ἐπιθυμία in Scripture). Writing from the sin/repentance approach, Burk (2015; cf. Burk & Lambert, 2015) challenged evangelicals who "are reluctant to say that same-sex attraction itself is sinful" (p. 95). He argued that "attraction" and "desire" are interchangeable, and he defined them both in terms of "a desire for sexual activity" (p. 108). For Burk, "the defining element of same-sex attraction is desire for a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex" (p. 112). However, he suggested that SSAs are complex phenomena, indicating "they can be sanctified when they are shorn of the elements that otherwise make them sinful" (p. 112). As he sees it, SSAs are desires for sex. Since they are sinful temptations, they have one kind of remediation: "When sexual possibility and intention are removed through repentance and faith toward God, there can exist the real bonds of holy, God-honoring

same-sex friendship" (p. 112). Repentance, then, means transforming sinful same-sex desires into holy desires for the same-sex. Burk rooted SSOs (understood as a disposition to sin) in humanity's sinful nature. Others advocates of the sin/repentance approach like Yuan (2018) distinguish between *same-sex temptations* and *same-sex sexual desires*,[40] arguing the former is from original sin but the latter is actual sin.

One of the few evangelical authors to articulate sin in relation to transgender issues, Strachan (2016) suggested that gender dysphoria is both an opportunity for pastors "to identify the roots of our suffering" and an exposition of the "wildness that runs in our hearts" (p. 41). For Strachan, "All gender dysphoria, transgender instincts, and cross-dressing impulses stem from the fall" (p. 36). Exhibiting a sin/repentance focus, he underscored the sinfulness of *desires* to cross-dress or to identify as the opposite sex. While Strachan argued that identifying "the root may prove difficult in some cases," he commended we "repent of all our ungodly inclinations and desires" (p. 42). Thus, according to Strachan, gender dysphoria is a complex experience of pain and sinful desire.

Other approaches also emphasize sin in their positions. A representative of the transformation-focused approach, Comiskey (2003) highlighted the sickness aspect of sin, given texts like Isaiah 53 (p. 56). Thus, he spoke of humanity's "sin sickness" (p. 120). For Comiskey, relational rifts relate significantly to the brokenness observed in sexuality and gender. Sin sickness may entail how others have wounded us and how we have sinfully responded, and relational healing comes through the cross (p. 129). Collins and Coles (2017), articulating a chaste gay Christian approach, argued for the sinfulness of "same-sex sexual acts and lusts" (p. 4). However, they do not believe same-sex (or opposite-sex) orientations are sinful because they merely "incline us towards certain

[40] What Yuan labels "same-sex sexual desires," I label "same-sex desiring." This label emphasizes the consent of the will.

forms of lust and sinful sexual behavior" (p. 6). As noted in the last section, Yarhouse (2010) considered sex outside of heterosexual marriage sinful. He identified another expression of our sin in our "sinful capacity to fragment others, to think about humans as interchangeable objects for personal sexual gratification" (p. 22). Given this statement, we can conclude that he deemed same-sex desiring sinful.

Interpreting same-sex attraction a kind of temptation, weakness, or brokenness. Exhibiting an approach between approaches, Johnson (2017) differentiated between personal sin (actual sin) and weakness, a "*passive* defect of one's creaturehood" (p. 279, emphasis original). According to Johnson, "Psychological *fault* refers to a biopsychosocial and ethicospiritual disorder involving both weakness and sin—a deficient condition influenced by biological and social factors and woven into one's created nature, but having ethical and spiritual significance" (p. 286, emphasis mine). In other words, *fault* is the location where personal sin and weakness meet. While Johnson considered same-sex sexual activity or any consent to SSA *personal sin*, he labeled SSA itself *weakness*. Thus, same-sex desiring and eroticism are examples of *fault*. Overall, Johnson considered intrusive same-sex desires a kind of temptation that arises from one's sin nature that requires repentance when consent follows temptation. By contrast, Burk (2015) and Strachan (2015) consider same-sex attractions temptations of one's own desire that warrant repentance (cf. Jas 1:14). Strachan (2019a) has similarly argued that sinful instincts inherent to cross-dressing are essentially temptations. Despite how they parse out the sinfulness of SSA or GI, most evangelical writers consider them some form of temptation.

Similarly difficult to group, Piper (2012) interpreted both same-sex desires and a same-sex orientation through the lens of spiritual groaning (Rom 8:23), seeing them as "part of our broken and disordered sexuality" (para. 12). He attributed these desires to original sin and sinful human nature, arguing that "to be caused by sin and rooted in sin

does not make a sinful desire equal to sinning" (para. 17). Thus, for Piper, a distinction can be made between brokenness and sinning out of that brokenness. Reflecting on Paul's discourse about weakness (2 Cor 10–13), Comiskey (2003) believed our weaknesses might entail our dispositions toward habitual sins (cf. Yuan, 2018, p. 54). He considered the weaknesses related to our sexuality and our relationships, and he emphasized Paul's invitation to "befriend our frailties" so "we can act in God's power" (p. 17). As a chaste gay Christian, Hill (2010, 2016a) also valued the Pauline category of weakness in his understanding of his same-sex desires. Erickson (2019), another chaste gay Christian, considered "brokenness" an appropriate category for LGBTQ people. He resisted secular calls to deny the brokenness of LGBTQ people because it would diminish their embrace of the gospel and its comforts.

Theological Principles for Addressing Sexuality, Gender, and the Self in Christian Soul Care

As MacIntyre (1988) has suggested, our "first first language" is formed by our own tradition's first principles (p. 381). After formation by our tradition, we can engage other research traditions like LGBT-affirming psychologies. Two of Scripture's narratives shape our foundational theological mindset about same-sex attraction and gender incongruence. First, we will explore sex (male and female), gender expressions, and sexuality (sexual practices) by processing them through Scripture's four main themes: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. Second, we take a narratival approach of the believer's union with Christ and process the sexual-gendered self through Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection, and exaltation.

Reading Sex, Gender, and Sexuality with the Biblical Metanarrative

Abridging the main points of the story, Dooyeweerd (1959/1979) and Wolters (2005) have derived creation, fall, and redemption as Christianity's "ground motive" (p.

28) or "basic biblical categories" (p. 12), respectively.[41] These headings, along with "new creation," are usually considered the four most significant sections of the biblical narrative.

Creation. Genesis 2 describes how the LORD God formed the man and his body from the dust of the earth (v. 7). The LORD God made the woman and her body from the man's rib (vv. 21-22). The man and woman's material existence reveals two themes: sameness and difference.[42] God fashioned them from the same flesh, made them both image-bearers (Gen 1:27), and distinguished them from the rest of creation as a different "kind" (cf. Gen 1:12, 21, 24-25; 6:20).[43] However, God organizes their flesh differently. Both creation accounts differentiate God's creation lexically: male (זָכָר) and female (נְקֵבָה) in Genesis 1:27 and man (אִישׁ) and woman (אִשָּׁה) in Genesis 2:23. The corporeal language of the latter passage, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," emphasizes the flesh they share in addition to their compatibility for covenantal relationship. In Genesis 2, the phonetic similarities and differences in verse 23 underscore the similarities and differences in their bodies. The man and woman's nakedness most visibly display and symbolize their difference (Gen 2:25).

Using the term Nelson (1978) popularized, the Scriptures speak about our

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[41] Wright (1991) and Bartholomew and Goheen (2014) have added Israel, the church, and the eschaton to these basic categories. Ciampa (2007) believed that reading the whole Bible (both Israel's story and the whole world's story) with a CSER (creation/covenant-sin-exile-restoration) narrative structure clarified its main plot points. For simplicity's sake, we focus on these three themes and include a fourth category many have added: new creation.

[42] As Hoekema (1986) contended, "Man's existence as male and female means that a man as a masculine being has been created for partnership with another being who is essentially like him but yet mysteriously unlike him" (p. 97). Compare also Grenz's (1997) interpretation of male and female in Genesis 1–2 as "sameness and difference" (p. 301).

[43] In Genesis 6:20, we see most clearly that males and females are not different "kinds." They are the archetypal "two" of every creature coming to the ark. This fact does not mean they are not two different forms of the same "kind." In contemporary discourse, humans differentiate males and females, gay and straight people, cisgendered and transgendered people. Whereas Gen 1–6 underscores "difference" by distinguishing humanity from the rest of the creatures.

sameness and difference in our *embodiment*.[44] In the full contemporary human community, males and females are typically embodied without confusion. Divine speech issues forth from the nuclei of virtually every cell in male and female bodies. Cells perform the divine script as they synthesize tissue, which in turn form the organs that make primary and secondary sex differences determinable. We observe the created diversity of male and female bodies in heterogenous, secondary sexual characteristics; differing heights, builds, and weights; and mixed assortments of soft and sharp facial features. Despite this diversity, God's good creational design highlights male and female bodies, except when original sin corrupts the physical creation and moves it away from His design.

As we established earlier in this chapter, Genesis 2 depicts a unique culture in which God's presence defines the meaning of gender because the culture of the garden is "a paradigm for all of subsequent humanity" (N. Collins, 2017a, p. 212). Not only does God's presence serve to define masculinity and femininity in this context, but the man and woman shape masculinity and femininity in relation to each other as well. Hence, gender, its enculturation, and its expression have vertical dimensions in relation to God and horizontal dimensions in relation to humans. Citing C. S. Lewis's *Perelandra*, Collins considered gender more transcendent (or essential) than sexual differentiation because it reflects something about God himself. Thus, masculinity is "a symbol of the intrinsic order that humankind exercises over God's creation," and femininity is "a symbol of the intrinsic relationality that humankind exhibits within God's creation" (p. 212). Comparably, Johnson (2018) defined masculinity in terms of agency and femininity in terms of communion. Contemplating relationships between men and women, Piper

[44] Nelson's body theology is a double-edged sword. Problematically, he dismissed natural law as a means for determining the meaning of our bodies. His symbolic interactionist perspective also thwarts the kind of essentialism we are trying to retrieve. He believed "the body is language" (p. 35) but also favored sociocultural meanings over biological ones. In addition, he concluded that same-sex sexual activity is permissible. Nevertheless, we can concur with him that estrangement from our bodies is incompatible with the incarnation and that the symbolism of our bodies in cultural contexts is significant.

(1991/2006) explained masculinity as "a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to man's differing relationships" and femininity as "a freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman's differing relationships" (pp. 35–36, capitalization removed).[45]

Here, we must differentiate between *universal essences of gender* and the *essence of a gender role*. Collins and Johnson described the former, and Piper articulated the latter. As Johnson contended, masculinity and femininity are not mutually-exclusive opposites.[46] Men should commune with God, their wives, their children, and other men. A woman's work, even when it is exclusively domestic, entails robust agency. Importantly, we should not interpret essences as if they are devoid of culture. Ordained by God and written into the structure of creation, these essences were established by a social, Triune God (cf. Grenz, 2001), and they issue from a divine culture. The canon contains "concrete universals" that are "embedded in particular situations" instead of abstract universals (Vanhoozer, 2005, p. 348, emphasis removed). Gender is more concrete universal than abstract universal. The concrete essences of gender have "transcultural significance in particular contexts" (Vanhoozer, 2005, p. 348, emphasis removed).[47] Different contexts warrant varied performances of these concrete essences.

If sexual anatomy differentiates the common flesh males and females share, gender differentiates some of the psychosociocultural characteristics that humans share as

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[45] Importantly, Piper's definitions center on "the significance that manhood and womanhood have for the relational dynamics between men and women and the implications of these dynamics for the roles appropriate for each" (Piper & Grudem, 1991/2006, p. 474).

[46] Dictionaries typically list at least two meanings for the word "opposite." In one sense, it can describe things that contradict (e.g., A and not A). In another sense, it can describe the complementary other. This discussion maintains the latter sense and challenges the former.

[47] Vanhoozer (2005) wisely cautions us against abstraction, for "those who principilize assume that what gets contextualized is a pristine, culture-free principle, when what actually gets imported is one's culturally conditioned understanding of a biblical principle" (p. 316, emphasis removed). Conservative use of modern essentialism also has a similar problem: it lacks significant reflection about the cultural and personal dimensions of gender.

well. If humanness is the substance males and females share, gender communicates two forms of that substance. Gender essences symbolically organize certain *human* properties. Modern essentialism has proposed that masculinity and femininity are categories that list polarized traits (e.g., S. L. Bem, 1974). While this may be true in some respects, shared humanity tempers the differences between the genders. The woman still reigns over the animals in her own right, and man is still subject to God's reign. We can avoid Jung's suggestion that men are mostly masculine and partly feminine if we posit that masculinity and femininity are more a binary organization of human qualities than contrary kinds (see chapter 3). Masculinity symbolizes agency, and femininity symbolizes communion by prominently exemplifying these traits. However, both agency and communion are shared human qualities. The essence of maleness and femaleness are two ideal, archetypal arrangements of agency and communion. Hence, according to Johnson, the aim of the creational design is "to become more fully a flourishing personal agent-in-communion *and* to become more masculine or more feminine" (p. 161). Putting it another way, we are to become more *human* in addition to becoming more masculine or feminine. God's image in all humans communicates our universal value as creatures and gendered individuals (cf. Gen 1:27; 9:6). Consequently, if the dignity of the human body has universal moral implications, perhaps embodied maleness and femaleness does as well.

Most obviously, the biblical narrative in Genesis 1–2 unveils two purposes for sexual intercourse: procreation (1:28) and covenantal unity (2:24-25). Adam's "cry of delight" in 2:23 hints at Adam's "innate yearning for completeness" (Grenz, 2001, p. 277). Given the connection between the paradise of Genesis 2 and Canticles, perhaps we can use the latter to interpret Adam's desire. In Canticles 8:6, the woman described *her* longing, saying, "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love [ἀγάπη in the LXX] is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord" (ESV). Far from the unbounded heterosexual longings constructed in Western cultures, where pornography and casual sex dominate

the landscape, Canticles foreshadows the mutuality, jealously-bounded eros, and agapic, self-giving love that would be later expounded in the NT (e.g., 1 Cor 7:3-5; Eph 5:21-33; see Powlison, 2003, pp. 61–62). We can employ Grenz's (1997) definition of *eros* to describe this desire as the "longing to possess and be possessed by the object of one's desire" (p. 21). Hence, the full meaning of sexual intercourse entails procreation, union, jealous desire, covenant, and mutual, self-giving love.

Nature also bears witness to Scripture's emphasis on unity and procreation in the mechanics of male-female sexual intercourse. Our bodies joined in sexual union teach us the embodiment of "one flesh." Sperm and ovum unite, and the fruit of their union propagates the human community. The moral quality of the monogamous, male-female sexual covenant means that God designed us for "*uni*-heterosexuality" (N. Collins, 2017a, p. 146). As we will see in chapter 4, the necessary interpersonal relations that emerge from the human community entail social orientations both to the same sex and the opposite sex. Fundamentally, the creator made us for family *and* friendship.

Fall. The Fall described in Genesis 3 entails the obfuscation of God's de*sign*. In stark relief to God's ordinances and norms, created structures have been disordered by original sin, and we now experience ab*normal* structures. The perfected sameness and difference humans exemplified in Genesis 1–2 became disordered as their resemblance to the triune God was marred. Since gender is also a personal construction, the Fall means that *all* human expressions of gender fall short of the creation design (cf. Rom 3:23).[48] The same diversity that marked the unspoiled creation marks the postlapsarian state. Augustine (1961) argued that vices or pathologies are accidents, not essences. They lack "natural good" (p. 11).[49] Hence, diversity based on fallenness relies on accidents directly

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[48] This statement assumes that gender is divinely instituted, culturally constructed, and personally enacted. The latter two are designed to conform to the former.

[49] "In the bodies of animals, disease and wounds mean nothing but the absence of health; . . .

and created essences indirectly. Thus, experiences like SSA and GI are not essential or substantive; they are accidents indicating the lack of creation perfection in a constellation of bodily and psychosocial structures.[50] At the same time, SSA and GI *are essential* to the stories of those who experience them. Their personal identity, in philosophical terms, would be different if these parts of their stories changed. Hence, SSA and GI are *essential* to some people's stories, but not *essential* to the people themselves or their human nature.

Moreover, bodies, gendered psyches, and sexual activities fail to signify their created *telos* in a myriad of ways. People with intersex conditions experience the most pronounced effect of the Fall on sexed bodies. Their bodies groan for elucidation.[51] Sexed bodies and the sociocultural notions of gender after the Fall interact in another specific way: apprehending people's sex incorrectly. Goff, Thomas, and Jackson's (2008) study on race and gender found that participants associated Blackness with masculinity. Participants "made significantly more errors when categorizing the gender of Black women than for any other group" (p. 397). Hence, cultural stereotypes about race and gender can obscure creational maleness and femaleness. Stereotyped ideals of male and female bodies distort our notions of masculinity and femininity, too. Muscle dysmorphia and anorexia actualize these stereotypes with obsessive fervor in men and women, respectively. Those possessing physical features that diverge from those culturally constructed norms may characterize their bodies as deficient according to perceived social standards as well, exhibiting gendered forms of body dysmorphia.

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for the wound or disease is not a substance, but a defect in the fleshly substance, but a defect in the fleshly substance—the flesh itself being a substance, and therefore something good, of which those evils—that is, privations of the good which we call health—are accidents. Just in the same way, what are called vices in the soul are nothing but privations of natural good. And when they are cured, they are not transferred elsewhere: when they cease to exist in the healthy soul, they cannot exist anywhere else" (Augustine of Hippo, 1961, p. 11).

[50] Recalling Johnson's (2017) notion of fault, SSA and GI are where biopsychosocial weakness and personal sin meet.

[51] The theological issue with intersex conditions is not ontological. I believe God's creational intent for intersex people was for them to be either male or female. The issue, then, is epistemological: How do we know God's creational intent for each individual with DSDs?

Nature informs us of the gender expressions that maximize God's glorification in every sociocultural context (1 Cor 11:14). The Lord God himself made garments for the first man and woman (Gen 3:21), clothing that expresses the concealed sexual differentiation of their bodies. In a post-fall world, gender expressions may be marked by excess or deficiency, especially as sin corrupts our knowledge of nature. Men may be hypermasculine or hypomasculine, and women may be hyperfeminine or hypofeminine.[52] In terms of personal characteristics, they may exhibit an imbalance of agency and communion. As we saw earlier in this chapter, Thomas Aquinas conceptualized virtuous manhood as the mean of two extremes. He recalled Aristotle's (1926/1990) definition of virtue: "Excess and deficiency are a mark of vice, an observance of the mean a mark of virtue" (p. 95). Gender entails morality, and vice corrupts gender by stimulating excess. To some extent, Christians in every culture should feel some disconnect with their culture's vicious gender stereotypes. While creational maleness and femaleness may be appropriately, canonically expressed in every culture, fallen cultures may construct and essentialize *abnormal* gender expressions. These disordered gender essences constructed in a fallen world—as opposed to the contextualized essences of gender rooted in creation—denigrate the God-created temperaments of men and women, whose nature makes them more gentle or analytical, respectively (cf. Williams, 2011). At the same time, some experiencing GI come to transgress natural and canonical gender norms by embracing false genders that ignore chromosomal realities.

After the curse, women find the procreation process painful, and men find their work complicated by toil and frustration. Husband-wife relationships display the frustration of desire and distortions of male headship: domination and subjugation. We also find the sexual aspect of our social orientations cursed in terms of its desires. Sin

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[52] I owe this insight to an ethics lecture by Russell Moore at Southern Seminary circa 2009 that is now impossible to cite.

directs opposite-sex sexual desires away from marital union, and sin sexualizes same-sex affections to corrupt friendship. Apart from God's grace, impure sexual desires lead to sexual practices that excite worship of the creation instead of the Creator (cf. Rom 1:24-25). While the body's telos is glorification and God-worship, sin bends us toward bodily practices that fundamentally violate God's natural and moral order (cf. 1 Cor 6:12-20). Consequently, the immorality we practice in the body reinforces and shapes desires (cf. Smith, 2009). The embodied self groans for redemption: the deliverance from sin, weakness, and suffering (cf. Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 5:2). Overall, lusts for same-sex sexual activity and gender transitions corrupt embodied worship: the former desires to possess the bodies of the same-sex while the latter desires the body and the enculturation of the other sex. At the same time, abnormal expressions of heterosexuality worship the creation, disregarding God's moral boundaries, and hyper-distortions of gender undermine the shared humanness of males and females.

Redemption. While many figures and events in the OT foreshadow God's decisive means of redemption, Christ's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension accomplished our salvation from sin. Healing from sin is the highest and most significant therapy offered by the Christian tradition (cf. Isa 53:5; Heb 12:13). The moral achievement of salvation is the redirection of sex, gender, and sexuality back to God. Remaining sin and broken bodies frustrate the full realization of this redemption in "the time between the times" (Van Leeuwen, 1990, p. 51).

As for broken bodies, Jesus healed many people throughout His ministry, signifying the coming kingdom. In the church age, those united to Him may experience supernatural healing of various bodily maladies, receive partial remediation, undergo technological interventions,[53] or endure persistent bodily weaknesses. Since surgical

[53] Technological interventions may include surgery, pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, and gene therapies like CRISPR. To what extent are these interventions redemptive? If they restore created

remediation of intersex conditions has often caused more harm than no interventions (see Looy, 2002), we should be circumspect about easy fixes. Unlike pure medical conditions (or weaknesses) like DSDs (disorders of sexual development), SSAs and GI are complex experiences that implicate the body (i.e., the brain and nervous system), psychological development, and the human heart in a post-fall world. While the etiologies of SSA and GI are unclear, secular research emphasizes biological correlates, and most Christian models incorporate biological discourse into their explanations. Some aspect of these experiences entails chromosomes, genetics, epigenetics, and brain development. Given that people mature in sociocultural and individual contexts, sanctification will entail increasing development in wholeness, in addition to holiness (cf. Johnson, 2017).[54] Importantly, heterosexual abnormalities—the widespread departure of male-female sexuality from canonical norms in a fallen world—are by no means exempt from the redemptive implications discussed here. Given that heterosexual abnormalities are the statistical majority, redemptive interventions for these conditions warrant proportional consideration beyond the scope of this project.

Despite the Fall, Christians with renewed minds might also search for the good creation obscured by the curse. Relatedly, *felix culpa* entreats us to search out the grace afforded in experiences of abnormal sexuality and gender (Jacobs, 2014; cf. Gen 50:20). Those who are mostly or exclusively opposite-sex oriented (OSOd) struggle through the corruption of male-female sexuality while experiencing more sexual wholeness in same-

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structures to their telic function and foreshadow God's resurrection of the person's body, we can see them as redemptive, at least in a temporal sense. Notably, a nest of issues surrounds LGBT identification and technological interventions that this footnote cannot resolve. Western cultures promote affirming interventions (surgical and hormonal gender transitions), and other interventions have been cruel (chemical castration of gay men). Some interventions jumpstart puberty for those who are long overdue, and others block it for the gender dysphoric. Despite the contestability of possible interventions and divergent perspectives, orthodox Christians can agree that *some* technological interventions are congruent with God's created order. Affirming interventions that contravene canonical norms spoil the glory of God's creation.

[54] As later chapters will elucidate, both affirming and Christian models highlight the role of personal and social contexts in shaping the SSOd and GIt. However, they conceptualize this contextual influence very differently.

sex friendships. Strikingly, the same-sex oriented (SSOd) experience little or no corruption of male-female sexuality while being tempted to sexualize some same-sex relationships. As discrete temptations, SSAs are synchronic experiences (see chapter 4) that present opportunities for greater spiritual resilience. They lead to significant engagement in the Christian life, and they draw individuals into the church in unique ways. As Christians, SSOd and gender incongruent (GIt) men may also image Christ in distinctive ways. Insomuch as they embody the gentleness of Christ, they display canonically-normed—rather than *merely* culturally-normed—masculinity (see Williams, 2011).

Vocationally, the liminality of genital sexual activity in this life confronts the SSOd, as it does all believers. Paul, exemplifying this tension in 1 Corinthians 7, commended sexual intercourse for the married husband and wife (vv. 1-5) and singleness for the unmarried and widows (v. 8). When temptation is sufficient, he promoted marriage to strengthen self-control (vv. 2, 5, 9, 36). At the same time, he glorified the single life as an opportunity for undivided devotion to the Lord (vv. 7, 32-35, 38, 40). All of this is because "the present form of this world is passing away" (v. 31). In the age of redemption, sexuality awaits transformation. Its end is a social humanity without marriage (cf. Matt 22:30). With the exception of self-control and temptation, Paul instructed his readers to "lead the life the Lord has assigned to him" (v. 17), and "remain with God" in the "condition each was called" (v. 24).[55]

Similarly, the GIt recognize most acutely that the gendered essences proposed by humans in their fallen state do not always line up with the created structures ordained by God. In some sectors of traditional American culture, a boy drawn to music, art, or

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[55] As Schreiner (2018a) noted, "The discussion of marriage, singleness and virginity is informed by the rule Paul articulates three times in this paragraph (vv. 17, 20, 24): all believers should live out their lives as God has *assigned*—that is, the lives which God has apportioned or appointed for them to live" (p. 146, italics original).

dance; and a girl drawn to athletics, leadership, or power tools might experience gender dissonance. However, Scripture cites musical, artistic, and dancing men (cf. Gen 4:21; Exod 35:30-36:2; 2 Sam 6:14) and tool-use among women (Judg 5:26). Complementarians affirm the leadership of women among other women (Titus 2:4) and children (cf. Eph 6:1-3). Men who refrain from "anger or quarreling" (1 Tim 2:8 ESV) or women who adorn themselves with "modesty and self-control" rather than "braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire" (1 Tim 2:9; cf. 1 Pet 3:3-6) may seem queer. In Burkina Faso, a man whose masculinity is secure in possessing one wife throughout his lifetime will experience dissonance as his peers' sense of manhood draws them to multiple wives.[56] Much like the SSOd, and perhaps even more so, the GIt who resist cross-gender expressions know God's grace acutely in the weakened vessels they carry (2 Cor 4:7).

New creation. While the new creation has already begun (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15), the new heavens and earth are still yet to come (Isa 65:17; Rev 21:1). Bodies beset by weakness in the current age will be raised in power (1 Cor 15:43), and the sexual and gendered deeds done in the body will be judged (cf. 2 Cor 5:10). Just as we bear the image of Adam as male and female, it follows that we will also bear the image of Christ in male and female bodies after the resurrection (cf. 1 Cor 15:49).[57] Resurrected and united with Christ, believers will no longer experience illicit sexual desires of any kind.

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[56] Intriguingly, it is polygamy, not same-sex sexuality, that corrupts female friendships in West African cultures, especially as competition for their husband's favor and affection draws wives into competition.

[57] Hoekema (1986) argued that "man's having been created male and female is an essential aspect of the image of God" (p. 97). Thus, "In the final resurrection we shall not lose our individuality; that individuality will not only be retained but enriched, and our maleness and femaleness is of the essence of that individual essence" (p. 98). Being male and female is essential to our existence from its beginning to its immortal end. Hoekema also proposed we will know male-female relating perfectly without marriage in heaven. Similarly, Aquinas's hylomorphism assists us by proposing the soul as the form of the body. According to Aquinas, humanness is our only substance, for body and soul are united (Brennan, 1941). This view of the soul contests the notion that the true gender of one's soul might not match the gender of one's body, a claim that is possibly Platonic.

Their manhood or womanhood will perfectly organize their human properties and individual differences. The mystery of husband and wife (Eph 5:22-33) finds its final fulfillment in Christ and the church, the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2). With humanity's cultural differences still maintained (Rev. 7:9), men and women will enculturate their gender expressions by imaging this ultimate marriage flawlessly. While human marriages imaged it in the time between the times, this sign ended (Matt 22:30 // Mark 12:25 // Luke 20:35). Still, the bodies of men and women indicate sameness and difference, reflecting the image of God and His unity and plurality (Grenz, 1997).

New creation further clarifies the principle of abnormality in the time between the times. As Kuyper (1873/1991) argued, all humans live abnormal lives with even their knowledge of "normal" corrupted as well. Thus, "pathology alone can never lead to knowledge of a healthy life" (p. 274). God's norms emerge most clearly when we juxtapose *both* creation and new creation and read the book of nature with redeemed eyes. While these epochs are the same in terms of the absence of sin, they are not the same in terms of humanity's development.[58] Irenaeus (1885/1994) spoke of humanity's childishness (p. 521), and Paul characterized progressive sanctification as a maturation process (Eph 4:13-15). How then do sex, gender, and sexuality progress from their infantile states in the first creation to their mature states in the new creation? According to Grenz (2001), resurrection means the transformation of sexuality. While genital sexuality and marriage have come to an end, "the biblical narrative points to the eschatological new creation as the *fullness of fellowship* toward which human sexuality has been directed from the beginning" (p. 302, emphasis mine). The incompleteness signified by the human body is fulfilled in the eschatological community, the church. Thus, the child-like sexual self of the first creation becomes the "ecclesial self" of the new creation (p. 303).

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[58] Augustine (1961) argued that the ability to sin is also gone in the new creation (p. 123).

New creation clarifies the "normal" toward which the maturing and developing sexual self strives. The eschaton suggests a transformation of desire and love as well. As Grenz (2001) put it,

> As the Holy Spirit infuses the self-giving impulse (*agape*) with a compassionate familial concern for (*storge*), a penchant to enjoy the friendship of (*philia*), and a desire for true communion with (*eros*) one another, the Spirit leads those who are in Christ to reflect through their communal life the kind of love that characterizes the triune God (p. 335).

The completeness of our redemption means sanctified love for the same sex and the opposite sex in an eschatological community. Caught between two ages, the same-sex oriented discover their calling: male-female marriage or the divine devotion and communal life energized by singleness. In the present age, our sexuality may reflect the first creation or the new creation, or both during various seasons. Ecclesial selves practice homosociality (see Butterfield, 2015), heterosociality, and family.[59]

These canonical norms for biological sex, gender, and sexuality are universal for all humanity.[60] If Jesus embodied the "concrete universal" of the new humanity (O'Donovan, 1994, p. 150; E. L. Johnson, 2017, p. 340), Jesus as the groom (the new Adam) and the people of God as the bride (the new Eve) serve as concrete universals of maleness and femaleness. God created all of humanity in His image; His creation ordinances govern their sexed bodies and their gendered and sexual practices. All humans sin in terms of their gender expressions and sexual practices of the body and the heart (cf. Ps 53:1; Rom 3:10, 23). To varying degrees, their bodies, minds, and desires exhibit the

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[59] While virtuous sexuality requires marriage and often results in family life, we should not take this to mean that they have no place in the church during this age. Human marriages and nuclear families remind us of Christ and the church (Eph 5:22-33) and give meaning to believers' familial relationships (Matt 12:50; 1 Tim 5:1-2). Rather, we live out the "alternative family" Jesus put together: "Commitment to Jesus' new family did not necessarily preclude natural family loyalty, particularly in situations where whole households converted to the Jesus movement. But the focus remained on the faith family, not on the disciple's family of origin" (Hellerman, 2009, p. 211).

[60] This idea of "canonical norms" draws from Vanhoozer (2005), who concluded, "The canon is the norm both for understanding the divine drama and for continuing participation in it" (p. 145). See chapter 6 for further development of this concept.

natural damage brought forth by the Fall. Jesus gave himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim 2:6), cleansing sin and, to varying degrees, bringing healing in this age. All humans will be judged "according to what they have done" (Rev 20:13; cf. Rom 14:10-12), and the hidden actions and intentions of the heart will be revealed (1 Cor 4:5). Nevertheless, a resurrection awaits all sexed bodies, and the clarification of final judgment will reveal the eclipsed glory of ambiguous bodies and evaluate the moral practices of sex and gender.

The Sexual/Gendered Self in Light of the Christian's Union with Christ's Story

In this section, we will trace Christ's life through four phases: his incarnation and life, his death, his resurrection, and his exaltation.

Incarnation and life. From the beginning of the biblical story, we are told that a male (with the masculine pronoun הוּא) will crush the serpent's head (Gen 3:15). Later, we learn that one of the male descendants of David will reign on Israel's throne forever (2 Sam 7:12-16). Before Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, God's salvific plan called for a male savior (cf. Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:20). Jesus was a man and lived as a man in the sexed body that he was born with. Having a male body, he was circumcised per the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17:10; Luke 2:21). The sexual differentiation of His body was a part of God's good creation. Why was he born a man and not a woman or a nonbinary person? According to Paul, Jesus is the better Adam whose obedience counteracts the transgression of the first man (Rom 5:12-21). It was also fitting for Him to be our high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, a king, a priest, and *a great man* (Heb 7:1-4; cf. 7:26).

The savior of humanity had to be human. The Word became flesh (John 1:14; cf. Rom 8:3), and the Son of God became human. He was born in the way all humans are (Phil 2:7) and grew up the way all humans do (Luke 2:40, 52). Irenaeus (1885/1994) argued that Christ sanctified every stage of human life by passing through them (p. 391).

He “summed up all things into himself” to bring us from immaturity to maturity, moving us from “the breast of His flesh” to the “Bread of immortality” (p. 521). Hence, the incarnation means that the salvation Christ achieved is available to both sexes (see Gal 3:28). As Johnson (2017) explained, Jesus is the archetypal human. By His example, we discover our humanity as either male or female, and His maturation (Luke 2:52; cf. 1 Sam 2:26) encourages our maleness or femaleness to develop from their infantile forms to maturity.

Lest we conclude that the Son of God becoming a male indicates masculine superiority, Paul indicated that Jesus’s human incarnation was a humble manifestation of the divine (Phil 2:5-8). Unlike the androcentric ministry of the Jewish rabbis of Jesus’s day, Luke highlights Jesus’ countercultural inclusion of women in His ministry (Köstenberger et al., 2009, p. 285). In fact, Jesus being a male does not suggest that women are deficient; it indicates the normativeness of humanity’s sexual differentiation in general, not masculinity by itself (Cortez, 2017, pp. 195–198). We can conclude that the Son became man because both the masculine and feminine forms are good, being essential to our gendered roles. Jesus also challenged cultural gender norms that did not reflect His norms.

As a result, we discover our maleness and femaleness especially in the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church (Eph 5:32; Rev 19:7-9, 21:2; cf. Isa 54:5-6). As the church’s groom, Christ is the head of both men and women (1 Cor 11:3). As Fitzpatrick (2013) concluded, “The truth is that in Christ, we must all think of ourselves as feminine, as followers, not initiators; as receivers, as in a subordinate position” (p. 173). Hence, the masculine and feminine parts we play within our horizontal human relationships, and our gender expressions instruct us for our vertical relationship with the Son of God. As the creator and sustainer of humanity (Col 1:16-17), and the archetypal human being who became sexed and gendered, Christ is the *normed normer* of sexuality and gender.

Death. Even before His arrest, Jesus knew that he would be condemned to death, mocked, flogged, and crucified (Matt 20:18). Living according to the symbol of His death, the cross, would mark His disciples' lives (Matt 10:38 // Mark 8:34 // Luke 9:23, 14:27). As believers, we are united with Christ in His death (Rom 6:5), meaning that "our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing" (v. 6). As a result, Paul instructs believers to put to death their sinful desiring and sexual practices (Col 3:5). These are the practices of the old self (Col 3:9). Learning the way of Christ, believers remove the attire of the old self, its way of living, and its corrupted desires (Eph 4:20-22).

In a typical human drama, the actors don costumes and immerse themselves in their characters, creating what we might call "false selves." After the production, they hang up their costumes and retrieve their true selves. By contrast, in the theodrama, actors (Christians) receive costumes of righteousness (Isa 61:10) to become their true, authentic selves (as redeemed image-bearers), for their *fallen* way of life is not who they *really* are (Vanhoozer, 2005).[61] How does this relate to sexuality and gender? As people being normed by the image of Christ (Rom 8:29), we put off any persona that eclipses our most genuine self in Christ. Given our origin story in creation and our trajectory towards new creation, reveling in desire for sexual activity with the same-sex is hypocrisy. Since we are to identify with the parts we are given to play (Vanhoozer, 2005), neglecting our gendered parts or roles is not authenticity, despite its *perceived* congruence. As a corollary, embracing any public persona that eclipses the glory (cf. 1 Cor 11:7) of our sexed and gender existence risks bearing false witness (as opposed to gospel witness) to the new creation.

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[61] Vanhoozer (2005) described this reversal adeptly: "The gap that threatens personal identity and integrity begins with sin's lie that I am something I am not. Sin leads us to deny our true identities and to prefer more glittering, albeit hollow, images. . . . While sin encourages hypocrisy, doctrine fosters authenticity" (p. 369).

Resurrection. In one of His "I am" statements, Jesus identified himself as "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Though he was "before all things," the resurrection was essential to His new creation identity as "the firstborn from the dead" (Col 1:18), and Paul called it essential to the Christian's faith (1 Cor 15:17-19). Thus, Paul testified that Jesus "was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (v. 4). Being united to Christ means being united to Him in His resurrection (Rom 6:5), made alive to God (v. 11), and transferred to the dominion of grace (v. 14). The renewal of the resurrection entitles Christians to clothe themselves with the new self (Eph 4:23; Col 3:10). Recalling humanity's image-bearing before the Fall, the new self is morally perfect (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). Realizing the new self requires noetic renewal and transformation of self-knowledge (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23; Col 3:10). We know ourselves as the image-bearers we were made to be.[62] Knowing God in Christ means that we know ourselves better as bearers of His image and likeness (cf. Johnson, 2007, p. 405).

As Johnson (2017) explained, conversion brings about a "profound narrative change" as Christians retell their "story in the light of the new life" (p. 403). Even after conversion, their stories continue to change "as believers more and more come to think, feel, desire, remember, and act according to their resurrection life in Christ, their story likewise begins to take on a new form that differs increasingly from their old story (depending on how contrary to the Christian faith it was) and 'the world'" (p. 404). Hence, new selves tell new stories about their maleness or femaleness.[63] In continual self-examination, Christians put on gender expressions normed by Christ that are marked less by excess or deficiency over time. The renewed self with a renewed mind uses the lenses of Scripture to learn from nature, and nature reveals God's created order and how people

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[62] Compare Calvin's (1960) statement: "Again, it is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself" (p. 37).

[63] Consciously or intuitively, Christians use critical essentialism when they retell their stories of masculinity or femininity. See chapter 6.

should appropriate the *imago Dei* as male and female in every situation. Given that Christ's resurrection means a global transformation of the self, the Spirit transfigures the self across multiple orders of discourse: the sexually-embodied self (the biological order), the self-in-context (the psychosociocultural order), and the valuative practices of self (the ethical order).

Exaltation. After Jesus ascended into heaven, he sat down at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19 // Luke 24:51 // Acts 1:6-11; Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3). United with Christ, believers are seated with Him (Eph 2:6) and exhorted to filter a vision of their new sexual selves through Christ's session (Col 3:1-10). His exaltation invites us to see and become ourselves *as we are* in the place that he has prepared for us (John 14:2-4). Considering Christ's exaltation, Johnson (2017) described Him as the "heavenly archetype" whose image believers display with increasing clarity (p. 420; cf. Rom 8:29). If Christ is the heavenly archetype for our humanity, His relationship with His bride is the heavenly archetype for our maleness and femaleness. Since earthly marriage is a sign of the heavenly marriage between Christ and the church (Eph 5:31-32; Rev 19:7ff), the maleness and femaleness of Adam and Eve are proleptic. Hence, *our* maleness or femaleness is proleptic in this age, as well. In the next age, perhaps our sexual embodiment will celebrate the beauty of Christ and the new Jerusalem (Rev 21). The inadequacy of man's solitary existence that justified the sexes (Gen 2:18) now finds its fulfillment in relationality (Grenz, 2001, p. 281). Through Christ, God "himself will be with" His people, and His people, drawn from every nation, will be with each other (Rev 21:3, 24-26).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we surveyed Scripture to establish a biblical foundation for sexuality and gender. We also traced the historical development of Christian care for those practicing same-sex sexual activity and cross-dressing. Having examined orthodox

evangelical writings, we identified three theological themes that we can access throughout this project. Finally, we processed sexuality, gender, and the self through two foundational biblical narratives: the biblical metanarrative and Christ's story.

CHAPTER 3

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF LGBT-AFFIRMING PSYCHOLOGIES AND PASTORAL CARE

To better understand LGBT-affirming therapies and LGBT identities in our contemporary setting, we must recapitulate the cultural dynamics and worldviews that energize our time. One remaining and waning ideology is the modern scientific classification of sexuality. Postmodernist writers, reacting to the modern era's scientism, reject objective notions of sexuality and gender, creating another set of problems. Affirming psychologies and LGBT identities emerged amid the social change of the 1960s, and both scientism and postmodernism have influenced them. This chapter traces the historical development of crucial worldviews that have influenced LGBT-affirming therapies and identities.[1] Related to scientism and postmodernism, modern essentialism and constructionism/-ivism are also key ideologies to identify as they crop up in this history.

Viewing Homosexuality and Transvestitism through Scientific Classification and Pathology: The Backdrop of Modern Psychology and Modern Pastoral Care

During the nineteenth century, the *scientia sexualis* allowed psychiatrists to speak about practices that were only broached in the sacrament of confession during centuries past (Foucault, 1976/1990). Foucault described the change from pastoral-ecclesial language to scientific language, saying, "It was a time when the most singular pleasures were called upon to pronounce a discourse of truth concerning themselves, a

[1] Since the historical literature predominantly focuses on male homosexuality, we will highlight female homosexuality and transvestitism qua cross-dressing when possible.

discourse which had to model itself after that which it spoke, not of sin and salvation, but of bodies and life processes—the discourse of science" (p. 64). Thus, this new era of sexuality—based in naturalism—utilized classifications, pathologies, and therapies, and interpreted symbols pregnant with meaning (Foucault, 1976/1990). Importantly, the "medicalization of homosexuality" by European physicians shifted discussions from sexual behaviors (and the influential notion of voluntarism across previous centuries) to classifiable, biologically-based dispositions (Greenberg, 1988, p. 407).

While same-sex sexual activity had ancient origins (cf. Gen 19:5; Lev 20:13; Judg 19:22), Beachy (2014) argued "the homosexual" was invented in mid-nineteenth century Germany. Attributing its invention to the interaction of medicine with homosexual communities, he noted, "This confluence of biological determinism and subjective expressions of sexual personhood was a uniquely German phenomenon, moreover, and it clearly underpins modern conceptions of sexual orientation" (p. xiv). Further, the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century also witnessed the rise of the Industrial Revolution. Pearcey (2018) identified major shifts in gender roles during this period (pp. 217–218). Whereas men and women formerly worked and raised families together in agricultural communities, manufacturing reassigned men as workers and women as family caretakers. She argued these rigid gender roles produced ever narrowing categories of masculinity and femininity. As a result, the nineteenth century was marked by notable shifts in both sexual discourse and gendered activity.

Early Scientific Classification of Sexuality

Considered the first gay rights advocate, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895) questioned Germany's criminal laws barring same-sex sexual activity (Drescher, 2015b). According to Drescher, Ulrichs believed homosexuals were trapped in the bodies of the opposite sex. Ulrichs named male homosexuals *urning,* female homosexuals *urninden*,

and heterosexuals *dioning* (Beachy, 2014; Drescher, 2015b).[2] After Ulrichs's taxonomy, "same-sex eroticism was no longer simply a collection of disembodied sexual practices, but rather the *innate sensuality* that defined, at least in part, a significant, if tiny, sexual minority" (Beachy, 2014, p. 18, emphasis mine). These classifications inaugurated modern essentialist discourse about homosexuality. Soon, the terms "homosexual" and "homosexuality" (*Homosexualität*) appeared in 1869 when journalist Karl-Maria Kertbeny (1824–1882) advocated for decriminalization of sodomy and attempted to normalize the practice (Herzer, 1986; Drescher, 2015b).[3] Ulrichs—and subsequently Krafft-Ebing and Freud—were influenced by the discovery that both male and female sexual organs exist during embryonic development (Greenberg, 1988). Thus, they interpreted the homosexual condition through the lens of biological essentialism.

Viennese psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902) conceptualized homosexuality as a psychiatric disorder in the first edition of his 1886 work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Not influenced by natural law, Krafft-Ebing interpreted same-sex sexual activity through a Darwinian lens; it was pathological because the species could not be propagated (Drescher, 2015b). Krafft-Ebing (1965) called homosexuals the "step-children of Nature" (p. 383) and described their condition as congenital. He distinguished between four degrees of the inverted "antipathic sexual instinct": (1) psychical hermaphrodites (people we label bisexual); (2) homosexuals (those exclusively attracted to the same sex); (3) effeminate men and "viraginic" (masculine) women (possibly those with opposite-sex gender identities); and (4) hermaphrodites (people now considered intersex) (pp. 221–222). Some homosexuals embrace the "impulse" to cross-dress

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[2] According to Beachy (2014), Ulrichs drew from Greek mythology to create these terms. According to one account in Plato's *Symposium*, Uranus begot Aphrodite without a partner. This act represents same-sex sexuality, and the terms *urning* and *urinden* relate to "Uranian love" (p. 18). In another account, Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus and Dione. Ergo, *dioning* represents heterosexual love.

[3] Foucault (1976/1990) attributed the invention of the term *homosexual* to Karl Westphal (1870). However, Westphal published a year after Kertbeny.

according to the "sexual rôle [sic] in which they feel themselves to be" as well (p. 221, italics original). This fusion of psychiatric nosology and sexuality further essentialized the desire for same-sex sexual activity, the practice of cross-dressing, and the experience of cross-gender identities while also pathologizing them.

Writing at the close of the nineteenth century, American physician James Kiernan (1892) used the term "heterosexual" while referring to sexual perversions (p. 198). Kiernan described this phenomenon, saying, "In these inclinations to both sexes occur as well as to *abnormal methods of gratification* [emphasis mine]" (p. 199). Kiernan based this assertion on Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, but Katz (1995) revealed that Kiernan misinterpreted Krafft-Ebing's use of the term. While noting that Kiernan introduced both "homosexual" and "heterosexual" into American literature, Katz explains that "abnormal methods of gratification" means "ensuring pleasure without reproducing the species" (p. 20). According to Katz, moral frameworks in the United States were changing. While the "sexual instinct" had referred to "*procreative* desire" in the 1890s, it now "referred to men's and women's erotic desire for each other, *irrespective of its procreative potential*" (p. 19). Importantly, this shift from procreation to pleasure, in part, explains the emergence of the LGBT movement in the twentieth century. Further, Kiernan's article revealed that early psychiatric science served to essentialize sexual orientation as a category in Western discourse. As Foucault (1976/1990) said, nineteenth-century discourse shifted sodomy from "a category of forbidden acts" and "a habitual sin" to "a personage" and "a singular nature" (p. 43).

Soon, Englishman Havelock Ellis (1859–1939) popularized the word "invert" in the English-speaking world as a term for homosexuals (Jordan, 2010, p. 152). Ellis (1901) described homosexuality as "sexual instinct turned by inborn constitutional abnormality toward persons of the same-sex" (p. 1). Even at the time, Ellis (1901) recorded debates concerning whether homosexuality was "acquired" or "congenital" (p. 181). Ellis found truth in both claims, affirming it as "a phenomenon which is based on

congenital conditions" (p. 181). Grounded in the rudimentary knowledge of reproduction at the time, he hypothesized that an abnormal interaction of the sperm and the egg during prenatal development explained the sexual invert's condition. However, Ellis thought some could have a latent predisposition to sexual inversion that never actualized. Ellis (1933/1938) also differentiated the phenomenon of "eonism"—which he clarified as "transvestitism" or "sexo-aesthetic inversion"—from homosexuality (p. 242). He used the language of identification to explain how this population takes on the dress, mannerisms, and emotions of the opposite sex.[4] Overall, Ellis provided the English-speaking world with discourse to essentialize the sexual invert and the eonist.

Influenced by biological determinism, German doctor Magnus Hirschfeld (1869–1935) also supported a constitutional basis for homosexuality (Beachy, 2014, p. 88). Though a homosexual man, Hirschfeld (1910/1991) stands out for his *Die Transvestiten*, in which he made transvestitism an object of scientific investigation. He separated "effemination and masculation" and "truly inborn homosexuality" as separate phenomena (p. 148). This distinction is notable given that contemporary sources—like Ellis (1933/1938)—housed various forms of cross-dressing under homosexuality. For Hirschfeld, the transvestite cross-dressed because the activity reflected something more essential in the psychological interior (pp. 203–205).[5] Further, Hirschfeld questioned the existence of an "absolute" man or woman. He categorized multiple physiological, psychological, and sexual variables as masculine and feminine, concluding that

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[4] Notably, Ellis (1933/1938) credited Magnus Hirschfeld with naming this phenomenon "transvestitism" (pp. 242). As Ellis saw it, cross-dressing was only one trait involved and sometimes was not part of the clinical picture at all. He abandoned his 1913 term "sexo-aesthetic inversion" as well because it could be associated with homosexuality. Eonism was his chosen descriptive term for the phenomenon and captured the core activity of cross-gender identification.

[5] Hirschfeld (1910/1991) described this interior experience as "an unconscious projection of the soul" and believed that "in the psyche of these [transvestite] men there is present a feminine admixture" (p. 214).

43,046,721 masculine-feminine variations must be possible (pp. 223–227). While essentializing the transvestite, Hirschfeld dismantled the sex binary.

Freud and Jung

A significant turn occurred as modern psychiatry entered the twentieth century, primarily through Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) psychoanalytic theory. While differing definitions of "heterosexual" (meaning either perversion or normal sexuality) existed during the close of the nineteenth century, Freud cemented it as normal sexuality (Katz, 1995). Freud's (1905/1962) theories built on the work of Krafft-Ebing, Ellis, Hirschfeld, and others concerning "sexual aberrations" (p. 1). He utilized the concept "invert" to describe and classify homosexuals and posited three types: (1) absolute, meaning exclusively homosexual; (2) amphigenic, meaning bisexual, and (3) contingent, referring to those who may become attracted to the same sex when the opposite sex is unavailable. Freud believed that inversion is neither "acquired" nor "innate." (p. 6). He critically engaged extant theories at the time and concluded inversion has something to do with the bisexual anatomy of all humans and "disturbances" in sexual development (p. 10).[6]

Freud also carefully suggested an etiology of male inversion while remaining cautious about its origin (pp. 11–12). He believed that they fixate on a woman (e.g., their mother) for a short period of time and later identify with them. They take themselves as a sexual object and look for a man to love the way their mother loved them. Freud also observed that the "absence of a strong father in childhood" typically leads to inversion (p.

[6] Freud (1905/1962) made this claim about bisexuality while pondering the phenomenon and development of anatomical hermaphroditism. Since some hermaphrodites have the genital structures of both males and females, he argued that "a bisexual disposition is somehow concerned in inversion, though we do not know in what that disposition consists, beyond anatomical structure" (p. 10). Freud showed more restraint than his predecessors (e.g., Krafft-Ebing) concerning the psychological implications of this anatomical observation. Freud's interaction with many other physicians of his time reveals this theory of bisexuality was commonplace. While revising this work in 1915, his statement reflected greater comfort with contemporaneous bisexual theories: "Thus the sexual object is a kind of reflection of the subject's own bisexual nature" (p. 10). Resultantly, Drescher (2015b) ascribed this theory of bisexuality to Freud.

12).[7] Saturated in his theory of psychosexual development, his etiology faulted dysfunctional relationships with parents as common factors in the development of male inversion. Further, he accepted the bisexual theory of his time, arguing that "all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious" (p. 11).

However, for most people, either the masculine or the feminine dominated.[8] Indeed, Freud (1935/1960) saw homosexuality as a benign departure from normal psychosexual development, calling it "an arrest of development" and "a variation of the sexual function" (p. 423). In his broader theory of sexuality, he posited that children have a "polymorphously perverse disposition" that carries into adulthood (Freud, 1905/1962, p. 57). Only through the inhibitions accumulated across development were adults able to maintain normative sexual behavior (p. 97). Remarkably, he believed reaction formations developed in response to this perversity and begot various virtues (p. 105).

Further, Freud also facilitated the abandonment of the Victorian sexual ethic (sex as procreation) and ushered in a new focus for sexuality: pleasure (Katz, 1995).[9] For Freud (1911/1966), the "pleasure-unpleasure [Lust-Unlust]" principle was basic to unconscious psychological function (p. 219). As he theorized, pleasure is fundamental to

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[7] While Freud wrote *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in 1905, he added footnotes in this section in 1910, 1915, 1920, and 1924. This quote comes from the 1915 edition. Freud incorporated new scientific developments in his ever-changing theories but was cautious about generalizing them to the entire population of inverts.

[8] While Freud did not directly state this, a collection of his statements proves this point. From an anatomical perspective, Freud (1905/1962) remarked: "These long-familiar facts of anatomy lead us to suppose that an originally bisexual physical disposition has, in the course of evolution, become modified into a unisexual one, leaving behind only a few traces of sex that has become atrophied" (p. 7). Thus, we have a few traces of the other sex because of our evolutionary history. Though, despite the mixture, we are dominantly unisexual. Second, Freud argued that development differentiated the sexes most conspicuously during puberty (p. 85), distinguishing men and women more profoundly. Nevertheless, he also questioned the discrete categorization of gender, saying, "In human beings pure masculinity and femininity is not to be found either in a psychological or biological sense. Every individual on the contrary displays a mixture of the character-traits belonging to his own and to the opposite sex" (p. 86). Therefore, Freud assumed sexual differentiation while coming short of discrete gendered categories.

[9] Freud (1915/1957) placed the desire for "organ-pleasure" before the procreative utility (pp. 125–126).

human experience, because it is the first mental process that develops. Early on, Freud (1894/1966) also posited that growing physical sexual tension awakened psychological libido. Without the proper release, libido, or "sexual affect," might transform into anxiety (p. 193). In asserting this, Freud made sexual release a component of mental health.

Moreover, Freud also separated sexual desire from the object of desire, positing a psychological construct that longed "only for fulfillment" (Katz, 1995, p. 61). Freud (1905/1962) defined libido or sexual desire as "a quantitatively variable force which could serve as a measure of processes and transformations occurring in the field of sexual excitation" (p. 83). Thus, this force could drive a man regardless of whether it had an object. Two principles—desire and pleasure—defined sex, human personhood, and personal identity in Freud's theory and later spread throughout Western thought. As Evans (1977) revealed, "Freudian concepts have become so basic to our self-understanding that it is difficult to imagine how individuals saw themselves before Freud" (p. 36). Overall, Freud made everything about sex and made sexual orientation the "key to who we really are" (Greenberg, 1988, p. 428).[10]

Emerging from the psychoanalytic movement, Carl Jung (1875–1961) contributed three ideas germane to our discussion of LGBT identification: the persona, the self, and the animus and anima. First, Jung posited a masculine archetype in the female consciousness (the animus) and a feminine archetype in male consciousness (the anima) (Viney & King, 1993). Jung (1954/1969), like Freud, rooted his beliefs about gender in the biological theory of the time: "Either sex is inhabited by the opposite sex up to a point, for, biologically speaking, it is simply the great number of masculine genes that tips the scales in favour of masculinity. The smaller number of feminine genes seems to form a feminine character, which usually remains unconscious because of its

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[10] Similarly, Cole (1971) argued that Freud reduced "selfhood to a function of the sex drive" (p. 3).

subordinate position" (pp. 27–28). Similar to Freud's bisexual theory, Jung believed the opposite gender hides within us.[11] Jung (1935/1966) posited that we have an "innate psychic structure" with *a priori* knowledge concerning masculinity and femininity, a knowledge operant in gender-based relating (p. 191). Here, we see gender as an inner category rather than an exclusively external matter.

Further, Jung also theorized about psychological identity in its personal and social dimensions. Jung (1951/1959) presented the self as a more comprehensive construct than the ego and called it "the total personality which, though present, cannot be fully known" (p. 5). Furthermore, Jung (1935/1966) emphasized "self-realization," the owning of our uniqueness (p. 173). Hence, embracing the self means taking apart the persona. Jung (1935/1966) defined the persona as "a complicated system of relations between the individual consciousness and society, fittingly enough a kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual" (p. 192). Individuals embrace a persona because society demands it, and it ultimately leads to neuroses. The individualistic emphasis of Jung marked early LGBTQ+ discourse, principally its embrace of self-realization.

Kinsey

As an entomologist turned sexologist, Alfred Kinsey[12] (1894–1956) started the Institute for Sexual Research and studied sexuality in men and women. Through Kinsey, sexology took a quantitative turn by gathering large samples of data and gaining new taxonomic resources (Drucker, 2014). Kinsey (1941) questioned the simple bifurcation of homosexual and heterosexual, and he dismissed the Freudian types in favor of behavioral

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[11] Jung (1935/1966) said, "No man is entirely masculine that he has nothing feminine in him. . . . A man counts it a virtue to repress his feminine traits as much as possible, just as a woman, at least until recently, considered it unbecoming to be 'manish'" (p. 189).

[12] Though it is not our purpose to evaluate the morality or validity of Kinsey's work here, Mohler (2008) offered such an evaluation.

classifications. He also demonstrated that masculine and feminine traits did not necessarily mark homosexual people. Kinsey associated same-sex sexuality with behavior and disassociated it from one's identity (Kenen, 1997; Drucker, 2014).[13] According to Kenen (1997), Kinsey sought to normalize same-sex sexual activity and remove identity from the equation entirely. As Kinsey et al. (1948, 1953) researched male and female sexuality, they argued for adjectival, not substantive, uses of the terms *heterosexual* and *homosexual*. Kinsey et al. (1948) stated: "It would encourage clearer thinking on these matters if persons were not characterized as heterosexual or homosexual, but as individuals who have had certain amounts of heterosexual experience and certain amounts of homosexual experience" (p. 617).

Nevertheless, Kinsey's interval scale (the Kinsey scale or Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale)[14] facilitated identity and group membership in the homophile community nonetheless (Drucker, 2014). Ironically, Kinsey et al. (1948) believed that categorical notions of homosexuality in society—rather than his continuum approach—forced those with homosexual experience into homosexual communities (pp. 663–664). Originally, Kinsey's team applied ratings to their interviewees instead of collecting the data via self-report (S. L. Jones & Yarhouse, 2007, p. 214). Unwittingly, his team contributed to the essentializing trend of scientific discourse in which scientists classified their subjects. Kinsey et al. also separated the term "transsexuality" from homosexual behavior until it could be proven they were related (p. 612). Their work also called for the depathologization of same-sex sexual activity. Overall, the work of Kinsey et al. marked the beginning of affirmative practices for LGBTQ+ people (American Psychological

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[13] Specifically, Kenen (1997) argued that Kinsey operationalized homosexuality in terms of orgasmic activity between members of the same-sex.

[14] Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin (1948) introduced the Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale as a seven-point scale in which zero represents "exclusively heterosexual with no homosexual," three represents "equally heterosexual and homosexual," and six represents "exclusively homosexual" (p. 638). They used the terms heterosexual and homosexual adjectively. In their view, the terms referred to sexual experiences and psychological and behavioral responses.

Association, 2009).

Homosexuality, Transvestitism, and Psychiatry after World War II

During the mid-twentieth century, the emerging homophile movement questioned psychiatry's reign over defining and conceptualizing homosexuality and transvestitism. After the American Psychiatric Association (APcA) removed homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), practitioners splintered into two groups: affirming practitioners and those interested in modifying sexual orientation and sexual behaviors.

Mid-Century LGBT Movements

Foucault argued that the medicalization of homosexuality was "a very important tool against the oppression of homosexuality in the last part of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century. This medicalization, which was a means of oppression, has always been a means of resistance as well—since people could say, 'If we are sick, then why do you condemn us, why do you despise us?'" (Foucault, 1984/1997a, p. 168). As gay people internalized their diagnoses and the categories ascribed to them by scientists and culture, these internal identities eventually became the basis for political movements.

Writing in the late 1940s, Alfred Kinsey laid the foundation for imagining LGBTQ+ people through a diversity lens. In a far-reaching statement, Kinsey et al. (1948) suggested, "The homosexual has been a significant part of human sexual activity ever since the dawn of history, primarily because it is an expression of capacities that are basic in the human animal" (p. 666). His naturalistic investigations inspired subsequent scientific researchers to see homosexuality as "a simple fact of human diversity" (White, 2015, p. 102). Continuing Kinsey's work, Bell and Weinberg's (1978) *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women,* offered what Kinsey intended to be a third

volume in his study of human sexuality. Dispelling notions of "*the* homosexual," they classified the SSOd while deconstructing stereotypes at the same time (p. 23, emphasis original). Believing the "heterosexual majority" understood homosexual people through a "hideous stereotype" (p. 230), they sought a typology of homosexualities that would reveal intragroup differences. This study represented a growing awareness of the unique homosexual individual and "the construction of homosexuality as a way of life" (p. 140). Under the banner of scientific investigation, this study also reinforced the notion that homosexuality was a mark of diversity and relevant to majority-minority relations. Like Kinsey's original studies, it foreshadowed constructionist approaches.

Moreover, the homophile movement had emerged in the 1950s, sparked by Harry Hay and the founding of the Mattachine Society. Jordan (2010) explained Hay's role, saying, "[He] was trying to describe the homosexual community as more than a furtive sexual market. For Hay, it was important to recognize homophiles as a distinct subculture, bound together by political, ethical, and ritual needs" (p. 156). Hay reinterpreted homosexuals as *homophiles* and placed them alongside ethnic minorities for social and political purposes (Jordan, 2010). A major shift occurred in social science's investigations of homosexuality as well. Donald Webster Cory (1951/1975) introduced a new emic perspective on the homosexual. Instead of being classified by detached observers like psychiatrists and taxonomists, he casted himself and other homosexuals as minorities and reframed the discussion of homosexuality in political discourse.

While irenic public societies (the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis) marked the 1950s, the homophile movement became more militant in the 1960s (Hewitt, 1983). The Stonewall riots marked the emergence of the gay liberation movement, and its activists desired to change both the pathological status of homosexuality and its criminality (Hewitt, 1983; Katz, 1976/1992, p. 337). During this period, Swedish physician Lars Ullerstam (1964/1966) built on Kinsey's work as he spoke of an "erotic minority" with "sexual minority behavior patterns" (p. 5). As he saw

it, homosexuals were the most privileged of this group, which also included other "sexual deviations" such as exhibitionists, pedophiliacs, and scopophiliacs (voyeurists). In renaming this group erotic minorities, Ullerstam cast away the notion of the *pervert*, saying a "poison label has been applied to human *needs*" (p. 7, emphasis original). Rather, he exhorted erotic minorities to unite and challenge the "erotically privileged" (p. 12). Even further, he commanded the "sexually orthodox" to take up this cause, believing "it is now their moral duty to put things right" (p. 161). Ullerstam was inspired by Kinsey, seeing natural, morally-acceptable diversity in these sexual phenomena. He legitimized homosexual activity as a "need" and chastised the social majority for criminalizing and denying the erotic minority pleasure. Gay subculture further emerged during the 1970s as churches, organizations, and categories in the yellow pages added the adjective "gay" to their titles (Murray, 2000). Communally, LGBTQ+ people sought to redefine themselves in the public square and resignify their labels and identities.

In the early 1950s, a cross-dressing male, identified as C. V. Prince (1957/2005), wrote about transvestism (cross-dressing) as a phenomenon distinct from homosexuality and transsexualism (desiring gender reassignment surgery).[15] Similarly, Prince (1973/2005, 1978) differentiated between dysphoria concerning one's sexual anatomy and dysphoria about one's internal experience of gender. Further distinguishing between *femaleness* as an anatomical reality and *womanhood* as a gendered reality, Prince (1978) believed a man could become a woman without sex reassignment surgery (pp. 268–271). Perhaps Prince's (1979) most far-reaching contribution began as a declaration: "I am therefore to be classified as a 'transgenderist' now and no longer as an FP [femmiphile]" (p. 172). Unintentionally forming this umbrella term for transvestites and transsexuals, Prince was "an identity innovator" (Ekins & King, 2006, pp. 14, 120).

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[15] Formerly known as Charles Prince, this author has published variously as C. V. Prince, Virginia Bruce, and Virginia Prince.

A Bellwether of Cultural Developments: The Changing American Nosology of Homosexuality and Transvestitism

During and after the World War II era, the psychoanalytic school continued to dominate the pathological construction[16] of homosexuality and transvestitism. Psychoanalysts like Otto Fenichel (1945) heavily drew on Freud as both described homosexuality and transvestitism as perversions. Formalizing their taxonomy, psychiatrists in the 1950s grouped homosexuality and transvestitism under the disorder "sexual deviation," a subgroup of "sociopathic personality disturbance" in the American Psychiatric Association's (APcA) earliest *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (1st ed.; DSM-I; APcA, 1952, p. 7). In the DSM-I, these deviations were differentiated from "more extensive syndromes" (p. 38) and involved faulty "character and behavior patterns" (p. 36). While not considering homosexuality or transvestism[17] a vice, the DSM-I still ascribed moral valence to these behaviors. The second *DSM* (2nd ed.; DSM-II; APcA, 1968) listed homosexuality as a discrete disorder under "sexual deviations." Avoiding the implication of character, the DSM-II eliminated the sociopathic designation and disassociated the diagnosis from personality disorders (p. 9-10). The DSM-II also

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[16] According to Johnson (2007), Christians and modern psychiatrists disagree over the meaning of psychopathology. A Christian psychopathology includes discourse about sin, vice, and moral norms. While we can translate the findings of modern psychopathology into a Christian paradigm, Johnson highlighted how the APcA's construction of psychopathology avoids moral and spiritual discourse. Considering the APcA's version of psychopathology as a cultural construction here permits us the freedom of envisioning its reconstruction according to biblical and theological truths.

[17] Confusingly, the DSMs have listed both *transvestism* and *transvestitism* as mental disorders. The DSM-I placed *transvestism* under sexual deviation and supplied no defining criteria. The DSM-II filed *transvestitism* under sexual deviations, describing the parent heading this way: "This category is for individuals whose sexual interests are directed primarily toward objects other than people of the opposite sex, toward sexual acts not usually associated with coitus, or toward coitus performed under bizarre circumstances as in necrophilia, pedophilia, sexual sadism, and fetishism" (p. 44). Drescher (2015a) believed transvestitism was a forerunner of transsexualism (see also Drescher, Cohen-Kettenis, & Winter, 2012). However, this is unlikely given the DSM-II's definition of sexual deviation and focus on behavior rather than psychological activity. Neither the DSM-I nor the DSM-II supplied the diagnostic criteria that would elucidate these diagnoses. A booklet published circa 1960 (and possibly by Virginia Prince) clarified that transvestism "is applied indiscriminately to all who cross-dress without regard to their motives or purposes" (Prince?, 1960, p. 3). Before the DSM-III, we should interpret transvestism and transvestitism more generally as describing those who cross-dressed, despite the motive.

listed transvestitism as a discrete mental disorder, listing it and other sexual deviations separately.

Soon, researchers like Evelyn Hooker (1957) questioned whether homosexual people were more pathological than heterosexual people. These doubts came to a head in 1973 when the APcA's Nomenclature Committee reconsidered both the disorder status of homosexuality and the definition of a mental disorder itself (Bayer, 1981; Drescher, 2015a). Doubts about the disordered nature of homosexuality were "accelerated" by the gay liberation movement of the late 1960s, especially as protests against the APcA began in 1970 (Bayer, 1981, p. 189). Spitzer (1981) formulated a definition for mental disorders in 1973 that excluded homosexuality; he and others believed true disorders "regularly caused subjective distress or were associated with generalized impairment in social effectiveness of functioning" (p. 211). Homosexuality failed to meet these criteria. As a result, the APcA's board of trustees voted to remove homosexuality from the DSM-II in 1973, and the voting membership affirmed this decision (Drescher, 2015a). Therefore, the seventh printing introduced a new designation, *sexual orientation disturbance* (2nd ed.; DSM-II; APcA, 1975). Now, only those personally disturbed by or wishing to change their sexual orientation could receive a diagnosis.

When the APcA published the third edition of the *DSM* (3rd ed.; DSM-III; APcA, 1980), *ego-dystonic homosexuality* appeared under the general heading "other psychosexual disorders" (p. 281). Like *sexual orientation disturbance*, this classification described those who wanted to change their sexual orientation or found their SSAs unwanted or distressing. Gender-related diagnoses multiplied in the DSM-III, subsumed under the category psychosexual disorders. The broader category of gender identity disorders now housed new diagnoses: transsexualism, gender identity disorder of childhood, and atypical gender identity disorder (p. 261). Harry Benjamin's (1966) *Transsexual Phenomenon* had popularized the notion of transsexualism, distinguishing it from transvestism (Ekins & King, 2006, p. 66). At this point, *transvestism* had been

redefined as a paraphilia and found its new home in the subclass paraphilias.[18] The DSM-III (1980) explained the difference between transvestism and transsexualism, saying, "In both Transvestism and Transsexualism there may be cross-dressing. However, in Transvestism that has not evolved into Transsexualism there is no wish to be rid of one's own genitals" (p. 263). Unlike transvestism, transsexualism and gender identity disorder relied on gender identity as a psychological construct.

The DSM-III exhibited the shift from external sexual behaviors and cross-dressing to subjective experiences of distress about sexual orientation and incongruent gender identity. Importantly, the DSM-III finally broke free of the psychodynamic theories dominating previous manuals and became more *descriptive* (Drescher, 2015a). Ego-dystonic homosexuality disappeared in a revision of the third edition, but a similar description was placed under the heading "Sexual Disorder Not Otherwise Specified [NOS]" (3rd ed., rev.; DSM-III-R; APcA, 1987, p. 296). The DSM-III-R also introduced a non-transsexual type of gender identity disorder. However, the APcA continued to pathologize alternate gender identities until the DSM-5 transformed gender identity disorder into gender dysphoria (5th ed.; DSM-5; APcA, 2013). Unlike homosexuality, gender dysphoria has persisted as a diagnosis because it leads to hormone treatments and sex reassignment surgeries (Butler, 2004, p. 75). Moreover, the DSM-5 removed the NOS designation and only provided codes for discussing sexual orientation during "sex counseling" (p. 725).

After the APcA's 1973 vote, researchers studied the LGBT population more phenomenologically and descriptively. However, the nomenclature now belonged to the

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[18] In the 1970s, the ICD-9 (International Classification of Diseases) separated transvestism—the paraphilic practice of cross-dressing—and "trans-sexualism [sic]"—taking on cross-gender behaviors and identities (Drescher, 2015a, p. 391). Thus, editors exchanged Hirschfeld's original classification, transvestism, for transsexualism. In the 1970s, the ICD-9 (International Classification of Diseases) separated transvestism—the paraphilic practice of cross-dressing—and "trans-sexualism [sic]"—taking on cross-gender behaviors and identities (Drescher, 2015a, p. 391). Thus, editors exchanged Hirschfeld's original classification, transvestism, for transsexualism.

LGBTQ+ community and the individual rather than psychologists and psychiatrists. During this period of the depathologization of homosexuality and gender identity disorder, professionals lost their cultural authority to name and characterize these experiences and to identify LGBTQ+ people. The American Psychological Association's (APlA) volumes on therapy for LGBTQ+ people relied only on self-description and LGBTQ-related texts to guide their frameworks. Rather than researching pathology and therapy for sexual orientation or gender dysphoria, affirming psychologists researched LGBT identity formation, minority stress, internalized stigma, and intersectionality.

The Sexual Orientation Change Tradition in Psychiatry and Psychology

An interest in homosexuality's cause—and thus, its pathology and remedy—stems from essentialism (Laumann et al., 1994).[19] However, the medical professionals interested in sexual orientation change believed in heterosexual essentialism, not homosexual essentialism. As a result, they focused on psychosexual development in their evaluation of homosexuality's etiology. Before psychiatrists developed and implemented psychopharmacological drugs in the 1960s, they followed psychoanalytic theory and burdened parents with the blame for severe mental illnesses (Lieberman & Ogas, 2015, p. 193). During this section, we trace the historical development of etiological theories and therapies across the latter half of the twentieth century. These theories and therapies, along with their essentialist assumptions, would shape the evangelical response to homosexuality and transvestism during the same era.

Though Freud and subsequent psychiatrists viewed "the possibility of therapeutic reversal of homosexuality" skeptically, Sándor Radó's (1890–1972) work challenged this view in the 1940s (Bayer, 1981, p. 28). First, Radó (1940) took issue with

[19] Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, and Michaels (1994) also noted: "Ironically, today, many gay people are strong believers in some version of essentialism" (p. 285).

Freud's bisexual theory and questioned the psychoanalytic notion of "unconscious homosexuality" (466). He found the term "homosexual" clinically useless since psychoanalysts posited its latent existence in every kind of sexual and relational phenomenon. Having discarded Freud's bisexual theory, Radó introduced an idea that would affect the psychoanalysis and pastoral care of same-sex sexuality for the next half century: "reparative adjustment" (Radó, 1940, p. 466). He now interpreted "aberrant" sexual attractions as a reparative mechanism—first inaugurated through anxiety and inhibitions in early childhood and continuing through adulthood as an "altered scheme of stimulation" (p. 466). Radó (1955/1965) drew on evolutionary biology as he characterized same-sex sexual behaviors as adaptive "processes of repair" mainly organized by development in the familial environment (pp. 195–199). Theorists like Radó valued the adaptive function of sexuality such that "the will of the deity was replaced by the will of evolution in psychoanalytic literature" (Drescher, 2002, p. 17). Radó's developmental approach seemed to unlock the mysteries of homosexuality and provided subsequent psychiatrists with the tools to undo the modifications wrought to the standard sexual pattern. However, his evolutionary assumptions obscured the Creator.

Performing one of the classic studies on sexual orientation change, the Society of Medical Psychoanalysts published a "voluminous" study of "106 male homosexuals and 100 male heterosexuals in psychoanalytic treatment" (Bieber et al., 1962, p. vii). Notably, these psychiatrists defined homosexuality in terms of "a clearly defined behavioral pattern," not a presenting sexual orientation (vii).[20] The authors also collapsed bisexuals into the category homosexual. Utilizing substantive descriptions of those practicing same-sex sexual activity, Bieber et al. built their analysis on both Freud's theory of psychosexual development and Radó's reparative theory. They insisted that *all*

[20] Bieber et al. (1962) did, however, believe "the human has a capacity for homosexuality but a tendency toward heterosexuality. The capacity for responsivity to heterosexual excitation is inborn" (p. 305). Most accurately, Bieber et al. essentialized heterosexuality.

psychoanalytic theories agree "that the experiential determinants [for homosexuality] are in the main rooted in childhood and are primarily related to the family" (p. 18). Hence, they defined homosexuality as "a pathologic biosocial, psychosexual adaptation consequent to pervasive fears surrounding the expression of heterosexual impulses" (p. 220). Importantly, they believed homosexuals were really "latent" heterosexuals (p. 220). While still maintaining heterosexuality as an essentialist category, they attributed homosexuality's solidification to the environment. Bieber et al. formulated the "classical" familial pattern at work in homosexual development: dominant mothers "who were unusually close to their sons" (p. 44) and "hostile-detached fathers" (p. 172). Their studies also proclaimed modest results in sexual orientation change: 27 percent of homosexual patients became exclusively heterosexual after treatment. Notably, the authors emphasized the role of motivation in their success (p. 283).

When the APcA altered the second *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-II), Irving Bieber and psychiatrist Charles Socarides emerged as the most vocal opponents of the change (Bayer, 1981).[21] Overall, Charles Socarides (1968) resisted notions that homosexuality was innate, calling it "the choice of an object of the same sex for orgastic satisfaction" and a "learned, acquired behavior" (p. 5). For Socarides, the "male-female design" was essentialized at the biological level by evolutionary forces and perpetuated socially and culturally as well (p. 5). Improving upon Beiber's work, Socarides theorized about the development of homosexuality in both males and females. Socarides (1978) affirmed Radó's rejection of Freud's "constitutional bisexuality" and refocused on the psychodynamic factors at work in the development of homosexuality (pp. 38–39). He continued the classification work of Freud and Radó,

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[21] Both Bieber and Socarides conceptualized homosexuality through a psychoanalytic lens. Notably, Bayer (1981) emphasized how rethinking homosexuality entailed rethinking the entire psychoanalytic modality: "It is clear that the question of the diagnostic status of homosexuality aroused deep concern for these groups . . . because of what this change would portend for the status of psychoanalytic theory in the organization of a nosology of mental disorders" (p. 122).

positing three main types: preoedipal homosexuality (including two subtypes), oedipal homosexuality, and schizo-homosexuality. In the more severe of the preoedipal types (Type II), sufferers continually "search for identity and a cohesive self" (p. 91). During his case studies, he classified patients according to these types and organized their pathologies.

Further, Socarides (1968, 1978) drew heavily on Freud as he described the preoedipal development of male homosexuality and emphasized the effects of identification with the mother during the oedipal period. He tracked the male homosexual who, during maturation, "becomes painfully aware of this lack of masculine identification and searches for it in his homosexual relations" (Socarides, 1968, p. 74).[22] He attributed the formation of female homosexuality to secondary masculine identification and the Oedipus complex (Socarides, 1968, p. 74). According to Socarides, female homosexuals "may identify with the sexual and erotogeneity of an older female whom they know enjoys intercourse with men," and they "can also identify with males, in effect saying to the mother she has nothing to fear from their sexual wishes toward the father as they themselves wish only to be male" (p. 173). Overall, Socarides (1978) ascribed the emergence of preoedipal homosexuality to a disturbance of gender role identity (in this context, one's self-image as masculine or feminine) (p. 171). Socarides contributed to a growing literature of modern sexology, though he appealed to a developmental basis rather than a physiological one.

Southern Baptist researcher George Alan Rekers focused his research on gender development in childhood (e.g., Rekers, Bentler, Rosen, & Lovaas, 1977; Rekers & Mead, 1980; Rekers & Morey, 1990). He believed same-sex sexual activity was sinful,

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[22] Further, Socarides (1968) described what Payne would call the cannibal compulsion: "He seeks partners who represent strong masculine figures and who would give him almost by 'transfusion' the missing masculine attributes which diminish and deprive him, make him feel empty and demasculinized" (p. 74).

and when given the chance to speak in public psychology forums, Rekers (1978) advocated for its prevention. His descriptive research focused on gender-based mannerisms (see Rekers, Amaro-Plotkin, & Low, 1977). He also promoted therapeutic techniques to intervene in childhood gender disturbance,[23] hoping intervention would prevent transsexualism, transvestism, or homosexuality (see Rekers, Bentler, et al., 1977; Rekers & Mead, 1980). However, Reker's (1991/2006) psychological model of masculinity and femininity took the cultural challenges of gender seriously—a model organized to assist complementarian discourse. In this work, Rekers balanced biological and cultural notions of gender, striking a balance between essentialist and social constructionist discourse.

During the 1990s, mental health professionals (MHPs) providing therapy to change sexual orientation argued for it in terms of patient choice rather than psychopathology (Murphy, 1992). Joseph Nicolosi (2009/2016) championed this approach and insisted MHPs respect "client self-determination" (p. 4). Following Socarides, Nicolosi (2009) still considered the homosexual condition "maladaptive," saying, "The therapist must be neutral in judging the client, his behavior, and his choices; but he cannot be neutral about the condition of homosexuality" (Nicolosi, 2009, p. 30). Serving as the face of reparative therapy (RT), Nicolosi built his work on the psychoanalysis of Radó, Bieber, and Socarides (Nicolosi & Freeman, 1993, p. x). In *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality,* Nicolosi (1991) wrote about SSOd individuals who were homosexual in a psychological sense yet rejected the "gay" label (p. xv). Nicolosi was concerned with identity, explaining that his "clients experience their homosexual orientation and behavior as *at odds with who they really are*. For these men, their values, ethics, and traditions carry more weight in defining their personal identity

[23] Rekers, Bentler, Rosen, and Lovaas (1977) described gender disturbance as a disruption in either gender identity or gender-based behaviors. It includes cross-gender identification, cross-dressing, and behaviors (mannerisms, preferences, and activities) usually ascribed to the opposite gender.

than their sexual feelings" (p. 13). In effect, Nicolosi described the ego-dystonic homosexual. Furthermore, Nicolosi believed LGB identities can never really be ego-syntonic. Unlike the academic work of Bieber and Socarides, Nicolosi's work was more accessible and palatable to evangelical Christians. Nicolosi explained the psychoanalytic research at a lay-level and cited Christians such as Moberly (1983), Payne (1981, 1985, 1985/1996), and Comiskey (1989).

Like his psychoanalytic predecessors, Nicolosi formalized homosexuality as a mostly developmental phenomenon, attributable to parental relationships and a personal sense of gender identity.[24] For most men, Nicolosi believed same-sex sexuality was a reparative attempt to fill gender deficits (pp. 70–76).[25] Though Roman Catholic, Nicolosi's gender and sexual essentialism resonate with the evolutionary emphasis of his predecessors: "Nature made man complementary to woman, and to cling to the sameness of one's own sex is to look at the world with one eye" (p. 149). Further, he emphasized the role of the male therapist in the treatment of male homosexuality. Through the therapeutic relationship, the therapist and client could recapitulate the father-son relationship. As a result, the client could obtain masculine wholeness from a non-sexual male relationship. Nicolosi saw treatment as a life-long process.

Further, he emphasized "change" rather than "cure," saying that the first step requires changing one's personal identity from homosexual to heterosexual (p. 165). Nicolosi, along with Socarides and Benjamin Kaufman organized NARTH (National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality) in 1992 to protect the rights of clients and therapists regarding sexual orientation change treatments (Nicolosi & Freeman, 1993; Kaufman, 2002). Notably, NARTH was united by its members'

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[24] Nicolosi differentiated between "*core* gender-identity" and "gender-identity" (p. 94, emphasis original). The former is the personal recognition of *being* male or female. The latter pertains to how masculine or feminine one *feels*.

[25] Chambers and Chambers (2015) helpfully clarified: "Reparative therapy isn't actually aimed at repairing; it just acknowledges the reparative aspect of the perceived disorder" (p. 184).

disapproval of the APcA's 1973 decision and their concern with the prevention and treatment of homosexuality (Kaufman, 2002), not by explicitly Christian teaching.

These orientation-change psychiatrists and psychologists supplied the theoretical models that would inform evangelical soul care of LGBT-identified from the 1970s through the first decade of the twenty-first century. Their work was grounded in modern essentialism and a kind of positivist certitude regarding the categories of heterosexuality and gender. Mostly, their discourse established heterosexuality as normative and viewed homosexuality as a pathology. They saw homosexuality in stable, developmental terms. Freudian developmental theories informed most orientation-change regimens, making remediation of homosexuality accessible only to the trained analyst.

Foucault, Third-Wave Feminism, and Transgressivity: Affirming Ideologies after 1973

The 1973 APcA decision revealed a split between those who believed homosexuality was pathological or sinful and those who did not. Affirming philosophers and social scientists generated theories that filled the vacuum left by psychoanalytic theory. This section traces the affirming ideologies that influence contemporary affirming psychologies and the construction of LGBT identities.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Michel Foucault shifted the philosophical framework for homosexual identity significantly. Mary McIntosh (1968) had already argued that homosexuality was a *social role* more than a *condition*. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1976/1990) outlined how the scientific discourse of homosexuality simultaneously enabled society's control of the homosexual and the homosexual's own resistance of it (p. 101). Through this observation, Foucault subverted the essentialist mode. As Foucault (1984/1997b) pondered the history of subjectivity, he highlighted the Greco-Roman "practices of the self" and valued the autonomy he found in them (p. 282). He believed Christian, medical, and psychiatric institutions limited autonomy. Further, he sought liberation from oppressive, moral "power relations," arguing it was necessary for

both heterosexuals and homosexuals (p. 284).[26] While liberation could give way to "practices of freedom," it was not without ethical implications (p. 284). Ultimately, Foucault, like the Greco-Romans, believed "the care of the self" was a moral duty (p. 285). Unlike Christian soul care, Foucault's self-care assumed an autonomous self. Even its ethical framework was self-constructed: ". . . extensive work by the self on the self is required for this practice of freedom to take shape in an *ēthos* that is good, beautiful, honorable, estimable, memorable, and exemplary (p. 286, emphasis original). Overall, Foucault's libertine self incorporated moral sensitivity yet dismissed Christian norms as institutional domination.

His musings on sexuality focused on its creative potential rather than its essence. Foucault's (1984/1997a) believed the gay movement needed "more the art of life than a science or scientific knowledge (or pseudoscientific knowledge) of what sexuality is" (p. 163). Foucault viewed sexuality through a creative or constructive lens. He rejected the essentialist lens in which an individual discovers his or her sexual orientation and resisted the scientific mode of Freud and Kinsey. Rather, he proposed "sexuality is something that we ourselves create—it is our own creation, and much more than the discovery of a secret side of our desires" (p. 163). As Foucault argued further, he articulated the difference between *discovering* one's sexual identity and *becoming* or *creating* a gay life. Rather than sexual identities with intrinsic properties, Foucault focused on the self-constructing individual: "If we are asked to relate to the question of identity, it must be an identity to our unique selves. But the relationships we have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather, they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation" (p. 166). For Foucault, identity meant difference (cf. Derrida, 1972/1991).

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[26] Foucault did not support liberation in and of itself. When an interviewer asked Foucault (1984/1997b) about liberation of the self, he explained that he prefers "practices of freedom over processes of liberation" (p. 283).

Similarly, Foucault (1981/1997) was reluctant to speak of homosexuality in terms of "Who am I?" and "What is the secret of my desire?" (p. 135). He said succinctly: "To be 'gay,' I think, is not to identify with the psychological traits and the visible masks of the homosexual but to try to define and develop a way of life" (p. 138). For Foucault, it seems, being gay was an activity more than a universal category with intrinsic properties. Simons (1995) extrapolated the implications of Foucault's thought for identity politics masterfully: "He recognized the importance of struggling for rights to sexual freedom, but only as a stage, or as a condition of possibility for the affirmation not of identity but creativity" (pp. 97–98). Foucault deconstructed essentialized sexual identities, especially insomuch as scientific discourse constructed them. Similar to his view of liberation, essentializing discourse could pragmatically bring about the ultimate, desired end: freedom and creativity.

Importantly, Foucault (1982/1997) also contemplated "technologies of the self" that would allow people "a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (p. 225). These technologies included various fields of knowledge developed by humanity. Notably, Foucault expanded the idea of self-construction to bodies in addition to ways of living. While hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery predated Foucault, he provided another conceptual buttress for gendered transformation.

Toward the late 1980s and early 1990s, third-wave feminists introduced concepts that would eventually intersect with the LGBT movement. As early as the 1940s, Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1993) questioned essentialist accounts of gender as she proclaimed, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (p. 281). In the early 1980s, Adrienne Rich (1980) had already questioned the heterosexual assumptions in feminism and sought to align feminism with the gay movement (N. Collins, 2017a, pp. 235–236). However, Judith Butler (1988) stands out; she questioned the essentialism of gender in

the same way Foucault questioned the essentialism of sexual orientation.[27] Butler built upon de Beauvoir as she argued that "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceede [sic]; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (p. 519, emphasis original). Rather than having a static essence, Butler reinterpreted gender as an activity, a performance. Notably, Butler did not deny the biological aspect of gender but distinguished it from the sociocultural mode. Echoing Foucault's creative sexuality, Butler stated, "Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis" (p. 522). With striking implications for transgender people, she continued, "My suggestion is that the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time" (p. 523). As Butler sabotaged the biological foundation of gender, she imploded gender essentialism.

Further addressing gender theory, Butler (1990) resisted the notion that gender is a metaphysical substance. Gendered substances "are nothing other than the coherences contingently created through the regulation of attributes," she argued (p. 24). In other words, the "gendered self" only existed through discourse (p. 24), and "gender is always a doing" without a preceding ontology or subject (p. 25). Thus, practices make gender identities. In *Undoing Gender*, Butler (2004) more explicitly integrated feminist, transgender, and transsexual thinking. In this work, she rejected the DSM-IV's attempts to normalize gender through its diagnosis of gender dysphoria. She berated the diagnosis, saying, "This imposes a model of coherent gendered life that demeans the complex ways in which gendered lives are crafted and lived" (p. 5). Hence, she reinforced the personal and social construction of gender. Even more, Butler excoriated Rekers's work for

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[27] Butler (1988) drew on Foucault (1976/1990) as she deconstructed gender. She said, "As Foucault and others have pointed out, the association of a natural sex with a discrete gender and with an ostensibly natural 'attraction' to the opposing sex/gender is an unnatural conjunction of cultural constructs in the service of reproductive interests" (p. 524).

preserving gender norms by means of diagnosis—gender identity disorder (GID) (pp. 89–90). As Butler deconstructed gender, she welcomed transgendered people into a broadened feminist ideology.

Contributing another concept that psychologists would employ in LGBT therapies, Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) proposed society consider the "multidimensionality of Black women's experience" instead of the "single-axis analysis that distorts these experiences" (p. 139). In other words, Crenshaw believed that perceiving black women as either women or black alone underappreciated the fullness of their experience. Crenshaw rejected the classification system at work in anti-discrimination law. This system homogenized individuals within groups and minimized their differences. She proposed intersectionality as a means of integrating these otherwise distinct classes. Considering disadvantaged classes, she identified those with minority sexual preferences as well.

However, toward the late-twentieth century, "queer" emerged as a new generation esteeming "transgressivity" refused to be defined by their sexuality (Murray, 2000, p. 384). The *Queer Nation Manifesto* (1990/2003) argued that "gay" was too normal and proclaimed, "Using 'queer' is a way of reminding us how we are perceived by the rest of the world. It's a way of telling ourselves we don't have to be witty and charming people who keep our lives discreet and marginalized in the straight world" (p. 202). Queer people, then, embraced their marginalization and resisted conformity. As Foucault (1963/1998) explained transgression, he reasoned, "Profanation in a world that no longer recognizes any positive meaning in the sacred—is this not more or less what we may call transgression?" (p. 70). Recalling Nietzsche, he believed transgression and sexual discourse reveal that man "exists without God; the speech given to sexuality is contemporaneous, both in time and in structure, with that through which we announced to ourselves that God is dead" (p. 70). Unrestrained sexual speech, then, coincided with Western culture's loss of the divine. Queer emerged as another self-designation, valuing nonconformity instead of sexual orientation. Transgender was also redefined in terms of

transgression against the gender binary in the 1990s (Ekins & King, 2006, p. 21).

Affirming Pastoral Care Parallels Mid-Century Psychiatry and Affirming Psychologies

Initially, affirming pastoral care assumed orientation essentialism as its adherents justified the permissibility of same-sex relationships. In the 1950s, Derrick Sherwin Bailey used essentialist discourse and social science to reinterpret the behaviors of *true* homosexuals. Making his argument in the Anglican church, Bailey viewed sexual orientation as a natural, innate disposition and held that passages like Romans 1 did not reference the sexual activity of true inverts. As he reinterpreted the Christian tradition concerning homosexual practice, Bailey (1955) differentiated the *pervert* (catamites, pederasts, and heterosexuals who sought same-sex sexual activity) from the *invert* (a person with a disposition towards same-sex sexual activity). He concluded, "Faced with the novel and delicate responsibility of making an assessment of the invert's behavior which does justice both to his abnormal condition and the personal problems which it creates, and to the claims of morality, we find that our [Christian] tradition gives us no assistance" (D. S. Bailey, 1955, p. 169). Bailey recommended decriminalization of consenting homosexual relationships yet maintained the invert's psychological condition as pathological. Scientific research, he hoped, could determine its etiology, investigate its cure, and educate the public about the invert's handicap. Importantly, Bailey secured psychological science as the most promising form of discourse to make sense of inverts in the church.

Writing after the depathologization of homosexuality in the United States, John J. McNeill (1925–2015) expanded Bailey's work in his context, the Roman Catholic Church. A psychotherapist and a moral theologian, McNeill (1976) fittingly favored developmental approaches to sexuality and gender over and against biological approaches. Yet, at the same time, McNeill believed "God had a divine purpose in so creating human nature that a certain percentage of human beings are homosexual" (p.

194). Thus, he refashioned orientation essentialism with a theistic twist. Moreover, McNeill fused heterosexual identities with rigid, culturally-bound gender stereotypes, ultimately critiquing both. Commending Jung's positive outlook on the male homosexual, McNeill believed gay men and lesbians liberated culture from gender stereotypes.

As McNeill characterized homosexuals as "a created type," he reinterpreted homosexual identity as a commanded vocation (Jordan, 2010, p. 160). McNeill continued the we-now-know approach of Hiltner, arguing that the social sciences revise our conclusions about sexual orientation and same-sex sexual activity (p. 193). He also pitted personal identity and relational development against following an orthodox sexual ethic (pp. 170–171). Development of the intrinsic self was essential to McNeill's pastoral care of homosexuals. Further, McNeill believed the SSOd could "put together their dual identities as Catholic and as homosexuals" (p. xii), revealing his belief that religious identity and sexual orientation identity had equivalent status. Overall, McNeill shifted pastoral emphasis from sin and pathology to rescuing the "homosexual minority" from oppressive social structures (p. 190). Later in his career, McNeill (1994) identified as a homosexual and described it as an "essential aspect of myself" (p. 49). His focus on the givenness of both gender identities and sexual orientation essentialized these categories in human personality.

James B. Nelson (1930–2015) essentialized homosexuality in pastoral discourse as well. Continuing in the tradition of Bailey and McNeill, Nelson (1978) read Paul's condemnation of same-sex lust and intercourse in Romans 1 as a case of mistaken identity. Paul, Nelson argued, prohibited gay sex for people who are *actually* heterosexual, not those who are homosexual *by nature*. Hence, sexual orientation could validate same-sex sexual activity. Further, he held that rigid gender identities and gender

roles unnecessarily lead to the rejection of same-sex sexual activity.[28] Relevantly, as Nelson considered identity, he understood gay identification through principles like discrimination and minority status (p. 201). Intriguingly, Nelson shied away from the term "homosexual," arguing it depersonalized individuals, recalled its recent pathological status, and focused on sexual acts. Nelson applauded the LGB community's use of "gay," saying, "It is a way of saying more comprehensively and more accurately that one's identity as a sexual human being is far broader than what one does in bed" (p. 210). Contrary to contemporary pastoral discussions of LGB identities, Nelson believed that the term "gay" moved the conversation *away* from sexual discourse. It was the heterosexual majority who used "homosexual" to *sustain* association of gay with sexual activity. Further, Nelson (1994) also incorporated the notion of "heterosexism" in pastoral and moral considerations (p. 86). Overall, Nelson cemented the relationship between majority-minority language and LGB identities in affirming pastoral care. As surveyed in chapter 1, Marshall, Sanders, and others exemplify twenty-first-century affirming pastoral care. However, they appealed more to constructionist views of LGBT personalities, and affirming pastoral care followed affirming psychology in this regard.

Conclusions

After putting together the histories of the last two chapters, we can see how same-sex sexual activity and cross-gender expression have passed through four epochs in the West. During the first epoch, Christians concerned themselves merely with the lusts (i.e., desires) and behaviors related to these experiences (people defined by vice). Sin grounded their concern. After the Enlightenment, medical psychiatrists inaugurated the

[28] This idea may originate from Nelson's (1994) own personal experience with homophobia (pp. 86-89). During a period of self-discovery, Nelson found his masculinity threatened by LGB people. Afterward, he accepted the Kinseyian notion that most people are a mix of heterosexual and homosexual and attributed his discomfort with LGB people to reaction formation and projection. Thus, for Nelson, gender stereotypes and a lack of self-awareness hindered societal acceptance of same-sex practices.

second epoch. They named these activities homosexuality and transvestitism and conceived of them as pathological conditions. Pastoral caregivers of the time followed suit, often integrating ideas of pathology and sin. As gay communities formed and expanded into modern LGBTQ+ communities, they embraced minority statuses based on distinct social identities. Concomitantly, they subverted the power of their negative, stigmatized statuses to redefine their diversity as a positive attribute. Ultimately, LGBTQ+ communities celebrated the freedom to define themselves. The fourth epoch, emerging as we speak, emphasizes the role of personal meaning-making and self-constructions. While the third epoch emphasized communal construction, this fourth epoch underscores personal autonomy.

Overall, we can interpret the twentieth century as a shift from *being described* by practitioners and scientists to *describing oneself*. After the APcA's 1973 decision, social scientists studied the LGBT-identified with new eyes. Rather than researching "the etiology, treatment, and psychological adjustment of homosexuals," they investigated "*how* a person develops a homosexual identity" (Troiden, 1988, p. 1, emphasis original). Further, self-description not only predated the APcA's decision, it provoked it. Filling the research void after this decision, social scientists like Richard Troiden (1979, 1988) and Vivienne Cass (1979, 1984) began researching how gay identities developed. This line of research eventually reached evangelicals when Mark Yarhouse (2001) began investigating identity development and contemplated how Christian values might affect the process. The personal constructivist mode (see chapter 1) apexed in LGBT-affirming psychology when Ruth Fassinger (2017) explored "what it means to enact LGBTQQIA-affirmative therapy within a paradigm that *questions the very existence of those LGBTQQIA identities*" (p. 21, italics mine). Fassinger cited Foucault, Butler, and queer theory while exchanging LGBT identities for personal constructions and transgressive narratives. Strikingly, Fassinger's chapter is the foundational chapter of the APlA's most

recent handbook on affirming therapy. We will survey these developments and their implications in chapter 4.

Summarizing the Worldview Assumptions of Contemporary LGBT Psychologies

Scientists exploring sexuality and gender often interpreted these phenomena through one of the many forms of modern essentialism. Despite offering a robust epistemological foundation for gender, biological essentialism has been used to excuse same-sex sexual activities as natural phenomena. Biological determinism, while not identical to biological essentialism, is a logical step for many: "If these desires are biologically caused, they are my fate." Scientific classifications of homosexuality, transvestitism, and transsexuality offered their subjects language not only *to describe themselves with* but designations *to define themselves by*. To boot, Freud's biological essentialism made desire and pleasure basic to human personhood. Parallel to his influence, evolutionary theory—as another essentialist influence—explained sexual differentiation through evolutionary purposes (Looy, 2001), reduced sex to pleasure-driven attempts to propagate the species, and made sexual behaviors acceptable if they are beneficial and not harmful (S. L. Jones, 1999). For sexual orientation specifically, biological essentialism has come to mean that same-sex sexual activity is healthy, amoral, and essential to the SSOd personality. The authoritative appeal of scientism leads many to ascribe scientific classifications a transcendent explanatory power. As a result, they view them as constitutive and prescriptive.

Another ideology with a similar pedigree as constructionism/-ivism has combined with modern essentialist assumptions: expressive individualism (cf. Bellah et al., 2008; Taylor, 1989, 2007; Trueman, 2020). Relying on Taylor, Trueman (2020) defined it, saying, "Each of us finds our meaning by giving expression to our own feelings and desires" (p. 46). As external diagnoses shifted to internal identities,

experiences like SSA and GI became opportunities for self-realization. SSOd or GIt people first internally and then externally declared themselves to be LGBT—or whatever label had currency—so they could say, "This is who we *really* are." Thus, biological essentialism and expressive individualism culminated in orientation essentialism—the idea that sexual orientation is a real category of personhood. Following Industrialization, modern gender essentialism energized the over-gendering of everything in Western society. As a result, this over-gendering has frustrated the healthy gender identity development of young children whose interests did not fit narrow gender stereotypes.[29] Still, from a Christian perspective, we can reclaim essentialism apart from its modernist trappings to conceptualize sex and gender. However, we should not use it consider same-sex orientations essential aspects of personhood.

Foucault's autonomous self and Butler's gender performances furthered expressive individualism's advancement while releasing it from modern essentialism. Foucault set the foundation for a personal constructivism, and he imploded the classification system that the early LGBT movement had assumed. For him, desires determine the subjective re-creations of bodies, genders, gender expressions, and sexual behaviors, permitting sexual-identity labels to expand beyond the standard gay or lesbian identities. Butler likewise de-essentialized gender, making it what we do rather than who we are. She depathologized gender identity disorder while making gender a complex construct with many variations, spawning the creation of endless gender-identity labels. Individuals could now not only express their internal notions of gender or their sexual desires as identity markers, but they could also transgress authoritative classifications of

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[29] This statement does not abrogate gender distinctions in the church, home, and society. Rather it challenges what Rekers (1991/2006) the kind of genders stereotypes cultures created that were malignant. For example, toy manufacturers will make an identical toy "boy colors" and "girl colors" to capitalize on the strong sense of gender essentialism many children have. A young child may be drawn to the toy itself but experience shaming by parents, teachers, and peers for desiring a "boy toy" or a "girl toy." Such shaming inadvertently operates on the Butlerian paradigm: gender is what you do and desire, not what you are. As we will see in chapter 6, we need a kind of gender essentialism that affirms biblical prescriptions and rejects modern restrictions.

sexuality (beyond heterosexual and homosexual) and gender (beyond male and female).

Scientism, Expressive Individualism, Foucault, and Butler: Epistemological Crises for Pastoral Theology

These ideologies have presented Christians with a set of what MacIntyre (1977) called "epistemological crises," and Christians must answer with new narratives about sexuality and gender that adequately answer the objections of these paradigms (p. 455-456). Immersion in these "rival traditions," as MacIntyre (1981/2007) elsewhere suggested, allows one to identify the "unsolved problems" of those traditions and argue the superiority of one's own (p. xiii). Throughout this chapter, we have traced the development of several ideologies that confront historic Christianity and warrant new answers from an ancient faith.[30] Importantly, they have infected secular psychologies and, in turn, compromised affirming pastoral care.

Contemporary ministry paradigms have adapted to these developments in psychology and culture described throughout this chapter. Transformation-focused care built *some* of its assumptions about SSA on the amoral heterosexual essentialism of the orientation change tradition. Inspired by psychology's emphasis on identity development, the integration movement investigated the relationship between conservative religious values and LGBT identities. The sin/repentance approach embraced some social constructionist arguments while deconstructing modern LGBT identities and recovering biblical language and concepts. Influenced by the age of personal constructivism, chaste, LGB Christian care rejected the secular conceptualization of LGB identities and sought to

[30] The problem is not that Christianity as an ethical tradition—in MacIntyre's (1981/2007) terms—lacks the resources to meet these challenges. Throughout Christian history, Christians have engaged ideological crises. These crossroads resulted in better articulated theological principles like the Incarnation, the Trinity, justification by faith, and biblical inerrancy. The contextualization of the Christian faith must always adapt as cultural contexts and ideologies warrant careful re-examination of and novel applications of the unchanging Scriptures. These processes reveal flawed interpretations and often call for better delineations of orthodoxy.

reconstruct the meaning of LGB identities in the Christian tradition. These four approaches contextualized their Christian responses within these cultural movements.

A few conclusions emerge: Dominant cultural thinking about same-sex sexual activity and cross-gender expressions has mutated from historic Christian understanding to contemporary themes in this order: (1) sin, (2) pathology, (3) communal resignification, and (4) radical self-determination. A new articulation of Christian care must adequately respond to the drive to authentically express the self, especially as it is symbolized by the last two. Second, modern history's overall trend is the movement from (seemingly) objective descriptions of homosexuality and transvestitism to personally-constructed LGBT identities. As cultural forces and philosophical outlooks changed, SSOd and GIt people internalized and then deconstructed what had once been scientific classification. Orthodox pastoral care must find a new primary mode of describing experiences that relies less on classification systems. Finally, while many evangelicals were appealing to the sexual orientation change efforts (SOCEs) of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, LGBT-affirming psychologists were theorizing about sexuality and gender, studying identity formation, and integrating LGBT identities with affirming Christianity. Orthodox pastoral theology will preserve an interest in spiritually-founded personality transformation while also articulating alternatives to the minority-identification scheme of the LGBTQ+ community and the emphases of affirming psychologies.

CHAPTER 4

THE SECULAR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF LGBT PSYCHOLOGIES AND EVANGELICAL RESPONSES

Chapters 4 and 5 will survey and assess three identity-related themes that are salient from a Christian perspective. This chapter will uncover the theoretical frameworks of LGBT-affirming psychologies and locate their tensions and contradictions with the Christian tradition. We will also survey evangelical engagement of these frameworks and synthesize an alternative Christian framework for gender and sexuality. Chapter 5 will survey and assess affirming LGBT identity development and synthesis models and the strategies secular practitioners use to navigate the conflicts between LGBT identities and other salient identities.

The Secular Theoretical Frameworks of LGBT-Affirming Psychologies

As referenced in chapter 1, modern essentialism, social constructionism, and personal constructivism serve as the ideological foundations of today's LGBT psychologies and research.[1] In recent times, theorists have viewed essentialism and social constructionism as mutually exclusive perspectives on sexual orientation. The debate is a new instantiation of the medieval dialogue between realism and nominalism (see figure 1 in chapter 1) (Boswell, 1982/1989). Both modern essentialism and social constructionism inform the content of therapeutic dialogue and may even direct the discourse of

[1] According to Stein (1987/1990a), the essentialist-constructionist debate is not the nature-nurture debate or the voluntarist-determinist debate. He believed the latter two have connections to the former but should not be equated with it. While essentialist research does favor biological discourse about sexual orientation (e.g., hormones and genes), it may also emphasize the role of family dynamics (psychoanalytic theories) and social learning (behaviorism) as well.

affirmative therapies (Broido, 2000; Sánchez & Pankey, 2017). While the APlA's first two handbooks on LGBT-affirmative therapy favored the social constructionist perspective (see Perez, DeBord, & Bieschke, 2000; Bieschke, Perez, & DeBord, 2007), the most recent handbook devotes a chapter to biological essentialism and reinterprets social constructionism with personal and narrative concepts (see Fassinger, 2017; Sánchez & Pankey, 2017).

Understanding Modern Essentialism

In this section, we will introduce the modern essentialist perspective, observe how it plays out in therapeutic settings, and consider how it affects lesbian, bisexual, and transgender identities.

The modern essentialist perspective on sexual orientation and gender identity. Modern essentialism emerged as an ideological feature of sexology, emphasizing the role of biology in determining sexuality and locating sexuality and gender within the person (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). Stein (1987/1990b) defined it as the belief that "the categories of sexual orientation (e.g., heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual) are appropriate categories to apply to individuals" (pp. 4–5). According to Stein, modern essentialists[2] believe that the sexual orientation of a historical figure can be determined, and they envision sexual orientation as a transcultural category independent of social discourse. Bohan (1996) captured its relationship to personal identity, saying, "This approach argues that one's sexual orientation is a core part of her/his being and identity (whether its origins are biological, social, or both)" (p. xii). Many modern essentialists research hormones, genes, and neuroanatomy to establish a physiological basis for LGBTQ+ experience (see Sánchez & Pankey, 2017).

[2] Unless specified otherwise, "essentialism" will refer to modern essentialism in this chapter.

When pondering gender,[3] modern essentialists "portray gender in terms of fundamental attributes that are conceived as internal, persistent, and generally *separate* from the on-going experience of interaction with the daily sociopolitical contexts of one's life" (Bohan, 1993, p. 7, emphasis mine). Thus, they believe gender is internal and independent of sociocultural contexts. According to Hart (1984), transsexual[4] people assume essentialism insomuch as they wish to alter their sexual anatomy to conform their bodies and gender to the opposite sex. Their desire to undergo surgery, he argued, depends on rigid cultural stereotypes of masculinity and femininity and categorical thinking about sex reassignment (e.g., going from entirely male for entirely female). Hence, full gender transitions assume modern essentialism.

As recounted in chapter 3, modern essentialist discourse has its roots in the psychiatry of nineteenth-century Europe. According to Hegarty (2018), affirming psychologists were uninterested in the etiology of sexual orientation in the years following the APcA's removal of homosexuality from the DSM-II in 1973. However, he observed a shift in this approach in the early 1990s. Biological essentialism supplanted environmental essentialism. First, Bailey and Pillard (1991) found that 52 percent of the pairs of monozygotic twins in their study both had bisexual or same-sex orientations. Hamer, S. Hu, Magnuson, N. Hu, and Pattatuci (1993) discovered evidence "suggesting the possibility of sex-linked transmission in a portion of the population" of self-identified gay men (p. 321). This finding added to the growing evidence of a possible, yet elusive, genetic contribution. Finally, Simon Levay's (1991) famous neuroanatomic study found differences in the third cell group of the interstitial nuclei of the anterior hypothalamus

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[3] We should note that there are two related ways of speaking about the implications of essentialism for gender. In one sense, being male or female may be an essential aspect of the self. In another sense, being transsexual or transgender may be perceived as an essential aspect of the self.

[4] Throughout this chapter, outdated terms like *homosexual* and *transsexual* are used when the sources use them. In the same vein, *gay*, *lesbian*, *bisexual*, and *transgender* are used as nouns when the cited literature does so. *Same-sex attraction* and *gender incongruence* are used interpretively to designate the core experiences of these labels and identities.

(INAH-3) between heterosexual men and homosexual men. The area was larger in heterosexual men and smaller in both women and homosexual men. As Hegarty argued, these studies invigorated interest in biological essentialism, especially among the media and the general public.

Furthermore, Bohan and Russell (1999) identified the ontological and epistemological foundations of essentialism—realism and positivism.[5] Ontologically, essentialism means that the categories used to describe phenomena like sexual orientation and gender identity exist outside human constructions of those categories. Thus, sexual orientation identity is "a fundamental and definitive axis of each individual's core self, regardless of how that self may be manifested (or hidden) in varying situations" (p. 13). Epistemologically, positivism assumes realism but also assumes that we can achieve objectivity and value neutrality. Thus, when researching sexual orientation and gender identity, the essentialist aims to discover "the phenomena that define sexual orientation and to answer meaningful questions about them through the application of positivist methodologies" (p. 14). Like dinosaur fossils, sexual orientation and gender identity are extant and waiting to be studied.

Though far from an essentialist, Foucault (1984/1997a; Simons, 1995) recognized the utility of essentialist discourse in the political realm.[6] Hegarty (2018) similarly traced the emerging political utility of biological essentialism to the LGB legal cases of the 1990s. As he explained, judicial cases tasked twentieth-century jurists with establishing sexual orientation as an immutable class. Attorneys appealed to the immutability of sexual orientation and its biological basis in court, especially during the litigation over Colorado Amendment 2. Hegarty believed the need for biological

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[5] Weinrich (1987/1990) names the essentialist position *realism,* and Neimeyer (1995) names the position *objectivism*.

[6] When Hart (1984) suggested a constructionist viewpoint in affirming therapy, an activist chastised him for undermining the political cause for gay people.

essentialism waned in the political-legal context in 2003 after Lawrence v. Texas shifted the legal focus from an immutable class to the imposition of stigma. Psychologists followed suit by researching minority stress afterward.

Modern essentialism in therapeutic practice. Modern essentialism informed early affirming therapies like Woodman and Lenna's (1980) and Maylon's (1982/1985). Both emphasized self-actualization, holding that clients should fully realize their sexual orientation and identify as gay. According to essentialist therapists, facing one's sexual identity means "recognizing, accepting, and integrating sexual orientation into one's overall sense of identity" because it is a "core aspect of personal identity" (Bohan, 1996, p. 5). Thus, essentialism requires *accepting* and *integrating* the internal reality of sexual orientation or gender identity into one's personal identity. Russell and Bohan (1999) described the foundational question in essentialist psychotherapy for LGB people as "Who are you?" (p. 31). They depicted the role of the essentialist therapist in epistemological terms: knowing or helping the client to determine his or her sexual orientation. These therapists assume that sexual orientations and gender identities are essential categories, and they assist clients in determining their place within these ontological categories. Emphasizing expressivism and immutability, Stein (1996) added that essentialist therapists understand sexual orientation as "the expression of some inner nature of a person" and believe that sexual orientation "rarely changes across a lifetime," despite how individuals may repress it (p. 91).

As Hart (1984) observed, clients often exhibit essentialist assumptions. Referring to their gay orientation, some say "they have come to know themselves as they 'truly are'" (p. 41). Similarly, male-to-female (MtF) transsexuals may assume they "should have been born" as women (p. 42). Further, Hart identified a few ways in which therapists join with clients' essentialist beliefs. The therapist may see the homosexual self as the *true self*, guiding clients to accept themselves as such and facilitating congruence

with that identity. A psychoanalytic therapist may also see homosexuality as a psychological defense against heterosexual norms and typical gender roles. When this is the case, practitioners work to recover what they believe are normative sexual orientations and gender roles. In contrast to how SSOd people become their true selves by actualizing their gay selves, modern essentialism, according to Hart, leads transsexual people to believe the opposite sex *is* their true self.

Reading lesbian, bisexual, and transgender identities with modern essentialism.[7] As we will discover, research on lesbian- and bisexual-identified people tends to operate from a constructionist perspective. Some attribute this difference to sexual fluidity in women, a least in part (Rust, 1993; Diamond, 2008). Essentialism leads researchers to assume bisexuals are either gay or lesbian people who are in denial about their sexuality (Malcolm, 2000; Fox, 2006). In one study, men who identified as bisexual had arousal patterns that matched those of homosexual or heterosexual men; hence, they did not exhibit a distinctive bisexual arousal pattern (J. M. Bailey, 2009).

Biological essentialists, according to Sánchez & Pankey (2017), highlighted the role of biological sources (e.g., hormones, genetics, and brain structures) in determining variant gender identities. Though, as in sexual orientation, "essentialism does not entail nativism and environmentalism does not entail constructionism" (E. Stein, 1999, p. 103, emphasis removed). So, environmental or nurture etiologies of gender identity may be essentialist as well. Before the concept of gender identity emerged to describe people experiencing variant gender identities, such persons were identified as transsexuals (Hart, 1984) or transvestites (Weinrich, 1987/1990) in the literature discussing modern essentialism.

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[7] Historically, research on sexual orientation has focused on men, forcing women's sexuality to be understood in terms of theories and research involving men (B. S. Mustanski et al., 2002; Diamond, 2008). Throughout this chapter, we will devote space to lesbian, bisexual, and transgender identification when possible.

Presently, modern essentialism endures as scholars emphasize the transculturality of cross-dressing and cross-gender identities. Feinberg (1996) denied gender essentialism yet engaged in an essentialist quest to locate alternate gender expressions across space and time. We also see essentialism reflected in Bullough and Bullough's (1993) search for varying constructions of cross-dressing phenomena in cultures across history. Psychologists Lev (2007) and Bockting (2014) use modern essentialist discourse to introduce clinical and developmental issues regarding gender identity, utilizing these histories to normalize gender-variant experiences. In therapy, psychologists like Fraser (2009) posit the transgender self as the authentic self, implementing essentialist discourse to dispel notions that it is "a false self, defense or complex" (p. 126). These practitioners believe that being transgender or gender nonconforming is who these clients really are.

Understanding Social Constructionism

In this section, we will introduce the social constructionist perspective, survey its view of lesbian, bisexual, and transgender identities, and discern how it affects psychotherapy with LGBT clients.

The social constructionist perspective on sexual orientation and gender identity. Social constructionists, according to Stein (1987/1990b), reject the essentialist notion that sexual orientation is a valid category applicable to all people across space and time. Theorists who take a constructionist approach view sexual orientation and gender identity as creations of cultural discourse rather than transhistorical and transcultural categories (Russell & Bohan, 1999). While modern essentialism reigned for much of the twentieth century, Kitzinger (1995) reported the absence of self-acknowledged essentialists in the academic landscape of the mid-1990s; the designation became a slight. Marked by their reaction to modern essentialists, social constructionists find themselves "interrogating and deconstructing" the categories established by sexology (Fassinger &

Arseneau, 2007, p. 21). Constructionism, when applied to gender, argues "that gender is not a trait of individuals at all, but simply a construct that identifies particular transactions that are understood to be appropriate to one sex" (Bohan, 1993, p. 7). Thus, constructionists believe gender is not inherent; it only exists in social transactions.

Historically, social constructionism has four sources: (1) nominalism (Boswell, 1982/1989); (2) reactions to Cartesian rationality and structuralism (A. Lock & Strong, 2010); (3) Berger and Luckmann's (1966/1967) *The Social Construction of Reality* (V. C. Cass, 1999; Sánchez & Pankey, 2017); and (4) sociological studies of deviance and social roles (see Becker, 1963; McIntosh, 1968). According to Lock and Strong (2010), social constructionism developed across the thought of luminaries like Giambattista Vico, Edmund Husserl, and Michel Foucault. Vico mourned how Cartesian rationality dismissed premodern thought and pondered the relation of language to knowledge and the role of humans in constructing knowledge. Emphasizing phenomenology, Husserl argued that knowledge could only be "grounded" in consciousness (p. 32). By underscoring intersubjectivity, he uncovered the social dimension to phenomenology by recognizing the role of others and shared social assumptions in constituting knowledge. Finally, Lock and Strong cited Foucault's contributions to social constructionism: exploring the role of discourse in constructing the self in sexual contexts. Additionally, Berger and Luckmann (1966/1967) argued that "reality is socially defined," a social product of humanity (p. 116). Given the social dialectic between the individual and society, they maintained that we both collectively contribute to a culture's notions of objective reality and receive them unknowingly from our culture as givens (p. 129). Finally, Becker (1963) contributed to the formation of social constructionism as he interpreted deviances like homosexuality as the arbitrary constructs of social groups. In a similar manner, McIntosh (1968) deconstructed *homosexual* as a medical category and reintroduced it as a social category.

Moving to philosophy, we find that social constructionism is antirealist. According to Bohan and Russell (1999), social constructionism rejects the existence of sexual orientation outside social discourse. Thus, experiences of sexual orientation "are not intrinsically or necessarily manifestations of identity, nor need identity be organized around the nature of one's erotic and affective attachments" (p. 17). From a social constructionist standpoint, even the connection of gender to the body is a constructed reality (Butler, 1993; Nagoshi & Brzuzy, 2010). Epistemologically, social constructionism rejects the possibility of knowing things as they really are (Bohan & Russell, 1999). According to constructionism, the social discourse that makes sense of sexual orientation and GI "frames individuals' own self-definitions and shapes their behaviors" (Bohan & Russell, 1999, p. 18). Hence, social discourse, not biology or environment, makes sexual orientation and gender identity knowable and intelligible.

Psychologists, disenchanted with positivism, have relied on non-essentialist frameworks like queer theory, feminist theory, and postmodernism (Kitzinger, 1995; Minton, 1997) that question scientific objectivity. Plummer (1992) anticipated the effects late modernity or postmodernism would have on gay-affirming psychologies. He observed how these psychologies limited themselves to discrete classifications and overlooked the potential diversities of sexuality. These varieties, he suggested, would make objective definitions of sexual-identity labels impossible. Gergen (1992) too advanced a postmodern agenda in psychology, arguing that, "Rather than 'telling it like it is' the challenge for the postmodern psychologist is to 'tell it as it may become'" (p. 27). As he explained, modern psychologists held up a mirror to nature, aiming to understand it. However, in postmodern psychology, researchers not only seek to study cultural constructions but take an active role in creating them as well. Given this perspective, social constructionism in its many versions leads practitioners to take a more active role in LGBT communities than modern essentialism.

Kitzinger (1995) identified two types of social constructionism at work in LGBT psychologies: the "weak form" and the "strong form" (p. 142). In the weak form, sociocultural frameworks shape one's perspectives on the psychosocial realities of male and female or gay and lesbian. However, this does not override the fundamental biological realities of maleness and femaleness. The strong form takes a more extreme position. It questions basic categories, such as maleness and femaleness, "the sexual drive," and "the homosexual," mindful of how they are reified only in Western cultures (p. 142). The stronger form would even see anatomical differences through the lens of social construction. Because of this, Kitzinger connected the stronger form with French feminism, which deconstructs the notion of "woman" as a "political category" (pp. 142–143). Within this framework, women's characteristics are not natural; they have been "biologized." The weaker form, while mindful of the social conditioning at work in these kinds of categories, does not dismiss them altogether.

Russell and Bohan (1999) attributed the widening influence of constructionism to the "changing contexts of coming out" (p. 35). As younger LGB people rejected rigid categories, they began to see themselves more on a spectrum of sexual orientation. Social constructionists also believe, according to Fassinger (2017) and Bohan (1996), that humans produce sociocultural artifacts discursively as they make meaning about their experiences and pass on these meanings to others through language. Notably, "these socially transmitted meanings and the dimensions to which they are attached become internalized and eventually come to be viewed as essential aspects of human experience" (p. 22). Thus, LGBT identities are ultimately socially constructed but have been internalized and essentialized through cultural media and discourse. Social constructionists also "reject both the concept of 'true selves' or inner 'essences', and the traditional methods of positivist social science" (Kitzinger et al., 1998, p. 530). As a result, constructionism disconnects sexual practices from sexual identities or social roles

(Kitzinger, 1995; McIntosh, 1968; Richardson, 1984). Practices come first and meaning comes afterward, according to the constructionists.

Constructionist perspectives on lesbian, bisexual, and transgender identities. In the literature, constructionism has provided an ideological haven for exploring LBT issues (lesbian, bisexual, and transgender). In a seminal text, Kitzinger (1987) treated gay-affirmative models suspiciously, arguing that its liberal humanism ultimately oppresses women (and lesbians). Kitzinger viewed lesbian identification through the lens of radical feminism, arguing that affirmative psychologists focus on homosexuality in men and force women into their development models *post hoc*. She appealed to social constructionism as social science's liberator from depoliticization, patriarchy, positivism, and oppressive categories.

As we have noted, constructionism appeals to researchers studying women's sexuality—specifically lesbian and bisexual identities—because of sexual fluidity. Contemplating the malleability of sexual identity in women, Rust (1993) considered social context a determiner of sexual identity more so than one's innate sexual orientation. She believed that constructionism pioneered an opportunity for bisexuality to become "an authentic form of sexuality" (p. 51). Rust concurred with constructionist critiques of dichotomous (i.e., either homosexual or heterosexual) and scalar models of sexual orientation (e.g., the Kinsey scale). The latter, she contended, suggests bisexuality is merely a transitional state between heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Butler (1990) engaged in a kind of constructionism as she transformed gender from essence to performance, seeking to "disrupt" the gender binary and categories like sex and gender (p. xii). Following in the footsteps of Butler and other radical feminists, many gender-affirming therapies have questioned the male-female binary and gender

essentialism. Singh and dickey's[8] (2017a) work on gender-affirming practices assumes that gender essentialism and the gender binary is the result of colonization. Contemporary practitioners adopt constructionist approaches because they allow more diverse interpretations of gender. Outside a gender binary, a multitude of gender identities is possible.

Social constructionism in therapeutic practice. Formulating one of the earliest therapeutic strategies based on constructionist theories, Hart (1984) emphasized the flexibility of sexual orientation identities while abandoning the fixedness of sexual orientation. He challenged the essentialist assumptions of clients, arguing, "Such identities can instead be viewed as creations of the interaction between an individual and society at historically specific moments" (p. 41). Using a constructionist framework, Richardson (1987) recognized "that sexual preferences and identities may themselves change over time" (p. 6). Not arguing for sexual orientation change, she cautioned therapists against labeling clients gay or homosexual. She understood "sexual identity as an ongoing process" (p. 9). It may come as no surprise that Fassinger's (2017) constructionist therapy "explores what it means to enact LGBTQQIA-affirmative therapy within a paradigm that questions the very existence of those LGBTQQIA identities" (p. 21). Additionally, social constructionism recognizes the possibility of fluidity (the contemporary framing of flexibility) in the client's sexual identity, allowing clients to see their heterosexual past without judgment and permitting future changes in sexual identity as well (Russell & Bohan, 1999). Thus, the constructionist emphasis in therapy deconstructs the stability of the essentialist framework and validates a myriad of future developments in sexual orientation identity.

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[8] Some transgender or gender-nonconforming people, like lore m. dickey, use *lower-case letters* to begin their first and last name. The name appears in the text as such.

Moreover, Bohan and Russell (1999) explained that social constructionists understand therapy as a "discourse between client and therapist [that] results in the cocreation of new understandings" (p. 31).[9] Constructionists are not concerned with discovering who the client is; instead, they explore whom the client wants to be. As the authors explained, constructionist therapists take a contextual approach to sexual orientation identities and present the client with opportunities to question their original self-understanding. Rather than assuming a particular outcome, therapists join with the client in creative ventures. According to constructionist therapies, personal identity is linguistically forged and volitionally directed.

Finally, McNamee (2004) argued that social constructionism is not a type of therapy but a way of doing therapy. It focuses on dialogue, language, and meaning. There is no singular meaning or reality at which the client and therapist may converge. Rather than forming a "common discourse or shared meaning," the therapist and client create a "conversational domain" where different points of view coordinate (p. 260). Additionally, therapists expect no particular outcome for therapy. This therapy enables personal meaning-making and disregards its commensurability or alignment with another's meaning. McNamee's view of social constructionism in therapy is radically individual. As affirming therapists use this kind of therapy, they create an environment for the client to synthesize personal identities that are internally coherent and independent of all "external" considerations.

Understanding a Variation on the Constructionist Theme: Personal Constructivism

Personal constructivism, a variant of social constructionism, has its roots in what Richardson (1984) called the shift from the "sexual orientation model" to the

[9] From a constructionist perspective, individuals construct both their reality and identity through discourse (Russell & Bohan, 1999).

"identity construct model" (p. 84).[10] Rather than viewing sexual identity as a phenomenon fixed by development, psychologists began viewing sexual identity as both a personal and social construction. Constructivist therapies specifically focus on developing the self, reconstructing narratives, and enacting new narratives (Neimeyer, 1995). Both Neimeyer (1995) and Fassinger (2017) distinguished between *constructionism* and *constructivism*. According to Fassinger, *constructionism* is the societal level of reality construction that emphasizes broader discourse, and *constructivism* is the personal level of reality in which individuals construct narratives. While Russell and Bohan (1999) did not believe constructionist and constructivist approaches were distinguishable, they recognized that constructivist approaches emphasize the role of personal meaning-making.

Formulating a contemporary prototype for affirmative therapy, Fassinger's (2017) model drew from constructivist applications in vocational counseling. Rejecting essentialist assumptions, Fassinger offered a "counseling/therapy that is affirmative around issues of sexual orientation and gender diversity without relying on rigid, limited categories and labels" (p. 40). She rejected the way political discourse treats LGBT identities—inchoate identities that must be discovered, nurtured, and self-actualized. Instead, she envisioned "an identity construction and enactment discourse" in which identities are personally forged and performed through social transactions (p. 40). Personal constructivism explains the "ever-expanding variety of self-chosen labels" that appear in personal narratives about sexuality and gender (p. 41).

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[10] The distinction between a *sexual orientation model* and an *identity construct model* first comes from Plummer (1981). Modern essentialist assumptions drive the former and its use by therapists (with psychodynamic and behaviorist perspectives) and geneticists. If one's sexual orientation is homosexual, one's "*actual* identity is that of a homosexual" (p. 69, emphasis original). Plummer proposed the latter model from the perspective of symbolic interactionism. The identity construct model is more cognitive. An individual matches the totality of her experiences (e.g., social, sexual, existential) with contemporary labels.

Fassinger named her paradigm a "transgression-affirmative nested-narrative identity construction and enactment (NICE) model for therapy" (p. 41). Borrowed from queer theory, *transgression* refers to how these identities conflict with social norms and how individuals reclaim control of self-definition. As Fassinger saw it, her therapy advanced "gay affirmative" therapy to a more radical "transgression affirmative" approach (p. 43). Rejecting statements like "I was born this way" or "I was born in the wrong body," Fassinger's constructivism teaches clients to say, "I found it in myself to transgress sexual and gender norms." Her approach is not that of a radical outlier; remarkably, her approach shapes the APlA's most recent handbook on LGBTQ+ issues as the foundational chapter.

Similarly, an APlA-published work on affirmative practice with transgender and gender-nonconforming people also propagates a kind of personal constructivism. In it, Chang, Singh, and Rossman (2017) rejected the gender binary (male and female) in favor of a less restrictive approach to gender. Rather than adopting the terms promoted through social norms, the authors highlighted various self-designations used by TGNC people: genderqueer, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, third gender, gender neutral, agender, genderless, neutrois, null-gender, nongendered, masculine of center, androgyne, intergender, multigender, polygender, bigender, and genderfluid. The authors also emphasized the mutability of these labels "in different settings, at different times, or within different relationships" (p. 23).

Understanding the Intramural Disagreements among LGBT Psychologists

Modern essentialists and constructionists/-ivists have intriguing debates that expose the weaknesses of extreme positions. In this section, we will get a feel for how they evaluate each other's claims.

Constructionist critiques of modern essentialism. In one sense, constructionists critique modern essentialism because they believe the political effects it offered are no longer needed (see Simons, 1995; Foucault, 1984/1997). Russell and Bohan (1999) thought modern essentialist approaches were appropriate for the time immediately after the depathologizing of homosexuality. As they put it, "Those who developed LGB-affirmative approaches—which are grounded in validating rather than pathologizing essentialist views—were visionaries who moved LGB psychology from a role as a tool of oppression to a far more open exploration and affirmation of LGB lives" (p. 36). For them, essentialism was a necessary step along the path to constructionism. Accordingly, Russell and Bohan suggested we move away from essentialism because recent "contextual shifts" call for "different paradigms for thinking about and conducting psychotherapy with LGBT individuals" (p. 38). The post-pathologization academy read sexual orientation through modern essentialism, especially given the influence of positivism. Scientists believed they could understand LGBTQ+ people objectively through instruments and the senses (cf. Hiebert, 1999). Social constructionism has emerged to critique empirical science and modernism (Kitzinger, 1995). As postmodernism has increasingly deconstructed scientific and social categories, many LGBT individuals have lost their faith in science to define these categories. Instead, they now use discourse to make sense of alternative sexualities and genders.

Resultantly, a constructionist might indict biological essentialism for the role it has played in political discourse. During the 1970s and 1980s, a few correlational studies concluded that if individuals believed sexual orientation was more attributable to biology than choice, they would have less homophobic attitudes (Hegarty, 2018, p. 70). These studies—combined with the etiological studies by Bailey, Hamer, and Levay in the 1990s—became powerful tools for political activists who wished to establish LGBTQ+ people as a stable class eligible for judicial review. Hegarty (2018) argued that biological essentialism began to wane in 2003 after Justice Kennedy's opinion in Lawrence v. Texas

appealed to new legal criteria for establishing LGB people as a class. Kennedy was more concerned with the stigma inflicted by Texas's anti-sodomy statute than establishing LGB people as a group based on a shared biological disposition (see *Lawrence et al. v. Texas*, 2003). According to Hegarty, "biological essentialism was no longer essential" (p. 56) and stigma became the next focus of psychological research of LGB people.

Promoting a more holistic biopsychosocial model, Sánchez and Pankey (2017) identified three possible challenges to biological essentialism: (1) sexual fluidity, (2) discoveries in neuroanatomy, and (3) epigenetic research. Findings concerning sexual fluidity, a prominent phenomenon in women, have led researchers to question the idea that sexual orientation is fixed and constant. We will expound on this challenge below. Researchers have also discovered that sexual differentiation of the brain begins *before* the introduction of hormones. This finding has questioned the view that hormones are the primary determiner of brain differentiation. Recent research on neuroplasticity has also revealed that the brain may change more as a result of experience and environment during adulthood than first believed. This discovery has corrected researchers' beliefs about the fixedness of adult brains. Finally, Sánchez and Pankey believed epigenetic research challenged biological essentialism because it suggests that environmental factors and personal choices may turn specific genes on or off. As they contend, these findings undermine the forms of essentialism that exclusively focus on the role biological influences play in forming sexual orientation or gender identity.

Feminists have also criticized modern essentialism for privileging the experience of gay men and downplaying the sexual fluidity and voluntariness experienced by women (Hegarty, 2018). Diamond (2008) defined female sexual orientation in terms of fluidity, differentiating it from male sexuality. She asserted that a woman's sexual responsiveness has "situation-dependent flexibility" (p. 3). Also, both Rust (1993) and Diamond found significant numbers of women in their studies changing from bisexual to lesbian and lesbian to bisexual. Rust clarified that some women do

embrace lesbian identities permanently. However, across a ten-year study, Diamond found that women who maintained their sexual identity were "the smallest and most atypical group" (p. 65). Recent research reports sexual fluidity in males as well (see Diamond, 2016; Savin-Williams, 2017). For Rust, constructionism explains sexual fluidity better than modern essentialism because "social contexts are constantly changing" (p. 68). Notably, Diamond argued that neither modern essentialism nor social constructionism thoroughly explained female sexuality.

Essentialist critiques of social constructionism and personal constructivism. Though few psychologists still identify as essentialists, many (including some self-identified constructionists) operate from an essentialist perspective (Kitzinger, 1995). As they counter constructionism, modern essentialists rely on the findings of biology and history. LeVay (1996) maintained that genetics makes a fundamental contribution to sexual orientation while not determining it. He relegated bisexuality to a stage in the coming out process. When faced with the reality of sexual fluidity in women, LeVay believed that some women do experience changes in sexual orientation. As he explained, fluidity may refer to identity rather than sexual orientation itself. He also dispelled common misconceptions about the role of genetics in sexual orientation: "The scientists who currently espouse genetic theories claim only that genes *influence* sexual orientation, not that they *determine* it" (p. 55). Hence, LeVay explained fluidity by the fact that genes interact differently with various environments and some genes do not express themselves until later in life. To boot, he criticized constructionists for over-relying on the role of language in constructing sexuality, arguing that biologically-rooted phenomena like sexual attraction are pre-linguistic. Nevertheless, he believed weak social constructionism is compatible with an emphasis on the role of biology in sexual orientation.

Malcom (2000) also pushed back on constructionists, saying that sexuality is

ultimately more structured than fluid. Specifically, in his studies of married men who have sex with other men, he argued that "an underlying biological predisposition" is at work in bisexually-identified men and denied that bisexual behaviors signify a bisexual orientation (p. 295). Similarly, Epstein (1987/1990) identified a significant weakness of social constructionism: While emphasizing the role of meaning in the construction of sexuality, constructionism does not account for the psychological structures that make gay and lesbian identification possible. As a result, the constructionist position gives the impression that biological substrates are a kind of *tabula rasa*, such that socialization and language are mostly, if not entirely, responsible for sexual phenomena.

Boswell (1990) criticized constructionists for devoting "more energy to exposing the weaknesses of the 'essentialist' position than to articulating and refining their own" (pp. 134–135). He distanced himself from the essentialist label while arguing its position, saying that one crucial question is whether societies create sexual activities or whether they are endemic to humanity in general (p. 135). He argued the latter and affirmed the transhistorical nature of homosexuality. While constructionists find ancient and modern homosexualities discontinuous, Boswell believed they could correspond while having "various consonances and dissonances" (p. 143). He also rejected the reductionistic characterization of essentialism, arguing that "no one who believes that there are biological aspects to human sexuality would claim that there are not also individual psychological, familial and social factors operating alongside and conjunction with these" (p. 136). Like LeVay, Boswell argued that essentialism entailed more than the implications of biology.

While not necessarily arguing for essentialism, others have also traced LGBTQ+ people throughout history. Rich (1980) argued for the historical reality of lesbians along a "lesbian continuum" (p. 648). Expanding *lesbian* beyond sexuality, she believed that "primary intensity between and among women" has occurred across cultures (p. 648). Bullough and Bullough (1993) traced cross-dressing across multiple

cultures and epochs, while also arguing that cross-dressing is normative. From the perspective of historiography, some kind of essentialism is necessary to trace same-sex sexuality and cross-dressing across spatiotemporal divides.

Evaluating Theoretical Frameworks from an Orthodox Christian Perspective

Modern essentialism and constructionism/-ivism are deficient from a Christian perspective, and we will discern how in this section.

Modern essentialism. Philosophically, the first question is whether or not modern essentialism is compatible with a Christian framework. Modern (qua scientistic) essentialism is the realism of nontheistic science. Informed by positivism, it repudiates the spiritual and ethical realities associated with sexual orientation, gender identity, and social identities (e.g., LGBT labels). Strong forms of modern essentialism constitute what Hiebert (1994) described as naïve realism. In this view, there is a "one-to-one correspondence between human knowledge and reality" (p. 38). Modern essentialists also minimize the role of culture in forming LGBT identities, shaping SSA, and validating alternate gender identities. In fact, Kuhn's (1962/1970) emphasis on scientific communities and paradigms reveals that scientific investigation of LGBTQ+ people is itself socioculturally embedded.[11] Orientation essentialism, another form of ME, minimizes the agentic aspects of identity, relegating volition to expressing, accepting, or disclosing a core orientation identity alone (cf. Russell & Bohan, 1999, p. 40).

Furthermore, modern essentialism does not share the same assumptions about humanity as Christian anthropology. Since naïve realists tend to be reductionistic (Hiebert, 1994), the Christian notion of desire and the secular notion of attraction will

[11] At the same time, we should recognize that Kuhn's instrumentalism would bar him from validating translation between paradigms (Hiebert, 1999, p. 88). The translation project we are attempting assumes commensurability is possible because all paradigms are formed in relation to a transcendent reality.

have divergent conceptual genealogies.[12] Similarly, the contemporary West's *sharp* distinction between biological sex (as embodied gender) and gender (as sociocultural construct) does not comport with Scripture (cf. Gen 2:24; 1 Cor 11:2-16, 16:13; 1 Pet 3:7) or the Christian tradition (see chapter 2). Also suspect is the notion that sexual orientation—as we know it and experience it in a fallen world—is a core aspect of the self. Recovering an Augustinian essentialism, Christians would argue that the fallen expressions of same-sex orientations and opposite-sex orientations are more *accidents* than *essences* (cf. Augustine of Hippo, 1961).[13]

Recently, Christians have argued against orientation essentialism insomuch as they believe it leads to the internalization of identities that trap individuals in sinful sexual habits and behaviors (S. L. Jones & Yarhouse, 2007, p. 31; Paris, 2011, pp. 74–76; Hannon, 2014; Butterfield, 2015a, pp. 94–98). Many of them criticize it in their attempts to recover the classical essentialism of the Christian tradition. Michael Hannon's (2014) critique of orientation essentialism appealed to the deconstructive potential of social constructionism, reemploying it as a tool for Christian criticism.[14] Hannon argued that *both* heterosexuality and homosexuality are not helpful ideas in Christian sexual ethics. Orientation essentialism, he lamented, misleads Christians to assume that the species of

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[12] However, we should not take this to mean that they have *no* correspondence. On the contrary, critical realism would lead us to "argue that paradigms can be made commensurable through the process of translation" (Hiebert, 1999, p. 88).

[13] As Cartwright (1968) pointed out, determining which properties of a thing or person are essential and which are accidental is a difficulty encountered in essentialism. Helping us make this determination, Augustine (1961) argued that "disease and wounds" are accidents, not substances (p. 11). Similarly, he argued that "vices in the soul are nothing but privations of natural good" (pp. 11-12). As we will argue, experiences like SSA and GI are experiences that entail a confluence of sin, bodily weakness (or disability), and suffering. They also may co-opt God's good created structures that may be unique to the individual. As a result, they are privations of the good God intended and are accidental properties of those who experience them. Since these accidental properties present with consistent features, they are discernible by scientific investigation.

[14] Hannon aligned with poststructuralist theory only long enough to take down the "sexual-orientation structure" and recover "the classical Christian view from which all of this is a departure" (p. 33). He faulted modern essentialism for "evaluating passions against nature rather vice versa" (p. 33). Though not articulated, Hannon's argument suggests his intent to recover a historical kind of Christian essentialism that evaluates sexual desires against nature and created essences.

lust they experience in a fallen world is natural. As he saw it, orientation essentialism bound the Christian to sin.[15] Even more striking, Hannon challenged the concept of heteronormativity, arguing Christian use of *heterosexual* uses an identity "that is essentially distinguished from its foil by nothing but a particular brand of temptation to sin" (p. 31). Thus, a helpful model will need to transform the frameworks and reinterpret the experiences that empower orientation essentialism.

Constructionism/-ivism. The ontological and epistemological postulates of both social constructionism and personal constructivism are also problematic. As De Cecco and Elia (1993) concluded, constructionism's reductionism "seem[s] to suspend a disembodied individual in a sea of categories" (p. 12). We cannot fully understand sexuality and gender without contemplating the biological realities of an embodied humanity (e.g., sexual arousal, hormones, neuroanatomy, sexual anatomy, and genotypes). From the standpoint of social constructionism, truth also has no independent reality, and universal human experiences or qualities cannot be asserted (Bohan, 1996, p. 8). Kitzinger (1995), in particular, captured social constructionism's wariness of terms like "natural" and "universal" (p. 142). The strong form of social constructionism, she said, may lead one to question basic sexual categories (i.e., male and female). The exclusive focus on personal agency in Fassinger's model also ignores the constraints of biological and social realities.

Social constructionism rejects the notion of an transcendent, divine perspective, as revealed in the Christian Scriptures. Perhaps social constructionism's most destructive impact on Christian doctrine would be its rejection of the universality and transcultural reality of human sin. Social constructionism reduces sin to a cultural-

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[15] Compare affirming-sociologist Diane Richardson's (1984) contention that modern essentialism does not permit a "clear conceptual distinction between the state of being homosexual (defined in terms of self-identification) and homosexual behavior" (p. 85).

religious construction, meaningful only in the societies that forged the notion. Further, constructionism disables the application of Scripture to contemporary contexts and frustrates contextualization of the gospel. It limits Scripture's assertions to its temporal and sociocultural contexts. In fact, affirming theologians employ a form of these arguments as they undermine the contemporary applicability of sexual and gender norms.

Without a biological grounding or an explicit ethicospiritual framework, social constructionism promotes the trends of culture and social psychology, and personal constructivism guides an individual to do what is "right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6). Both ultimately lead to the deconstruction of what Christians consider to be transcendent moral norms. Constructionism also directs therapists to challenge the moral categories used by clients, dissolving their moral frameworks (see Russell & Bohan, 1999, p. 44). Finally, personal constructivism's infusion of transgressive acts from queer theory sardonically impedes the application of the doctrine of sin to sexual and gendered activity. Constructivism's repurposing of transgression makes it impossible to distinguish between good and bad gender expressions (see "Synthesis I" later in this chapter). Fassinger's narrative approach also results in identities based more on *what people are not* than *what they are* (e.g., nonconforming to societal norms). In other words, these identities have no ontological foundation. From a Christian perspective, this is particularly problematic, because Scripture's story roots human identity in the *imago Dei* and Christian identity in the *imago Christi* (cf. E. L. Johnson, 2017).

Summarizing Theoretical Agendas and Terminology in LGBT Psychologies and Forming a Preliminary Christian Response

As we consider how to respond to these theoretical frameworks, we should first review what they propose and interrogate the meanings of LGBT labels.

Theoretical agendas in LGBT-affirming psychologies. Modern essentialism and constructionism have been warring philosophical frameworks in the social sciences. During late modernism, constructionism/(-ivism) has gained the upper hand. Since essentialism has been so widely accepted (Laumann et al., 1994), many LGBTQ+ people still think in terms of discovering one's "true gay self" or revealing the true self through gender transition. A constructivist mindset influences the popular imagination as well in the form of advocating the deconstruction of gender binaries. Ironically, most people may be unaware of the implications of constructivism for LGB labels. The Foucauldian agenda preserves essentialist notions of sexual orientation and gender identity for sociopolitical purposes alone. However, the post-structuralist framework entails a radical autonomy and dissociation of the body and self that some think will eventually dispel essentialist mindsets.

Nevertheless, other scholars have attempted to reconcile modern essentialism and constructionism, typically through interactionist approaches (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). In one example, De Cecco and Elia (1993) underscored the sociopolitical functions of essentialism and constructionism in their interactionist account. Feminists embraced constructionism to undermine the biological differences that prevented women from achieving equal status with men in society. Additionally, the gay liberation movement embraced biological essentialism to combat homophobia. Finding an exclusive approach insufficient, De Cecco and Elias appealed to Lewontin, Rose, and Kamin's (1984) "dialectical explanations" (p. 11), which are understood within a holistic framework that respects both biology and culture. Overall, De Cecco and Elia argued that biology, culture, and personal agency play a role in shaping the sexual form of one's life.

After a comprehensive survey of multiple types of essentialism, constructionism, and interactionist approaches (named "conjoint approaches" here), DeLamater and Hyde (1998) attributed the conflict between essentialism and constructionism to different ontologies. Modern essentialists interpret essences through

positivism, arguing that we know these essences objectively, and constructionists deny that these essences exist, limiting knowledge to human creations. Modern essentialism and constructionism are fundamentally incompatible on an ontological level. Tolman and Diamond (2001) first argued for "biocultural interactionism" (p. 67). However, they later came to believe that an integrationist or interactionist paradigm was merely pragmatic and had failed to actually synthesize the frameworks (Tolman & Diamond, 2014). Kitzinger (1995) thought that a weak form of constructionism was compatible with essentialism, but she saw no resolution possible with strong constructionism.

A Christian alternative to modern essentialism and social constructionism might appeal to critical realism, and a triadic semiotic offers a solution to this impasse. With this theoretical framework, a biopsychosocial view of sexual orientation and gender identity becomes more plausible. Sánchez and Pankey (2017) appealed to Engel's (1977/1992) biopsychosocial model as the best framework to account for variations in sexual orientation and gender identity. Strikingly, Engel argued that a dualistic separation between biological and psychosocial perspectives might have its origins in a decision made long ago by Roman Catholic Church (RCC).[16] When the RCC allowed physicians to dissect the body, they prohibited "corresponding scientific investigation of man's mind and behavior" (p. 320). He suggested a biomedical model, which viewed the human being as exclusively a molecular machine, was insufficient for physicians. Rather, they needed a comprehensive framework that could account for "the social, psychological, and behavioral dimensions of illness" (p. 330). Even so, in holistic models like these, the religious aspects of the patient would still end up being subsumed under social considerations. Moreover, LGBT psychologists, specifically those studying women's sexuality, add another dimension to the sexual/gendered self: a constructivist emphasis on

[16] Engel does not explicitly name the RCC, but the historical context and his timeline of "some five centuries ago" suggest it (p. 320).

volition or personal agency (Kitzinger, 1995; Bohan, 1996; Fassinger, 2017).

Secular psychology, in dialogue with some Christian psychologists, has offered another conceptual dimension: religious values. As mentioned above, an APlA (2009) task force differentiated between organismic congruence, which entails "living with a sense of wholeness in one's experiential self" and telic congruence, which means "living consistently with one's valuative goals" (p. 18). *Prima facie*, the task force put telic congruence at odds with psychological well-being, concluding, "Although many individuals desire to live their lives consistently with their values, primarily their religious values, we concluded that telic congruence grounded in self-stigma and shame was unlikely to result in psychological well-being" (p. 58). However, the task force left open the possibility that telic congruence could occur without self-stigma and shame, and in that case, could promote psychological well-being.

Overall, in their assessments of LGBTQ+ identification, essentialists favor biological etiologies, social constructionists champion a psychosociocultural perspective, and constructivists—especially those like Fassinger (2017), who draw on queer theory—emphasize the role of personal agency in identity formation. Together, they offer a more comprehensive view of LGBT identities than either offer alone. Independently, they offer an incomplete picture. Perhaps, for this reason, some psychologists have promoted a more comprehensive approach that integrates these perspectives (e.g., De Cecco & Elia, 1993; Tolman & Diamond, 2001; Sánchez & Pankey, 2017). The Christian faith begs us to supply a normative and spiritual dimension to these perspectives. Seeing essentialism and constructionism/-ivism as elements of a more comprehensive system leads us to ask: How can identities be both discovered and constructed? A more comprehensive system that seeks to incorporate a divine perspective on gender and sexuality has the potential to balance the discovery and construction of the sexual/gendered self God has ordained. Aiming to account for these transcendent dimensions (biological, psychosociocultural, and normative), we require a scheme to show how they relate to one another. Wilber

(2000) has observed that all value systems necessarily entail hierarchies. Since a Christian perspective entails this kind of organization, we will explore multiple "levels of discourse" in the sixth chapter's discussion as we attempt to exegete nature's teaching (1 Cor 11:14; cf. Rom 1:26; 2:14) about sexuality and gender (cf. E. L. Johnson, 2007). Nature's teaching becomes clearer through special revelation, specifically how the biblical narrative shapes the sexual self.

The meanings of LGBT identities. The terminology used by affirming psychologists issues from their theoretical frameworks, and Christians must tread carefully when accepting, modifying, or rejecting secular terms. Like the terms gender, gender identity, biological sex, sexual orientation, sexual attraction, and transgender, the meaning of identity can vary.[17] Psychologists conceptualize identity differently than Christians (and differently from one another) because they start with different anthropological assumptions. Their emphases variously include sexual identity, sexual orientation identity, personal identity, identity salience, core identity, or even sociocultural labels.

Further, the APlA's (2008) definition of sexual orientation[18] leaves the meaning of identity or attraction undefined, increasing the linguistic divide between Christian and psychological communities because Christians define these terms differently than mainstream psychologists. Complicating this issue further, psychologists have themselves not agreed on the definition of sexual orientation. Sell (1997) explained: "At present it is

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[17] Tucker (2010) describes the problem insightfully: "Often scholars use the term identity in a generic way, not realizing the potential for equivocation. Identity is used within philosophy to explore the consistency of the self over time. It is used in psychology as a descriptor for personal identity. It is used within sociology with a focus on social identity" (pp. 3-4). Christian engagement is more complicated by postmodern conceptions of identity which reject a core self.

[18] The APlA's (2008) definition of sexual orientation frequently appears in recent Christian literature (see Burk, 2015; Butterfield, 2015; Collins & Coles, n.d.; Sprinkle, 2015; Strachan, 2015; Yuan, 2018). In this brochure, the APlA (2008) defines sexual orientation as "an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes. Sexual orientation also refers to a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions" (p. 1).

clear that researchers are confused as to what they are studying when they assess sexual orientation in their research. Several literature reviews have found that researchers' conceptual definitions of these populations are rarely included in reports of their research and, when they are included, they often differ theoretically" (p. 644). According to Sell, these differences in definitions and theoretical frameworks make it difficult to classify individuals based on their sexual orientation. As seen earlier in this chapter, this definitional crisis has undercut modern essentialist notions of sexual orientation and paved the way for more constructivist approaches to identity.

The meaning of sexual attraction is also important for precise Christian discourse. While defining sexual attraction, Rosario and Schrimshaw (2014) said: "Sexual attraction refers to the extent to which sexual fantasies, erotic arousal, and sexual desires (the latter is also known in the literature as 'sexual attractions') focus on either, both, or neither sex" (p. 556, italics removed). This definition of sexual attraction suggests aspects of the phenomenon that are more volitional (sexual fantasies) and less volitional (arousal and sexual desire). Singer (1984) argued that sexual attraction (or sexual arousal) functioned physiologically like an emotion. Further, Pfaus, Scepkowski, Marson, and Georgiadis's (2014) survey of the literature on sexual arousal and sexual desire emphasized autonomic responses to stimuli. However, some of the mechanisms they identified imply some volition: selective attention, fantasy, executive function, cognitive and emotional meaning, and behavioral interpretation. However, this literature tends to reduce human sexuality to mechanistic phenomena, especially in how it compares animal and human sexuality. Lamenting the difficulty of defining sexual desire, Brotto and Smith (2014) highlighted sex differences in sexual desire and argued that women's sexual desire does not always have physiological correlates. Hence, sexual attraction has physiological, cognitive, affective, and volitional components.

Transgender identities deserve our attention, as well. While individuals may synthesize a transgender identity, "transgender" is simply "an adjective that is an

umbrella term used to describe the full range of people whose gender identity and/or gender role do not conform to what is typically associated with their sex assigned at birth" (American Psychological Association, 2015, p. 863). Since not all gender-variant people identify as transgender, the APlA explained the term gender nonconforming as "an adjective used as an umbrella term to describe people whose gender expression or gender identity differs from gender norms associated with their assigned birth sex" (p. 862). When transgender people identify as such, their varying identities represent a combination of several factors: assigned birth sex, gender identity, gender role, and sexual orientation (W. O. Bockting & Cesaretti, 2001). Some TGNC (transgender and gender nonconforming) identities operate within the "gender binary system," and others challenge it; the many possible labels individuals use to describe their gender identity correspond to their idiosyncratic experiences of it (Chang et al., 2017). Hence, identifying one's gender identity with a label has a volitional element that is more intentional than the gender identity itself (see the definition of gender identity in chapter 1). From a Christian perspective, the way the term "identity" is used today in discourse about GI confuses *discovered experiences* and *choices* and ignores transcendent realities. Christian discourse warrants conceptual clarity for terms like sexual orientation, sexual attraction, and transgender identities.

Evangelical Engagement of Secular Theoretical Frameworks

In this section, we will first survey evangelical perspectives on modern essentialism and constructionism/-ivism, and then we will evaluate how evangelicals have engaged these concepts.

Surveying Evangelical Perspectives

To varying degrees, Christians have engaged the theoretical frameworks at work in secular discourse and LGBT psychologies. As explained earlier in this chapter,

modern essentialism and constructionism/-ivism are the reigning theoretical paradigms in Western discourse. As we explore evangelicals' engagement with these issues, we should remember that essentialist arguments play out one way when we refer to sexual orientation and another way when we refer to gender.[19]

Embracing simple essentialism as a framework for sex and gender while rejecting constructionism. Some Christian authors exhibit a simple essentialism in their treatment of sex and gender because the kind of essentialism they promote has no modifier. Butterfield (2015a) subscribed to strong constructionism during her former life as a lesbian university professor. Today she has proposed a biblically-based essentialism, instead, having written, "Bible-believing Christians are gender and sexuality *essentialists*, believing that there is an essence to maleness and femaleness, and that God's created order mandates sexual union exclusively between one man and one woman in the covenant of biblical marriage" (p. 6, emphasis original). She added, "God's created order includes norms, boundaries, definitions, and limits for sexuality and gender" (p. 6).

In his writing on gender dysphoria, Strachan (2016) exhorted Christians to "embrace an essentialist vision of the sexes" (p. 38). He argued that the insights of 1 Corinthians 11 warrants differentiated gender expressions among the sexes (p. 38), a countercultural notion in the West. Elsewhere, Strachan and Peacock (2016) argued that Scripture's "gender essentialism" serves as a foil to Butler's (1990) constructionist views (p. 29). Similarly, Burk (2012) assumed gender essentialism when he rejected the notion that "gender is something you learn, not something you are" (p. 230). When these authors use the term "essentialism," they use it in a different sense than what we find among modern, scientistic perspectives.

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[19] For many orthodox Christians, the creation narratives lead them to believe sex and gender are rooted in human nature in a way that fallen sexual orientations of any sort are not.

Embracing simple essentialism as a framework for both sexual orientation and gender. Known mainly for his influence on the transformation-focused approach, Nicolosi (2009/2016) articulated a simple essentialist treatment of both gender and sexual orientation. Though his writing lacks explicitly Christian content, he argued "that gender identity and sexual orientation are grounded in biological reality" (p. 3). The embodied nature of human beings and telic notions of their design strongly inform his position. He described clients' desire to change their sexual orientation, saying, "Their impetus for change comes from their deep conviction that underneath it all *they really are heterosexual men*, and they seek a therapist who sees their inner potential" (p. 3, emphasis original). This claim is consistent with the argument of Laumann et al. (1994) that those who search for the causes and cures of homosexuality operate from an essentialist framework. Intriguingly, he believed both birth gender and heterosexual functioning are fundamental human attributes. Another influence on the transformation-focused perspective, Moberly (1980) implied that the SSOd have a discrete type of personality that will warrant comprehensive transformation. For example, she asked, "What is the type of personality structure that underlies the possibility of homosexual behavior?" (p. 178). For Moberly, development solidified SSOs.

In another example of simple essentialism, Comiskey (2003) described the essential qualities of maleness and femaleness and considered heterosexuality basic to humankind. He described gender, saying, "There exists an essential rhythm of masculine initiative and feminine response that helps secure both parties in the goodness of their genders" (p. 27). While he described essentialism without modifiers, he still rejected the extremes of an overly-bounded gender essentialism. Comiskey similarly believed that Scripture called him to become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:15-19) by embracing his "true heterosexual identity" and abandoning his "gay self" (pp. 58–59). If we use Comiskey's definition, "heterosexual" entails the complementarity instituted by God (cf. Gen 1–2). Intriguingly, heterosexual relating does not necessarily entail romance or eroticism—it

entails friendship between men and women as well (p. 28). Thus, he argued that the "gay self" or identifying with "homosexuality as the real, authentic self" leads to "a yielding to homosexual activity" (p. 185). Comiskey's notion of the gay self includes the biological essentialism touted by the media, the orientation essentialism that makes "gay" a real category of person, and the proposed ethnic minority status of LGB people.

Expanding gender essentialism but rejecting orientation essentialism. Collins (2017a, 2017b) traced the modern concept of gender essentialism to its origins in early twentieth-century sexology. As he reported, feminists first emphasized "primary gender identity" to unite women in social causes, but they later followed innovators like Rich (1980) and promoted "secondary gender identity" (e.g., sexual orientation) (N. Collins, 2017a, p. 235). Collins (2017b) defined primary gender identity (PGI) in binary terms—God's creative intent to make everyone either male or female. While suggesting that one's God-intended PGI "is a central component of personhood," Collins displayed a kind of biblical gender essentialism (p. 84). Secondary gender identity (SGI), on the other hand, refers to the enculturated aspects of gender that vary from culture to culture (p. 84). Collins (2017a) has argued that a *gay* orientation is a kind of "aesthetic orientation," which functions as a secondary gender identity in contemporary contexts (p. 254). Notably, he rejected sexual orientation as "a category of personhood" because it best correlates with our fallen state (p. 144). Thus, he has conceptualized gender through both essentialist (primary gender identity) and constructionist (secondary gender identity) lenses, rendering labels like "gay" cultural constructs.[20]

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[20] Investigating the NT's use of παρθένος (virgin) as a secondary gender identity, Collins (2017b) concluded that "modern-day secondary gender identities can be indexed by linguistic labels currently in use in communities of practice" (p. 184). Sexual orientation, he contended, could serve as "an axis of difference along which linguistic labels might index secondary gender identities" (p. 184).

Utilizing social constructionism merely as a critique for orientation essentialism. While attempting to undermine orientation essentialism and its deleterious effects on the identities of Christians, some writers have utilized some constructionist arguments without embracing the theory *in toto* (see Paris, 2011; Hannon, 2014; Burk, 2015; Butterfield, 2015). Paris (2011) sourced modern notions of sexual identity to nineteenth-century anthropologies (p. 41). She concluded that sexual identity—along with notions of heterosexuality and homosexuality—"is a social construct that provides a faulty pattern for understanding what it means to be human, linking desire to identity in a way that violates biblical themes" (p. 43). In effect, she subverted orientation essentialism by seeing sexual identity with the same lenses as constructionists. By saying that "people created sexual identity" she could base "sexual ethics in our humanity" and "God's created order" (p. 75). Appealing to the constructionist argument of Foucault (see chapter 3), Butterfield (2015a) similarly faulted Freud and nineteenth-century scientists for essentializing sexuality and altering human personhood. She also criticized what she perceived as orientation essentialism among her interlocutors, chaste gay Christians, with the same approach. In her estimation, sexual orientation is a faulty essentialist concept, and constructionist arguments destabilize it.

Critiquing orientation essentialism and modifying constructivism as frameworks for sexual orientation. Some Christian authors, like Yarhouse and Jones (1997), have criticized orientation essentialism—the tendency in Western cultures to consider same-sex orientations as constitutive—and constructivist approaches. They believed neither is more compatible with the Christian faith. They argued that applying orientation essentialism to ethical discourse created problems—especially the essentialist notion that the individual must actualize his gay self in homoerotic behaviors.[21] Jones and

[21] Jones and Hostler (2002) argued that this kind of self-actualization occurs independently of moral norms.

Yarhouse (2007) also observed that this version of essentialism typically took on a stronger form. Strong orientation essentialism holds that sexual orientations are transcultural, sexual orientations are real forms, and sexual orientations are vital aspects of personal identity. Additionally, Jones and Yarhouse (1997) faulted the materialist worldview behind orientation essentialism insomuch as it may lead LGB people to abdicate responsibility for their self-identifications. While critical of some definitions of essentialism, they hold to a Christian version, arguing that the incarnation of Christ underscores the value of the human body. In other words, Christianity presupposes a kind of realism in which we can and should align our knowing to match the discoverable world around us. Hence, they rejected orientation essentialism in favor of a Christian critical realism (see Jones & Yarhouse, 2000, p. 15).[22]

Jones and Hostler (2002) addressed the benefits and liabilities of constructivism. Like Kitzinger's distinction between strong and weak constructionism, they distinguished between *Constructivism* and *constructivism*. The former endorses an entirely subjective construction of the self, and the latter recognizes the limitations of a purely objective framework for understanding the self. Given that constructivism is compatible with many non-Christian ideologies, they concluded it is no more Christian than Constructivism. They believe Christian practitioners may conduct therapy within a significantly modified constructivist framework as long as they still assume realism. Yarhouse (2008) has also demonstrated how a constructivist framework—in the form of narrative sexual identity therapy—may be used to deconstruct narratives promulgated by the mainstream LGBTQ+ community. Insomuch as he employs constructivism for this purpose, Yarhouse parallels Paris and Butterfield.

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[22] Jones and Yarhouse (2000) identified their position towards science and religion as "critical realism" (p. 15). As they explained, "There is a real world out there where it is possible to know and know truly (hence, 'realism'), but we also believe that our theories and hypotheses about that world, and our religious presuppositions and beliefs about reality, color and shape our capacity to know the world (hence, 'critical realism')" (p. 15). Given this epistemological commitment, their reluctance to commit to either modern essentialism or constructionism makes sense.

Balancing essentialist and constructionist approaches to gender. In terms of gender, Yarhouse (2015a) reflected both essentialist and constructionist perspectives. He believed there is "something essential and sacred" about being male and female (p. 31). However, he also recognized that "rigid stereotyping" of the differences between males and females "could actually exacerbate questions about gender identity" (p. 42). He sought a balance between "recognizing exceptions to binaries . . . and arguing that the sex binary is arbitrary, socially constructed or oppressive" (p. 42). Beyond the issue of gender itself, he suggested an essentialist framework lay behind the classification of people as either transgender or cisgender, and he dismissed the extreme of strong constructionism as academic exercises.

Finding neither biological essentialism nor social constructionism sufficient to explain gender. Looy (2001, 2002, 2005; Looy & Bouma, 2005) has assessed the nature of gender in light of the essentialist/constructionist debate most thoroughly. Looy (2001) found both the biological essentialism (i.e., naturalism) of evolutionary psychology (EP) and social constructionism's neglect of embodiment problematic when explaining sex differences. EP, she argued, over-delineates the differences between men and women because it assumes "a very different, divergent evolutionary history for each sex, resulting in different physical, psychological, and behavioral traits" (p. 304). Additionally, she faulted constructionism for failing to explain the transcultural sex differences researchers have observed. However, Looy resisted rigid essentialist conclusions from evolutionary psychology that absolutize "an essential female or male nature" (p. 310). She viewed intelligent design as a broader explanatory framework for understanding sexual differences. Elsewhere, Looy (2005) critiqued inventories of masculinity and femininity, like Bem's (1974) Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI). In evaluating these instruments, Looy rejected the tendency to "draw on cultural beliefs and values regarding gender" and make them "essential, stable and universal

characteristics of human nature" (p. 319). Thus, she observed a tendency to essentialize cultural instantiations of gender.

Making categorical distinctions. Yarhouse (2005, 2019) created a prophylactic for orientation essentialism: a "three-tier distinction" between sexual attraction, sexual orientation, and sexual identity (2019, p. 59).[23] He distinguished attractions from orientations because some people experience weak or temporary SSA. When SSA is "strong and persists over time," individuals have a same-sex orientation (SSO) (p. 60). Notably, he conceptualized opposite-sex attraction (OSA) and SSA as independently-measurable phenomena (Yarhouse & Burkett, 2003; S. L. Jones & Yarhouse, 2007). Finally, Yarhouse (2019) believed that sexual orientations and sexual-identity labels are separate phenomena, rejecting their conflation in broader cultural narratives. In addition to LGB labels, he noted that "SSA" might function as a label as well (p. 61).

Regarding gender dysphoria, Yarhouse (2015a) developed a "multi-tier" distinction to help clients communicate their experiences and choices (pp. 136–137). Gender dysphoria (e.g., "I experience gender dysphoria") is the most descriptive way to talk about GI. It is descriptive because it does not communicate a transgender identity. A client may describe himself as a "transgender person," using "transgender" adjectivally. With a substantive use, an individual might identify as transgender (e.g., "I'm transgender"). Finally, some gender incongruent (GI) people may add an explanation (e.g., "I'm transgender and that means X"). Similar to his distinctions for sexual orientation, these distinctions provide alternatives for individuals who do not want to essentialize their GI or cross-gender identities.

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[23] Contra the trend in affirming psychology to fuse orientation, behaviors, and identities, Yarhouse (2013) also distinguished between attraction, identity, and behaviors.

Evaluating Evangelical Perspectives on Secular Theoretical Frameworks

From a Christian perspective, neither strong forms of modern essentialism nor constructionism have helped communicate the biblical parameters for the male-female pattern and its appropriate cultural expression. Yarhouse (2015a) and Looy and Bouma (2005) have argued that conceptualizing gender as a narrow universal essence may actually lead the GIt to have greater uncertainty regarding gender identity.[24] While Yarhouse balanced this point by offering three lenses to understand gender identity (integrity, disability, and diversity), Looy and Bouma proposed that gender should be comparatively assessed with continua rather than dichotomously. While this proposal's validity depends on the meaning of gender, Looy and Bouma risk alienating biblical sexual essentialism. However, Looy appropriately criticized some modern psychologists for essentializing sociocultural gender roles and traits. For example, if the BSRI (see above) and some of its gender traits were applied to Jesus, it would likely find him feminine or androgynous![25]

While Butterfield and Strachan appeal to essentialism, they do not differentiate their biblical essentialism from Western modernity's—at least with the term they use. The ambiguous essentialism articulated by Butterfield and Strachan generates more questions than it answers. Merging modern essentialism with presumed "biblical" notions of manhood and womanhood leaves the positivistic influences on modern gender essentialism unaddressed. They believe essentialism is biblical and social constructionism is not. This countercultural critique questions "the wisdom of this world" (1 Cor 3:19 CSB) qua constructionism without equally interrogating unbiblical aspects of modern

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[24] Rekers (1982) also cited evidence that transsexuals tend to have overly-bounded beliefs about gender roles compared with non-transsexuals.

[25] The BSRI's feminine items include being affectionate (cf. John 11:5, 13:23, 15:9-17), compassionate (cf. Matt 9:36, 14:4, 15:32, Luke 7:13), gentle (cf. Matt 11:29), and loving children (cf. Mark 10:13-16). Its masculine items include being self-reliant and self-sufficient. These autocentric values are difficult to square with Jesus' reliance on the Father.

essentialism. *Prima facie,* positivistic operationalizations of gender (see Bem above) *seem* more compatible with Scripture, but they make complementarianism *seem* less accessible to those whose personalities do not fit *arbitrary* gender stereotypes (see Rekers, 1991/2006). While Butterfield and Strachan do not reflect much on the positivism behind modern essentialism, they do acknowledge that some gender stereotypes are not biblical. Their concern is recovering God's creative intent for sex and gender, but essentialism—as it used in Western discourse—often evokes the gender essences constructed in fallen Western cultures. Hence, articulations of gender essentialism in postmodern contexts require additional *modifications*.

As Paris and Butterfield have argued, the notion that sexual orientation is an essential aspect of human personhood is also problematic. The sexual orientation framework saturates the Western mind (see Plummer, 1981; Paris, 2011; Butterfield, 2015), and the concept of a heterosexual orientation by itself has no ethicospiritual boundaries. As a result, Collins (2017a) argued that Scripture prescribes "*uni*-heterosexuality," meaning "sexual orientation toward *one* opposite-sex person who is one's spouse" (p. 146, emphasis original). The most lamentable consequence of the sexual orientation framework has included the loss of homosociality and chaste friendship as well (Butterfield, 2015a; Hill, 2015). Most fascinating, recent evangelical interest in constructionism has provided the conceptual means to frame transformation in other terms besides sexual orientation change.

As observed in chapter 2, the biblical pattern for erotic sexuality is "heterosexual," but we should be careful when using terms that connote sexual orientation. The notion of sexual orientation may color our readings of Genesis 1–2 in contemporary contexts. If we believe that we are essentially sexually-oriented beings of some type, we may forget that erotic sexuality is liminal. According to Jesus, we are undergoing a sexual conversion. In "this age," we marry, but in "that age," we will not (Luke 20:34-35 ESV). Erotic sexuality is an experience for the marriages of this age.

Thus, sexual orientation may not be an edifying category for those like Paul (see 1 Cor 7) who have "made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 19:12 ESV). As suggested by Butterfield, orientation essentialism obfuscates the biblical pattern more than it clarifies it. Christians must be careful not to communicate the amoral heterosexuality of the sexual-orientation change tradition as biblical truth. Christian morality does not condone *every* kind of heterosexuality (e.g., rape or pre-marital sex). Similarly, experiences of SSA should not cause Christians to discount the possibility of monogamous heterosexual marriage, especially for those who are not exclusively same-sex attracted. While the biblical vision of marriage is heterosexual in structure, it is not limited to those who are exclusively opposite-sex attracted. Scripture prescribes a specific, *virtuous form of heterosexuality* for those who desire marriage, and it also supports singleness.

Synthesis I: An Alternative Christian Framework for Gender and Sexuality

As we synthesize an alternative Christian framework, we must first wrestle with how Christians have used secular frameworks and clarify terminology that we can use in Christian discourse.

Wrestling with Christian Uses of Essentialism and Constructionism

Synthesizing Rekers's (1991/2006) categories with Yarhouse's and Looy and Bouma's observations aids our journey through this impasse. Rekers distinguished between morally-defined and culturally-defined aspects of gender. The three types of culturally defined aspects include those based on biological differences, benign arbitrary differences, and malignant arbitrary differences. Buying feminine hygiene products, wearing makeup, and the idea that secretaries *must* be women serve as examples of the three types, respectively. With these categories in place, we can hold that contextualized gender roles (see definition in chapter 1) or expressions are dichotomous; they are either

male or female. However, culturally constructed aspects of gender not required by biology or Scripture may exist as continua.[26] Immoral notions of masculinity and femininity particularly deserve deconstruction, especially to the extent they prevent individuals from realizing their God-given potentials. Without these distinctions, Looy and Bouma's conclusions about gender are inadequate. Similarly, Collins's distinctions between primary and secondary aspects of gender identity alleviate the tensions with modern essentialism and constructionism/-ivism. However, he does not develop the necessary moral dimensions of secondary gender identity. At any rate, a Christian approach needs a form of *complex essentialism* that can account for the arguments of constructionism and challenge malignant gender stereotypes.

Despite modern essentialism's weaknesses, some form of essentialism must inform our understanding of the transcultural/transhistorical reality of oriented sexual desire (qua a desire for sex), while simultaneously recognizing its unique cultural formation. Affirming approaches embrace constructionism/-ivism and weaken the commensurability between biblical prohibitions against same-sex sexual practices and contemporary constructions of sexuality.[27] Without modifying essentialism, Scripture's prescriptions and prohibitions for sexuality cannot be critically contextualized in contemporary contexts. We need some sense of the transcendent source of both sexuality and gender to avoid falling into the abyss of antirealism or affirming theology.

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[26] As we will argue in the next chapter, these more arbitrary aspects of gender are more likely personality variables than aspects of gender. Thus, *some* of what Westerners consider gender diversity is better articulated as the diversity of human personality.

[27] Brownson (2013) says: "The overall thrust of most revisionist positions has been to emphasize the historical *distance* between the world of the biblical text (and thus forms of sexual behavior and desire addressed by the biblical text) and our contemporary world" (p. 40, emphasis original).

Clarifying Terminology in Christian Discourse

As surveyed in chapter 3, "sexual orientation"—as a linguistic signifier—is a modern creation. "Gender" is similar. Beyond linguistic uses, the concept of gender did not refer to maleness and femaleness before mid-twentieth century sexologists like John Money (1955) distinguished between biological sex and gender role (cf. "Gender, n.," 2019). Sexual orientation was the invention of Europeans interested in decriminalizing same-sex sexuality. These facts should not, however, mean that humans created the realities (the significata or objects) these symbols point to. To complicate matters, Christians are also confronted with the liminality of marriage and sexuality in this age (cf. Matt 22:30 // Mark 12:25 // Luke 20:34-35).

Having wrestled with the theoretical frameworks informing sexuality and gender, we can now think more Christianly about what we have so far called SSA and GI. Yarhouse's (2005, 2013, 2015a, 2019) tiered distinctions[28] for SSA and gender dysphoria provide a starting point for distilling a sound Christian interpretation of LGBT labels. These tiers create a spectrum in which people are described most generically to most specifically. Communicating these experiences to the broader Christian community, we should first turn our attention to what all humans share in terms of relationality and navigate the biologically- and culturally-conditioned aspects of sexuality and gender. Establishing a baseline for shared human experience allows us to discern the diversity of sinful distortions of the creational pattern.

Some of the terminological disagreement we have surveyed among evangelical Christians stems around the phrase "same-sex attraction." First, it will help to differentiate between *same-sex attractions* (as isolated synchronic experiences) and

[28] In this discussion, we are synthesizing Yarhouse's distinctions. He referred to the second tier as homosexual orientation or same-sex orientation, but *same-sex sexual orientation* is our term. Yarhouse used *sexual identity,* but we prefer sexual orientation identity in this project. While Yarhouse employed the term *gender dysphoria*, we prefer *gender incongruence*. We applied Yarhouse's fourth tier regarding gender dysphoria to same-sex attraction as well.

same-sex attraction (as a diachronic experience) and consider the imprecision of the term. Extracting ourselves from our present context will illustrate. Before the gay liberation movement (GLM) took root, Horowitz (1967) measured adolescent popularity among same-sex and opposite-sex peers. He assigned popular teens a "same-sex attraction score" and an "opposite-sex attraction score," describing those with high scores as people others "like to be with" (p. 171). In light of this study and its pre-GLM context, we can recognize a kind of "platonic" same-sex attraction that is an interpersonal *structure* created by God embedded in human nature (cf. Yuan, 2018, p. 64).[29] However, sin can direct even platonic SSA *away* from God as individuals desire their same-sex peers for reasons like selfish ambition or codependency.

The contemporary use of the term privileges sexual denotations and eclipses the nonsexual relational interest the term could also imply. In other words, the term obscures a more complex phenomenology of affections for same-sex others in the minds of those who experience it.[30] Experiencing indeterminable SSA, some may find themselves asking, "Do I desire sex or friendship?" Thus, we should designate *same-sex sexual desire* as the sinful corruption of platonic interpersonal attraction. While "same-sex attraction" is a descriptive starting point, it is insufficient for precise soul care. Modifying Yarhouse's second tier, *same-sex social orientation*, describes the fundamental orientation all humans have toward same-sex friendship. A same-sex *sexual* orientation is a distortion of this social orientation and describes a consistent experience of same-sex sexual desires to a significant degree. Finally, *sexual orientation identity*

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[29] Wolters's distinction (2005) between *structure* and *direction* informs this discussion. "Structure refers to the order of creation, to the constant creational constitution of any thing [sic], what makes it the thing or entity that it is" (p. 59). Direction "designates the order of sin and redemption, the distortion or perversion of creation through the fall on the one hand and the redemption and restoration of creation in Christ on the other" (p. 59). As Wolters explains, any created structure can be directed away from God (to sin) or back to God (through redemption).

[30] Recalling Paris's (2011) and Comiskey's (2003) arguments, this discussion has similar implications for heterosexuality and opposite-sex attraction.

labels include LGB and other expanding options. Some choose "same-sex attraction" to serve as one of these labels, the previously mentioned problems notwithstanding. Others choose to disidentify completely and substitute another label (e.g., ex-gay, post-gay, no label, and "in Christ"). As Yarhouse stated, "Each of these labels makes a claim about sexual identity that may exceed (though it will not necessarily exceed) a mere statement of attraction or orientation" (2019, p. 61). A fourth tier, *label with explanation*, involves the use of one of these labels but with some further delineation of the meaning intended. We can also distinguish between *orientation* labels and *identity* labels. The first might describe *how* people are and what they experience, and the latter might describe something more essential about *who* people are and/or how they choose to organize their lives.

These distinctions carry over to the issues surrounding transgender identities as well. *Gender dissonance* describes the discord many people experience when their gender identities do not line up with "arbitrary" cultural expectations of masculinity and femininity (see Rekers, 1991/2006).[31] All Christians can expect to experience some form of gender dissonance in whatever cultural context they reside in, given the penchant for cultures to encode vice in gender expressions. An extreme form, *gender incongruence*, entails a chronic sense of gender dissonance and, often, the sinful desire for cross-sex gender expressions. As an identity label, *transgender identity* might describe an experience of GI or cross-sex gender expressions or both. Finally, some may use *transgender labels with an explanation* to clarify the label to others. We can also distinguish between *gender-incongruence labels* and *gender-identity labels*. The former describes *how* people experience their bodies and their gender in a cultural context, and the latter communicates *who* they are, the gender they have embraced, and how they have

[31] This statement recalls Rekers's distinctions between arbitrary cultural constructions of gender and those that are biblically or morally defined.

chosen to organize their lives.

Proposing Christian Critical Essentialism as An Alternative Framework

The waning of modern essentialism and the rise of constructionism is the cultural air we breathe. As we have observed, ministry paradigms wrestle with these developments. Overall, *mere* modern essentialism, insomuch as it has been constructed by Western modernity, is insufficient to facilitate the Christian conceptualization of sexuality and gender needed today. It confuses individuals as they seek to comprehend their sexuality and gender in light of Scripture. M*ere* social constructionism and personal constructivism fall short as well. They both undermine biblical authority and dismember the divine intent for gender and sexuality across cultures; they are both the "wisdom of the world." Given these challenges, contextualizing Scripture's perspective on these issues in the present day requires significant *modification* and *explanation*. The transcendent verities assumed by historic Christian essentialism and a sense of the cultural mandate's (Gen 1:28) implications for cultural constructions provide a starting point. However, we need to articulate these ancient principles anew in contemporary contexts. Perhaps we can call this approach *critical essentialism*. However, even a critical version of essentialism will still require additional Christian transformation or transposition.[32] *Christian critical essentialism* holds that God's intentions for gender and sexuality are universal and transcendent, but humans—post-fall—are charged with constructing their sexuality and gender according to the divine design plan *for their culture and personality*. In chapter 6, we will outline Christian critical essentialism.

[32] The term *critical* indicates a posture of suspicion against modern forms of essentialism. We retain the word *essentialism* to recover its classical potential.

CHAPTER 5

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN LGBT PSYCHOLOGIES AND EVANGELICAL RESPONSES

The American Psychological Association's (APlA) guidelines for affirmative therapies emphasize the practitioner's competency in "lesbian, gay, and bisexual identity development," "ethnic and cultural factors affecting identity," and "the intersections of multiple identities" (APlA, 2012, p. 17). Similarly, the TGNC (transgender and gender nonconforming) guidelines for affirmative therapies emphasize the clinician's competence with TGNC identity development and intersecting cultural identities as well (APlA, 2015).[1] This chapter will survey two additional themes in affirming psychologies: models of LGBT identity development and approaches to religious identity conflicts. We will also evaluate these approaches from a Christian perspective and discern alternative Christian frameworks.

Affirming Models of LGBT Identity Development and Evangelical Responses

Both Christians and secular psychologists have proposed models to explain the origins of LGBT identification. While we will cover some Christian views regarding the etiologies of same-sex attraction and gender incongruence, we will limit our survey of secular models to identity development.

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[1] Gender identity is an important clinical focus as well: "Psychologists strive to continue their education on issues of gender identity and gender expression with TGNC people as a foundational component of affirmative psychological practice" (American Psychological Association, 2015, p. 852). While gender identity will be an important discussion in later chapters, this chapter focuses on the social identity (transgender) rather than the internal, felt experience of gender.

Understanding Secular Models of LGBT Identity Development

Overall, psychologists have studied LGBT identity development to investigate how LGBTQ+ people are different from heterosexual and cisgender people and to establish how LGBTQ+ people are similar to each other. Writing soon after the depathologization of homosexuality, T. S. Weinberg (1978) discovered a connection between sexual behaviors, perceptions of similarity and difference, the interpretations of others, and gay identification.[2] With research like this in the background, LGBT identity development dominated LGBT psychology for the first two or three decades that researchers studied these phenomena. Many psychologists formed models based on clinical experience and qualitative research to explain how an individual develops an LGB or transgender identity. In some cases, they validated this research with quantitative methods. Notably, this line of research inquiry often replaced the search for etiological explanations for SSOs and GI. These models "have been very popular" with mental health professionals (MHPs) "because they provide guidelines for what interventions the individual in therapy may need" (Eliason & Schope, 2007, p. 20). Specifically, "they seek to predict, articulate, and normalize common experiences in developing and managing a stigmatized identity" (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996, p. 508).[3]

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[2] Specifically, T. S. Weinberg (1978) found that men understood themselves as gay when they perceived differences between themselves and other peers who had participated in sexual activity during childhood and adolescence. Their other peers showed diminished interest in same-sex sexual behaviors or discontinued them completely in favor of opposite-sex sexual behaviors. In other cases, males in the study identified as gay after they met other gay men. When self-identified gay men facilitated redefinition of the respondents' perceptions of their behaviors and feelings, the respondent began identifying as gay or as a homosexual.

[3] Despite these benefits, an avid reader of the academic literature in this area will observe that identity development models have waned in prevalence by the time of this writing. Why, then, does this section still focus on these stage models? First, MHPs like Bockting and Coleman (2007/2016) and Kort (2018) still use these models. Moreover, at the time of this writing, Cass's (1979) "Homosexual Identity Formation: A Theoretical Model" was cited by 3,657 works according to Google Scholar. Ergo, these models have had a foundational impact on the literature. Second, Christian psychological research still investigates identity development (cf. Yarhouse, Dean, Stratton, & Lastoria, 2018). Third, even though stage models generalize according to essentialist assumptions, generalizations are helpful as long as they are not taken to be determinative. Fourth, while the academic literature is largely constructionist, cultural and political narratives largely use essentialist developmental narratives. Thus, they still apply in many contemporary contexts.

Sexual and gender identity development models—also called coming-out models (Coleman, 1982; Eliason, 1996)—provided clinicians with milestones to facilitate the emergence of LGBT identification.[4] As Richardson revealed (1984), research on sexual identity development does not make sexual orientation an intrinsic, essential quality. On the contrary, developmental models conceptualize identity as a hypothetical construct that is "constructed and maintained through the process of social interaction" (p. 84). Thus, developmental models shifted the discourse about LGBTQ+ people away from essentialist assumptions. Still, Russell and Hawkey (2017) argued that developmental models preserve essentialist notions insomuch as they forced LGBTQ+ experience into monolithic developmental molds. Nevertheless, LGBT identity development models are identity blueprints for many practitioners.

Plummer (1975) was the first to conceptualize the emergence of homosexual identities in terms of developmental stages (Eliason & Schope, 2007). Formulating a sociology of sexual stigma, he drew from symbolic interactionism to plot a kind of "career" development to understand how people adopt "homosexuality as a way of life" (p. 134). Similarly, psychologists like Minton and McDonald (1984) identified symbolic interaction theory (SyIT) as the source of their sociological interest to make sense of homosexual identity (Minton & McDonald, 1984). SyIT influenced early investigations of homosexual identity (e.g., Kenneth Plummer, 1975; Ponse, 1978; Troiden, 1985) and supplied the social concern in this line of research. Similarly, Cass (1979) utilized interpersonal congruence theory (an interactionist theory) to highlight the role of psychological constructs such as self-perceptions, cognitions, affects, congruence, and integration. Moreover, multiple models and therapeutic approaches to LGBT identity

[4] Not all models explicitly do this. However, Kort's (2018) *LGBTQ Clients in Therapy* promotes Cass's (1979) original model of homosexual identity formation as clinically relevant. He commends this framework to facilitate the identity development process. Similarly, Bockting and Coleman (2007/2016) use their stage model of transgender identity development to instruct clinicians to take an active role in facilitating an identity outcome.

(Woodman & Lenna, 1980; Coleman, 1982; Maylon, 1982/1985; Minton & McDonald, 1984; W. Bockting & Coleman, 2007/2016) have cited Erik Erikson's (1950/1963, 1956, 1959/1980, 1968) psychosocial perspective on identity. Other models have defined their identity constructs in terms of sexual identity (e.g., Cass, 1984). In the following sections, we will summarize and evaluate salient[5] LGBT identity development models.

Cass's model of homosexual identity formation: An example of general homosexual identity development. Vivienne Cass's (1979) proposed a six-stage model to track men's and women's homosexual identity development. Her generic model—meaning that it can apply to men and women—is the most cited and foundational to subsequent models. Cass assumed that identity acquirement occurs developmentally and that individuals take an active role in the process. More, Cass concluded that one's public social identity and one's private personal identity ultimately align and integrate by the end of identity development. This integration includes the convergence and growing congruency of personal perceptions, behaviors based on personal perceptions, and others' perceptions. Importantly, Cass (1984) conceptualized identity as a cognitive construct and defined it in terms of its social aspect and relationship to social categories.

During the first stage, *identity confusion*, individuals are confronted with internal thoughts, feelings, or attractions or external behaviors that challenge their heterosexual self-perception. Each stage confronts the individual with the decision to continue to the next stage or remain at the present stage (*identity foreclosure*). At this stage, *identity foreclosure* could mean inhibiting homosexual behaviors or defensively denying the personal salience of internal and external experiences. The second stage, *identity comparison*, occurs as self-perceptions, desires, thoughts, and behaviors become

[5] Subsequent models are prominent in the following secondary sources: Yarhouse and Tan (2004) provided a comprehensive overview of general and specific LGB models. Dworkin (2013) summarized recent bisexual identity development models. Bockting (2014) surveyed transgender identity models.

more congruent, but the difference between private and public identity becomes exaggerated. Thus, people feel alienated from society and social groups. At this point, they may (1) interpret their otherness positively, (2) maintain behaviors while rejecting a gay/lesbian self-perception, (3) accept that their behaviors and self are homosexual but change their behaviors for social reasons, or (4) reject both homosexual behaviors and a homosexual self-image when faced with extreme social alienation. Moving to the third stage, *identity tolerance*, individuals increasingly tolerate the possibility of a homosexual identity. Socially, their sense of belonging shifts from heterosexual groups to homosexual groups as they find affirmation in the latter. By the end of this stage, they have moved from "I probably am a homosexual" to "I am a homosexual" (pp. 229–231).

Having accepted their homosexual identity, the SSOd now reach the fourth stage, *identity acceptance*. At this point, immersion in homosexual communities promotes social and cultural saturation in the gay subculture; as a result, they begin to see themselves as gay. The dilemma of this stage depends on their community: do they live gay publicly and privately or just privately? They follow the community. If their group values "full legitimization," they feel the tension of incongruent public and private identities—leading to stage five, *identity pride* (p. 232). At this point, these individuals become suspicious of the heterosexual community and accept the credibility of the homosexual community. Their group identity is now attached to the homosexual community, believing, "These are my people" (p. 233). They no longer hide their homosexual identity but disclose it, thus reinforcing it. If they interpret reactions to their homosexual identity positively, they will move forward to *identity synthesis,* the sixth and final stage. At this point, people no longer dichotomize homosexual groups and heterosexual groups. They realize that some heterosexual people are supportive of their homosexual identities. At this point, they have synthesized both their public and private identities into an integrated self-concept. They have also integrated their homosexual identities with other aspects of themselves: "Instead of being seen as *the* identity, it is

now given the status of being merely one aspect of self" (p. 235, emphasis original).

Sex differences: Differentiating gay and lesbian identity development. While Cass and others (see Coleman, 1982; Troiden, 1989) promoted general models that included men and women, psychologists have observed that men and women arrive at gay and lesbian identities through similar but different processes. McCarn and Fassinger (1996) even alleged that the foundational models of homosexual identity development relied on the recollections of White men. Gonsiorek and Rudolph (1991) identified some of the differences between men and women: men tend to have more "abrupt" processes, and women's processes are marked by "greater fluidity and ambiguity" (p. 165). Noticing that the general models focused on sexual activity as the catalyst for LGB identification, Bohan (1996) argued that women's sexual orientation identities generally indicate "emotional attachment and political beliefs" (p. 111). We will explore these differences in this section.

Troiden (1979) formulated an ideal-typical model based on the experiences of 150 white men. He identified four stages: (1) sensitization, (2) dissociation and signification, (3) coming out, and (4) commitment. The middle stages—(2) dissociation and signification, and (3) coming out—differed from Troiden's (1989) later gender-inclusive model. During the second stage, young men separate the reality of their sexual attractions and behaviors from sexual identities. Troiden believed "dissociation has the ironic effect of *signifying* these feelings" (p. 365, emphasis original). When men can no longer deny the significance of these feelings, they classify their attractions as homosexual and begin the next stage, *coming out.* This stage includes "self-definition as homosexual, initial involvement in the homosexual subculture, and redefinition of homosexuality as a positive and viable lifestyle alternative" (p. 367). According to Gonsiorek and Rudolph (1991), "coming out" may describe men's experiences better than women's. Men tend to experience linear processes, and women experience fluidity

(p. 169). Thus, "coming out" may be a process more common in men than women. Even though gay men's processes are more linear than lesbians', McDonald (1982) argued that gay men's identity development is still not as linear as heterosexuals because of the effects of stigma and discrimination. He also found that men needed to disclose to people who were not gay to arrive at a positive gay identity.

Specifically studying how lesbian identities are fashioned and managed, Ponse (1978) took a constructionist approach to identity formation. She identified five "elements" in a "gay trajectory" for women: (1) feeling different from straight women while experiencing same-sex "sexual-emotional attraction," (2) applying "lesbian significance" to her attractions, (3) connecting attractions to identity, (4) finding similar people, and (5) commencing a "sexual-emotional lesbian relationship" (pp. 124–125). Unlike models based on male experiences, Ponse highlighted *emotion*. Contra Ponse, Bohan (1996) argued that a woman's progression towards a lesbian identity *begins* with a same-sex relationship, whereas a man's progression *terminates* in one (p. 111). In her investigation of lesbian identity development, Sophie (1986) found that the identity integration process no longer required activism or involvement in gay liberation movements. Attitudinal shifts—partly attributable to feminism—toward lesbians made it possible to synthesize lesbian identities with a milder process. Additionally, Chapman and Brannock (1987) found that lesbians "felt strong emotional or physical/sexual bonds" with other females before they recognized that they were different from other women (p. 73).

Bisexual identity development. As Paul (1984) argued, bisexual identity has received less attention, possibly due to the marginality experienced by bisexual people in both gay/lesbian contexts and the West's largely heterosexual society. Formulating the first model of bisexual identity development, Weinberg, Williams, and Pryor (1994) identified four stages: (1) initial confusion, (2) finding and applying the label, (3) settling

into the identity, and (4) continued uncertainty. During the first stage, multiple experiences may unsettle individuals: having sexual feelings for men and women, dissonance regarding their heterosexual relationships, an inability to name their experience as heterosexual or homosexual, or discomfort with SSAs. Moving to the next stage, these individuals discover the bisexual label, and as a result of various experiences embrace it. People label themselves bisexual more completely during the third stage and feel like bisexuality explains their experience. Since bisexual people tend to be less settled in their identity than gay or lesbian people, the authors proposed a fourth stage: continued uncertainty.[6] The authors attribute this stage to "the lack of social validation and support that came with being a self-identified bisexual" (p. 35). Thus, a unique struggle in employing the bisexual label is its lack of acceptance among those *exclusively* attracted to one sex or the other.

Others have made important observations about bisexual identity development as well. Fox (1995, 1996) envisioned bisexual identity formation as a nonlinear process with diverse factors in play (e.g., gender, ethnicity, sexual and emotional attractions). Differentiating between the experiences of men and women, Fox explained that bisexual women usually experience SSAs after experiencing opposite-sex attractions first. Bisexual men tend to experience SSAs before or at the same time as heterosexual behaviors. After experiencing their first attractions to women, Fox reported, bisexual women label themselves "bisexual" sooner than men. Strikingly, while gay men and lesbians have sexually differentiated experiences, bisexuals identify with each other

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[6] Weinberg, Williams, and Pryor (2001)—using the same sample in their earlier study—found that their participants were more confident of their bisexual identity by midlife. They "had obtained closure" (p. 199). Weinberg et al. cited this as evidence that bisexual people are not always transitioning from straight to gay identities. Participants had greater certainty at this point in their lives because they labeled themselves based on their attractions and not their behaviors. Since many participants only had one sexual partner during midlife, self-labeling due to attractions alone is significant. Bradford (2004) also argued for certainty in the last stage. She proposed understanding bisexual people within the context of the heterosexual-homosexual binary assumed by society. In the fourth stage of her model, *transforming adversity*, individuals identify as bisexual within the broader LGB community and serve as role models for others.

despite the gender differences in their experience.

Transgender identity development. Transgender identity development models often build upon general models like Cass's, except that, unlike LGB models, gender identity is the pervasive theme. For most people, gender identity stabilizes earlier in the developmental process than sexual orientation (American Psychological Association, 2015). Therefore, robust models of transgender identity development account for early childhood experiences. Bockting and Coleman's (2007/2016) model of transgender identity development serves an example. Marking the developmental stages of transgender identity, they built on Coleman's (1982) original five-stage model on the coming out process for gay and lesbian people. In addition to its continuity with Coleman's widely cited model, Bockting's prolific research on transgender issues enriches it.

Rather than making the process necessarily linear, Bockting and Coleman saw the stages as developmental tasks. As they observed, "Individuals may cycle through tasks across the stages, depending on their psychosocial challenges and the assets available at a particular time in their development" (p. 139). They argued that this model provides the clinician with the knowledge necessary to facilitate identity development. Their model begins with *pre-coming* out. Seeing parallels with homosexual development, Bockting and Coleman identified gender nonconformity as a feature of this early period. They observed two ways in which children deal with their "true selves" (p. 140). Children who externally and markedly present non-conforming gender expressions experience rejection and discrimination. Others, better at concealing their gender identity, present a "false self to the world" (p. 140). *Coming out*, the next stage, means "the acknowledgment to oneself, and then to others, of persistent cross-gender or transgender feelings" (p. 141). Thus, careful disclosure marks this stage. The authors highlighted the

importance of a positive response from others to stave off "feelings of alienation, aloneness, fear, confusion, shame, and being defective" (p. 141).

The third stage, *exploration*, involves "learning as much as possible about expressing one's transgender identity now that the secret has been revealed" (p. 144). Its first development task is learning about themselves and their community. Now individuals navigate their social contexts more openly with their nascent identity. The internet provides opportunities for individuals to encounter and learn from other transgender people even before they come out. Issues surrounding gender expression and biological characteristics complicate the second developmental task, achieving sexual competence and a sense of personal attractiveness. The GIt experience a second adolescence when they explore their sexuality "with their authentic gender identity" in place (p. 145). Much like adolescents, they may experience ambiguity and exhibit defiance during this stage of development. Importantly, Bockting and Coleman exhorted clinicians to facilitate exploration instead of identity consolidation at this stage. They contended that "experiencing" and "experimenting" with gender expression is necessary for an "integrated transgender identity" (p. 146). Like Cass, their goal is identity integration. Overall, the successful completion of this stage's tasks includes taking pride in one's identity and developing identity management skills. If necessary, clinicians facilitate the development of pride by disarming internalized transphobia.[7] Clinicians should also foster the integration of the "false self" and the "inner self," parts divided during earlier developmental stages (p. 147).

Pursuing *intimacy*, the fourth stage, transgender individuals confront anxious attachment patterns developed earlier in life and engage others with their new gender

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[7] A parallel to internalized homophobia, internalized transphobia is "discomfort with one's own transgenderism stemming from society's normative gender expectations" (W. Bockting & Coleman, 2007/2016, p. 147). Notably, they believed that a desire to completely pass as a member of the opposite sex could be a sign of internalized transphobia.

expressions and socially identify as their new gender. The individual's sexual orientation now corresponds to their new gender performance, leading to double stigma if they pursue relationships with others of the same gender. MtF individuals are at risk for engaging in prostitution during this stage as they seek affirmation of their femininity. The final stage is *identity integration.* Here, "the individual incorporates public and private identities into an integrated and positive self-image" (p. 153). Now, being transgender is not the most salient part of the individual's identity but just one aspect. Importantly, identity labels become less necessary, as well. More comfortable with themselves and ambiguity, they do not feel the need to pass as the other gender. Despite reaching the last stage, more consolidation and integration may occur across the lifespan.

Summarizing the themes and processes of LGBT identity models. Having surveyed the aforementioned models, we can conclude by identifying four themes and several developmental processes that stand out in these and other LGBT identity models. Overall, models (1) emphasize the true sexual or gendered self (Minton & McDonald, 1984; Chapman & Brannock, 1987; Gagné et al., 1997; Lev, 2004; W. Bockting & Coleman, 2007/2016), (2) contend that identities are volitional (V. C. Cass, 1979; Troiden, 1989; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), (3) identify personal and social dimensions for identities (V. C. Cass, 1979; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), and (4) highlight individual differences among those with similar identities (V. C. Cass, 1979; Minton & McDonald, 1984).

The development models usually begin with initial awareness of SSA or GI and terminate with a form of integration or resolution. We will follow this trajectory as we identify salient processes. First, individuals feel different—especially during childhood; a sense of dissonance or incongruence; and confusion about their feelings (Ponse, 1978; Coleman, 1982; Sophie, 1986; Chapman & Brannock, 1987; Troiden, 1989; M. S. Weinberg et al., 1994; Lewins, 1995; Gagné et al., 1997; W. Bockting &

Coleman, 2007/2016). At some point, they come to terms with their sexual attractions, gender nonconformity, or gender incongruence (Coleman, 1982; McDonald, 1982; Gagné et al., 1997; Lewins, 1995; Lev, 2004). Having recognized their experiences, they revise their self-perceptions and contemplate the meaning of labels people use to describe SSA and GI (McDonald, 1982; D'Augelli, 1994). Within these processes is a sense of being at odds with society or culture (V. C. Cass, 1984; Minton & McDonald, 1984; Troiden, 1989; M. S. Weinberg et al., 1994; Bradford, 2004).

Moreover, the SSOd and GIt research their experiences and explore new sexual and gendered behaviors (Coleman, 1982; Sophie, 1986; Lev, 2004; W. Bockting & Coleman, 2007/2016). Searching for community, they look for those who are like them (Ponse, 1978; V. C. Cass, 1979; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). At some point, they begin to disclose to others or come out publicly, a process which may involve displaying pride or developing resilience (Troiden, 1979; Coleman, 1982; Minton & McDonald, 1984; Gagné et al., 1997; Lev, 2004; W. Bockting & Coleman, 2007/2016). Finally, the SSOd and GIt reach some kind of integration, resolution, or synthesis (Coleman, 1982; Minton & McDonald, 1984; Sophie, 1986; Lewins, 1995; Gagné et al., 1997; Devor, 2004; Lev, 2004).

Current trends: Contextual and narrative approaches. In the twenty-first century, a new emphasis on sociocultural contexts shifted academic foci away from linear identity development models. Researchers faulted many of these models for neglecting social identity and sociocultural contexts (D'Augelli, 1994; Cox & Gallois, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996; J. L. Horowitz & Newcomb, 2002; Fassinger & Arseneau, 2007). Contextual approaches have been called "lifespan approach[es]" (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005, p. 25) and "sociocultural approaches" (B. Mustanski et al., 2014, p. 612). They investigate the unique effects a dynamic social context has on the LGBT person, utilizing approaches like Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model (B. Mustanski et al.,

2014). Contextual approaches assume that previous models overlooked divergent LGBTQ+ experiences and have sought to accommodate developmental variations with greater flexibility (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Russell & Hawkey, 2017).

Narrative approaches highlight the role of dynamic cultural narratives in forming LGBT identities. Cohler and Hammack (2007) preferred a "life-course approach" to stage models because of the "changing narratives of identity for sexual minority youth" (p. 47). Summarizing the work of Hammack and his associates, Mustanski et al. (2014) described how their narrative approach underscored the "diversity of trajectories, and associated intracohort variability, that has resulted from the widespread availability of multiple narratives" (p. 614). As they saw it, narrative approaches explain the generational differences between the gay teens of the present and the past and account for stories that do not match standard scripts. Cohler and Hammack (2007) described these standard scripts as "master narratives" and argued that multiple narratives drive identity development (p. 49). Thus, as Hammack and Cohler (2009) argued, a "narrative approach restores a focus on the voices of sexual subjects and hence provides access to the meaning-making process as it actively lived and embodied in word, thought, and action" (pp. xv–xvi).

Russell and Hawkey (2017), for example, focused on "the role of context in shaping both the emergence of SMGE [sexual minority and gender-expansive] identities and the stigma associated with those identities" (p. 78). At the close of the 1980s, Troiden (1989) observed that homosexual identity formation models all assume that these identities are developing against a background of stigma. This context, he contended, affects both how LGB identities are formed and expressed. Russell and Hawkey (2017) thus investigated LGBT identities in terms of the varying contexts within which they emerge and the respective stigma associated with those contexts. They believed their study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the individual's unique developmental pathway. Some of the external stigmata they proposed include

homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, cisgenderism, and heterosexism. They encouraged clients to see themselves as a part of a social change movement, to face their fears about disclosure, to adjust in changing contexts, to ameliorate internalized stigma, to mitigate the negative consequences of stigma, and to stimulate resilience in adverse contexts.

How psychologists critique LGBT identity development models. Many critiques of stage models come from a constructionist perspective and criticize them for essentialist assumptions (e.g., Bohan, 1996; Horowitz & Newcomb, 2002; Russell & Hawkey, 2017). Critics fault homosexual identity (HI) models for shoehorning experiences into their stage structure or pathologizing those that do not conform, thus creating new *norms* for homosexual development and alienating those whose experiences fall outside the norms (L. S. Brown, 1995, pp. 18–19; K. E. Johnson, 2015; Hegarty, 2018). Eliason and Schope (2007) observed a related methodological weakness across identity development models: they are based on *post hoc* recollection of early life experiences. The data that can be accessed, therefore, is subject to how individuals make sense of their past in light of current identifications. With norms prescribed beforehand, they tell their stories accordingly. Although Cass (1979) warned that her model was more of a guideline and might not be accurate for everyone's experience, she still described her model as the "six stages of development that *all* individuals move through in order to acquire an identity of 'homosexual' fully integrated within the individual's overall concept of self" (p. 220, emphasis mine). Anticipating contextual models, she believed the model would need updating as societal acceptance of homosexuality changed.

D'Augelli (1994) believed that the Eriksonian influence on many identity models made them too linear and too essentialist. Plummer (1992) too, weighing the implications of postmodern thought for LG (lesbian and gay) identity development, questioned his previous work on the developmental stages of sexual identity. Reminiscent of Foucault, Plummer stated, "We need more and more ways of thinking about same-sex

sexualities and relationships that do not lock us up in controlling categories, but which instead empower us towards difference and diversity" (p. 15). Like the contextualists, they believed that these models were too prescriptive.

Concerned that the foundational HI models conceptualized identity as a static concept, D'Augelli (1994) presented identity as a dynamic concept. Taking a social constructionist perspective, Horowitz and Newcomb (2002) expanded this concern by promoting an active role for the individual to play in shaping his or her identity. Queer theory and McIntosh's (1968) interpretation of the homosexual role have led psychologists to reject the permanence and immutability of social identities (Eliason & Schope, 2007). Thus, Horowitz and Newcomb (2002) proposed that sexual orientation identities are dynamic and nonlinear, not having a specific telos or terminus. Some would argue that HI models prescribe one way to the "good life" and pathologize deviations (Hegarty, 2018, p. 16). Thus, even Cass (1996) warned practitioners against using HI models to help "clients 'find themselves,' 'feel better about being lesbian, gay, or bisexual,' 'come to terms with a lesbian or gay sexual orientation,' [or] 'find their true selves'" (p. 228). Instead, she exhorted therapists to realize that these ideas are Western and culture-bound.

Additionally, some argue that bisexual and transgender identities challenge lesbian and gay identity models in unique ways. They believe that bisexual identities and transgender identities disrupt and invalidate the homosexual-heterosexual and gender binaries assumed in these models (see Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Eliason & Schope, 2007). Transgender identities would seem to shift the assumption of these models: attraction to people based on psychosocial characteristics like gender, instead of primary and secondary sexual characteristics. Diamond and Butterworth (2008) challenged the essentialist assumptions in Gagné et al. (1997), specifically that finding one's true gender identity is a successful end of the developmental process. They argued that these models assume only dichotomous, cross-gender experiences rather than "gender multiplicity" (p.

365). Overall, these critiques demonstrate how contemporary psychologists are interested in a multiplicity of sexual and gendered narratives. As we also learned, they focus on the role of stigma in social contexts. However, no salient critiques exist of these recent approaches.

Evaluating LGBT Identity Development Models and Contextual Approaches from an Orthodox Christian Perspective

Identity development models often make assumptions that contradict orthodox sexual ethics. Contextual approaches tend to undermine individual responsibility. In the following, we evaluate both from a Christian perspective.

LGBT identity stage models. Insomuch as they promote norms for LGBT identity development, stage models lack the flexibility to account for religious values. As Yarhouse and Tan (2004) argued, such models assume LGB identification is "healthy sexual identity synthesis" (p. 45). They believed this excludes those who "dis-identify with LGB-affirming ideologies" (p. 45). The "trajectory" established by these models fails to consider how a "religious valuative framework" may lead an individual to an alternative sexual identity besides LGB (Yarhouse, 2001, pp. 334–335).[8] Yarhouse (2001) believed that McCarn and Fassinger's (1996) inclusive agenda could be extended to religious identity and to "those who dis-identify with their experiences of same-sex attraction" (p. 336). Christian engagement of secular models accordingly challenges them to contemplate how religious experience would cause variation and departure from typical identification trajectories. While secular models terminate in LGB identities or same-sex relationships, Christian beliefs often lead to alternative outcomes. Christians who experience SSA may dis-identify with LGB labels (Yarhouse, Tan, et al., 2005),

[8] While we use Yarhouse's critique for theological purposes, it is actually a critique according to the canons of psychology proper. The secular mental health literature frequently fails to envision alternatives to conversion therapy that are amenable to non-affirming (orthodox) Christianity.

identify as gay but commit themselves to celibacy (Yarhouse et al., 2017), or identify as gay socially while committing themselves to chastity in a mixed-orientation marriage (e.g., N. Collins, 2017). All of these are possible outcomes for those living out an orthodox sexual ethic. Similarly, those experiencing GI may be able to affirm the reality of their experience without identifying as or performing a gender inconsonant with their biological sex.

More specifically, secular models prescribe behaviors that contradict historic Christian beliefs. For instance, both Coleman (1982) and Bockting and Coleman (2007/2016) consider experimentation with sexuality and gender expressions necessary to complete identity integration.[9] The suggestion that these behaviors are vital to arrive at one's true self or to pass into maturity is dubious. Not only does Scripture prohibit these behaviors (see chapter 2), Scripture presents a different developmental trajectory in which conformity to Christ is the end (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:13; Col 1:18, 3:10). Notably, the Christian critique aligns in some respects with a social constructionist's critique here: LGBT identity models are too exclusive and prescriptive. Similarly, these models unwittingly propose a false narrative to make sense of SSA and GI, which reflects the broader cultural narratives internalized by individuals as they recount their experiences. The Scriptural narrative would make sense of these experiences alternatively in terms of creation, fall, redemption (Dooyeweerd, 1959/1979; Wolters, 2005), and restoration (Ashford, 2011) and Christ's narrative (R. A. Peterson, 2012; E. L. Johnson, 2017).

Contextual and narrative approaches. In contemporary LGBT psychologies, contextual approaches to identity and stigma are frequently offered but rarely critiqued.

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[9] While merely *describing* how most people synthesize LGBT identities is not problematic, Bockting and Coleman envisioned an active role for the therapist in the process. Therefore, if therapists follow their rubric, they will guide clients through exploratory behaviors.

Just as critiques of identity development models increased as paradigms shifted, contextual approaches may expect the same fate. Problematically, contextual approaches minimize the individual's role in forming his or her sexual minority or gender minority identity. Researchers can still examine internal cognitive processes without losing sight of the social context's role. From a Christian perspective, the individual's interpretations and appraisals are significant because the human heart assigns meaning amid circumstances, dwells on past human experiences (cf. Luke 2:19), and serves as the seat of cognition and personal agency (cf. Heb 4:12) (Pierre, 2010, 2016). In their attempts to account for the unique developmental idiosyncrasies of the individual, contextual approaches may overlook discernible patterns in LGBT identification as well.

Regarding the issue of stigma, mainstream psychologists may unwittingly fail to consider the religious implications of secularly constructed notions like heterosexism, cisgenderism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. In particular, some researchers operationalize homophobia in ways that conflict with conservative Christian beliefs (Rosik, 2007a, 2007b). These beliefs include questioning the "naturalness" of same-sex sex and the morality of the same. Rosik, Griffith, and Cruz (2007) also found that secular measurements fail to appreciate how conservative Christians distinguish between lesbian/gay people and the moral significance of their sexual behaviors. By that logic, Rosik et al. reasoned, society would need to eliminate religious moral frameworks in order to eliminate homophobia. Since there are aspects of homophobia that Christians can agree are harmful (e.g., disrespect or violence toward LGBTQ+ people or abandoning LGBTQ+ teens), Rosik et al. reasoned that mainstream psychology's insensitivity towards Christian values makes maltreatment of lesbian and gay people worse. As constructs, heterosexism, cisgenderism, and transphobia are vulnerable to the same flaws. If researchers operationalize these concepts to pathologize orthodox Christian beliefs about sex and gender, attempts to ameliorate the stigma experienced by the SSOd and GIt will be ineffective in conservative Christian communities.

On an individual level, SSOd and GIt Christians are also responsible for how they interpret experiences like stigma. Even as affirming psychologists, Russell and Hawkey (2017) challenged clients to determine "how realistic" their stigma-induced fears were (p. 90). The Christian notion of the heart (and its sinful disposition) exposes *both* the biases of those who perpetrate *real* discrimination against LGBTQ+ people *and* the biases of LGBTQ+ people themselves. Besides, Scripture presents norms for sexuality (Gen 1–2) and gender (1 Cor 11), and ideally, operationalizations of stigma should not conflict with Christian evaluations of the morality of sexual activity (Rom 13:13, 1 Cor 6:18) or contextualized gender expressions (Deut 22:5; 1 Cor 11:4-15).

Summarizing Models of LGBT Identity Development and Forming a Preliminary Christian Response

Despite their weaknesses, Christians have much to glean from LGBT identity development models—provided they understand them descriptively. These models decode the experience of LGBTQ+ people and invite Christian response.

Takeaways from identity development models. Cass's (1979) model of homosexual identity development shows us how sexual identities emerge in social contexts. Individuals synthesize LGBT identities in their search for affinity and sameness. At the same time, LGBTQ+ people search for sameness amid their experiences of otherness. Without adequately dealing with the problem of sameness and difference, SSOd and GIt Christians are at risk of returning to old ways of identifying and behaving. Troiden's (1989) distinction between *identity* and *self-concept* reveals how psychologists and Christians use the terms differently. For Troiden, identity, in general, refers to the way people perceive themselves in social settings, but self-concept is a broader term.[10] A

[10] Troiden defined sexual identity as "perceptions of self as homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual in relation to sexual and romantic contexts" (p. 45). Social identity more accurately describes Troiden's definition of identity in general. This should be contrasted from the way in which Christians

person's self-concept is composed of many dormant identities that present when contexts activate them. Thus, "a homosexual identity is a perception of self as homosexual in relation to romantic or sexual situations" (p. 46). Additionally, McDonald (1982) introduced the concept of "stages" with "milestone events," a concept that helps us retain the insights of overly-rigid stage models (p. 47). Milestone events are frequently observed but not necessarily expected. Despite the variability in LGBT identity development, observable milestones and patterns may still provide a general-yet-flexible framework for understanding why people LGBT identify (see McCarn & Fassinger, 1996; B. L. Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Mustanki et al., 2014). Finally, narrative and contextual approaches to LGBT identity development show us how stage models are master narratives. These approaches point us to the unique experiences of the individual and challenge us to discern what narratives and contexts have influenced their LGBT identification.

Seeing LGBT identity development models as narratives. As surveyed in chapter 4, modern essentialism and constructionism/-ivism influenced the ways psychologists explained the origins and development of LGBT identities. The more essentialist models explored the sense of difference felt by the SSA and GI during childhood and adolescence.[11] According to these models, the onset of SSA or GI itself may contribute to this perception. Some individuals identified additional secondary differences like gender nonconformity, which may also result in social alienation and bullying. Ultimately, individuals seek a community to mute the differences they perceive. Notably, one of the foundational authors in this field, Cass (1979), considered the last

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popularly use identity to refer to core or essential identity. He uses self-concept more globally, defining it as a perception without the need for social context. According to him, a self-concept holds many dormant identities.

[11] Constructionist models more actively attribute the difference experienced by the same-sex attracted and gender incongruent to contexts of stigma.

stage a kind of integration. Gay is not "seen as *the* identity; it is now given the status of being *merely one aspect* of self" (p. 235, emphasis original and punctuation modified). These ideal-type models emphasized how their subjects were different from heterosexual and cisgendered people.

Models informed by social constructionism and constructivism offered seminal critiques of essentialist models and insights. They contemplated the sociocultural context at work in identity formation. According to this framework, LGBT identities are not discovering the "true self," they are a means for making sense of oneself within a specific cultural era. These models also challenged the notion of a unitary experiential narrative for LGBT identity development, allowing other factors of one's personal identity (e.g., ethnicity and religious values) to determine one's narrative. The constructivist approach to LGBT identity development more radically challenged the norms expected by secular psychologists. Not only were LGB identities subjects of inquiry, but heterosexual identities as well (Worthington et al., 2002). Ironically, the constructionist/constructivist emphasis may comport with Christian attempts to interpret the meaning of SSA or GI in relation to faith rather than dominant cultural narratives. In fact, developmental models seek to capture the transcendent narratives inherent to LGBT identities.

Social psychology also illumines the meaning of identity in our contemporary context by distinguishing sameness and difference. According to S. R. Jones and Abes (2013), Erikson's notion of identity emphasizes sameness, whereas Derrida focused on difference and otherness. For example, Erikson (1956) said, "The term identity expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (self-sameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (p. 57). For Erikson, identity represented something core to the self and its intelligibility. Eriksonian identity answers the question, "Who am I?" (S. R. Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 56). By contrast, Derrida (1972/1991) spoke often of *différance*, a force that undoes ontology and being. The Derridean notion of difference or otherness answers the question, "How

am I different from others?" These are two ways of articulating identity—sameness and difference—and they correspond to how psychologists have researched the development of LGBT identities. What started as an attempt to provide a semi-homogenous account of the "gay man" soon became an attempt to locate the myriad variations on this theme. While early developmental models proposed a unitary path (sameness) for the gay man, later models sought to describe "sexual minorities" according to the uniqueness of their experience—though, as a result, the meaning of gay became increasingly indeterminate. We should note that the word "model" here implies that the trajectories proposed are life courses to imitate. As we articulate the Christian faith in light of these emphases, we can ask: Whose life narrative are people with SSA and GI to imitate? How do Scripture's narratives form the identities of the SSOd and GIt? What would an ideal model of Christian identity development look like for SSOd and GIt Christians?

Surveying and Assessing Evangelical Perspectives on the Origin and Development of LGBT Identities and Experiences

Evangelicals have primarily focused on the etiologies of same-sex attraction and gender incongruence. However, Yarhouse and his colleagues have explored the development of LGB identities apart from etiological questions. The subsequent sections evaluate how these Christians have tackled these issues.

Christian theorizing about the etiologies of same-sex attraction and gender incongruence. Evangelicals took an interest in the etiology of gender-variant experiences like SSA and GI in the late-twentieth century. Moberly (1980), a luminary among transformationists, contemplated the unique history of the SSOd, positing "that the homosexual—whether man or woman—has suffered from some deficit in the relationship with the parent *of the same sex*; and that there is a corresponding drive to make good this deficit—through the medium of same-sex, i.e., 'homosexual',

relationships" (p. 178, italics original). Thus, this "reparative drive" leads men and women to search for same-sex replacements for unmet identificatory needs from childhood (p. 180). For Moberly, SSA is the eroticization of needs for same-sex intimacy, and the Christian faith does not prohibit "the homo-emotional response" (p. 180). Notably, Moberly (1983) defined sexuality "more broadly, in terms of gender identity and not just sexual activity" (p. 29). Therefore, deeper needs lie *behind* same-sex sexual interests. Her theory stems from her universal perspective on human development and environmental essentialism. Moberly (1980) argued: "We are designed to undergo a long period of physiological and psychological development before reaching maturity" (p. 28). Further, "male-female complementarity" is the *telos* of development, not something evident throughout every stage (p. 29). For Moberly, the developmental pathway for "the transsexual" is the same as the homosexual's (p. 13). Transsexuality is a more extreme manifestation of "the same psychodynamic structure as homosexuality" that results in "actual gender dislocation" (p. 13). She attributed the onset of both SSA and GI to parental relationships.

An exemplar of the sin/repentance approach, Welch (1995, 1998, 2000) identified the sinful heart as the sufficient cause of SSA and labeled biological or psychosocial influences as "possible necessary influences" (Welch, 1998, p. 173). Rather than addressing LGB identities, he pinpointed the psychological construct behind them: sexual orientation. For Welch, a desire for same-sex sexual activity is comparable to other sinful inclinations: anger, greed, and jealousy. Welch reacted against Moberly (1983) and Payne (1981, 1985), believing they considered psychosocial deficiencies the primary cause of same-sex sexuality and sin a secondary cause. To him, homosexuality was instead "thoughts or actions, in adult life, motivated by a definite erotic (sexual-genital-orgiastic) attraction to members of the same sex, usually but not necessarily leading to sexual relations with them" (p. 19). Connecting desire and behavior, he said, "If the deed was prohibited in Scripture, the desire was too" (p. 23). While Welch seemed

to fuse the concepts of "attraction" and "desire," he had in mind a desire for same-sex eroticism and intercourse.

Jones and Yarhouse (2000) used a holistic framework to understand sexual orientation. As they reflected on its etiology, they proposed a "weighted interactionist hypothesis" to explain the origins of enduring SSA (p. 84).[12] They pointed to the cumulative effect of biological, psychosocial, and volitional influences on SSOd people during crucial developmental periods.[13] Additionally, they argued that these influences interact varyingly due to individual differences. In his explanation of gender dysphoria (GD), Yarhouse (2015a) discussed sex and gender with biological, psychological, and cultural distinctions. He believed a weighted interactionist model best explains GD because it balances biological and psychosocial factors. Nevertheless, he recognized two additional considerations: (1) *equifinality*, the idea that people can reach the same outcome as a result of different social factors; and (2) *multifinality*, the idea that people's similar social contexts may have divergent trajectories. Yarhouse framed etiological discussions around "humility" because the science of etiology is inconclusive (Yarhouse, 2010, p. 205, 2015a, p. 79). Given the absence of a universal etiology, Yarhouse shifted his research to sexual identity. As noted earlier, Yarhouse (2010, 2015a) also conceptualized both SSA and GD through Scripture, especially the lenses of creation, Fall, redemption, and glorification.

Christian theories about the origins of same-sex attraction and gender incongruence have strengths and weaknesses. Moberly's certainty about the cause of SSA

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[12] Similarly, integrationists Balswick and Balswick (2000) proposed an "interactive developmental model" (p. 14). They believed that biological and psychosocial (including sociocultural) factors might mutually influence each other as sexual orientation develops. Citing Bandura's social learning theory, they argued that individuals are also active agents in their environments. They limited the moral possibilities of sexuality to the constraints or freedoms created by biological and psychosocial factors. As they envision it, the spiritual meaning of sex has an ultimate effect on decision making.

[13] Yarhouse (2019) later drew attention to the weighted aspects same-sex attracted individuals give to their sexual identity: its biological (male or female), psychosociocultural (gender identity), volitional (sexual intentions), valuative (sexual values and beliefs), and behavioral components.

unwisely made one causal pathway for it determinative for all SSOd people, leaving some SSOd people unable to identify with it (e.g., Lee, 2013; Hill, 2020). Welch is right that a Christian conceptualization of SSA (and analogously GI) must account for sin first because these experiences—however intrusive they may seem at times—include sinful desires that can result in sinful behaviors. However, perhaps Moberly also has a point: What developmental experiences predispose the heart to certain kinds of desires? Her emphasis on gender nonconformity also has secular support (e.g., Bem, 1996). Yarhouse has most extensively researched the possible biological and environmental contributions to SSA and GI, concluding etiologies of both are inconclusive. He has commendably framed both in the biblical metanarrative. As mentioned earlier, Yarhouse has not deeply wrestled with a theology of sin as he has contemplated SSA and GI. While we may be uncertain about the scientific pathogenesises of these experiences, Christians can have certainty about their origins as we attribute both to the Fall.[14]

Christian expansion of sexual identity development theories. Not only interested in the origin of SSA, Yarhouse (2001) investigated the source of LGB identities as well. He proposed a unique five-stage model that accounts for Christian deviations from mainstream L/G (lesbian/gay) identity development. Contra secular LGBT psychologies, his research took the role of "valuative frameworks on sexual identity development and synthesis" seriously (p. 331). First, individuals experience *identity confusion/crisis* when they come to terms with their experiences of SSA. The way they perceive the conflict of SSA with their religious, ethnic, cultural beliefs, or values may make this experience particularly distressing. *Identity attribution* highlights the attributions they make about themselves, particularly whether their orientation is defining or merely an inclination.

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[14] Thanks to Mark Liederbach for emphasizing this point to me.

In Yarhouse's model, two divergent paths emerge during *identity foreclosure versus expansion*. When individuals foreclose on an LGB identity, they continue through the developmental processes described by mainstream researchers in chapter 5. However, others reject L/G identities and explore alternatives, thereby "expanding" their identity. Yarhouse differentiated between those whose alternative pursuits are marked by "initial enthusiasm" and "sustained resolve" (p. 338). When a person encounters challenges during this process, they enter *identity reappraisal*. Both L/G-identified people and those who disidentify with their attractions may reenter the crisis/confusion stage. The former may have failed to integrate an L/G identity into their personal identity, and the latter may have failed to change their attractions. Finally, reaching *identity synthesis*, L/G-identified individuals resume the trajectories assumed by other models. Those who disidentified with their attractions resume their personal development "within a valuative frame of reference" (p. 339). In other words, their values dictate their development of self.

Notably, Yarhouse's approach has evolved since his earliest model, one which was more commensurate with many of the models surveyed in chapter 5.[15] Adapting to the broader cultural shift from essentialism to constructivism, he moved away from rigid linear models. Specifically, Yarhouse, Dean, Stratton, and Lastoria (2018) observed a shift in psychological research from theoretical models of sexual identity development to empirical investigations. Researchers now, they revealed, study milestones in sexual identity development rather than proposing stages. Yarhouse et al. studied twelve sexual-identity development milestones. In contrast to the linear models, they did not expect participants to complete every milestone. Milestones included first awareness of SSAs, attributing LGB labels to themselves, using a gay label privately, and using a gay label publicly. Further, while Yarhouse's (2001; Yarhouse & Tan, 2004; Yarhouse, Tan, et al.,

[15] Models may change for at least two reasons: (1) new data or new frameworks challenge the shortsightedness of previous models or (2) the population itself changes.

2005; Yarhouse & Seymore, 2006) earlier research highlighted religious disidentification with LGB identities, Yarhouse et al. (2018) recognized that celibate gay Christians use "gay" to convey their sexual orientation and "celibate" to clarify their sexual ethics. Importantly, Yarhouse et al. did not prescribe LGB identities or labels, choosing to remain neutral on the matter. In addition to highlighting celibate gay Christians, they also highlighted Christians like Christopher Yuan, who exclusively define their identity "in Christ" (p. 80).

By contributing sexual identity development theories, Yarhouse challenged the prevailing models that assumed SSOd people ultimately arrive at gay identities and same-sex relationships. While secular models considered gender and race as they grew more complex, Yarhouse made space for another dimension: religious values. He and other Christian researchers have improved their contribution in this area by exchanging stages for milestones, making their studies more flexible and less prescriptive.

Synthesis II: An Alternative Narrative Performance of Sexuality and Gender

Christian writers remind us that the phenomena of SSAs and GI have their ultimate origins in the Fall of man (Gen 3), both in their consequences for our bodies and our sinful hearts. This pathogenesis, however, does not mean SSAs and GI are reducible to actual sin. Here we encounter a crucial translation question: If SSAs and GI are not identical with the biblical terms for inordinate desire, should that not affect how we conceptualize these constructs? Another question arises: What exactly do SSAs and GI reveal in terms of the *dynamic structures* that have been *directed* away from God towards sin (see Wolters, 2005; Johnson, 2017)? We know these phenomena post-fall, but what can we say about platonic desires and gender congruence in the garden? Another question emerges for those who experience exclusive SSA: Is their lack of capacity for opposite-sex relationships (like covenantal marriage) an occasion of internal suffering, disability, damage, or a combination of all three? If disability, are there any advantages (e.g., the

absence of sinful lusts towards the opposite sex)? Could the same be said about the disordered nature of GI? When intrusive desires and affections fixate on objects that a SSOd woman finds incongruent with her values, is that a kind of suffering? To what extent do Christians mitigate the damage to the sexual or gendered self in this life?

Towards Christian Stories of Same-Sex Orientation

Let us begin with the problem of desire. The relationship of sinful desires to LGBT identities is core to the Christian debate. Christians usually start with the experience of "same-sex attraction." As we have already noted, this phrase implies two time frames: synchronic and diachronic. Attractions are punctiliar. For some who experience SSA, the word may evoke synchronic imaginings and momentary experiences, as they experience a fleeting interest in someone of the same sex. For others, the word will elicit their experience across time (diachronic): their life lived with SSAs. They speak of their story and the compounding effect of an enduring same-sex orientation (SSO). From a diachronic perspective, additional experiences come into play: the confusion of (1) experiencing SSAs during childhood, (2) interpreting the self who experiences these unrelenting attractions, and (3) risking disclosure to significant others.

Relational complexity plagues a life with SSO. When it comes to same-sex peers, those who experience exclusive OSA can easily differentiate between a desire for friendship and a desire for sex. If they are male, the former correlates with men, and the latter correlates with women. One warrants repentance, and the other is innocuous. However, for those experiencing SSA, a desire for friendship (a created social desire) and a desire for sex might be phenomenologically muddled. For the Christian, both the flesh and the Spirit desire (ἐπιθυμέω), as they war with each other (Gal. 5:17). When the SSOd (same-sex oriented) Christian woman feels desire for another Christian woman, does she

desire social intercourse or sexual eroticism?[16] Such is the complex liminality experienced by the SSOd between the first resurrection and the second. Though the APlA's (2008) definition of sexual orientation seems like a good starting point for cultural engagement, a phenomenology of *Christians* who experience SSOs better reveals these complexities. The APlA's clinical definition obscures the way SSOd Christians discover the meaning of their attractions within a Christian worldview.[17] While the sinfulness of desire is an important facet of same-sex attractions, it is but one aspect of Scripture's full counsel. Recognizing all the aspects of these experiences and then transposing them into the ethicospiritual order reveals the complexity of the whole experience before God and permits a fuller participation in Christ's redemptive story.

Towards Christian Stories of Gender Incongruence

Transposing the experience of GI reveals even more about the world's corruption of gender in two ways. As we discussed, neither (modern) gender essentialism nor constructionist approaches to gender can address everything that shapes contextualized gender roles. Probably every Christian in every culture experiences some sense of dissonance between the gender roles and expressions constructed in that culture and the roles and expressions prescribed by Scripture. Contemporary Western Christians who experience GI are caught between the overly-prescriptive roles found in Western culture (e.g., hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity) and the Butlerian paradigm (i.e., the autocentric performance of gender). As Strachan (2016) argued, the temptation of one's desire accompanies GI, but what precisely is this desire? If sexual desire is a desire to possess another person for sexual purposes, the GIt are tempted with a desire with

[16] One gloss in Strong's (1995) concordance characterizes κοινωνία (fellowship) as "(social) intercourse."

[17] See Yarhouse (2019) and Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) for the importance of meaning-making with respect to sexual identity and multiple identities, respectively. However, from a Christian perspective, our aim is to discover meaning with divine awareness rather than fashioning it independently.

ontological implications—the desire to become a differently-gendered person.[18] Corporeally, cross-gender desires are a covetous longing for the primary and secondary sexual characteristics of another. Subjectively, they are a striving for the lived experience of the other gender. Historic Christianity believes that the moral and spiritual effect of giving consent to these desires is the contravention of what nature teaches (1 Cor 11:14) and the Christological and ecclesiological significance of gender (Eph 5:21-33; Rev 21:2).

Biblical Narrative Performances of Sexuality and Gender

We can collate Butterfield, Yuan, and Yarhouse's contributions: Scripture's grand story must be the ultimate starting place for making sense of the origin and development of LGBT identities. Butterfield (2015a) declared original sin "the most democratizing idea in all of human history" (p. 9), yet so is the *imago Dei*, the gospel, and the final judgment. As Christians recognize, union with Christ is democratizing as well, and the gospel invites all humans into that union. Early LGBT psychologists distanced themselves from the pathologizing mindset of their predecessors so they could promote healthy identity development, all the while underscoring how LGBTQ+ people were still being perceived as different from heterosexual and cisgendered people. As psychologists' interests shifted to the social context of sex and gender, they externalized the difference (and the pathology), attributing it to heterosexism, cisgenderism, homophobia, and transphobia. By contrast, a Christian narrative begins with the sameness of humanity: the shared, creation-rooted experiences of social desire and enculturated gender corrupted within a fallen creation.

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[18] We should note that not all people who experience gender incongruence will desire to transition into the opposite sex fully. Some prefer to live in between genders or as both genders; others see themselves outside the concept of male and female entirely or without a gender (Chang et al., 2017). This discussion applies to those who accept the gender binary or at least a gender continuum and experience gender incongruence.

As we arrive at a framework for conceptualizing the origins and development of LGBT identities, the biblical narrative looms large. Breathed out by God, it provides the divinely-inspired elements of a script for sexuality and gender. Nevertheless, Christians are charged with performing this script in various sociocultural contexts to demonstrate its plausibility and realize its narrative (Vanhoozer, 2005; cf. von Balthasar, 1988). More existentially, the Scriptures challenge Christians to reinterpret their experiences according to its story (see Johnson, 2017) and embody the moral character it prescribes. LGBT identity models tell LGBT stories. Some of their ideal-type stories were heavily scripted; others allowed more improvisation on a theme. In chapter six, we will reframe the story of LGBTQ+ people within the biblical metanarrative, and we will emphasize biblical performances of the sexual self.

Affirming Approaches to Religious Identity Conflicts and Evangelical Responses

Both secular practitioners and Christians long to resolve the conflicts created by LGBT identities and traditional religions. Their solutions diverge, and we will explore their strategies in this section before synthesizing an alternative Christian approach.

Understanding Affirming Solutions for Religious Identity Conflicts

Another salient theme in LGBT-affirmative therapies is the interaction between LGBT[19] identification and religion or spirituality. Islam, Orthodox Judaism, and many Christian denominations prohibit same-sex sexual behaviors, and many in Judeo-Christian religions believe gender corresponds to sex. These beliefs create conflicts for

[19] In this section, we will extend research on religion/sexual orientation conflicts and apply it to religion/gender-identity conflicts. As Kashubeck-West, Whiteley, Vossenkemper, Robinson, and Deitz (2017) stated, "We could not find literature specifically related to psychotherapy to help TGNC [transgender and gender nonconforming] individuals resolve conflicts between gender identity and religious faith" (p. 223). The reader should assume that research originally addresses the relationship between sexual orientation and religion. When the literature refers to transgender people specifically, we will refer only to transgender people.

those who also identify as LGBT. Kashubeck-West et al. (2017) identified three approaches to resolving clients' religious conflicts with sexuality or gender: (1) changing their sexual orientation or gender identity, (2) departing from their non-affirming religious tradition to become a part of an affirming tradition, or (3) integrating their religion with their sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition to surveying these strategies, we will explore three others: differentiating between religion and spirituality, privileging one identity over another, and intersectionality.

In psychological literature, intersectionality appears as an emerging framework for making sense of conflicting identities, and it has two main forms. While not overtly interacting with the intersectionality literature, Fassinger and Arseneau's (2007) "model of identity enactment of gender-transgressive sexual minorities" grapples with the intricacies of identity sources (pp. 22–24). The authors identified religion as one "interactive influence," among others (e.g., personality, race/ethnicity, or social class) that "intersect[s]" with gender and sexual orientations (p. 24). Unlike the more uniform models of the previous section, they argued that these dimensions interact in such distinctive ways that everyone has "a unique context for identity development and expression" (p. 32). Following postmodern theory, Sherry, Adelman, Whilde, and Quick (2010) called into question notions of the "unitary or integrated self," emphasizing the self's never-ending mutability (p. 112). Thus, they conceptualized LGB identities and spiritual identities as "potentially competing" social identities that intersect (p. 113; cf. Bozard & Sanders, 2011). However, intersectionality initially focused on the "multiple forms of oppression and privilege [that] shape people's experiences," not the mere intersection of competing social identities (Moradi, 2017, p. 105). Therefore, we will discuss both foci: intersecting social identities and intersecting systems of oppression, below.

Affirming psychology on reorientation or gender identity conversion therapies. Haldeman (1994) spurned psychotherapeutic sexual orientation change efforts (SOCEs) because they are "based on the a priori assumption that homoeroticism is an undesirable condition" (p. 222). To boot, Haldeman rejected both the psychodynamic and behavioral etiologies believed to explain the origins of SSOs. An empirical grounding for these theoretical assumptions and research proving the efficacy of SOCEs, he believed, is lacking. According to Haldeman, religious SOCEs "seek to divest the individual of his or her 'sinful' feelings or at least to make the pursuit of a heterosexual or celibate lifestyle possible" (p. 224).[20] He identified orthodox interpretations of Scripture as the motivation for this approach, and he cited research findings that gay men with conservative beliefs are more depressed and vulnerable to ministries that emphasize sexual orientation change. Overall, Haldeman argued that these efforts, whether provided by clinicians or ministries, are unethical. For Haldeman, gay sex is normal (found in all cultures), and LGB individuals are normal in terms of psychological adjustment.

After researching experiences in conversion therapy for religious participants, Beckstead and Morrow (2004) believed LGB individuals seek conversion therapies out of a need for congruence with their religious beliefs. Notably, participants in their study oscillated between extreme identities during therapy (e.g., gay, ex-gay, or celibate). Most of their participants arrived at a positive sexual identity (e.g., heterosexual or LGB), though some felt that no label fully described them. After conversion therapy, Shidlo and Schroeder (2002) determined two outcomes for those having bad experiences with SOCEs: an "injured-recovery-of-gay-identity" and a "resilient-recovery-of-gay-identity" (p. 254). The injured recovery group experienced psychiatric symptoms as they blamed themselves for not converting their sexual orientation. The resilient recovery group felt

[20] Compare Rodriguez and Ouellete (2000), who associated reorientation therapies with the rejection of homosexual identities for religious reasons.

freed to identify as gay or lesbian because their change attempts failed.

Reconsidering religious traditions. While some LGBTQ+ people may change to an affirming religious tradition to resolve their identity conflicts (Sherry et al., 2010), others may leave Christianity altogether or drift away from Christian practices (Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000). *Altering their religious tradition* may mean adopting revisionist interpretations of Scripture, embracing liberation theology to more radically re-envision Christianity, or joining non-Abrahamic faiths that are more tolerant of same-sex sexual activity (M. G. Davidson, 2000). Affirming practitioners like O'Neill and Ritter (1992) appealed to Boswell's (1981) revisionist interpretations of Christian history to bolster affirming Christianity.[21] Hopwood and Witten (2017) believed non-Abrahamic faiths—Buddhism, Hinduism, and earth-based and Native American religions—are more accepting of transgender people in US contexts.

Moreover, Ritter and O'Neill (1989) emphasized the role of MHPs in taking over the spiritual journeys of lesbians and gay men after they part with traditional faiths. Beckstead and Morrow (2004) reported that many Mormon participants in conversion therapy redefined their understanding of spirituality or modified Mormon beliefs while working through identity conflicts. Thus, one solution is maintaining a traditional religion while changing some of its content to achieve congruence.

Integrating religion and sexuality or gender. *Integration* as a solution for LGBT conflicts with religion is ubiquitous across the literature (Wagner et al., 1994; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Borgman, 2009; Bozard & Sanders, 2011), and approaches vary. While Haldeman's (2004) approach is nondirective, clinicians may facilitate integration with affirming faiths and appeal to revisionist interpretations of Christian

[21] Specifically, they cited this statement of Boswell's (1981): "Early Christianity was relatively tolerant of homosexuality. It was only in the latter half of the twelfth century that greater hostility began to be directed toward individuals of same-gender orientation" (p. 34).

Scripture (cf. Davidson, 2000; Bozard & Sanders, 2011). Promoting integration, Bartoli and Gillem (2008) rejected the idea of "privileging one [identity] or the other" when LGBT identities and religious identities conflict (p. 203). Thus, preserving both identities is ideal for clinicians using this approach.

Haldeman (2004) appealed to integration as an alternative to pure gay-affirming therapy and conversion therapy when religious commitments conflict with sexual orientation identity. Reminiscent of sexual identity development theories, he stated, "The ultimate task of the therapist helping a client resolve internal conflicts about sexuality and religion is the integration of disparate aspects of identity" (p. 693). His approach entails a person-centered disposition that empowers the client to make his or her own decisions in resolving the conflict. For the therapist, "neutralizing one's personal feelings or beliefs" becomes paramount when clients experience "a conflict between their sexual and religious selves" (p. 695). As the therapist and client reach integration or resolution, "it may also be that the therapeutic discernment leads to a goal of prioritizing one identity element over another" (p. 696). Hence, religious commitments may win out.

Bozard and Sanders's (2011) GRACE (*goal exploration*, *renewal of hope*, *action*, *connection*, and *empowerment*) model frames identity integration specifically within the Christian faith and functionally leads clients to affirmative Christian communities (cf. Wagner et al., 1994; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000). Expecting clients to have experienced "religion-based guilt, shame, confusion, loneliness, rejection, and abuse," clinicians foster hope by making the client aware "that places of belonging and fresh moral interpretations are possible" (pp. 55–56). Bozard and Sanders posited three possible actions: clients may choose to (1) stay in and change their traditional community, (2) make another attempt at their earlier religious practices, or (3) begin new spiritual practices apart from religion. They encourage practitioners to help clients navigate both negative messages from the LGBTQ+ community about religion and "barriers and opposition in the religious world" (p. 60). Thus, the authors highlight

misconceptions the LGBTQ+ community has about (affirming) Christianity and steer their clients to affirming churches.

Other Strategies. The affirmative literature frequently neglects religion in favor of *spirituality*, because the latter comports better with LGB identification (Yarhouse, 2001). Hopwood and Witten (2017) thus implied that spirituality is a way forward for some transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) people, because some religions have a codified gender binary that nullifies nonbinary experiences. Halkitis et al. (2009) found that LGBT adults "considered themselves to be significantly more spiritual than religious" (p. 254). Their study's participants associated religion with religious practices and moral codes and spirituality with spiritual relationships involving self, God, and others. According to bautista,[22] Mountain, and Reynolds (bautista et al., 2014), many transgender individuals consider themselves "spiritual but not religious" because organized religion "is too confining and limiting" (p. 72). LGB people may also describe themselves as "spiritual, but not religious" (Sherry et al., 2010, p. 115).

Rodriguez and Ouellette (2000) identified *compartmentalization* as a strategy for separating religious life from LGBT activities and identification. However, when these domains intersect one another, they warn that clients may experience "identity dissonance" as friction between these identities develops (p. 334). Thus, they considered it maladaptive. Moreover, Sherry et al. (2010) suggested a unique approach in the affirmative literature. They said, "For those whose spiritual self feels more salient, the renegotiation of one's sexual self may be considered" (p. 117). Their self-described postmodern approach views both religion and sexuality as social constructions, allowing more flexibility for the self's configuration in relationship to these "dimensions of identity" (p. 112). Thus, refraining from same-sex sexual relationships becomes an

[22] Some transgender or gender-nonconforming people, like delfin bautista, use *lower-case letters* to begin their first and last names. The publisher also uses the lower-case name.

option. In this case, they recommended "acknowledging a LGBT orientation, but not acting on it" (p. 117).

Introducing intersectionality, minority identity, and minority stress. As Shin et al. (2017) explained, intersectionality employs at least two emphases. The *weaker form* identifies multiple identities or intersecting identities. Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) and Jones and Abes (2013) used intersectionality in this sense. Shin et al., Moradi (2017), and Grzanka and Miles (2016) preferred its *stronger form*: employing intersectionality to identify multiple sources of oppression. The weaker form focuses on the experiences of the individual, and the stronger form focuses on the role of society, institutions, and social structures in creating multiple sources of oppression. Even with different foci, both approaches assume a context of oppression for minority identities. Researchers have also applied intersectionality to religious LGBTQ+ people (see Russell & Hawkey, 2017).

A preliminary discussion of minority identity and minority stress will help to explain psychologists' interest in intersectionality. Meyer (2003/2013) suggested that minority stress has a direct relationship to LGB identities, saying, "Characteristics of minority identity—for example, the prominence of minority identity in the person's sense of self—may also be related to minority stress and its impact on health outcomes" (p. 6). Meyer also proposed that *integrating* one's LGB identity rather than featuring it as a prominent identity leads to better mental health outcomes.[23] Paradoxically, Meyer also believed that minority identities lead to more significant mental health challenges. Hendricks and Lista (2012) and Testa, Habarth, Peta, Balsam, and Bockting (2015) have applied Meyer's minority stress model to transgender and gender-nonconforming people

[23] According to Meyer, individuals have multiple identities, and those identities are organized into hierarchies. When one minority identity is unduly prominent and overshadows other aspects of the self, it leads to worse health outcomes. Therefore, "integration of the minority identity with the person's other identities is seen as the optimal stage related to self-acceptance" (p. 7).

as well. Minority identities and minority stressors are essential foci for LGBT-affirmative therapies given possible impacts on mental health. These foci naturally lead to a focus on intersectionality. Hence, Pantalone, Valentine, and Shipherd (2017) used Meyer's model to understand "the intersections between identity and exposure to potentially traumatic interpersonal and structural experiences" (pp. 183–184). For MHPs, an interest in intersectionality is often an interest in minority stress.

Multiple identities. Using intersectionality to make sense of multiple identities has many theoretical sources. Influenced by postmodern notions of self, D'Augelli's (1994) life span (or contextual) approach to LGB identities understands "the self as multiple identities" (p. 313). Jones and McEwen's comprehensive (2000) *model of multiple dimensions of identity* (MMDI) issues from social constructionism and the feminist form of intersectionality proposed by Patricia Collins (S. R. Jones & Abes, 2013). This model builds on the Eriksonian conceptualization of psychosocial identity as *sameness* but also accounts for *difference* in terms of "power, privilege, silence, and voice" (S. R. Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 59). In this model, religion is one of many social identities (e.g., gender, class culture, and sexual orientation) that orbit the core self and intersect with other identity dimensions.

Accommodating postmodern critiques of essentialized identity, Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) modified the original MMDI model by adding a "meaning-making filter" to account for the relationship between one's context and self-perceptions (p.11). Relevantly, Jones et al. based their modified model on Abes and Jones's (2004) study of the meaning-making faculties of lesbian students. The influence of postmodernism on multiple identity approaches highlights the role of personal meaning-making in contemporary models. Similarly, the postmodern approach of Sherry et al. (2010) deconstructed the sexual orientation-religion conflict by reinterpreting both elements as fluid and dynamic yet intersecting social constructs. They concluded:

> The social constructs of what it means to be "gay" or what it means to be a "Christian" permeate the person construct of one's understanding of his or her sexual identity. Therapy then becomes a process of investigation into the meaning making behind social and person [sic] constructs of the self, couched in a highly affirming therapeutic relationship (p. 117).

Thus, "gay" and "Christian" are open to revision, and a fluid perspective on both allows the conflict to resolve.

Several studies frame the conflicts experienced between sexual orientation/gender identity and religion in intersectional terms (Bartoli & Gillem, 2008; Bozard & Sanders, 2011; Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Killian et al., 2019). Uniquely, Rosenkrantz, Rostosky, Riggle, and Cook (2016) identified the positive aspects at this intersection instead of the conflicts. Using participants gathered from LGBT-affirmative faith organizations, participants created new meanings around their faith and religious texts (e.g., Christian Scripture), and LGBTQ people experienced a more "authentic sexual identity" with the aid of religious and spiritual experience (p. 131). Heard Harvey[24] and Ricard (2018) considered three intersecting identities when they studied African American gay men in Black churches. They proposed that sexual identity formation may have similarities to African-American identity formation and call on MHPs to attend to the conflicts that may emerge.

The multiple identities approach reflects other associations. In addition to feminist and postmodern influences on multiple-identity approaches, Bartoli and Gillem (2008) placed religion-sexual orientation conflicts under the category of *multiculturalism*. Thus, "value conflicts" are "acculturation issues" (p. 205). They believe these conflicts are merely issues in acculturation. Diamond and Butterworth (2008) propose using intersectionality to comprehend the connection between gender and sexual identity better. They believed intersectionality might help explain transgender experiences better than essentialist LGBT development models. A representative of a multiple-identity approach,

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[24] According to academic databases, Heard Harvey is a surname.

Bozard and Sanders (2011) recommended that "counselors should also become aware of and attentive to the ways in which experiences of race, class, and geographic location interact with the sexual identities and religious experiences of clients" (p. 60). Like others studying multiple identities, they use intersectionality to facilitate the resolution of competing social identities, with rare mention of sociopolitical implications.

Intersecting systems of oppression. While other psychologists have focused on the social identity aspects of intersectionality, Moradi (2017) sought its original intent: "to consider systems that give rise to inequality and to apply equal scrutiny to oppression and privilege" (p. 122). A marker of third-wave feminism, intersectionality addressed power inequity. Intersectionality was first conceptualized by Crenshaw (1989) to "contrast the multidimensionality of Black women's experience with the single-axis analysis that distorts these experiences" (p. 139). She argued that social structures "bury Black women's experiences" because race and gender are conceptualized as discrete classes (p. 160). She extended this approach to other "disadvantaged" people, including those with minority sexual orientations (p. 151). Later, Collins (1990/2000) distinguished intersectionality from the "matrix of domination" (p. 18). While the former focuses on how "oppressions work together in producing injustice," the latter "refers to how these oppressions are actually organized" in terms of "domains of power" (p. 18). Potential oppressions include race, gender, and sexuality. Moradi, strongly influenced by Crenshaw and Collins, redirected clinical foci to the social and political dimensions that affect clients.

Importantly, Moradi's (2017) use of intersectionality takes a personal constructivist turn: "Instead of asking how clients' gender, ethnicity-race, and sexual orientation influence their presenting concerns, one might ask: How do my clients construct themselves in various interpersonal, structural, historical, and other power dynamics; how do these dynamics shape my clients; and how do these patterns of

coconstruction shape clients' presenting concerns?" (p. 118). Rather than static identities stemming from fixed group differences, Moradi considered how individuals appropriate these identities/categories and construct the meaning of their experiences. Intersectional approaches have led some affirming psychologists to emphasize the structural oppressions they believe mark conservative religions (e.g., Hagen et al., 2011; Singh & Harper, 2012). Seeing Judeo-Christian religions as having "privileged statuses," they argue these religions oppress people who are LGBT-identified (see Singh & Harper, 2012, p. 288).

Evaluating Religious-Conflict Resolution and Intersectionality from an Orthodox Christian Perspective

Secular practitioners often propose strategies for resolving sexual identity conflicts that undermine historic Christianity. These strategies and the framework of intersectionality warrant significant Christian critique.

Religious-conflict resolution strategies. Some integration solutions, like Haldeman's, assume value neutrality is necessary when working with LGBT clients. However, both orthodox and affirming Christians have argued that value neutrality is not possible (see S. L. Jones, 1994, p. 196; Nelson, 1982, p. 164); instead, values are prominent in therapy (Bergin, 1991). Following Kuhn, Jones (1994) exposed the naïve realism of positivistic science and argued that "prescientific beliefs" affect the work of scientific investigation (p. 186). Further, leading clients to affirming Christianity violates Principle E of the APlA's (2017) code of ethics, which protects the rights of the individual to make "autonomous decision making" and charges psychologists to "respect" gender identity, religion, and sexual orientation (p. 4). Many clinicians use integration to introduce LGBTQ+ people (especially with conservative backgrounds) to

affirming religions (e.g., Haldeman, 2004; Bozard & Sanders, 2011), assuming integration requires LGBT-affirming religions.[25]

Furthermore, many practitioners operate as if the sexual orientation framework is sacrosanct and unopen to reinterpretation. They are also quick to challenge gender binaries, but transgender identities take on quasi-essentialist qualities that make them immune from interrogation. If LGBT identities do not really exist in and of themselves (Fassinger, 2017), then they should be able to be open to revision, especially in a way that makes them congruent with traditional religious beliefs on gender and sexuality. Perhaps, for this reason, Sherry et al. (2010) abandoned integration projects in favor of postmodern conceptions that allow individuals "to adjust aspects of the self in useful and adaptive ways" (p. 117). However, their approach opens up both religion and LGBT identities up to fluidity. Despite the weaknesses of an integration approach, practitioners can still query LGBT identities when a client's "religious valuative framework" makes her religion more dominant in her self-understanding than her sexual orientation identity or gender identity without revising her religious beliefs or values (see Yarhouse, 2001, p. 335).

More Christianly, if union with Christ is foundational for Christians' religious identity, then their religious identity is particularly pervasive. The Scriptures confront

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[25] Even Haldeman proves his approach is not value-neutral when he cites Evangelicals Concerned as an organization that facilitates resolution while maintaining conservative values. The organization's founder, Ralph Blair (2017), appeals to affirming readings of Christian Scripture to make gay sex permissible. While the organization may preserve some typical evangelical values, it does not regarding sexual behaviors between members of the same sex. Additionally, Haldeman suggested an alteration of the client's religious framework because he confuses conservative religious beliefs with conversion therapy. Further, he recommended affirming religious communities to his clients. He even opined: "In Phil's case, the reaction [to a gay-affirming church] was positive, but it was not sufficient to overcome the conservative religious framework installed in his identity" (p. 704). Despite an overt attempt to be value-neutral, Haldeman did not recognize his own latent affirming framework. Similarly, Bozard and Sanders (2011) warned practitioners to "be cautious about referring LGB clients to clergypersons who hold non-affirming views regarding sexuality" when the client's religious background is traditional (p. 68). At a minimum, respect for religion will require the psychologist to refer clients both to clergy with affirming and non-affirming viewpoints. It would also be appropriate to refer clients in traditional religious communities to other MHPs with conservative religious beliefs. Otherwise, the MHP risks misrepresenting non-affirming religions to the client.

Christians with the notion of lordship, meaning that Christians strive to obey God, and they are in covenant relationship with Him (Frame, 2008). Additionally, one's union with Christ is crucial in comprehending a Christian's personal identity (Rosner, 2017). LGBT-affirmative psychology fails to appreciate the salience of religious identity for Christians. Further, orientation essentialism leads practitioners to undermine Christian identity, especially how the self relates to creation ordinances and the Fall. O'Neill and Ritter argued that since same-sex orientations are "naturally occurring," they must be part of God's original creation (p. 35). They confused God's original creation and natural law with life in a fallen world. They also assume that repentance is a permanent expulsion of feelings rather than a Christian discipline that habitually realigns the heart with God's revealed will. Arguing that gay sex is not sinful, practitioners have also sought to weaken Christian doctrine (see De Cecco, 1985, p. 1; Bozard & Sanders, 2011, p. 57).

The transformative implications of Christian conversion modify how Christians would integrate LGBT identities. Both a "point [in time] and a [lifelong] process," Christian conversion means a "radical paradigm shift" both in worldview, beliefs, and behaviors (Hiebert, 2008, pp. 310, 323). Hence, a Christian worldview interprets LGBT identities and experiences differently. That said, this should not mean that a client's "religious identity" should be preserved without qualification. Christian Scripture suggests a constant adjustment to one's identity as the Spirit conforms the believer to an unchanging Christ (Rom 8:29; Heb 13:8). Altering some religious beliefs is often necessary since Christians have frequently miscommunicated the gospel, or they may have misunderstood or misapplied it. Wrongly held assumptions communicated by other Christians may also have complicated individual understanding. In the spirit of *ecclesia semper reformanda est*, personal beliefs, affections, and volitions are continuously open to modification as Scripture. Better interpretations reform the individual. However, the proper domain for this kind of reformation is within Christian

communities, not the offices of mental health practitioners who have other values.[26]

Intersectionality. As a framework, intersectionality reveals the ideological conflicts within contemporary psychology. While modern psychology conceives itself as an empirically-driven enterprise and promotes quantitative research methods, intersectionality derives from "Afrocentric philosophy, feminist theory, Marxist social thought, the sociology of knowledge, critical theory, and postmodernism" and uses more qualitative and narrative methods (P. H. Collins, 1990/2000, p. vii; see Bowleg, 2008, p. 317). Intersectionality approaches are highly interpretive, leading researchers to read "individual level data within a larger sociohistorical context of structural inequality that may not be explicitly or directly observable in the data" (Bowleg, 2008, p. 320). Intersectionality privileges intervention at the societal level, often to the neglect to the individual level. While oppression and privilege are social realities, are they sufficient to serve as a pervasive lens to view humanity? More importantly, psychologists using intersectionality must ask themselves whether a persistent focus on oppression/privilege paradigms resolves or perpetuates societal problems.

In addition, the instability of the premises undergirding intersectionality calls into question its intelligibility and coherence. As Howard (2000) said, "In tension with an emphasis on structural inequalities, much of the emerging theory of intersectionalities shows the influence of a weak form of postmodernism, in its recognition of multiple, fluid identities" (p. 382). If these identities are ever-changing, at what points may clinicians categorize them as privileged or oppressed? The fluidity of identities may loosen the effect of conflicting identities, but are fluid identities even intelligible? While the anticategorical approach to intersectionality asserts the failure of analytical categories

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[26] We should not confuse this argument with Vines's (2014) contention that we should reform orthodox biblical interpretations to be more affirming. The spirit of *ecclesia semper reformanda est* still retains continuity with historic Christianity (cf. Strachan, 2014). Vines's approach is more accurately labeled *heterodox revision* than Christian reformation.

to make sense of social issues (see McCall, 2005), what about the structural inequities themselves? Moving away from categories, Moradi (2017) argued that we should "replace language about ability status, gender, race, class, and sexual orientation with language capturing ableism, sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, or, more broadly oppression, injustice, and privilege" (p. 121). But, if postmodernism destabilizes sexual orientation, then it also exposes heterosexism to revision. Ironically, focusing on structural inequalities requires a kind of essentialism to make it intelligible and coherent.

Christianity also challenges intersectionality by supplying a divine perspective on these matters. First, a divine perspective recognizes the plights of vulnerable people and commands benevolence to them (Exod 22:16-23:9; Deut 10:18-19, 14:29; Ps 72:4; Zech 7:9-10; 1 Tim 5:9). Additionally, the people of Israel (Exod 23:9; Deut 7:7) and members of the first-century church (Acts 11:19; 2 Tim 3:11; 1 Pet 1:1) were persecuted minorities in their contexts. As Yuan (2016) argued, SSOd people are similar to the marginalized people mentioned in Scripture, *to some extent*. Scripture reveals that God judges oppression and does so justly (Ps 7:11; Jude 14-15; Rev 6:10). Scripture also speaks against privileging the rich over the poor (Jas 2:1-13), saying that God chose "those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom" (v. 5 ESV). While intersectionality may offer temporary relief to oppressed groups, God understands the complexities of an individual's plight in ways that finite research cannot. Further, God will bring full justice to the earth (Isa 42:4), an impossible outcome for intersectionality.

Further, a Christian perspective transforms questions of identity. Jesus created an either/or distinction by saying we can serve either God or money (Matt 6:24, Luke 16:13), revealing that the ultimate object of personal allegiance is singular. Christ challenges the individual to forsake all and follow him (Matt 10:37-39). Paul deconstructs the personal advantages of social identities when he concluded, "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ" (Phil 3:5 ESV). Paul also

deconstructed the significance of ethnicity (Col 3:11) and freedom status (Gal 3:28). He reconstituted the self as "Christ's" (Gal 3:29) and concluded that "Christ is all, and in all" (Col 3:11). While space does not allow a full analysis of identity, suffice it to say that Scripture disrupts the identity formulations of intersectionality and frameworks of multiple identities. While Jones and McEwen (2000) conceptualized religion as one social aspect of the self that interacts with others, Scripture sees it as all-encompassing. For Christians, the self aims for Christ saturation in every aspect. Abes et al. (2007) recognized that some identities are more important than others (identity salience) when navigating multiple identities but not the extremes of a cross-based life that calls for a cruciform abandonment of one's other identities (cf. Phil 3:1-14).

Summarizing Affirming Solutions for Religious Identity Conflicts and Forming a Preliminary Christian Response

As observed in this chapter, many LGBT identity development models have emphasized the importance of integration. Some posited that healthy LGB or transgender identity development entails integrating private identities with public identities. Others framed it as integrating their LGBTQ+ experience with their personal identity, forming a coherent sense of self. In another sense, practitioners used integration to combine LGBT identities with non-affirming religious identities. As we observed, practitioners recommend a one-way integration that reinterprets religious beliefs instead of LGBT identities.

Contemporary LGBT psychologies also distinguish between static and dynamic identities (see D'Augelli, 1994). According to D'Augelli, Gergen's (1991) postmodern notion of the "saturated self" is less settled than the Eriksonian ideal in which maturity entails a secure sense of self (p. 313). If Gergen's postmodern self reaches its final end, neither LGBT identities nor religious identities are bounded or coherently intelligible. The related emphasis on difference and diversity also entails idiosyncratic

interpretations of LGBTQ+ experience and religion. Nevertheless, a dynamic sense of identity means that we are always changing, and this notion is retrievable in Christian soul care.

Finally, affirming psychology unveils the challenges of multiple and intersecting identities in the Western context. Given that religious identities are the *most* salient aspect of personal identity for some individuals, other sociocultural identities must be considered contingent. In resolving religious conflicts, some psychologists employ the postmodern self to revise both religious and sexual orientation identities. However, a functional resolution of the conflict only requires the revision of *one* of those identities. Some identities are more salient than others and exercise privilege over other identities. Theorists have proposed that identities function hierarchically with each identity organized according to its salience (Burke & Stets, 2009; S. R. Jones & Abes, 2013). Intersectionality undermines the social structures that allow one identity to reign over another. If the postmodern self takes intersectionality to its ultimate conclusion, both minority statuses and privileged statuses are inchoate. Some contexts render them more unintelligible when two minority statuses compete within the same person (e.g., gay identity and Muslim identity in the rural American South). Still, understanding a weaker form of intersectionality as the acknowledgment of multiple social identities can illumine dimensions of human experience essential for Christian engagement.

The concept of identity integration warrants further exploration. Unlike the kind of integration proposed by modern psychologists, a Christian form of identity integration would make an in-Christ identity most salient and read all other aspects of self through identification with Christ. Contextual and narrative approaches, along with intersectionality, reinforce the significance of social domains in shaping an individual's story. They remind us that the self has multiple social sources and has different experiences in different contexts. A Christian approach reprocesses the individual's story and the self's facets through its master narrative: Scripture. Postmodern approaches to

identity conflicts reveal that the LGBT self is open to revision; this mutability is an opening for Christian intervention. A Christian alternative to affirming approaches will consider how Scripture's narratives transform those who LGBT-identify. Specifically, this transformation requires a reorganization of the self according to a hierarchy in which union with Christ is supreme.

Surveying and Assessing Evangelical Perspectives on Christian and LGBT Identities

Christians have engaged sexual identity conflicts by offering sophisticated models for their remediation (e.g., sexual identity therapy), discouraged "gay Christian" identification, and encouraged Christians to reorganize their identity hierarchies.

Healing sexual identity conflicts and resolving multiple social identities. Integrationists have offered an alternative to reorientation therapies and LGB-affirming therapies that permits orthodox Christian theology. With their sexual identity therapy framework (SITF), Throckmorton and Yarhouse (2006) aimed for "synthesis of a sexual identity that promotes personal well-being and integration with other aspects of personal identity (cultural, ethnic, relational, spiritual, worldview, etc.)" (p. 8). Given the challenges of these conflicts, they underscored the necessity of "client self-determination" (p. 7). This framework's four phases include assessment, advanced informed consent, psychotherapy, and sexual identity synthesis. The SITF demonstrates "respect [for] client personal values, religious beliefs, and sexual attractions" (p. 2). Its focus on identity and religious values—instead of sexual orientation (the focus of reorientation therapy and LGB-affirming therapy)—subversively reframed the problem of sexual orientation conflicts. In creating this framework, Throckmorton and Yarhouse made space for Christian values in the public square. As a result, the APlA's Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation (2009) listed their framework alongside traditional LGB-affirming approaches in its guidelines (Yarhouse,

2019). In effect, Yarhouse and Throckmorton influenced the APlA to be mindful of conservative sexual values.

Using the SITF, Yarhouse (2008; Yarhouse & Beckstead, 2011; 2019) developed sexual identity therapy (SIT) to assist clients when their sexual identity conflicts with their religious identity. SIT improves on the religious-conflict resolution strategies surveyed earlier in this chapter, because it takes the values of conservative Christians seriously. Importantly, it supplies five tools that make an orthodox sexual ethic more plausible to Christian clients: (1) a three-tier distinction, (2) weighing various elements of identity, (3) making meaning about SSA, (4) identifying narratives about SSA, and (5) achieving congruence. These tools interrogate dominant cultural narratives about the nature of sexual orientation and its connection to identity and behaviors.

Yarhouse's (2019) "weighted aspects of identity" offered Christians a visual scheme for making sense of their sexual identity (p. 69). Having argued previously that sexual identity is not limited to one component (Yarhouse & Tan, 2005), Yarhouse identified six aspects to expand clients' sexual self-understanding: biological sex, gender identity, and the nature of a client's sexual attractions, intentions, valuative frameworks, and behavior. As they account for identity salience, clients may assign these aspects different weights, illumining the most salient components of their sexual identity at the time. Importantly, clients rate aspects of their sexual identity, not their personal identity.[27] Respondents also determine the ideal proportions of their identity elements by assigning them values. These rankings allow Christian clients "to give more weight to beliefs and values" and redistribute aspects of their sexual identity, if they so desire (p. 71). This tool deconstructs the orientation essentialism endemic to sociopolitical discourse and provides

[27] Despite the sexual identity framework used, some people still fuse their sexual identity with their personal identity. As Yarhouse (2010) observed, ". . . some sexual minorities see their same-sex attractions as the first and last word on their sense of who they are as a person. But others tend to see who they are in light of God making them male or female, or in light of their values and sense of identity in Christ" (p. 143).

the Christian client the option of realigning his sexual identity with God's revealed will in Scripture.

Further, Yarhouse invited clients to reflect on the meaning of their SSAs and the attributions they have made regarding their sexual orientation identity. He investigated the impact of milestone events on sexual orientation identity and explored the three lenses (diversity, disability, and sacred) used to make sense of attractions and gender dysphoria (see Yarhouse, 2015).[28] Paying attention to how clients relay their stories is an additional clinical tool in Yarhouse's SIT (see Yarhouse, 2008). He identified two scripts at the center of sexual orientation identity conflicts: the shame script, in which religious notions that SSOd people are *particularly* deficient or sinful; and the gay script, cultural ideas about the positive meaning of SSA for one's identity. As he collaborated with the client, Yarhouse co-constructed counternarratives that challenge both gay and shame scripts. Finally, Yarhouse (2019) applied the APlA's (2009) distinction between organismic and telic congruence, explaining it as the difference between living according to "impulses" or "strivings" (p. 133).

In their research of complex experiences, Yarhouse, Nowacki-Butzen, and Brooks (2009) also studied "multiple identity considerations" for Christian, African-American men, who experienced SSA (p. 17). Participants' primary identities varied. They described themselves as Christian, both Christian and African American, and gay. Participants organized these multiple identities hierarchically. One argued that he was

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[28] Yarhouse (2015; Yarhouse et al., 2018; 2019) identified three lenses or frameworks for making sense of SSA and gender dysphoria: sacred/integrity, disability, and diversity. The sacred/integrity lens highlights sexual differentiation—both physiological distinctions and appropriate sociocultural expressions. Using this lens, we see how same-sex sexual activity undermines male-female distinctions and sacred norms for sexual intercourse. The disability lens views same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria as evidence of a fallen world and bodies and minds "not functioning as originally intended" (Yarhouse, 2015, p. 48). Some people using this framework may LGB-identify in order to communicate a "way of being in the world" (2019, p. 86) rather than being a signal of their sexual desires (e.g., "same-sex attracted people"). Finally, the diversity framework—in its weaker form—views same-sex attraction and gender incongruence as opportunities for "identity and culture to be celebrated as an expression of diversity" (Yarhouse, 2015, p. 50). The stronger form of this framework—emanating from gender theorists—radically deconstructs sex and gender and teaches LGB people to value the diversity of their sexual interests.

African American primarily because his appearance would lead an observer to that conclusion before knowing he was Christian. Another specified that "Christian" described his identity and "African-American" described his ethnicity. Conducting this investigation, Yarhouse et al. hoped to identify the participants' "attributional search" for the meaning of their attractions (p. 28).[29] The study also revealed how individuals employ hierarchies to organize their social selves.

Throckmorton and Yarhouse's SITF is beneficial because it allows for orthodox Christian values and identity formation to thrive during psychotherapy with Christians, even when used by secular practitioners who hold affirming beliefs. As mentioned in chapter 1, it has the adverse potential of facilitating sinful self-conceptions and behaviors. While Christians may not condone this result, they can still challenge it. Yarhouse's categorical distinctions have provided an essential tool for Christians: distinguishing between attractions and LGB labels. Reflecting on the meaning of one's attractions or incongruence is undoubtedly helpful, but Yarhouse's lenses of diversity and disability need further biblical and theological development.

Proclaiming the liabilities of "gay Christian." Butterfield (2015a) rejected the term "gay Christian" and argued against what the grammar implies, saying it splices incompatible moral frameworks together. She also cautioned against its social identity implications, suggesting it would draw Christians away from Christian fellowship into LGBT fellowship.[30] In rejecting the term, however, she still wished to attend to "the heavy hand of loss that these feelings seem to portend, or the deep sensitivities and character building that marginalization ushers forth" (p. 116; see Yuan, 2016, pp. 23–29). Additionally, Butterfield suggested hierarchies of identities and language: "I wonder why

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[29] See also Yarhouse, Brooke, Pisano, and Tan (2005) and Yarhouse (2019).

[30] Similarly, Yuan (2018) argued: "Identifying oneself as a 'gay Christian' implies that one identifies as much with the gay community as with the Christian community, if not more" (p. 69).

it is not also useful for people whose *primary* identity is in Christ to maintain a linguistic *priority* that emphasizes their worth and dignity as a daughter or son of the King, first, and their sexual desires (persistent, even abiding ones) as *secondary*" (p. 123, emphasis mine). Thus, the heart of Butterfield's concern is the implications that the phrase "gay Christian" has for personal identity, community, and communication. Burk and Lambert (2015) similarly believed the phrase "is at best misleading and at worst a complete surrender to the falsehoods of the sexual revolution" (pp. 37–38). For Burk and Lambert, "gay identity involves *assent* to those attractions and to the behaviors that stem from those attractions" (p. 123, emphasis original).

According to Comiskey (2003), the gay self justifies same-sex eroticism and shields oneself from therapeutic engagement. The Christian solution is to "identify wholly with Christ and so be transformed" (p. 188). Citing Luke 9:23, Comiskey charged Christians to lay all identities at the foot of the cross. For Comiskey, this death means a willingness to face pain and the idolatry of relationships. Being resurrected with Christ means sloughing off the gay self and rediscovering the divine potential for our creation as male and female. "Taking one's place as a part of God's heterosexual order," the SSOd will do well to remain open to marriage with the opposite sex (p. 191).[31] Comiskey clarified that healing from homosexuality rarely occurs instantly; instead, it is a gradual process.

These writers are wise to warn against the liabilities of seeing and describing oneself as a gay Christian. However, have they been fair to some celibate gay Christians in confusing their LGB labels with pervasive LGB identities? Others would argue it is possible for Christians who label themselves LGBT to make their Christian identity primary and their attractions or incongruence secondary. In this sense, they can die to any

[31] Elsewhere, Comiskey (2010) said: "But we err in assuming that marriage is the best solution for all. Far from a concession to our humanity, living a celibate life can be equally creative and rewarding to the married life. (pp. 199-200).

notion of sinful desire or sinful behavior connected with a word and still utilize a defanged LGBT vocabulary. Then again, the wisdom of avoiding LGBT labeling may consist in the perniciousness of LGBT identity development. Using these labels with frequency may induce an affirming mindset among weaker Christians. Christians should wrestle through whether LGBT labels constitute an unnecessary stumbling block to weaker Christians as well (c.f., Rom 14:20-21; 1 Cor 8:13).

Promoting identity hierarchies. Collins (2017a) developed a framework to harmonize union with Christ and gay identity, arguing the former was primary, and the latter was secondary. First, he rejected the term "sexual minority" and conceptualized the SSOd as "gender minorities" (p. 260). His treatment of secondary gender identities (e.g., widow and virgin) in Scripture supports the designation (see also Collins, 2017). Being a Christian gender minority may include social disadvantages such as not being able to get married, being rejected by family members,[32] or being vulnerable to hate crimes. According to Collins, a final implication of gender minority status is that minorities gather into communities and create culture. Collins implored Christians to act like missionaries and decipher the meanings formed in these cultures.

Second, Collins distinguished between "Christian identity" and "the identity of a Christian" (p. 292). The former reduces "Christian" to one identity among others. The latter defines identity in terms of what makes an individual unique (i.e., individual differences). For Collins, the "already/not yet" tension in the time between redemption and new creation has implications for our social identities (pp. 298–299).[33] Though delivered from the dominion of the flesh, we still live in the flesh (Gal 2:20). Christ transforms the social identities that we use to navigate this world, and Collins believed

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[32] Some Christians undergo rejection by family members for merely disclosing that they experience same-sex attraction (see Yuan, 2016, p. 24).

[33] What I call "social identities," Collins names "first-creation identities" (p. 299).

that Christians could identify as gay without experiencing "gayness" as a "fleshly" identity (p. 299; cf. Hill, 2016). The transformation inherent in salvation, Collins contended, means that our social identities can be freed from sinful expressions. In this sense, "gay" can be a useful sociocultural identity for navigating Western culture on this side of eternity (p. 303). As cited above, Collins warned about the sinful possibilities of gay identification. Thus, gay identities are sinful when they deny original sin.

Finally, Collins likewise suggested a hierarchy of identities. He placed "Christian identity in the driver's seat," relegating other identities to a subservient position (p. 311). At the same time, Collins employed the language of *integration* or *incorporation* to emphasize the importance of including even one's past self into a coherent notion of self (p. 199). Arguing for "the concrete benefits of encouraging gay people to integrate their orientation into Christian identity," he believed integration would lead to more clarity regarding all the experiences of the SSA (p. 289). While arguing for integration, however, Collins did so in the context of superordinate and subordinate social identities. Collins's hierarchy of identities drew from his differentiation between primary and secondary gender identity, as well.

Appropriately, Collins preserves the Christian's union with Christ by emphasizing the Christian's identity instead of a mere "Christian identity." His conceptualization of LGB labels has considered the transformative implications of salvation, including the mortification of sinful expressions. Perhaps most helpful, Collins suggests a kind of hierarchy of identities that make all other identities servants of one's union with Christ. One weakness of this position is that it may cause weaker SSOd (or analogously GIt) Christians to stumble into sin as they uncritically embrace LGB labels without reprocessing them as profoundly as many celibate gay Christians have done. Also, does embracing a minority status bog down SSOd Christians by setting them up for unnecessary minority stressors (e.g., misinterpreting comments as slights or assuming they are unwelcome when they are not)? This critique should not diminish the real

suffering many SSOd Christians have experienced, but we should ask: Does embracing a minority status stimulate healing or sustain the pain of prejudice?

Synthesis III: An Alternative Identity-Organization Schema for Competing Identities

Intriguingly, the various positions (recall figure 1) we have encountered in this project, in some respects, the cultural dispositions Niebuhr (1951) observed. Those emphasizing sin and repentance believe LGBT identities are too compromised for appropriation, preferring biblical and theological terminology instead (except for "SSA" and "gender dysphoria"). Affirming pastoral theologians, like Joretta Marshall, syncretistically revises Christian doctrine while preserving secular cultural values. Significantly, Marshall distances herself from celibate gay Christians. The remaining positions fall in between these poles as they navigate the possible relation between LGBTQ+ experience and historic Christianity. They also vary in the extent to which they evaluate the worldviews that pervade various forms of LGBT identification and the meaning of identity in contemporary contexts. All these positions would agree that compartmentalizing SSOs or GI from one's Christian faith is neither healthy nor Christian, and we can draw upon the salient contributions of orthodox approaches to sexuality and gender.

Explaining Identity Transformation

Christians who affirm and practice orthodox sexual ethics believe that Christianity entails the transformation of LGBT identities. They differ, however, in the extent to which these identities are to be reinterpreted, transmuted, or mortified. Though LGBT identities have been thoroughly debated, the nature of "Christian identity" is also problematic. Naming oneself a Christian can be distinguished from being united to Christ in his death and resurrection (cf. Matt 7:21-23). Moreover, Christian social identity can be problematic when others manipulate Christ-followers to buy certain products, to vote a

certain way, to spread chain emails, or to distribute false content on social media.[34] Having a social dynamic, Christian identities may also take on a Pharisaical character. Externally, people may be marked by moral law-keeping while being internally corrupted (see Matt 23:27). As a label or a social identity, then, "Christian" does not sufficiently communicate one's personal beliefs and values by itself. Americans may apply the term to Southern Baptists as well as Oneness Pentecostals and Mormons. As we have seen, affirming theologians also appeal to Christian identity to undermine sexual differentiation and orthodox sexual ethics. Rather, *Christian* identity warrants *explanation* within a confessional framework and the transformational effects of union with Christ.

Articulating Changes in Sexuality in a Sociopolitical Context

Christian soul care also requires we reflect on the meaning of change. As we observed in chapter 2, Dallas (1991) appealed to Kinsey's scale when describing sexual orientation change. Kinsey's scale assumes that when SSAs decrease opposite-sex attractions increase. However, researchers have since measured these variables independently (see Shively & DeCecco, 1977; Sell, 1996; S. L. Jones & Yarhouse, 2007). With a two-dimensional framework, we can envision how SSAs can decrease without a correlating effect on OSAs. In one sense, rehabilitating the sexual orientation change tradition (SOCT) in the contemporary ministry context has the same challenges as rehabilitating modernism to combat the arguments of postmodernism. That said, discourse about sexual orientation change reveals internal contradictions even in mainstream psychology.[35] Klein, Sepekoff, and Wolf's (1985) widely-cited measurement of sexual orientation envisions a complex construct. Four of its seven items are cognitive

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[34] For example: "If you're a true Christian, you will do X."

[35] Other conditions (e.g., personality disorders and schizophrenia) experienced in a fallen world also resist therapeutic remediation or have divergent responses to treatment because subtypes and causal pathways vary (E. L. Johnson, personal communication, September 17, 2018).

and volitional (sexual behavior, sexual fantasies, self-identification, and lifestyle). At the same time, Shidlo and Gonsiorek (2017) argued that changes in sexual behaviors or identities do not constitute sexual orientation change. Their argument is irreconcilable with Klein and others' operationalization.

We must also recognize the sociopolitical dimension at work in affirming psychologies (cf. Hegarty, 2018) and debates about orientation change. Implications abound if sexual orientation has volitional aspects rather than occurring as intrusive biological responses alone. Consequently, current political power consists in *defining* sexual orientation change more than *regulating* it.[36] From a Christian perspective, we can advocate for measured and realistic changes in SSO (and GI) through new cognitions, affections, volitions (cf. Hiebert, 2008; Pierre, 2016), and relational transformation (cf. Johnson, 2007; Coe & Hall, 2010) without making orientation changes a primary pursuit.[37] Except for Christian perfectionists, most Christians have believed that transformation is incomplete in this life, even though its pursuit is essential to all Christian discipleship (Hiebert, 2009). While the SOCT, as exhibited by Nicolosi (2009/2016), sought to change the orientation of gay people, Payne would have us give proportional consideration to the transformation of heterosexuality and modern gender essentialism as well.

Transforming and Reorganizing Identity through Christian Narratives

When we use terms like "identity," "gay," and "Christian," our speech relates to both transcendent realities and the images evoked in the minds of one's audience. With an extractionist bent, some Christian approaches have overlooked the value of achieving

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[36] Rarely is sexual orientation treated in jurisprudence as merely a psychological phenomenon; its use in legal contexts protects same-sex behaviors and associated ways of living.

[37] As a typical approach, this assertion should not rule out cases in which individuals experience complete sexual orientation change or the remediation of gender incongruence.

maximal intersubjective understanding between speaker and hearer. Others leaning toward syncretism have strived for intersubjective understanding without fully integrating a divine perspective in their communication. Recognizing these extremes, traditionalist Christians have resorted to explanation, modification, and substitution (also accompanied by explanations) to clarify their doctrinal and social locations concerning sexuality and gender. Orthodox approaches generally reject the practices of self-development they consider sinful as well. Preservation of the faith they have received (2 Thess 2:15) should be the highest priority for SSOd and GIt Christians who look to communicate both their beliefs and its effect on their experiences. The postmodern turn has encouraged personally-constructed meanings of terms like lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Given the ambiguity created by many sociocultural labels, they at minimum warrant explanation. However, in the next chapter, we will argue that LGBT labels are best substituted with Christian narratives of SSO and GI that expound the transformed self and its Christocentric hierarchies rather than minimize it. Christianity's transformative implications mean that a Christian reorganization of the LGBT self must be clearly articulated.

CHAPTER 6

DETAILING THREE CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVES FOR THE PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELING OF CHRISTIANS INITIALLY IDENTIFYING AS LGBT

In chapters 4 and 5, we surveyed three themes of LGBT-affirming psychologies and proposed biblical alternatives. First, neither modern essentialism (ME) nor social constructionism (SC) can adequately provide the theological framework needed to understand sexuality and gender in the contemporary era. Instead, Christian critical essentialism can help us determine faithful expressions of gender and sexuality in every cultural context. Second, it was concluded that the stories told by affirming psychologists needed transformation by Scripture's grand story, especially its presentation of Christ's story. Moreover, God has provided us with a universal "script" with which to interpret and perform our sexual selves in specific cultural contexts. Hence, the stories of LGBTQ+ people can be retold through the lens of Scripture's dramatic narrative. Finally, it was suggested that LGBT labels should be replaced with Christian stories of SSO and GI that explain transformation, hierarchies, and reorganization of the self. This chapter expounds upon these three alternatives.

Regarding LGBTQ+ issues, Christians with divergent views have valued the role of narrative. Many have explained their theological and cultural dispositions through personal narratives (e.g., Comiskey, 1989; Davies & Gilbert, 2001; Hill, 2010; Yuan & Yuan, 2011; Tushnet, 2014; Butterfield, 2015b; Coles, 2017; Bennett, 2018). While counseling the same-sex oriented (SSOd) and the gender incongruent (GI), Yarhouse (2008, 2013, 2015a, 2019) has also explored narratives and scripts (see also Yarhouse & Sadusky, 2020). Butterfield (2015a), Collins (2017a), and Yuan (2018) have also

underscored the role of biblical narratives in forming a Christian's identity. Narratives—biblical and personal—are among the common factors of a Christian approach. Narrative is a critical component for some LGBT psychologists as well (e.g., Risen, 2003; Lev, 2004; Hammack et al., 2013; Fassinger, 2017; cf. Risen, 2016). As MacIntyre (1988) observed, we come to know ourselves in our quests for narrative (p. 219). In this chapter, narrative performances will feature prominently,[1] developing the symbolic-narrative modality of Christian soul care for the LGBT-identified (see Johnson, 2007).[2] Four stories predominantly guide the narrative performances we will discuss: (1) Scripture's grand story or metanarrative; (2) Christ's story in his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation; (3) Paul's story, including the discontinuities and continuities he experienced with his former life as a Jewish Pharisee, and (4) the Christian's story, the unique story of each saint transformed, in part, by internalizing these three biblical stories.

Conclusion I: Christian Critical Essentialism as An Alternative Worldview Guide for Gender and Sexuality

Scripture's grand narrative (see chapter 2) foundationally informs Christian critical essentialism. The rendering of Christian critical essentialism[3] (CCE) proposed here recognizes Scripture as the script and the church as its performers (Vanhoozer,

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[1] Following Vanhoozer (2005) and contra postliberal theology, our focus on Scripture's narrative does not mean that it is without propositions or other genres, and our discussion of performance assumes that performances have propositional content (pp. 279-283). We focus on narrative because of its salience for our target audience. Vanhoozer (2014) differentiated narrative and drama, saying, "Dramas, by way of contrast, *show* rather than *tell* and are typically enacted in the first person and second person, the language of personal interaction" (p. 252). The term "narrative performances" indicates that SSOd and GIt Christians have performances to *show* and first-person narratives to *tell*.

[2] Johnson (2007) promotes a holistic framework for soul care that employs multiple modes of therapy to address the complexity of human nature. Focusing on one modality in this dissertation invites the development of the other modalities in future projects.

[3] *Christian critical essentialism* seeks to recover biblical ideas of gender and sexuality without the trappings of modern essentialism and holds that the historic Christian tradition proposes that there is something essential and enduring about these features of human nature. *Critical* is added to acknowledge that human knowers, clouded by sin, do not necessarily apprehend those essences with full clarity. Critical also indicates our intention to deconstruct *modern* essentialism and the obstacles it presents for the same-sex attracted and gender incongruent.

2005). CCE can serve as a kind of "philosophy as therapy" through which we question *both* cultural constructions of gender and sexuality *and* modern interpretations of Scripture concerning the same (cf. Peterman, 1992, p. 2). While the Bible is the master narrative that rightly envisions the divine perspective on created reality, natural law also serves as a secondary "script" for what "nature itself" teaches us about gender and sexuality (1 Cor 11:14 ESV; cf. Rom 1:26). With this background, we will first explore essences and constructions.

Divine Plans and Human Constructions

Divinely-created essences and regulated human constructions are not opposed to each other, for they work together harmoniously.[4] Scripture often clarifies the role of God and humans in creation through construction imagery. According to the OT, God creates (Gen 1:1, 27; Ps 148; Isa 43:1-7; Mal 2:10; Matt 19:4; Eph 2:10), His creations are superior to those of human beings (Exod 34:10), and the Lord governs His creation (Ps 74:17; Isa 37:16). His image-bearers create as well. Adam named aspects of the creation (Gen 2:20). The Lord commanded Noah to build an ark according to the design He gave (Gen 6:14-16). The Lord instructed Moses to build Him a sanctuary according to His design (Exod 25:9, 26:30, 39:32). Solomon built the temple according to the plans given to him by David (1 Chr 28:11-18), plans elucidated "in writing from the hand of the LORD" (v. 19). When Jeshua rebuilt the altar, he followed Torah (Ezra 3:3), and when Levites rebuilt the temple, they praised the Lord according to David's instructions (3:10).

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[4] This brief biblical survey recalls the debate in Christian ethics between proponents of divine command theory, virtue ethics, and natural law. Space does not allow its development here. Natural law contends that ethics is "rooted in facts about the sort of creature we are, what God created when he created human beings" (C. B. Peterson, 2017, p. 83). Emphasizing the plans God commands and the human agency required to fulfill them in this section recalls divine command theory and virtue ethics, respectively. Intriguingly, adherents of all three views believe Thomas Aquinas is their champion (Wilkens, 2017, p. 4). Affirming natural law does not exclude "developing virtue" or "obeying the divine command" (Kallenberg, 2017, p. 110).

Similarly, the NT presents God as a builder (Matt 16:18, 26:61; Heb 3:3-4; 11:10; 2 Cor 5:1) and contrasts Christ as God's chosen cornerstone with the constructions of man (Matt 21:42 // Mark 12:10-11 // Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11). Building on the right foundation is the difference between refuge and destruction (Matt 7:24-27), and the construction process should use materials that will withstand judgment (1 Cor 3:12-15). Paul described his spiritual labors with construction imagery, describing Christ as a foundation that faithful workers must lay (1 Cor 3:10-11; cf. Rom 15:20). Paul also presented the church as the temple God is building (Eph 2:20-22). Deconstructing his former belief system, Paul believed justification by works should not be rebuilt (Gal 2:18). Moreover, Jude commissions his readers to build their "selves" up in the faith and keep themselves in the love of God (Jude 20-21).

Throughout salvation history, God has provided instructions, commands, and laws for the faithful to build, obey, and lovingly perform their calling. Particularly relevant to discussions about gender and sexuality is the role of natural revelation and natural law. In one of the most explicit texts against same-sex eroticism, Paul condemned men and women for converting the "natural use" (φυσικὴν χρῆσιν) of sex into that which is "against nature" (παρὰ φύσιν) (Rom 1:26-27 KJV). He even argued that "nature" (φύσις) instructs the Gentiles' hearts and consciences with the requirements of the law (Rom 2:14). Similarly, Paul even directed his readers to consider the teachings of "nature" (φύσις) when evaluating appropriate expressions of gender (1 Cor 11:14). Thus, nature, when studied with a renewed mind (Rom 12:2), can be a reliable source for faithful performances of sexuality and gender.

LGBT psychologies pit constructionism/-ivism and modern essentialism against one another. Proponents of both approaches disagree about how things are (ontology) and how we know things (epistemology). A biblical perspective on this issue

reveals that God is the creator and governor of universal moral norms.[5] God also gives directives that authorize human constructions. However, when humans construct without the right foundation, directives, or materials, their constructions invite destruction. What modern psychology's factions have seen in part, we see more wholly with biblical lenses. If Scripture provides the necessary divine guidelines for gender and sexuality, how shall we then construct them?

Grand Narratives and Small Narratives

Lyotard (1984) famously defined postmodernism in terms of "incredulity toward metanarratives" (p. xxiv), and he also differentiated between metanarratives and local narratives. While Scripture may not be a metanarrative in the Lyotardian sense,[6] this sentiment has led mainstream Bible scholars to emphasize diversity and undermine the unity of the Bible (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2004). Revealing our place in a unified Scripture, Newbigin (1989) said, "We live *in* the biblical story as part of the community whose story it is, find in the story the clues to knowing God as His character becomes manifest in the story, and from within that indwelling try to understand and cope with the events of our time and the world about us and so carry the story forward" (p. 99). A "life committed to the truth of this witness" argues its plausibility (Newbigin, 1995, p. 94).[7] As

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[5] This statement assumes that not all moral norms are universal.

[6] According to Smith (2001), Lyotard's definition of metanarrative is not "a 'grand story' in the sense of stories that have grand or universal pretensions, or even make universal claims" (p. 354). Rather, metanarratives are modern productions that appeal to "scientific Reason" (p. 354). Since the Scriptures appeal to faith—in the Augustinian sense—instead of universal reason, he contended that Lyotard's discussion of the metanarrative has nothing to do with Scripture. Smith believed we could join with Lyotard in his rejection of the metanarrative of autonomous reason because such a notion upended Christian thought during the Enlightenment. Hence, Lyotard was more interested in exposing how the universal claims of science had usurped narrative forms of knowledge than he was in undermining Scripture's grand story. Any use of "metanarrative" or "grand narrative" in this chapter assumes this distinction.

[7] In its original context, this quote obscures the proof or witness provided through the four gospels and other books contained within the Christian Scriptures. In its use here, this quote reminds us of the *salience* and *potency*, not the *exclusivity,* of personal testimony as evidence for the Christian faith. To boot, personal testimony fades over time in a way that the Word of God does not. We also should not carry over the anti-propositionalist stance Newbigin's discourse conveys.

we live in the biblical story to make sense of our cultural surroundings, we also embody the story in a kind of lived rhetoric, and our bodies and our attire reveal the organizing grand narrative of our lives.[8]

The role of personal testimony leads to another consideration: "the little narrative" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 60). According to Frame (1999), the self—along with biblical norms and situational awareness—provides a perspective or angle "to view the full range of ethical norms and data" (p. 52). His existential perspective "studies the ethical subject—his griefs, his happiness, his capacities for making decisions" (Frame, 1987, p. 75).[9] In narrative terms, we would say that people tell stories that make sense of themselves in the world. Unlike Lyotard's conception of little narratives, the existence of a Triune God allows us to contextualize our smaller narratives within a more sweeping narrative. While reading Turner (1993), Jones and Yarhouse (2006) processed the subjective self within an objective (read *divine*) view of the self. God charges selves with discovering and forming themselves, they contended, according to the divine meanings of embodied capacities and limitations like sexuality and gender.

Synthesizing these ideas, we can conclude that the Scriptures provide a metanarrative for constructing our sexual and gendered selves in light of their embodied, enculturated, and volitional aspects. This narrative constitutes a divine perspective, a universal narrative that calls all people to make sense of themselves in their contexts. Aided by divine de-*sign*-ations, Scripture and nature invites us to discover the divine pattern and its *telos* and construct ourselves accordingly. This Christian form of receptive constructionism is the life-long journey known as progressive sanctification. Divine regulations do not mean that our human constructions are exhaustively delineated; they

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[8] In the foreword to Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, Jameson (1984) argued that metanarratives had not disappeared entirely. They went underground in our unconscious.

[9] Frame (1987) adds that this experiential element should be read through Scripture and the individual's context.

will require improvisation, as we will see. Properly constructed selves perform their stories of sexuality and gender in the ecclesial theater before the angels (Calvin, 1960, p. 881), for man is "a story-telling animal" (Alasdair MacIntyre, 1981/2007, p. 216).

What Nature Teaches

As we established, Scripture commissions us to determine what nature teaches about sexuality and gender, and, as we will later discern, we read nature best through the biblical lenses. Historically, Christian thinkers like Aquinas appealed to natural law. While Protestants have given natural law a mixed reception, we can begin with Kuyper's treatment of natural law; he discussed it under the rubric of the divine ordinances and general revelation (VanDrunen, 2010). Kuyper (1898/1954) characterized general (or natural) revelation and special revelation as having the same source in God's self-communication to humanity. Because humans fell into sin, they could no longer know God through natural revelation alone. Special revelation steps in to help humans as long as sin remains and will be needed no more in glory. For Kuyper, special revelation needs natural revelation and vice versa. Thus, Kuyper (1873/1991) believed the "[divine] ordinances are real," but noetic sin challenges our access to them (p. 245). Recalling Calvin, he said that we need the spectacles of Scripture to understand natural ordinances rightly.

Moreover, Kuyper (1873/1991) believed that "knowledge of God's ordinances" leads us to use both divine and human sources in understanding academic fields like those studying sexuality and gender in our contemporary setting (p. 251). He argued this while affirming that sin makes academic study "futile" when we attempt it based "solely on the observation of life" (p. 248). As we recounted earlier, Scripture teaches us to apprehend nature's teaching about the maleness and femaleness. God's word, then, supplies the lenses through which we read gender theory and theories about sexual orientation and spurs theologically-constituted theories. Lest some recoil at this

notion, we recognize such cultural engagement will discern the noetic sin that prevents affirming psychologists from apprehending gender and sexuality rightly. Even so, Kuyper appealed to Calvin and other Reformers for such openness, for they valued the insights of pagan political theory despite the influence of sin on they discovered in their thought. By way of application or contextualization, Scripture unites with the "phenomena of life" (p. 250) and the Christian's renewed mind to determine appropriate expressions of gender and articulations of the sexual self at any time and place. Natural law invites us to interpret the "*semiodiscursive* structure" of our sexuality and gender according to three orders of discourse: embodiment, the self-in-context, and values and aesthetics (see Johnson, 2007, p. 266).

Embodiment. Reflecting on the biological order, we know that humans are embodied as male and female (cf. Nelson, 1978). They differ in terms of chromosomes, hormones, neurology, primary sexual characteristics (e.g., gonads and sex organs) and secondary sexual characteristics (e.g., growth of breast tissue after puberty and sex differences in body hair or muscle mass). These biological features have significance. Chromosomes, including sex chromosomes, express the language of God (F. S. Collins, 2006). They speak from the moment of conception, and they are witnesses to divine intent. The similarity of male and female embryos in the earliest stages of sexual development declares the fundamental humanness of both, and their emerging differentiation affirms their created sexual distinctiveness before birth. Our bodies "tell us who we are and, ultimately, who we are meant to be" (Savage, 2015, p. 93). Our sexual differentiation reveals that male and female bodies are best suited to divinely-instituted, specialized purposes, and coming together in sexual union fulfills the creation mandate (Gen 1:28) and expands the human community. Experiences like same-sex attraction (SSA) and gender incongruence (GI) take place in relation to these sexed features of human life and development. While theorists do not believe the biological order explains

the origins of these phenomena by themselves, they are nevertheless constituent parts (Sánchez & Pankey, 2017). Even without spiritual eyes, humans recognize disorders of sexual development, the disordered nature of gender dysphoria, and disorders of sexual dysfunction.

The sexual/gendered self-in-context. Considering the psychological and sociocultural aspects of the sexual/gendered self, we contemplate the relationship of the individual to society. Being embodied as male or female entails individual, subjective internalization of divinely-created essences within a social context. Having male or female bodies and navigating society with them colors our experience and our perceptions of ourselves in relation to others. Commonly, people's internal sense of gender usually aligns with their bodies. People generally have sexual intercourse with people of the opposite sex. As Scruton (2006) theorized, we give meanings to our bodies: "The most striking example of this is provided by clothing, which dramatises the sexuality of the body in the act of concealing it. Sex is hidden, so that it might be revealed as gender" (p. 268). Gender, then, is the outward symbol of our concealed sexual differentiation, our more hidden primary sexual characteristics. Clothing and other gender expressions are the public communication of our hidden embodiment. Sexual attraction interacts with the sameness and difference that the human body and gendered behaviors communicate; those who are different become sexually appealing (D. J. Bem, 1996; Scruton, 2006).

Values and aesthetics. According to Scruton, erotic love "is essentially evaluative" (p. 250). Sexual experiences entail aesthetic judgments. As we observed in chapter 4, sexual desire includes volitional elements as well. Western legal codes remind us that sex has moral consequences (e.g., rape, sexual abuse, or even responsibility for resulting offspring). Some bodies are appropriate for intercourse, and some are not. Some social contexts invite sexual intercourse, and others do not. Societies prescribe proper

gender expressions, writing them into their social codes. If a woman in the Middle East forsakes a *hijab*, she will incur the judgment of others. If a man wears shorts in Burkina Faso, he violates social codes. Being sexually embodied in a particular social context entails moral agency. How we describe ourselves as male or female and how we qualify these realities with other labels (e.g., LGBTQQUIA) are also acts of the self.

New Epistemological Partners: Critical Realism and Peircian Semiotics

Critical realism and Peircian semiotics offer a more promising epistemological basis than the naïve realism of modern essentialism or the antirealism of constructionism/-ivism. Hiebert (2008) described it, saying, "Critical realism affirms a real, objective world and historical facts that transcend cultural constructs of it. It also affirms that knowledge has a subjective dimension to it. It is constructed by individuals and societies and encoded in their cultures" (p. 274). Thus, critical realism allows an interface between an external world known to God and the more culturally-embedded perceptions experienced by individuals. As a result, signs link transcendent realities and subjective experiences of them. Another fundamental value in critical realism, the hermeneutical community puts a check on biases and assists us as we approximate the external, transcendent reality. Critical realism assumes we can arrive at "good-enough" answers to our questions.

While critical realism has many forebears, Hiebert (1999) cited Charles Peirce's foundational contribution frequently. Specifically, he believed Peirce's semiotic model is an essential outworking of critical realism. Scholars often contrast Peirce's semiotic with Ferdinand de Saussure's (e.g., Hiebert, 1999; Deledalle, 2002; E. L. Johnson, 2007). Saussure (1959) defined a sign as the "combination of concept and sound-image" (p. 67). He renamed the sound-image the *signifier* and the concept the *signified*. Saussure rejected the "nonpsychological part [of language] from the outset" (p. 13) and affirmed the sign as a "two-sided psychological entity" (p. 66). Johnson (2007)

faulted Saussure's dyadic model for "removing reality from the frame of semiotic theory" (p. 620). Similarly, Hiebert (2009) warned of the corrosive effect of Saussurean semiotics on the speaker-listener relationship. Without a connection to reality, meaning becomes exclusively intersubjective.[10]

Finding the Saussurean semiotic lacking, both Johnson (2007) and Hiebert (2009) embraced Peirce's semiotic theory as a starting point in their respective fields of practical theology. Peirce (1960a) described his triadic model, saying: "A *representamen* is a subject of a triadic relation to a second, called its *object*, for a third, called its *interpretant*, this triadic relation being such that the representamen determines its interpretant to stand in the same triadic relation to the same object for some interpretant" (p. 285, emphasis altered and capitalization removed). Peirce (1960b) later explained that the *representamen* stands in place of a person or thing. The *interpretant* is the corresponding sign generated in the mind of the sign's beholder. Finally, the *object* is the thing the sign represents.

For Hiebert (1999, 2009), Peirce's triadic symbols[11] preserve the transcendent and subjective nature of signs and make optimal contextualization of the gospel possible. A triadic semiotic also permits translation across two different cultural systems while authorizing ultimate reality to test both. Johnson (2007), too, preferred the realism of Peircian semiotics, appreciating its preservation of the "extrahuman reality" (p. 620). Further, Hiebert (2009) highlighted the application of semiotics to cross-cultural communication, saying, "Communication in Peircian terms is measured by the correspondence between what the speaker says and what the hearer understands" (p. 124-

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[10] I am grateful to Eric L. Johnson for pointing out that the hearer and the listener can share meaning without that meaning corresponding to ultimate reality.

[11] Hiebert (2009) uses different terminology to explain Peircian semiotics: "Each sign, he said had (1) the sign (the signifier; e.g., the spoken or written word, the sound of a bell, a picture of an arrow); (2) the mental concept or image it evokes in the mind (the signified); and (3) the reality to which it refers (the significatum)" (p. 27).

125). Thus, a triadic model tests intersubjective understanding with extra-human realities. Critical realism and Peircian semiotics facilitate effective communication and establish correspondence between different types of discourse.

Towards a Christian Critical Essentialism: Critiquing Modern Essentialism and Constructivism/-ivism

Critical essentialism is critical realism applied to gender and sexuality. Drawing from the biblical metanarrative, we can explore CCE and its implications for how we understand personal identity, specifically its sexual and gendered aspects. A triadic semiotic informs this framework as well. Most plainly, critical essentialism assumes that concrete human essences exist independently of humanity's imaginings and the signs used to refer to both those essences and imaginings. The critical aspect means that humans do not always apprehend these essences in such a way that they perfectly correspond to the divine perspective, the reality outside human constructions. It also means that our theology of gender and sexuality must be self-aware of its "own cultural conditioning," so that we do not mistake our "culturally conditioned *understanding*" of sexuality and gender for concrete essences (Vanhoozer, 2005, pp. 313–314, italics original). We should note that CCE is not an entirely new perspective; instead, it helps us identify, articulate, and participate in orthodox performances of sexuality and gender.

Kuyper (1905/1998) helps us see critical essentialism from a biblical perspective. First, essences begin with God: "A thought of God forms the core of the essence of things; God's thinking prescribes their form of existence, their appearance, their law for life, their destiny, and their passing away" (p. 444). Thus, in the most literal sense, God *regulates* aspects of the creation and their essences. Kuyper contended that Adam, unlike us fallen creatures, apprehended things as they are without the need for careful observation or analysis. In naming the animals, he perceived their essences unabashedly and "expressed his *insight* in a *name* that corresponded to that essence" (p.

450, emphasis original). According to Kuyper, noetic sin's influence means that we do not perceive the essence of things perfectly, as Adam did. Adam created new language, but we can only borrow or combine extant words. For Adam, ". . . *concept* stood in organic coherence with *essence*, and *word* with *concept*" (p. 451). Kuyper's triadic formula—essence, word, and concept—provides us a basis for critical essentialism. What makes it distinctly Christian is its recognition of noetic sin and the need for spiritual illumination. Our human finitude also means that "we see in a mirror dimly" and that we "know in part" in this world, waiting to "know fully" (1 Cor 13:12). Contemplating the meaning of the kingdom of God for "our entire world-and-life-view," Kuyper believed that "those who have received the inner enlightenment of the Holy Spirit are able to get a view of the whole that is in harmony with the truth and essence of things" (p. 458). With Scripture's assistance, we form the worldview necessary to interpret the natural world and the work of God's common grace in human thought.

Building on the Kuyperian paradigm, other complicating factors deserve our attention: individual differences and cultural differences. Individual differences mean that among those who share the same culture, the same words evoke a variety of understandings. Humans construct their understanding in relation to their dimmed and corrupted vision of the world. Cultural differences complicate matters further by distorting correspondence between both words and images/concepts within tribal limitations, since both are culturally constructed in relation to the world. We should not understand personal constructions or cultural construction as unrelated to divine reality; instead, they have the potential to facilitate or distort apprehension of it.

A Christian critical essentialism of gender and sexuality performs six tasks: (1) it calls attention to noetic sin and the need for spiritual illumination; (2) it challenges modern essentialism and positivism by recognizing that noetic sin distorts scientific investigations of sex and gender; (3) it extensively transforms constructivism by fostering reflection on the divine perspective on created structures; (4) it recognizes that humans

were designed to learn about their sexuality and gender from God and construct it according to His plans;[12] (5) it promotes symbol use that honors God and communicates effectively to fellow humans; and (6) it conceives of maleness and femaleness as created structures or essences that can be recognized and enacted by human knowers. A triadic approach allows us to affirm the reality of essences like maleness and femaleness that exist apart from human knowers and simultaneously hold that individuals and cultures construct ideas and concepts that attempt to correspond symbolically to that reality. The goal of applied theology is to align human perspectives with the transcendent divine perspective, using fitting language for both.

How does CCE affect how we comprehend sex, gender, and sexuality? We begin by seeing these three concepts as dimensions of the maleness and femaleness established in Genesis 1–2. Maleness and femaleness are real essences apart from post-fall constructions of them. In the West, created structures have also been called essences or substances (Wolters, 2005). As a result, biological sex, enculturated gender, and social and sexual orientations are created structures, insomuch as they reflect divine design. Two men may share in created maleness but have two different expressions of masculinity. How can we account for this? Following Ricoeur, Vanhoozer (2005) differentiated between *idem*-identity and *ipse*-identity. The former entails an exact repetition, but the latter encompasses sameness in essence and difference in performance. Canonical norming implies the sameness of *ipse*-identity. Modern essentialism assumes *idem*-sameness—instead of *ipse*-sameness—must govern instantiations of masculinity and femininity. Idem-sameness, though, obscures the accidents of created individual differences.

Adam and Eve are the archetypes from which the concrete essences of their descendants derive (cf. Elliot, 1991/2006; Johnson, 2018). As their ectypes and

[12] Thanks to J. P. Pierre for pointing this aspect out.

descendants, we bear the image of those persons of dust (cf. 1 Cor 15:49), inheriting their maleness and femaleness in weakness.[13] Since Christ restores us to image Him (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:10), we look to His relationship with His bride as the gendered archetypes that inform our gendered development. As humans, we continue the journey to mature manhood and womanhood and to the city where genital sexual expression is no more.[14] How then can we account for differences between cultures? Kuyper (1873/1991) argued that "God's creation . . . is fully equipped and endowed with all the powers it needs, carrying within it the seeds of all the developments to which it will attain even in its highest perfection" (p. 246). Modifying Kuyper's original discussion from politics to gender, he would say that "all the givens that govern [diverse cultural expressions of each gender] . . . were present in human nature at its creation" (p. 246).

The essences of maleness and femaleness are the divinely-ordained, original configuration of qualities that maintain a dialectic of sameness and difference. However, our experience of and participation in their enculturation and instantiation in a fallen creation shapes and limits our knowledge of these essences. A triadic semiotic means that the word "male" is a sign that corresponds both to a mental concept and a divinely-constituted essence. How should we understand the relationship between true essences and social or personal constructions? As Jones and Yarhouse (2006) concluded, "The true self is both discovered and formed" (p. 126).[15] Unlike Adam, we cannot penetrate to the

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[13] As Ciampa and Rosner (2010) clarified, Paul draws more on the Genesis 5:3 sense of man's image and likeness than the Gen 1:26-27 sense of the image of God. "The image of the earthly man lacks the glory with which it was previously created and is now an image of impermanence, weakness, ignobility, and of earthly humanness" (p. 824). On the other side, bearing the image of Christ means that our image-bearing has been restored to perfection.

[14] Both Moberly (1980) and Medinger (2000) emphasized the continued growth and development of our sex/gender.

[15] Ironically, at the time of their writing, Jones and Yarhouse argued psychology erred "dramatically in the direction of discovery" (p. 126).

essence of ourselves perfectly. Positivism, which discounts epistemic sin, leads us to believe that we can discover ourselves without spiritual illumination. It argues that we can discover our true selves in the pattern of our sexual desires, express our masculinity or femininity by embodying stereotypes, or transform our female bodies into male bodies because we are male on the inside. Constructionism leads us down a different path. Without an external reality to account for, our bodies, gender, and sexuality are liberated from social and canonical norms entirely. This radical autonomy would seem to revel in social transgression. Its proponents create bodies, genders, and sexual practices without boundaries. Contra these distortions, CCE proposes that spiritual enlightenment and progressive sanctification mean that we are all on a journey to discover and perform our maleness or femaleness. As we learn about ourselves through Scripture and the light it shines on creation, it charges us with constructing, internalizing, and externalizing what we discover about our maleness and femaleness according to creation ordinances.[16] Contextualizing Paul, we might say that our sexual and gendered selves are God's workmanship, created beforehand so we could construct them (Eph 2:10). Soul care paradigms for the LGBT-identified begin with the proposition that *we are all navigating a fallen world, uncovering the meaning of our sexual bodies and constructing our gendered selves, and we need Scripture's and nature's teachings about them to guide us.*

Conclusion II: Biblical Narrative Performances as an Alternative to Secular LGBT Narratives

As Christians reflect on themselves as sexual and gendered beings, they can draw from the metanarrative of Scripture and Christ's story. Doing so aligns their perspective with God's. Union with Christ encourages Christians to trade in secular

[16] As Johnson said, "Inwardness facilitates the internalizing of God's word and the construction of one's new self in Christ" (p. 433). He also described the Christian's role in the transformation process, saying, "This is a part of God's design in redemption: to make *images* of God, who are co-agents who rely upon God through faith that God uses to bring about change" (p. 496). Finally, internalization leads to externalizing: "The deeper and more fully integrated" the believer's status in Christ "become[s] with the rest of one's self-representations, the more the self manifests God's glory" (p. 545).

LGBT narratives for biblical performances. Overall, Christians can use Scripture as a script for improvised performances of the sexual self.

Canonical Norming of the Sexual Self within the Divine Story

As Vanhoozer (2005) concluded, "The canon is the norm both for understanding the divine drama and for continuing participation in it" (p. 145). In our discussion, the canon aligns our understanding of sexuality and gender with the divine norms and guides our performances of them.[17] Scripture's universal narrative tells a story to make sense of sexual embodiment, our bodies in context, and the ethical expressions of both. The Scriptures also serve as the Script for our contextualized gender performances (cf. Starling, 2016). Nature also narrates gender and sexuality, despite the damage inflicted on embodiment by the Fall, noetic sin, and fallen cultural stereotypes. In chapter 2, we considered nature's teaching about our bodies and worthwhile performances of sexual differentiation through the lenses of Scripture's four main headings: creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. Believers today perform the Script in the church age between Christ's first and second comings. Creation, fall, and redemption shape their sexual self-understanding, and the new creation shapes their sexual telos.

Performing the Story of Christ as Males and Females

As Vanhoozer (2005) re-envisioned Christian practices as dramatic performances of the canonical script, he appealed to contextualization as the means through which we perform the gist of Christ's life in new contexts (p. 397). While identity politics (and the postmodern self) focuses on the "situatedness" of one's story while rejecting all generalizations about the human condition, "being in Christ refers to

[17] Following Vanhoozer's (2005) analogy, the Spirit is properly the director; pastors and counselors assist by directing specific performances of sexuality and genders.

the concrete shape of Jesus' historical life" (p. 393). While the Christian's identity is grounded in Christ and His narrative, "Christians are not identical to Christ" (p. 396), and disciples will improvise their in-Christ-role by using the canonical script and acting out of their new nature (p. 397). Hence, we derive two truths: a Christian's story is, in one sense, the *same* as Christ's, but, in another sense, it is also *different*.

As Yarhouse (2010) observed, cultures prescribe scripts, like a "gay script," to normalize the way a SSOd life should unfold (p. 47). In chapter 4, we observed the shifting frameworks behind LGBT origin stories, the scripts that make sense of SSA and GI. Modern essentialists propose rigid scripts, prescribing their development from one stage to the next. Constructivists (who dismiss the limitations these stories place on personal freedom) and intersectionality theorists (who believe these stories neglect personal complexity) prefer the individual's unique narrative. As we learned in the previous section, the canon makes universal claims about humanity that the sexual or gendered self needs and cannot escape. At the same time, each Christian's story is not identical to Christ's, and everyone's story is "unrepeatable" (E. L. Johnson, 2017, p. 145). In chapter 2, we explored the script all Christians share and perform (Christ's incarnation and life, death, resurrection, and exaltation) while exploring how this master story transforms situated narratives like the experiences of SSA and GI. Unlike the universal metanarrative of Scripture, Christ's narrative is a concrete universal only for those united to Him.

Union with Christ is a "dramatic union, in which the believer's story merges with and is transformed by Christ's story" (E. L. Johnson, 2017, p. 330). It is "participating in the narrative of Jesus" (Grenz, 2001, p. 329). As Johnson summarized, "Christ's story is the Christian's focal narrative for realizing the trinitarian goal of becoming better developed, vigorous, and virtuous personal agencies in communion with God and others," and "the christoformic goal of becoming more biopsychosocially whole and ethicospiritually holy and receptive" (p. 146). Hence, union with Christ transforms

the sexual, gendered self to image God in holiness and wholeness.

Improvising Development of the Sexual Self in Christ

Scripture tells us we are united with Christ (Rom 6:5). We are also incorporated into His body, participate in His narrative, and identify with Him as His possession (C. R. Campbell, 2012, p. 413). Yet despite our sameness with Christ in many respects, we are different from Him. Christians are also different from each other, marked by diverse specializations, services, activities, and functions (1 Cor 12:4ff). Nevertheless, their differences do not erase their fundamental sameness (1 Cor 12:11-13) or unity (1 Cor 12:25). Performing our union with Christ means contextualizing His life within ours.

Concrete universals, decontextualization, and recontextualization.

Contextualizing the gospel involves both decontextualization (Conn, 1984; P. Shaw, 2009) and recontextualization (Quesinberry, 2004; M. J. Erickson, 2013). As Shaw (2009) promoted decontextualization, he argued that every person and situation offers an opportunity to identify the good (the image-bearing element) and the bad (the elements of sin and fall). Decontextualization reminds us that culture is not value-neutral, and Christianity serves as a counter-cultural force within it. As Quesinberry (2004) suggested, decontextualization requires missionaries to "separate the trappings of their own culture and home contextualization" as well (p. 221). Hesselgrave (2009) held that Scripture also entails a decoding process: its interpretation depends on its languages and cultural forms. Thus, these three cultural contexts (the biblical texts', the missionary's own culture, and the target culture) require decoding.

When functioning missiologically, CCE entails decontextualizing the plagues loosed by modern essentialism and constructionism/-ivism on the Christian community. After decontextualization, we can recontextualize sexuality and gender in the contemporary era by transposing the biological and psychosociocultural orders of

discourse into the ethical and spiritual orders, thus transforming fallen dynamic structures by the latter. Living in the West, the excesses of both modern essentialism and constructionism/-ivism confront the missionary in a pluralistic society. In the same American city, a missionary may run across a West African who enacts his masculinity through domination and domestic abuse and a gender-expansive person who denies sexual binaries while undergoing hormone replacement therapy.

Recalling our earlier discussion, Christians are always contextualizing these concrete universals in dynamic contexts. Contextualization means that we must learn our native language over again as we decontextualize and recontextualize it. First, decontextualization entails conceptual crucifixion, for "what you sow does not come to life unless it dies" (1 Cor 15:38). Decoding terms like heterosexual, gay, lesbian, and bisexual encourages self-reflection for the SSOd person's cultural blind spots. To many of us, "heterosexual" represents normative sexuality. However, decontextualization reveals that Western heterosexuality does not share the same moral code as Christianity, because Christian heterosexuality necessitates covenantal commitments. To the SSOd, heterosexual functioning might seem inaccessible insomuch as it represents *exclusive* heterosexual desire. Decontextualization means that a man's desire for *a woman* is normative, not exclusive desires for *women*. Decontextualizing "gay" similarly means neutralizing either/or thinking. If a man experiences mostly SSA but some OSA (opposite-sex attraction), the term "gay" mispresents the particularity of his experience. Recontextualization allows us to use "heterosexual" to describe normative sexuality in this creation, though it will require new presuppositions and explanations. Christians support a *virtuous form of heterosexuality*. Even terms like "same-sex attracted" gain new presuppositions when recontextualization reprocesses the place of OSA (if they exist) in

one's experience.[18]

For the GIt, terms like male and female, masculine and feminine, and cisgender and transgender also require decontextualization and recontextualization. Decontextualizing basic sexual and gender classifications neutralizes the influence of modern essentialism. Overly-prescribed gender roles must be transformed according to canonical, new creation norms, producing biblically-renewed, contextualized gender roles. For people experiencing GI, common parlance concerning sex and gender may prove too disconcerting, especially since the onset of GI may happen so early in human development. Rediscovering sex and gender terms in another culture's language (e.g., the biblical Hebrew or Greek terms) may allow them space and time to reprocess the concrete universals of masculinity and femininity. After they have rebuilt these concepts with canonical norms, they may finally recontextualize the use of the English terms.

Multiple aspects of the self in a Christian worldview. As we witnessed in the previous section, Christ's story necessarily distinguishes the old self from the new self. In addition to these dimensions, Johnson (2017) derived four facets of the self through Christian reflection: the created self, the actual self, the real self, and the ecclesial self. He defined the *created self* as "that which most basically distinguishes the individual from all other persons and includes one's created strengths, weaknesses, and personality" (p. 499). Importantly, Johnson noted that the created self has been subjected to original sin, has developed in a fallen world, and must be separated from the old self through the process of sanctification. He considered the created self the body/soul infrastructure that provides narratival continuity for the individual throughout the lifespan.

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[18] Following Shively and De Cecco (1977), we should reinterpret sexual attraction as having two independent dimensions: same-sex attraction and opposite-sex attraction. This conceptual shift overcomes the weaknesses of the Kinsey model, which may lead people to pursue heterosexual attraction in attempts to decrease their same-sex attractions.

Additionally, Johnson denoted the *actual self* as "a composite of all that one actually is, here on earth" (p. 432). For the Christian, this self includes the created self (as "good created infrastructure"), the old self, and the emerging new self. Engaging psychological notions of the false self and the true self, he connected the actual self with the true self. According to Johnson, the *real self* is who we *really* are, perfected in Christ. Building on Colossians 3:1, Johnson recalled how the real self has "been raised with Christ" and exhorted to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (ESV). Johnson posited the *ecclesial* self as well, drawing on Grenz's (2001) work on the social element of salvation.[19] Hence, Johnson speaks of the ecclesial self as the basis of Christian social identity.

The goal of many LGBT identity models is to discover and actualize the "authentic" or "true self." According to Johnson's (2017) definitions, the false self is "a function of both sin and distorting developmental pressures," and the true self is the fusion of the actual self (empirical self) and real self in Christ (p. 488). While the paradigms that underlie these two understandings of the true self have fundamentally different worldviews, Johnson's definitions transform the autocentric true self proposed by LGBT psychologies. Affirmative models assume that the authentic self is more of what Johnson considers the actual self. Insomuch as these models encourage consent to same-sex sexual desires and cross-gender desires, the true self they seek to actualize is the old self. Our model strives for the actualization of the real self seated with Christ.

Additionally, three other concepts from Johnson (2017) clarify our discussion of the self: the old/new division, differentiation, and integration. First, being a Christian means that we are *internally divided* into an old self and a new self. While "the old-self system seems to remain the default orientation," the believer is "becoming oriented to the

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[19] This concept should not lead us to think that justification is facilitated through church participation. Rather, Johnson sees humans as both personal and social creatures.

new-creation life" (p. 484). Paradoxically, we should promote this division, Johnson insisted, through subjective reflection before God and reception of God's grace in Christ. Then, we can tell the difference between our old selves and our new selves. This *redemptive differentiation* undermines the old self by enabling mortification and vivification. Hence, believers recapitulate Christ's story: specifically, His crucifixion and His resurrection. The Spirit and the believer collaborate in the construction of the new self on the created self, its created infrastructure, and its narrative continuity.[20] It means the "reclaiming of one's story and biopsychosocial damage" (p. 500); however, we cannot reclaim sin in the same way as we re-appropriate weakness and suffering. Finally, *redemptive integration* describes the process through which believers receive and construct "a resurrection/ascension way of life based on God's love toward them in Christ" (p. 520). This activity entails coming to terms more and more with the actual self, especially its aspects that are hidden by shame. Integration means acknowledging faults (the intersection of weakness and sin) and bringing "the knowledge of one's remaining sin into the light of Christ," folding "it into his love" (p. 531). This process reminds us that our old selves are still a part of our story, even though they have been "recontextualized and redefined by Christ" (p. 531).

Sexual scripts, gender performances, and sexual identity. As we have established, God has tasked Christians with constructing or improvising their sexuality and gender with the canonical script. Unlike Butler's (1988; see also West & Zimmerman, 1987) self-constituting gender performances, these performances are rooted in the concrete universals first expressed in Adam and Eve and proleptically in Christ and the church. Individuals have internal sexual scripts that help them organize and make

[20] Similarly, Pierre (2016) distinguished between "given identity" (the identity based on God's creational design) and "constructed identity" (the context-shaped, individual expression of personhood) (p. 130). He encouraged Christians to subordinate their constructed identities to their God-given identities (p. 139).

sense of sexual situations, desires, and practices (J. H. Gagnon & Simon, 1973; S. L. Jones & Hostler, 2002). However, we can expand these scripts beyond Gagnon and Simon's understanding of "sexual" as erotic/genital sexuality. Delineating sexual identity, Shively and De Cecco (1977) identified four components: biological sex, gender identity, social sex-role (gender role), and sexual orientation. Recalling our terms in chapter 1, one's sexual identity is the substructure of one's sexual function. It also has valuative components. The spiritual order of discourse adds another dimension: the spiritual meaning of all these components. Therefore, "sexual script" will henceforth denote one's canonically-normed script that interprets and integrates biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual/gendered values, and the spiritual meaning of maleness and femaleness in relation to one's union with Christ. One's sexual script determines one's sexual self.

Norming Christian stories of same-sex attraction and gender incongruence with the canonical script and what nature teaches. Since Christian stories of SSO and GI are normed by the canonical script, they have a discernible shape. However, given multifinality and equifinality (see chapter 4), we will not be able to delineate a precise path for these populations' development. Nevertheless, Christians who experience SSO or GI share the beginning and the end of the process in common. At some point, they began experiencing SSO or GI. Insomuch as they are Christian, they will end the process as they finally become their real self hidden with Christ. The milestones in between may vary, and each milestone entails a process. Becoming a Christian is a necessary component, but, as we will see, conversion's place in one's story will vary. The model proposed here focuses on the social dimensions of these experiences, and the intermediate steps may not match everyone's experience. Synthesizing the best models in chapter 5, the model here moves from the onset of SSAs or GI to the process of their ongoing Christian transformation.

In the first stage, *difference formation*, individuals feel different from others before or after the onset of SSAs or GI. These differences may be formed as the created self grows up within fallen contexts and the experiences emerge in their awareness.[21] Phenomenologically, the actual self experiences SSAs or GI. While these people may have felt different before these experiences began, many will feel a sense of social dissonance because of their sexual script (see definition above). They may feel different from their same-gendered peers, family members, or selected prototypes. The confusion and dissonance created may begin in early childhood both for the SSOd and the GIt.

Next, individuals look for those like them in a *community search*; so, they pursue sameness. They long for a community to abate the loneliness of their existential situation. Children may look for those with similar physical, psychological, or social differences, especially along the lines of gender. They may search for those whose gender expressions—whether mannerisms, strengths and weaknesses, temperaments, interests, attire, or behaviors—match their sense of gender dissonance. Adolescents and adults, more cognizant of their attractions and incongruence, may locate LGBTQ+ communities to find solidarity and belonging. Finding the direction of their sexual interests and desired gender expressions atypical from peers, they search for groups where they feel safe to "be themselves" and explore their desires.

The following milestone, *Christian norming and community*, reveals the temporal difficulties of this model. While some may have become Christians before the onset of SSA or GI, others may become Christians after forming same-sex relationships or undergoing gender transitions. Nevertheless, conversion and discipleship call them to become more like Christ. Despite the otherness they experience among other humans, the sameness and universality that union with Christ implies challenges the particularity of

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[21] We should not take this to mean that the created self is same-sex attracted or gender incongruent. Instead, as we shall find, the Fall co-opts the distinctiveness of the created self in fallen contexts and the sin nature to produce these experiences.

their story. Conversion reconciles the SSOd and GIt to the believers they feel different from on the basis of their shared union with Christ. Conversion also establishes the internal division of the old self and new self. LGBTQ+ stories, as received from mainstream culture or affirming theologies, are disrupted as Christian narratives diverge from the world's (cf. Jas 4:4; 1 John 2:15). When the Christian life begins, sexuality and gender take on spiritual meanings. We differentiate desires and reinterpret bodies through Christ's incarnation. Christians then seek to perform sanctified sexual scripts. The liminality of sexuality in this age confronts them as they understand that the eschaton means the transformation of sexuality into sociality. Similarly, conversion entails some subjective fluidity. Unlike the kind of fluidity constructed in Western culture, sanctification renders their constructions of masculinity or femininity unstable as the Spirit conforms Christians to Christ and reconciles them with their created selves. The sexual self and gendered self begin a lifelong process of re-norming.

After union with Christ has challenged the particularity of their story, the SSOd and GIt reclaim their differences as imagined in their new selves, seated with Christ. They undergo *Christian re-integration*. Their created strengths and weaknesses, temperaments, and spiritual giftings become positive traits. They re-envision their difference as specialization, a means to edify the whole body. Insomuch as the Fall has bent their created particularity towards illicit sexual and cross-gender desires, the SSOd and GIt have a fundamental change of mind and heart regarding sin's coopting of their creational infrastructure, and they make repentance a practice.[22] This process involves ongoing mortification of their sinful sexual desires and vivification of holy social desires (cf. Kapic, 2006, p. 34) and integration of the sameness-in-Christ they share with other

[22] While μετανοέω/μετάνοια may frequently denote conversion in the NT, its other uses include having a "change of mind" ("Μετανοέω, Μετάνοια," 1967, p. 999).

believers with the particularities of their created selves. In this light, they celebrate differences insomuch as they build up Christ's body.

Finally, through *difference leveraging*,[23] the SSOd and GI utilize their differences for Christ's mission on the earth (cf. 1 Cor 9:22-23). The particularities that led them to form communion around similar experiences of sin, weakness, and suffering become differences that energize the spread of the gospel, discipleship, and the care of souls. Similar to the apostle Paul, the SSOd and GIt long for the salvation of those who are like them "according to the flesh" (Rom 9:3; see subsequent section). However, the kind of sameness the SSOd and GIt share with those in the mainstream LGBTQ+ community most reliably hinges on the sinful flesh. It is inferior to the kind of spiritual unity believers share as they perform Christ's story together (Eph 4:3). This sameness, based on the real self, trumps the similarities built on the actual self.

Trading Secular Performances for Biblical Narrative Performances

In the world of affirming psychology, essentialist therapists may guide SSOd clients to actualize themselves according to a gay script, or they may encourage GIt clients to fully transition to the other gender. Constructivist therapists may take a more radical approach and challenge their clients' gender essentialism, encouraging them to transgress traditional sexual norms, to create an idiosyncratic gender, and to enact their desires apart from a transcendent moral order. We have argued that Christians have an alternative: They can perform sexual scripts that have been shaped by Scripture's stories. Unlike the unregulated performances of the constructionist approach, biblical performances are divinely regulated and aligned with the Creator's intentions. Rather than following an essentialist gay script, Christians perform Christ's narrative all the while acknowledging their experiences of SSO and GI. In the discussion below, we ask:

[23] Thanks to Sam Williams for supplying the word "leveraging" in one of our conversations.

In what ways can we communicate how the actual self is both the same and different from the real self?

Conclusion III: Christian Narrative Transformations as an Alternative to Christian/LGBT Identity Integration

The Christian life rightly performed means that the SSOd and GIt enact and improvise Scripture's narrative. In other words, they contextualize the biblical narrative and Christ's story in their personal lives. As Newbigin (1995) mused, Christians prove the veracity of the faith by the story their lives tell (p. 94). When we think about "personal being and identity in terms of communication," we also clarify our stories to others (McFadyen, 1990, pp. 6–7). Therefore, it is vital that the way we communicate our stories and ourselves—the designations, signs, and labels we use to facilitate intersubjective understanding with the audiences of our stories—embodies Christ's story lucidly.

Paul's Story: Continuity and Discontinuity

Christians frequently look to Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-22; 22:1-22; Gal 1:13-24) as a paradigm for Christian testimony. His conversion entails "issues of continuity as well as of discontinuity" (W. S. Campbell, 2006, p. 165). Therefore, the transformation of Paul's Jewish identity provides an imitative model (cf. 1 Cor 4:16, 11:1; Phil 3:17; 2 Thess 3:9) for understanding the identity of a Christian, especially concerning previously dominant social identities. Part of our purpose here is determining the significance of Paul's statement: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17). The already/not yet paradox of Paul's statement here tempts commentators to over-realize the eschaton or place it in the distant future (W. S. Campbell, 2006; Thiselton, 2000). For the Christian, the actual self exists in the liminality of the already/not yet paradox.

Paul lived this paradox throughout his ministry. Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3) and also said that being a new creation made circumcision and uncircumcision irrelevant (Gal 6:15). Paul still identified as a Jew (Acts 22:3) despite the effect Judaism had on his persecution of the church (Acts 22:4; Gal 1:13). He believed living as a Jew according to the flesh leads to condemnation (Rom 2:17-27; Gal 6:13), but being a Jew inwardly, circumcised by the heart, leads to boasting in Christ (Rom 2:29; Gal 6:14). Paul's "transformed explanation of the role of the law in the light of the Christ-event" changed the meaning of being a Jew (W. S. Campbell, 2006, p. 119). For Paul, the meaning of "Jew" required transposition into a Christian framework.

The paradox of Paul's relationship to his Jewish identity becomes clearer with missiological reflection. He said, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law" (1 Cor 9:20). Despite having the warrant to fuse his credentials with this identity (Acts 22:3; Gal 2:15; Phil 3:5-6), he held it loosely so that he might relate to those outside the law as well (1 Cor 9:21). Insomuch as his Jewish identity afforded him confidence and gain, he counted it as rubbish to gain Christ and participate in His story (Phil 3:7-11). Indeed, the Lord called him to preach to his own people *and* to those different from him, the Gentiles (Acts 13:47). Paul's appropriation of his Jewish identity did not always gain him acceptance with the Jews; sometimes, it elicited persecution (2 Cor 11:24). He also chastised Peter for separating himself from the Gentiles to please the Jews (Gal 2:14).

In his old life, Paul was a blasphemer and a persecutor, opposing Christ (1 Tim 1:13). He appealed to his former self when he told his story (Acts 22:3-5). After his conversion, he saw himself sinless and seated with Christ (Eph 2:6; Col 3:1), yet still identified himself (εἰμι ἐγώ, "I am") as the foremost of sinners (1 Tim 1:15). His sin highlighted the Lord's grace (1 Tim 1:14, 16). Being forgiven much, he loved much (cf. Luke 7:47). As Thiselton (2000) argued, "The new eschatological reality of the gospel

abolishes 'human' categorization; but in a deeper and more realistic sense it relativizes and redefines them" (p. 547).[24] Putting these observations together, we realize that transformation of identity entails continuity and discontinuity, sameness and difference. Paul counted the old way of categorization as rubbish, but he leveraged it when it was fruitful for gospel purposes.

Contextualizing Paul's identity transformation within our discussion warrants cautious distinctions. Jewish identities can be transformed in ways that sexual-identity and gender-identity labels cannot. Salvation belongs to the Jews (Rom 9:4-5), God constituted them as a people (Gen 12:1-3), and they remain God's people by covenant (Rom 11:17-27). Additionally, LGBTQ+ communities are not bound together by the same dynamics as ethnic groups. The most obvious reason is that nearly all LGBTQ+ individuals are not born among LGBTQ+ people.[25] While De Cecco and Elia (1993) contended that gay and lesbian identities *are* ethnic identities, LGBT identities more accurately sociopolitical identities that *function as* ethnic identities. However, at least one similarity between Jewish people and LGBTQ+ people exists: both have been cut off from Christ and will not inherit the kingdom without faith and repentance (Rom 2:4, 11:20, 23-24; 1 Cor 6:9). Fittingly, even though same-sex sexual activity is "contrary to nature" (Rom 1:26), God's kindness (Rom 2:4, 11:22) offers Gentiles who practice gay sex an opportunity to be grafted into Israel "contrary to nature" (Rom 11:24). Without faith and repentance, even the Jew is cut off from God. Imitating Paul, SSOd or GIt

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[24] Compare also Campbell's (2006) statement: "The new creation presupposes the old and transforms it. In Paul's theologizing we encounter the renewal of creation rather than its obliteration" (p. 165).

[25] Supporting this assertion, Meyer (2003/2013) observed that time and socialization differentiate ethnic groups like Black people and LGB people. LGB people are not socialized into their identities across their lifespan. In most cases, LGBTQ+ people *develop* the characteristics that draw them into the mainstream LGBTQ+ community. That said, in rare cases, individuals who have been adopted by or are the natural children of LGBTQ+ people may grow up in LGBT culture *and* develop same-sex attractions or gender incongruence.

Christians rightly experience anguish over the salvation of LGBTQ+ people who are like them "according to the flesh" (Rom 9:3).[26]

Another comparison guides our conversation: the meaning of Gentile identity.[27] According to Kuecker (2014), those born of Israel considered themselves ὁ λαός and all the other nations τὰ ἔθνη. Thus, the latter's use in the NT represents social differentiation. Paul differentiates the Gentiles and the Jews, characterizing the Gentiles as sinners (Gal 2:15; 1 Thess 4:5) and instructing his audience to avoid their lifestyles (Eph 4:17). According to Peter, the lives of Gentiles are marked by "sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry" (1 Pet 4:3). Despite these associations, Paul permitted Gentile identities to continue as long as they were being transformed by their in-Christ identity and avoided contradiction with their in-Christ identity (Tucker, 2010, p. 268). As Tucker (2010) argued, Paul sought to reorganize the identity hierarchies of Christ followers, such that their in-Christ social identity became the most salient (p. 84). As we contemplate Paul's attitude toward social groupings, a question confronts us: Is it more problematic that LGBTQ+ people are associated with sin or that we fail to discern the sinful lifestyles of all people groups (τὰ ἔθνη) who do not know God? Underestimating the sinful state and practices of all people, regardless of association, inhibits the spread of the gospel. Experiences of sin, suffering, and weakness bind LGBTQ+ people together in unique ways that distinct ethnolinguistic groups are not. In addition to his own conversion story, Paul's treatment of Jewish and Gentile identities inform how we should conceptualize the transformation of SSOd and GIt people.

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[26] Paul's use of "flesh" here denotes shared ancestry. As I will argue, the SSOd and GIt are bonded in this cultural moment by shared experiences of sin, suffering, and weakness.

[27] We should not confuse this argument with the one in which scholars appeal to Gentile inclusion as a basis for blessing same-sex unions. See Hill (2016b) for a review and rejoinder of this argument. The argument formed here joins with Hill's but diverges on the principle of self-communication.

Transforming the Christian's Narrative of Same-Sex Attraction or Gender Incongruence

Christian narrative formation entails internalizing the universal narrative across Scripture, participating in Christ's narrative, and imitating Paul's conversion narrative. Despite diverging trajectories, all humans participate in the universal narrative. Only those who follow Christ participate in His narrative. Insomuch as we imitate Paul's narrative, the unrepeatable nature of our own stories confronts us; our *smaller* stories resemble Jesus' and Paul's without duplicating them. Across orthodox approaches to sexuality and gender, Christians writers have spoken about what we are calling *narrative transformations of the sexual self* (e.g., Paulk, 2003, p. 118; Yarhouse & Burkett, 2003; Burk & Lambert, 2015; Hill, 2016b; N. Collins, 2017a, p. 299).

These three canonical scripts offer a common language and a way to unite seemingly opposed soul-care paradigms. Supplying Kierkegaard's thoughts on the self, we note that the construction of the self is an "ethical task" before God, a task that is essential to who we are (C. S. Evans, 2002, p. 81). The construction of the sexual self—as the realization of the *imago Dei* as conformity to Christ's image—is also an ethical task. As Moberly (1980) contended, we grow into our complementarity as mature males and females; our sexual selves undergo "growth and development" (p. 28). Our need for conformity to Christ for optimal image-bearing means that our growth into manhood and womanhood is our moral responsibility across the lifespan (cf. Medinger, 2000). Hence, as we internalize these three canonical scripts, *indigenous* sociocultural labels (heterosexual, cisgendered, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer) fail to communicate the Christian's story *in toto*. By knowing God through the canonical script and undergoing the past and continuing work of the Holy Spirit (e.g., Rom 7:6; 8:6; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 3:18; 2 Thess 2:13; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:2), the sexual self undergoes repair and reorganization as a matter of priority (cf. Johnson, 2007, p. 507).

Narrative transformation of the self entails the transformation of desires. In one

sense, sexual desires are rational and (e)valuative; they entail a personal dimension (Scruton, 2006).[28] As we discovered in chapter 4, they also have volitional elements and function like emotions. Practices, too, form our desires, directing them towards the Creator in worship or to the creation in idolatry (J. K. A. Smith, 2009). Thus, three types of interventions can assist a Christian's repentance from same-sex or cross-gender desiring: (1) rational-evaluative, (2) emotion-focused, and (3) practice-oriented approaches.

First, SSOd or GIt Christians can reason about themselves with the mirror of Scripture, distinguish aspects of themselves, and evaluate their desires (and the values inherent to those desires). After all, our Spirit-formed beliefs and values can inform our emotions (Elliott, 2006). According to Galatians 5, the Christian life divides the self's desires: those of the flesh and those of the Spirit (v. 17). Desires for sexual immorality (v. 19) and envious desires (v. 26) warrant crucifixion (v. 24). For the SSOd, the desires of the flesh include a desire for sex (Burk, 2015) and idolatrous, envious desires "for what we want to see in ourselves, but lack" (Allberry, 2014, para. 2). For the GIt, envious desires entail the desire to possess the opposite-sex, whether in part or whole, in a more ontological sense. In their new selves, the SSOd, enlivened by the Spirit unto repentance,[29] can desire platonic friendships with those of the same sex.[30] Dressing up in

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[28] Scruton (2006) argued that a human is a "rational animal" (p. 41). We can be distinguished from animals in general because we can reflect on ourselves, have "interpersonal understanding," and be held responsible (p. 60). Because of our reflective nature, our desire fixes "on the embodiment of the other" and not just on their bodies alone (p. 93). Interpersonal desires like SSA thus have a rational dimension that expands beyond the mere sexual urges of animals. Further, erotic love is evaluative because it relies on aesthetic judgments (p. 250).

[29] Both primary and secondary repentance is appropriate here, but secondary repentance empowers the transformation of desires. According to Johnson (2007), primary repentance entails "active, direct and aggressive disavowal of all one's contaminated life," and secondary repentance "enables one to change one's internal environment spiritually *by God through faith*" (pp. 485-486). Secondary repentance pursues a sinful emotion or desire "to do it harm, using Scripture meditation, guided imagery (e.g., to actually nail it experientially to the cross), or contemplation on God's love or the harm it has caused" (E. L. Johnson, 2017, p. 513).

[30] In a culture that practices same-sex marriage, same-sex marriage, and same-sex friendship must be clearly differentiated internally and externally. The latter should not be marked by codependency (Rentzel, 1990), and friendships should always have room for others (N. Collins, 2017a, p. 103).

their new selves, the GIt have the ability to celebrate the gendered existence of the opposite-sex and desire to put on their true, real gendered selves hidden with Christ.

Similarly, as Christians contemplate the difference between their actual selves and their real selves, their relationship to their sinful desires comes into focus. A Christian man can say, "I'm a porn addict," referring to his actual self. The purpose of this kind of identification is to stymy sin, to be aware of typical temptation patterns, and avoid situations that would result in moral compromise. Owning and taking responsibility for one's actual self engenders sanctification. It is a self-schema *for this life* that encourages self-watchfulness (cf. 1 Cor 10:12; Gal 6:1) and ownership of one's weakness and the temptations that typically issue from it. Self-deception ensues without a realistic appraisal of our sin (1 John 1:8, 10). On the other hand, a repentant man's real self in Christ could say, "In Christ, I'm morally pure and not a porn addict." His position in Christ means that he is free from sin (Rom 6:18) and that God will no longer "remember" his sins (Jer 31:34; Heb 8:12). However, the already/not yet paradox of the Christian self does not erase one's history and the damage of sin. Many situations, for example, warrant honest dialogue regarding one's actual self. A candidate for a pastoral position should not deny having looked at pornography within the past year, if asked. If he were to deny it, and the search committee later discovered evidence to the contrary, he could not plead that he was referring to his real self! Knowing our true selves in Christ is critical to our escape from the bondage of sinful patterns of life, and knowing our actual selves and weaknesses is essential for weakening our old selves. In other words, knowing Christ can disentangle us from the shame of our sins, sufferings, and weaknesses, but it does not deny the reality of the past or the present (E. L. Johnson, 2017, pp. 428–429).

We should know our actual selves not only to stave off sin but also to communicate ourselves in culturally-appropriate ways. Consider a couple who has been married for twenty years and has had multiple children. Twenty years into their marriage, the husband reveals that he experiences SSA. Dizzied by the revelation, the wife feels

like she does not know the person she married. She questions the meaning of every sexual act they had for twenty years and the authenticity of their marriage. The shock of her husband's experience leaves her experiencing betrayal, particularly as she integrates this knowledge into her twenty-year history with him. The disclosure makes her wonder if she has *actually* known him, because this aspect of her husband's actual self was unknown to her. Same-sex orientations (as persistent SSA), homosexuality, or gayness are the operant categories at work in her own dysphoria because they are culturally salient.

Second, SSOd and GIt Christians can benefit from emotion-focused strategies and the pursuit of orthopatheia (right sentiment) (Allison, 2012; Kim-van Daalen & Johnson, 2013). Reflecting on Paul's discussion of weakness in 2 Corinthians, writers have contemplated SSOs and GI under biblical rubrics like "weakness," "groaning," "suffering," or "pain" (Comiskey, 2003; Piper, 2012; Hill, 2016a; Hambrick, 2016a; E. L. Johnson, 2017; Burrus, 2018). Coming to terms with SSOs and GI can entail employing OT literature to lament over them as weaknesses (E. L. Johnson, 2017, pp. 291–292). Reducing SSOs and GI to sinful desires dismisses significant pain and can create an "excluded middle" that may facilitate a return to sinful behaviors. But, how do the SSOd have a unique form of suffering? Disclosing opposite-sex lust in a sex-specific accountability group is comparatively commonplace. Disclosing same-sex lust risks far greater alienation and rejection. While both the SSOd and GIt grapple with the shame of "sins against nature," the SSOd, in Thomistic terms, have a "double shame" because their sin has creational ("against nature") and horizontal ("against fellow image-bearers") dimensions.[31] The SSOd and GIt also suffer mischaracterizations because of their sin struggles. They may entrust their stories with others, only to have their struggles conflated with pedophilia or promiscuity. They may suffer according to the stereotypes

[31] Thanks to E. L. Johnson for collaboration on this point.

some Christians hold. The temptations and grief afforded by one's weaknesses contribute to suffering as well (Rom 8:22-23; 2 Cor 5:2-4; Heb 2:18). The dissonance felt with the created self produces grief.

Christians suffer universally, but the form of suffering the SSOd or GIt experience is distinctive, and it warrants acknowledgment. In fact, differentiated suffering (and rejoicing) of any kind is best named and shared with the whole body of Christ (1 Cor 12:26). The SSOd or GIt can also join their "sorrows to Christ's on the cross," thus identifying with the cross (Johnson, 2017, p. 382; see Comiskey, 2003, p. 114). When faced with shame and social anxieties, they can imagine Christ as their refuge and bask in His love (Kim-van Daalen & Johnson, 2013, p. 177). Similarly, Christians can consent to God's providential work as they suffer with chronic intrusive desires.[32]

Third, moral and spiritual practices, a la Smith's (2009) argument, can inform our desires and our identities. Making chastity a practice rather than habituating vice weakens our old selves. An array of spiritual practices (e.g., worship, singing, confession, baptism, creed citations, prayer, listening to Scripture and sermons, the Eucharist, the offering, and evangelism) have personal and corporate expressions, and they can also shape Christians' desires (see Smith, 2009, p. 212).

In the end, this multimodal transformation may not include the development of heterosexual desires of the old creation and may not mean the end of SSAs or GI, but the most change may present in terms of what Harry Frankfurt (1971) named "second-order desires" (p. 6). As he put it, "Besides wanting and choosing and being moved *to do* this or that, men may also want to have (or not to have) certain desires and motives" (p. 7).

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[32] Johnson argued that suffering is best relieved when Christians "reinterpret it in the heart as part of God's ultimate good for life" (p. 266). Inspired by Jonathan Edward's concept of consent as "conscious, heartfelt acceptance/reception of God and his will," Johnson recommended "we consent to God and the good in the suffering, but not the evil" (p. 267). Thus, SSOd and GIt Christians can heartily accept the good God is making in their suffering while rejecting the evil (cf. Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28).

While the attenuation of sinful desires qua temptations may vary, Christians can expect their desires about their desires to change. In the eschatological community, Christians can also rightfully expect their created, healthy longings for communion with both sexes to increase and their sinful longings for either sex to weaken progressively. Most intriguingly, this argument applies also to those whom one finds repulsive or difficult to love (see Elliott, 2012). In the Spirit, same-sex love becomes an entirely different concept than its construction in mainstream Western culture. Similarly, the envious desires of the GIt may be transformed eventually into celebrations of the other sex. Instead of following secular culture by changing their bodies and clothing, they can defy the gendered norms of the world in the ways all Christians come to do. Nevertheless, GI may remit or persist in various forms throughout one's life.

Reorganizing the Sexual Self and Articulating the Actual Self to Others: A Trialogue of Authentic Communication

Western culture values authenticity. According to Taylor (1989), the version of authenticity prized today is the culmination of subjectivist expressivism and Enlightenment naturalism. As a result, it chafes at how spiritual traditions might restrict the expression of the self and its "ordinary desire" (pp. 506–507). For Taylor (2007), the "ethic of authenticity" means "that each one of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that is important to find and live out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority" (p. 475). Its moral framework resists contamination of the self by religious restrictions. A secular ethic of authenticity is autocentric. Golomb (1995) traced Western culture's interest in the authentic self to Kierkegaard.

However, Kierkegaard's authenticity differs fundamentally: he inspires a Christian form of authenticity. Kierkegaard (1848/1980) argued that "every human being

is primitively intended to be a self" and is divinely named (pp. 33–34).[33] Hence, Kierkegaard's authentic self is divinely known and sourced. Believing that Christ is the standard and the goal for the self, he concluded: "the greater conception of Christ, the more self" (pp. 113–114). Hence, all humans have a common task to become "essentially human," but Kierkegaard (1846/1944) warned that living as a unique human being rests on the qualities available to all humans. Living as an individual through difference alone, however, is cowardice (pp. 318–319).[34] Contra Derrida's emphasis on difference, Kierkegaard's authenticity preserves the tension of sameness and difference.

Therefore, we might say that an authoritative version of one's self is epistemologically discovered within the ultimate context: *before God*. After all, the true self is the self God knows and calls (Gal 4:9; 1 Cor 13:12; Vanhoozer, 2014, p. 116; Rosner, 2017). The three canonical stories we have reviewed reveal our true sexual selves, and this true self constitutes a fourth story. When a person tells an LGBTQ+ story on the premise of authenticity, we have to ask, "Whose authenticity? Which self?" First, we must reorganize the sexual self through redemptive differentiation. Relegating sinful same-sex and cross-sex desires to the old self, Christians disidentify from them while recognizing they are part of the actual self.[35] Consenting to these *sinful* desires is *sinning*. Without the will's consent, they are merely the temptations emanating from fallen sexed and gendered bodies. We can acknowledge them and draw near to God in moments of temptation.

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[33] Evans (2006) believed "primitivity" here might be better translated as "authenticity" (p. 236). He means that God created individuals with specific potentials for them to discover and actualize. Becoming this divinely-planned true self is authenticity (cf. Vaden, 2014).

[34] In context, Kierkegaard (1846/1944) chastised his generation, who believed that being from their time made them different. He contrasted this attitude with being different in the ways that are open to every human being across the ages. Rather than gathering "*en masse* in order to feel that they amount to something," he valued the bravery of being an individual (pp. 318). Evans (2006) supports this interpretation (p. 234).

[35] Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson (2012) might call this process defusion. Also, Yarhouse (2001) was one the first to point out that some religious people "come to dis-identify with their experiences of same-sex attraction" (p. 336).

Through redemptive integration, we understand the created self's strengths, weaknesses, or temperaments as the creational ingredients coopted by the Fall and sin to form experiences like SSOs and GI. They are, therefore, fundamentally good creations that warrant reclamation. If a man is temperamentally gentle, he should integrate this attribute into his working understanding of his actual self despite cultural notions of masculinity to the contrary (cf. Gal 5:23). A woman with a keen mind should do the same (cf. Rom 12:2). Authenticity in the time between the times involves owning and exploring the dissonance between the actual self and the real self. Avoiding sin means knowing one's actual self as SSOd or GIt and integrating these experiences into one's actual self-concept; they are the persistent weaknesses of the self.[36] Integration includes the fundamental recontextualization of the old self in Christ (E. L. Johnson, 2017, p. 531).

Achieving differentiation and integration of the self internally is one matter, but externally communicating the actual self presents other problems. At this juncture, we can imagine the communication of the sexual self as a trialogue. The self needs to communicate authentically to others in ways that are true before God. Hence, trialogical communication has a vertical and horizontal dimension. We can express some utterances to God through prayer while not creating intersubjective understanding with others (1 Cor 14:2-4). Some speech, such as using cross-gender pronouns, creates intersubjective understanding with others—attempting to communicate love for them—but disregards the one who created humans as male and female. The liminality between modernity and postmodernity reminds us that audiences will have different worldview assumptions (e.g., orientation essentialist or constructionist/-ivist) about LGBT labels. In an information age where social media profiles communicate the self to a multitude of audiences, LGBT

[36] Observing the persistence of these phenomena does not preclude the possibility that these manifestations of weakness will diminish or come to an end in this life.

labels cannot communicate the Christian self accurately as a global identity. The ethical task of authentically communicating the self encourages us perpetually to reconsider the perlocutionary effects of self-communication (Austin, 1962/1975).[37] Despite the intended meaning, some audiences—both Christian and non-Christian—will interpret LGBT labels as entailing practices of the self that are incompatible with orthodox sexual ethics.

Storying A Vocation for Same-Sex Attracted and Gender Incongruent Christians

In a letter written to Vanauken (1977), C. S. Lewis contemplated homosexuality as a condition that may hinder marriage. Lewis cited John 9:1-3 and observed that Jesus did not supply the etiology of the blind man's condition. Instead, He revealed the ultimate purpose or *telos* of the man's affliction: "that the works of God might be displayed in him" (ESV). Lewis concluded, "This suggests that in homosexuality, as in every other tribulation, those works can be made manifest: i.e. that every disability conceals a vocation, if only we can find it, wh. [which] will 'turn the necessity to glorious gain'" (p. 147). SSOs and GI offer opportunities for weakness to manifest God's power (2 Cor 12:9). A glorious biblical reversal of LGBT pride is to boast in SSOs and GI as *weaknesses* rather than *strengths* (cf. 2 Cor 11:30, 12:5, 9). They are opportunities to boast in God and the most potent Christian symbol: the cross (2 Cor 10:17; Gal 6:14). Kierkegaard's notion of becoming a self, Evans (2006) suggested, might be better termed a vocation in our modern context: "Each of us is called to become our individual selves, and this calling can be understood as a task laid on us by divine command" (p. 235). The three biblical stories in this chapter reframe individuals' actual selves—the messy convolution of the created self, the old self, and the new self—and

[37] Austin proposed that perlocutions or performances of perlocutionary acts are "certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them" (p. 101).

reconstitute their vocation: recontextualizing the burdens they carry to signify the power of God.

Paul loved proclaiming the good news about Jesus Christ. He became the servant of every kind of person to maximize his harvest of souls (1 Cor 9:19). He described his desperation to leverage the sameness he could find with his hearers: "I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I might share with them its blessings" (9:22-23). Contra notions of the postmodern self or multiple selves, the same "Paul role-plays in order to minister to many kinds of people" (Vanhoozer, 2014, p. 116). Perhaps this cultural engagement strategy explains why some people modify LGBT labels to jettison the affirmation of sinful desires and practices and maximize audiences for gospel proclamation. In an interview for the *Desiring God* website, Sam Allberry (2018) explained the rare situations in which he found it appropriate and meaningful to use the sociocultural label "gay" to communicate his experience with a SSO. In effect, he used gay to describe his actual self. In this sense, LGBT labels may have a utilitarian function in some contexts; they are neither the "authentic" expressions of the true self that modern essentialism promotes nor the personally-constructed transgressions of societal norms that constructivism encourages. According to Allberry's logic, some audiences respond better to *sociocultural labels with gospel explanations* than the scientific language (e.g., homosexual or SSOd) of some Christian communities.[38]

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[38] As we have seen throughout this project, the term *homosexual* originated from the scientific essentialism of the nineteenth century. As a technological innovation, psychiatrists and activists used it to decriminalize and normalize (and ultimately excuse) same-sex sexuality. Christians have retrieved the term for the classification of sin. In recent history, the term has fallen out of favor in scientific and cultural discourse. As a result, Christians currently use *same-sex attraction* more frequently. Some individuals associate it with sexual orientation change (e.g., Shidlo & Gonsiorek, 2017), but secular literature still employs the term (e.g., Hammack, Mayers, & Windell, 2013). In some contexts, SSA might be irretrievable, mainly because some associate sexual orientation change (often without warrant) with the draconian procedures of the mid-twentieth century or the malpractices of a few ex-gay ministries.

While Hill (2017) often uses the term *gay* to refer to himself, he explained one of its liabilities. Some audiences may receive Christian uses of "gay" as "a kind of conservative Christian takeover of a word that was originally developed, by a persecuted minority, as a means of solidarity" (para. 6). One atheist, Hill claimed, considered the label "inherently political and inherently moral" and historically sourced it to gay sex alone (para. 8). As Hill suggested, the word may become a stumbling block in the gay community when celibate Christians use it. Even affirming psychologists have recently argued that labels may be too contestable or on their way out (e.g., Savin-Williams, 2005; DeBord, Fischer, Bieschke, & Perez, 2017, p. 8). LGBT labels as we now know them may become passé before orthodox evangelicals reach consensus about their utility. Notably, LGBT labels have the potential to miscommunicate, both to the LGBTQ+ community and conservative Christian communities. This liability leads to another concern: their political use.

As we learned in chapter 3 and 4, the sociopolitical formation of the modern LGBT self is essential to its historical formation. When we fuse the Christian self with LGBT movements (or any political movement), we risk manipulation by the political purposes of that non-Christian agenda in ways that may undermine our employment by the heavenly polis. Christians will today likely find themselves labeled anti-LGBT when they publicly declare same-sex sexuality and gender transitions immoral. At the same time, Christians are still *pro*-LGBT in the sense that they desire their inclusion in the heavenly kingdom more than earthly kingdoms. This dilemma is the paradox of Christian witness: conveying that we are *for* image-bearers while also seeking their salvation.

LGBT labels may accompany designations like *sexual minority* and *gender minority*. As DeYoung (2018) reasoned, these kinds of descriptions may undermine the sameness Christians should experience with each other according to the grand biblical narrative. Moore (2015) observed that evangelical Christians are no longer a moral majority in America and recommended we "see ourselves as a *prophetic minority*" (p.

29). As he explained, living in a post-Christian America means that the Christian message will be increasingly strange to its hearers. Living within contemporary Western culture means that Christians "are a different people facing a different context" (p. 26). The kinds of minority stress Christians have experienced in antiquity and presently in closed countries can be diluted by the protective nature of union with Christ, especially as Christians suffuse their suffering into His body, the church. The paradoxical social dynamics of sameness and difference call Christians to interpret the cultural difference they experience together as the result of being "strangers and exiles on the earth" (Heb 11:13). Other differences, such as SSOs and GI, while significant, take a lower place in their identity hierarchy. Indeed, the latter dispositions can become tools for boasting in Christ and instruments for the church's mission. *Diversity of weakness* empowers the church's specialization in gospel witness, discipleship, and soul care to reach every kind of person.

As MacIntyre (1988) observed, "Names are used *as* identification *for* those who share the same beliefs, the same justifications of legitimate authority, and so on" (p. 378, italics original). However, the impetus of postmodernism is to localize meaning as temporary contractual agreements and thwart the possibility of broad consensus (Lyotard, 1984). Hermeneutical communities require that we translate and differentiate between *real* logical contradiction or incommensurability and the *apparent* conflicts of language games.[39] When names are not interpreted with the same presuppositions, communication dissolves. Scientific language names and classifies, while working toward consensus.

LGBT labels are, in a contorted way, personalized descendants of scientific classifications. Though scientific, terms like "same-sex attraction" and "gender

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[39] Rather than the Wittgensteinian sense, this statement recalls the secret languages designed to make speech unintelligible to those outside the group. When orthodox groups fail to translate between each other, they too play language games. On another note, the use of the word "incommensurability" here recalls its use in MacIntyre's (1988) work (p. 380).

incongruence" have their appropriate usages by Christians. Much of this project and good pastoral theology requires discernment regarding the usability of scientific terms like SSA and GI. However, scientific language *always* warrants a definition. Every peer-reviewed article in psychology defines it constructs. However, labels can reduce, conceal, and misrepresent something of the individual's narrative, primarily when sociocultural dynamics inhibit translation. Labels necessarily abridge the four stories we have covered in this chapter; they are inferior to personal narratives. Labels invite mass communication, but discipleship and soul care are usually one-to-one. It seems unlikely that we can manufacture enough labels to name every human's unique story. Though, as Christians, our vocation is to discover our "name divinely understood" (Kierkegaard, 1848/1980, pp. 33–34) and perform the biblical story together.

Christian Narratives of the Sexual/Gendered Self Rather than LGBT Identity Integration

In their debates about LGBT labels, orthodox evangelicals of every approach must wrestle with the benefits and liabilities of these labels. In fact, this debate will not be resolved until Christians soberly and dispassionately wrestle with the pros and cons with "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3 ESV).

One of the benefits of using adequately modified sociocultural labels is that they may capitalize on our culture's emphasis on authenticity and open up previously inaccessible avenues of evangelistic outreach. Proponents of modified LGBT labels might also argue that one's union with Christ can remain healthy if one's identity hierarchies are reorganized, the use of LGBT labels is contextual and not global, the individual forsakes sinful practices and desiring, and the nature of the old self is clarified. Some using LGBT labels might also argue that all labels (including same-sex attraction, gender dysphoria, and gender incongruence) ultimately require explanations, so LGBT labels are on par with these other designations. Finally, advocates of labels might say that

the liabilities of LGBT labels are worth the risk if they remove stumbling blocks for LGBTQ+ people's salvation (cf. 1 Cor 9:22).

On the other hand, critics of LGBT labels might argue that evangelicals have not sufficiently worked through the worldview implications of minority language, especially if a pervasive majority-minority lens inhibits the church's unity and flourishing. Similarly, does a perceived minority status inhibit the SSOd or GIt Christian's participation in the body of Christ? Further, weaker Christians who encounter orthodox Christians using LGBT labels may not sufficiently disidentify with sinful desires and practices, making them prey for the devil (cf. 1 Pet 5:8). The missiological intent for LGBT labels can also backfire if mainstream LGBTQ+ people strongly connect the labels with practices that orthodox Christians can neither affirm nor participate in. We should also note that this world's political kingdoms far too easily manipulate both "LGBTQ+" and "Christian," insomuch as they function as social identities. As mere social identities, both have the potential to wreak havoc on historic Christianity when they are disconnected from Spirit-wrought union with Christ.

Nevertheless, this section's overarching goal is not to settle the debate on the responsible use of LGBT labels but instead to refocus attention on the common ground orthodox Christians have: *Christian narrative transformations of the sexual self*. Even contemporary affirming psychologies prefer narratives to labels. This cultural shift offers Christians an opportunity to emphasize transformation narratives and optimally contextualize the gospel for LGBTQ+ people. Therefore, *Christians would do well to turn their attention away from the label debates and toward faithful self-exposition with narrative.*

A few explanatory statements clarify the meaning of "Christian narrative transformations of the sexual self." First, the sexual self is complex. It entails one's biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual/gendered values. For Christians, one's union with Christ saturates, interprets, and transforms the meaning of

lower ordered concepts like sexuality and gender.[40] Second, three biblical stories in this chapter (the biblical metanarrative, Christ's story, and Paul's conversion story) inform a fourth narrative: the Christian's story of a transformed sexual self. Third, the transformation of the sexual self is properly holistic. It changes how we think about (1) ourselves, our desires, and sexual/gendered behaviors; (2) how we feel about our sinful desires; and (3) our habits of self, the practices that make us who we are. It exchanges the secular narratives that organize the self with a Christocentric narrative subjectivity, and it replaces the secular call to authenticity with the divine vocation to boast in the cross and one's weaknesses. Finally, the transformed sexual self authentically communicates itself faithfully before God, humans, and self.

Applying These Conclusions to Pastoral Care and Counseling

As we apply these three conclusions to pastoral practice, we can first view LGBTQ+ people as a people group to reach missiologically. These conclusions also generate several strategies for counseling SSOd and GIt people, regardless of how they label themselves.

Taking a Missiological Approach While Caring for LGBT-Identified People

Because of its missiological impetus, contextualization[41] can serve as an outline for pastoral counseling and Christian soul care of people initially identifying as LGBTQ+. Practitioners may find themselves cycling or spiraling through this process as their counsel further aligns the individual with Christ.

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[40] Johnson (2007) called this resignification of secular concepts transposition. See chapter 1.

[41] The contextualization method outlined in this section draws from Hiebert's (1984, 1987) critical contextualization and MacIntyre's (1988) and Johnson's (2007) translation across intellectual traditions.

Prerequisite knowledge: What do we need to know about ourselves and others before we begin? Christians do well to learn from missionaries in post-Christian contexts. Not paralyzed by the otherness of their target cultures, they appraise them for what they are: fallen contexts for proclaiming Christ. Loving those who LGBTQ+-identify (whether Christian or not) means becoming what Hiebert (2009) called "transcultural mediators" (p. 198). Transcultural mediators immerse themselves in one culture, while maintaining the ability to live in another culture. When Christian practitioners enter the cultures of those who LGBTQ+-identify, they will encounter foreign languages, concepts, and ways of thinking. As a prerequisite, they must know Scripture, the Christian tradition, and the renewal of the Spirit, as well. In addition to these, the Christian caregiver will want to understand possible worldviews behind these identities, theories of their origin and development, and the solutions proposed within our culture to resolve the conflict between LGBTQ+ identification and Christianity. The pastor will want to be aware of the *multiple* secular sources that shape and distort our views of sexuality and gender. Finally, to people worth sharing with, pastoral practitioners must be aware of and willing to disclose their own sins and weaknesses.

Descriptive interpretation: What do you mean by LGBTQ+? The people we encounter in coffee shops, church offices, or in the community have a unique story. If they signify their story with a label, our first response should be a question, not an adverse reaction. We can ask, "What do you mean by that? How did you arrive at these labels?" At this stage, our interest is in their experience. Being safe people, we will want to draw out their actual self, since knowing the actual self, in all of its facets, facilitates precise biblical counsel. We can also ask, "How do you see your experience in light of historic Christianity?" With this question, we are inquiring about how they see Christianity in relationship to these labels, experiences, and ways of living. If they have

found a way to resolve the perceived conflict, it is helpful to know how they have done so and how effective it has been.

Critical evaluation: How does Christianity impact your sexual self? With something of their perspective understood, Christian evaluation is in order. We could ask, "Is there anything in your experience that conflicts with Christianity—morally, conceptually, and emotively?" Differentiation may assist our evaluation, asking them or at least ourselves: What parts of their experience are their created self, their old/fallen self, or (if they believe in Christ) their new self? At this point, we could encourage them to reflect on the worldviews behind their labels (inviting some metacognition) and to identify their personal weaknesses. These weaknesses could help them identify holes in their origin stories. Examining how their labels and experience interface with Christ, we can ask ourselves: "Who or what is reigning? Which part is most salient in their identity hierarchy?"

Contextualization decisions: How does the Christian community guide our decisions? Distilling the best contributions from the four orthodox positions surveyed across this project generates significant questions to explore with the counselee: (1) How does the gospel transform LGBTQ+ people—their experience, labels, story, and paradigms? (2) What roles do sin and repentance play in relation to SSOs and GI? (3) To what extent do they retain, reject, modify, or substitute LGBT labels? and (4) How do we tell personal stories in ways that make sense in the person's subculture? Edified by the wisest considerations of each position, the counselee can be sharpened by the Christian hermeneutical community.

Transforming practices: How do we perform our story with three biblical stories? As we recall, the three biblical stories surveyed in this chapter entail the internalization of God's grand story across Scripture, participation with Christ in His

story, and the imitation of Paul's missiology. However, if we overlook the personal narratives of those who experience SSOs and GI, we cede greater explanatory power to the mainstream LGBTQ+ community and movies like *Love, Simon* than we do to the gospel. Rather than dismissing them, let us remember that personal stories are open to revision and canonical norming, and Christianity transforms them. Our goal is neither to guide counselees back to the closet of 1950s culture nor to lose the gospel by correlating it to the culture of the 2020s. Instead, as Christian practitioners, we reflect on them and communicate with them in a way that helps them perform their sexuality and gender according to the canonical script.

Strategies for Counseling and Caring for the Same-Sex Attracted and Gender Incongruent

When counselees present with LGBT labels, their labels likely assume a worldview that, if not biblical, will draw from modern essentialism or constructionism/-ivism. Probing their understanding of their labels and experiences, we might ask, "As you understand it, were you born this way? Did attractions or incongruence develop because of your experiences in childhood, adolescence, or adulthood? Did society make you this way, or have you constructed your experience?" The goal of counseling becomes aligning the counselee's perspective with a biblical understanding of the sexual self and calling attention to the disorienting effects of sin. Five components of the sexual self are possible topics for the discussion: biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual/gendered values, and the spiritual meaning of sexuality and gender. Counselees will have to sort their experiences: What is created? What is fallen? What is being redeemed? What will wait to be redeemed in the next age? One of the counselor's primary tasks is encouraging counselees to uncover the meaning of their embodiment through the books of Scripture and nature. As they discover the true sexual self, they can construct or enact it.

Another beneficial process entails exchanging secular narratives for biblical performances of the sexual self. Pastoral caregivers can guide counselees through the metanarrative of Scripture: creation, Fall, redemption, and restoration. Every component of their sexuality and gender (i.e., embodiment, cultural context, and values and aesthetics) can be processed through these biblical headings. Christ's story also serves as a model for the counselee's personal narrative: His incarnation affirms the goodness of sexual embodiment; his death affirms the reality of sin and suffering; his resurrection redeems the sexual self from its vices, deficiencies, and excesses; and his exaltation means that the sexual self looks forward to its perfection. In the meantime, counselees can learn to differentiate between their old selves and their new selves. The SSOd can mortify desires for sex and vivify desires for friendship. The GIt can mortify cross-gender desires while still rejecting malignant gender stereotypes. As suggested earlier, GIt people may desire to embrace their true gendered self via its Hebrew or Greek name if the connotations of the English words "male" and "female" are too loaded with baggage.

It is essential that SSOd and GIt Christians learn to narrate their transformation stories. Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-22; 22:1-22; Gal 1:13-24) serves as a model for counselees to write out their own transformation narrative. Since sanctification is progressive, counselees can—in a sense—see their sexuality and gender as fluid. The Spirit transforms these dimensions of the self as He conforms them to Christ and restores the true male or female self. Counseling sessions are an opportunity to discuss many dimensions of transformation: thoughts, evaluations, primary desires, secondary desires, sexual practices, and gender expressions. Pastors can also challenge those in their care to reorganize their sexual selves so that Christ is Lord, and every other temporary identifier is a weakness and servant of his glory. This challenge should not forgo Christian authenticity, which means acknowledging one's created self, one's fallen self (and its experiences like SSOs and GI), the suffering of intrusive desires, and a unique story that cannot be abbreviated by a label.

Finally, pastoral practitioners can dialogue with SSOd and GIt counselees about authentic communication. As we have argued, labels and terminology can be expanded into stories or testimonies. Challenging clients to story their experiences without using labels or reverting back to scientific terminology (same-sex attraction, sexual orientation, gender dysphoria) forces them to explain themselves rather than assume their audience understands their language. If they are insistent on using LGBT labels, counselors can entreat them to reflect on the liabilities of these self-communications. While some may believe they can only be "seen" if they universally embrace LGBT labels internally and externally, the effect (i.e., perlocutionary effect) of such speech may ultimately eclipse what a well-crafted narrative would elucidate. Pastoral counselors should also connect SSOd and GIt Christians with the church. Comiskey (2003) exhorted the SSOd and GIt, saying, "The cross breaks the power of shame and bears our sins, allowing us to become good gifts to others" (p. 115). Perhaps the most lasting effect caregivers can have on the SSOd or GIt is to remind them of the cross and affirm them as good gifts to the church.

APPENDIX 1

CHARTING CHRISTIAN APPROACHES TO LGBTQ+ ISSUES

In the following pages Table A1 generalizes how the seven main soul care traditions (plus sexual identity therapy) address issues like same-sex relationships, alternative gender identifications,[1] LGBT labels, and sexual orientation change efforts (SOCEs). It also summarizes their focus of change, their associated organizations, their texts on LGBTQ+ issues, texts with a practical or pastoral focus, and texts with significant personal narratives or case studies. Readers should take this chart as a starting point and investigate the nuances and divergences of each text.

[1] "Alternative gender identifications" denotes the many possible ways of identifying besides identifying as one's biological sex (male or female): cross-gender identification (i.e., identifying as the opposite gender), transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, and many other formulations. This label does not address those who identify alternatively because of intersex conditions or disorders of sexual development (DSDs).

Table A1. Chart of Christian approaches to LGBTQ+ issues

	Same-Sex Relationships	Alternative Gender Identification	LGBTQ+ Labels	SOCEs	Focus of Change
LGBTQ-Affirming Christianity	Affirming	Celebrate	Celebrate	Discourage	Changing theology and church attitudes to affirming positions
Reorientation Therapies	Discourage	N/A	Disidentify	Promote	Changing sexual orientation on a continuum, or welcoming change as a byproduct
Sexual Identity Therapy	Follows client's values	N/A	Neutral	Serves as an alternative	Finding congruence with client's religious values
Integrationist Practitioners	Do not condone	Do not condone	Neutral	Neutral	Achieve celibacy or biblically-permitted behaviors
Roman Catholic	Catechism prohibits; Some ministries affirm	Prohibit	Many Positions	Many Positions	Aligning self and behaviors with Church teaching
Chaste Gay Christian	Discourage	Hospitable but not affirming	Permit	Discourage	Transforming LGB identification to support chastity and facilitate authenticity
Sin/Repentance-Focused	Prohibit	Prohibit	Disidentify	Discourage	Repentance from sinful identities, desires, and practices
Transformation-focused	Prohibit	Prohibit	Disidentify	Tacitly promote	Whole personality transformation through Christian interventions

Table A1 continued

	Associated Organizations	Texts on LGB-Related Issues
LGBTQ-Affirming Christianity	Q Christian Fellowship, Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists (AWAB), Institute for Welcoming Resources (IWR), Reformation Project, Society for Pastoral Theology	Myers (1996, 2010); Helminiak (2004); Brownson (2013); Loader (2014); Vines (2014); Achtemeier (2015); Gushee (2017)
Reorientation Therapies	Alliance for Therapeutic Choice and Scientific Integrity (ATCSI, formerly NARTH); Reintegrative Therapy Association	Nicolosi & Nicolosi (2002); Hallman (2008); Hamilton & Henry (2009); Nicolosi (2009/2016); Karten & Wade (2010); Nicolosi, Jr. (2018)
Sexual Identity Therapy	Sexual and Gender Identity Institute	Throckmorton & Yarhouse (2006); Yarhouse (2008, 2019); Braun (2009); Tan & Yarhouse (2010)
Integrationist Practitioners	American Association of Christian Counselors, Christian Association for Psychological Studies	Jones & Workman (1989); Jones & Yarhouse (1997, 2000, 2007, 2011); Yarhouse & Jones (1997); Yarhouse (2001, 2005); Yarhouse & Tan (2004); Yarhouse & Burkett (2003); Jones & Kwee (2005); Yarhouse et al. (2018)
Roman Catholic	Courage, EnCourage (Orthodox); DignityUSA (Affirming)	United States Conference of Bishops (2006); Selmys (2009); Smith & Check (2015)
Chaste Gay Christian	Spiritual Friendship; Revoice; Center for Faith, Sexuality, and Gender	Selmys (2009); Hill (2010, 2017); Belgau (2012a, 2014a, 2014c); Sprinkle (2015); Collins (2017a); Yarhouse & Zaporozhets (2019)
Sin/ Repentance	Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW); Christian Counseling & Education Foundation (CCEF); Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC)	Powlison (2003b); Yuan (2011); Burk (2012); Strachan (2014b, 2015, 2016); Allberry (2018)
Transformation-focused	Restored Hope Network (RHN); Desert Stream Ministries (DSM); Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX); Pure Passion Media	Paulk (2003); Comiskey (2003); Dallas & Heche (2010); Brown (2014); Citlau (2017)

Table A1 continued

	Texts on Transgender-Related Issues	Pastoral/Practical Focus	Narratives
LGBTQ-Affirming Christianity	Cornwall (2009, 2010); DeFranza (2015, 2016, 2019); Hartke (2018); Sabia-Tanis (2019)	Marshall (1994, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2010, 2017); Sanders (2012, 2015, 2016)	Lee (2013)
Reorientation Therapies	N/A	N/A	Nicolosi & Freeman (1993)
Sexual Identity Therapy	N/A	N/A	Tan (2008)
Integrationist Practitioners	Looy (2002, 2005); Looy and Bouma (2005); Yarhouse (2015); Yarhouse & Sadusky (2019, 2020)	Yarhouse (2010, 2013); Jones & Jones (2019)	N/A
Roman Catholic	Congregation for Catholic Education (2019)	Letters to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (1986)	Tushnet (2014)
Chaste Gay Christian	Coles (2018); Sprinkle (2018, 2021)	Hill (2013); Sprinkle (2015, 2021)	Hill (2010); Tushnet (2014); Coles (2017); Bennett (2018)
Sin/ Repentance	Strachan (2016); Burk (2017); Lambert (2017); Geiger (2017); Roberts (2017); Walker (2017); Strachan (2019b)	Welch (1995, 2000); Williams (2011); Allberry (2013); Butterfield (2015a); Shaw (2015); Hambrick (2016a, 2016b); Mason (2017)	Yuan & Yuan (2011); Butterfield (2015b); Perry (2018)
Transformation-focused	Shick (2014a)	Dallas & Heche (2010); Citlau (2017)	Comiskey (1989); Shick (2014b)

APPENDIX 2

THE CHALLENGES OF ACCESSING SOCIAL SCIENCE IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

Ultimately, scientific interpretation is acutely sensitive to the worldview or researcher tradition of inquiry (Kuhn, 1962/1970; Kitzinger, 1995). This project engages significantly with the texts of LGBT-affirming psychologies, all the while aware of their biases. As traditions of inquiry, LGBT-affirming psychologies assume a great deal about the nature of sexual orientation, gender, identity, and ethics. Similarly, affirming theology has an indissoluble relationship with social science. From Derrick Sherwin Bailey's (1955) reassessment of homosexuality to Austin Hartke's (2018) defense of gender transition, affirming theologies have appealed to the authority and constructs of social science. In fact, as Thomas Hewitt (1983) observed, "It is the granting of authority to either the Bible or science that determines one's place in the continuum of attitudinal categories proposed by James Nelson in 1977: rejecting-punitive, rejecting-nonpunitive, qualified acceptance, and full acceptance" (p. iv). In other words, how we relate the Christian faith to social science affects our sexual ethics.

Perhaps a precursor of contextual methods, Paul Tillich (1951) described two necessary functions of the church, saying, "The statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation. Theology moves back and forth between two poles, the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received" (p. 3). Tillich recognized the importance of the situation in relation to the Christian message. Ultimately, he formulated the "method of correlation," hoping to find "a way of uniting the message and the situation" (p. 8). The method of correlation "makes an analysis of the human situation out

of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions" (p. 62). His theological method began with the human situation.

Further, Tillich (1951) defined practical theology as "a bridge between the Christian message and the human situation" and believed it "put new questions before the systematic theologian" (p. 33). For Tillich, practical theology relies on "our present knowledge of the general and psychological and sociological structures of man and society" by necessity (p. 33). This assertion is not surprising, given that he believed the sciences and theology mutually inform each other (p. 22). If the philosophy of an era could dictate theology's questions, so could the social sciences. However, a vexing question emerges for the pastoral theologian using Tillich's method: Does the question manipulate the answer? Also, how do we know the answer is valid—from a divine perspective—if the cultural question is shaping it? Can the message still transcend and challenge the situation? Tillich's correlation method falls prey to the same problem as Saussurian semiotics: the question-answer model[1] offers no check on the bias of the cultural situation.

Mainline pastoral theologians like Richard Osmer (2008) cited Tillich's correlation method as a foundational principle in cross-disciplinary exchanges (pp. 165-167). Revising Tillich's method, Osmer characterized the development of a *revised correlation* method and a *revised praxis method of correlation* as mutually-minded correctives to Tillich's one-sided approach. In other words, Tillich's method moved unidirectionally from the situation to the Christian response, but a revised method allows for both the situation and Christian sources to mutually inform each other. Hence, Browning (1991) expanded Tracy's (1975) *critical correlation* approach (a correction of Tillich) to formulate his *revised correlational* method. Tracy proposed a practical

[1] See Frame's (2015) critique of Paul Tillich as Hegelian.

theology that not only dialogued with the social sciences but looked to critical social theory as well (p. 248). Unlike Hiebert's (1984) use of "critical," Tracy had in mind the "critical reformulation of both the meaning manifested by our common human experience and the meanings manifested by an interpretation of the central motifs of the Christian tradition" (p. 34). Browning relied on Tracy's work as he formulated his fundamental practical theology—a conception of theology as inherently practical (p. 8). Further, Browning cited the influence of Lamb (1982) and Chopp (1987). Lamb appealed to liberation theologies and critical theory as important critiques of traditional theological methods. Chopp, also inspired by liberation theology, emphasized praxis as the beginning point of practical theology. Further, she critiqued Tracy's "common human experience," and translated it as the experience of "white, bourgeois males" (p. 130). In doing so, she prodded a more pluralistic understanding of the many kinds of human experience that anticipate the twenty-first century notion of intersectionality. Overall, the many variants of the revised correlation method place human experience at the beginning of theological method. Further, its emphasis on the experience of the individual undermines the authority of Scripture in theological practice.

These correlational methods result in what Hiebert (1984; 2009) calls uncritical contextualization.[2] However, the pastoral theologian may just as easily fall off the other side of the horse into extractionism or noncontextualization. These errors might also include the dismissal of human subjectivity. Ethnocentric extractionism entails "the practice of excessive separation from one's cultural context" (Tennent, 2007, p. 198). As mentioned earlier, Hiebert (1987) called this practice noncontextualization. He blamed three sources for this mindset in cross-cultural contexts: the colonialist belief in Western

[2] The irony of this statement warrants explanation. Hiebert's *critical* contextualization was inspired by its philosophical underpinning: *critical* realism. However, theological correlational methods often access *critical* social theory. While both uses of "critical" might have a common philosophical ancestor in Kant, correlational methods would be considered *uncritical* according to Hiebert's classification.

superiority, a belief that non-Western cultures would evolve, and the naïve realism or positivism of scientific optimism. While a revised correlation method falls prey to the errors of postmodernism, extractionism is blind to the effects of modernity. As Hiebert explained, positivistic missiology led missionaries to merely insert their beliefs into another culture without contemplating the cultural conditioning of their theology (p. 105). Missionaries underestimated the sway other religions had on their hearers because they believed their hearers could just replace their belief systems with a "totally objective" Western theology (p. 105). This theological positivism can take the form of "scriptural positivism" as well (E. L. Johnson, 2007, p. 113). Scriptural positivism rejects all knowledge of the human condition not directly derived from the Bible. However, cultures produce significant amounts of extrabiblical knowledge (e.g., scientific knowledge in the West). From a missiological standpoint, rejecting cultural knowledge instead of transforming it through Christian reflection ultimately leads to syncretism (Hiebert, 1987, 2008). However, cultural knowledge—and in this case, scientific knowledge—may contradict biblical knowledge, leading to another important consideration: noetic sin.

Throughout the Reformed tradition, theologians like John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper, and Emil Brunner have warned of the effects of sin on how we think (Moroney, 2000). In particular, Brunner (1946) contrasted the effect of sin on logic and mathematics with its effect on knowledge of God. The latter is more clearly affected by sin. Brunner proposed a proportional principle: the closer knowledge is related to the nature of God and man, "the greater is the disturbance of rational knowledge by sin" (p. 383). More, the further this knowledge is from these existential centers, the less difference there is between nonbelievers and believers. As a result, Christian psychologists have been rightly cautious about the role of noetic sin in the field of psychology (Beck & Demarest, 2007; E. L. Johnson, 2007; S. L. Jones & Butman, 2011). Notably, the topics from LGBT psychology engaged in this project are highly worldview-dependent and subject to Scripture's authority (E. L. Johnson, 2007, pp. 172–173). Thus, a careful, biblical,

theological, and philosophical evaluation of each significant component of LGBT psychology accompanies its engagement throughout this dissertation.

Since psychology continually changes, Beck and Demarest (2007) suggested that theology and psychology can have "working alliances for as long as they are useful rather than enshrining them as fairly permanent paradigms of truth" (p. 22). Applying this principle to this project, we aim to learn something from LGBT psychology that may be useful for "effective ministry" in our contemporary context (p. 22). However, LGBT psychology is treated with a hermeneutics of suspicion (Ricoeur, 1970, 1971) when appropriate, especially given its potential to make distorted anthropological assertions.[3]

[3] Here, Ricoeur's distinction between hermeneutics of suspicion and hermeneutics of faith serves us well. Importantly, 'hermeneutics of suspicion' cannot be understood apart from Ricoeur's contextual use of it and his ultimate concern with the restoration of meaning (Scott-Baumann, 2009). Johnson (2007) recommended a prudent use of doubt and trust when reading and interpreting noncanonical texts. Therefore, we will read these psychological texts accordingly.

APPENDIX 3

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Affirming Christianity: a heterodox form of Christianity that permits or promotes same-sex sexual activity, same-sex sexual relationships, cross-dressing, and cross-gender or nonbinary identification

APlA: American Psychological Association

APcA: American Psychiatric Association

Biblical gender roles: culturally-appropriate gender roles coded in the cultural forms of the biblical text

Biological essentialism: a form of modern essentialism that appeals to biology as it makes sexual orientation and gender essential categories

Biological sex: a person's biological status, typically categorized as male, female or [in rare cases] intersex. Chromosomes, gonads and hormones, the primary sexual characteristics of sexual anatomy, and secondary sexual characteristics like facial hair in males and enlarged breasts in females determine biological sex.

Biological sexual identity: one's self-understanding of his or her biological or physiological sex

Chaste gay Christians: LGB-identified Christians who hold to a traditional sexual ethic

Contextualized gender roles: the application of a biblical gender role in the reader's cultural and temporal context

Christian critical essentialism (CCE): an ideology that promotes biblical ideas of gender and sexuality, criticizes modern essentialism and constructionism/-ivism, and holds that the historic Christian tradition proposes that there is something essential and enduring about these features of human nature

DSM: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

Environmental essentialism: a form of modern essentialism that emphasizes socialization and the internalization of sociocultural gender roles to explain differences between genders and sexual orientations

Gender: the psychosociocultural dimensions of maleness and femaleness (i.e., masculinity and femininity)

Gender dysphoria/dysphoric: a DSM-5 diagnosis that emphasizes the suffering inherent in detachment from one's biological sex

Gender expression: the manner in which people enact their gender. It includes attire, physical presentation, accessories, gender roles, and pronouns.

Gender identity: one's internal perceptions of one's gender

Gender-identity labels: the words people use to name their gender identity and gender expressions

Gender incongruence/incongruent (GI/GIt): the mismatch experienced between biological sex and gender identity

ICD: International Classification of Diseases

LGB: lesbian, gay, and bisexual

LGBT: lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

LGBTQ+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and additional associated labels

LGBTQQIA+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and additional associated labels

MHP: mental health professional

Modern essentialism (ME): an amoral ideology with an unreflective relationship to Western cultural constructions that considers sex, gender, gender expressions, and sexual orientation essential categories of personhood

Orientation essentialism: a form of modern essentialism that makes sexual orientation a vital aspect of personal identity

Orthodox Christianity: a historic form of Christianity that prohibits same-sex sexual activity, same-sex sexual relationships, cross-dressing, and cross-gender or nonbinary identification

OSA: opposite-sex attraction

Personal constructivism: an ideology derived from social constructionism and constructivism that emphasizes personal agency and meaning-making rather than essentialist categories

RT: reparative therapy or reorientation therapies

Same-sex attraction (SSA)/attracted (SSAd): sexual, emotional, or erotic interest in people of the same biological sex

Same-sex desiring: sexual desires for the same biological sex joined by consent of the will, constituting actual sin

Same-sex orientation (SSO)/oriented (SSOd): a consistent pattern of sexual attraction to the same-sex

Same-sex sexual activity: any sexual or erotic activity between biologically-sexed men or biologically-sexed women

Same-sex sexual desire: the sinful capacity to desire sex with someone of the same biological sex

Sexual identity: a composite of "one's biological sex (as male or female), gender identity (one's psychological sense of being male or female, sex role (degree to which one adheres to social expectations for one's sex), sexual orientation (the direction and persistence of one's experiences of sexual attraction), and intention or valuative framework (what one intends to do with the desires one has in light of one's beliefs and values)"

Sexual intentions: the values and aims one has for his or her sexuality

Sexual orientation identity: "acknowledgement and internalization of sexual orientation and reflects self-exploration, self-awareness, self-recognition, group membership and affiliation, culture, and self-stigma"

Sexual script: one's canonically-normed script that interprets and integrates biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual/gendered values, and the spiritual meaning of maleness and femaleness in relation to one's union with Christ

Sexual self: the composite of one's biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual/gendered values, and the spiritual meaning of maleness and femaleness in relation to one's union with Christ

Social constructionism (SC): an ideology that considers gender and sexual orientation sociocultural categories with no transcendent essence

Social desire: the longing "to experience wholeness and intimacy in relationships with others"

Sociocultural gender roles: the degree to which a person embraces "cultural expectations for maleness/masculinity or femaleness/femininity"

Sociocultural labels/labeling: the activity of labelling of attractions and orientations, an indicator of social identity

Transgender identity: a statement about one's gender that communicate his or her intentions for gender expressions or body modifications

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ABSTRACT

CRITIQUING COMMON THEMES IN LGBT-AFFIRMING PSYCHOLOGIES WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FRAMEWORKS

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Few works have delineated a robust orthodox pastoral theology for LGBT-identified people. Addressing this deficiency, this dissertation inductively investigates three prominent themes of LGBT-affirming psychologies, surveys evangelical engagement with these themes, and proposes three alternatives rooted in a biblically based, Christian worldview. Chapter 1 introduces the project and surveys contemporary Christian literature regarding the same-sex attraction and gender incongruence to help the reader navigate how evangelicals have engaged these issues. Chapter 2 explores biblical, historical, and theological foundations for addressing presenting LGBT labels in Christian soul care. Chapter 3 traces the historical development of modern psychology's tradition of inquiry regarding what we now call LGBTQ+ issues and identifies the theoretical frameworks that have informed LGBT-affirming psychologies and challenged historic Christian beliefs about sexuality and gender. Chapter 4 identifies and traverses the main secular frameworks that inform LGBT psychologies (the first theme), evaluates these frameworks from a Christian perspective, and surveys and assesses how evangelicals have engaged these frameworks. Addressing the second and third themes, chapter 5 details how LGBT psychologies conceptualize LGBT identity development and how they address the religious conflicts created by LGBT identities. Finally, the sixth chapter expands upon Christian alternatives to LGBT-affirming psychologies: Christian

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