

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL FORM

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PROGRAMME: MA X MTh _ MA ML _ MRes _ **DATE:** 30 /04 /2018

Please fill out each numbered section of this form and email it to the Postgraduate Faculty Administrator by the submission deadline. Total word count should be at least 750 words.

1. Proposed Title:

Gender Identity Crisis: The impact of cultural gender dysphoria (identity) on Christian identity.

2. Brief introduction to the key issue(s) being explored:

Identity formation is one of the most important and influential processes we as human being go through. A well-developed identity gives us a sense of our strengths and weaknesses; our individual uniqueness and can contribute towards higher self-esteem, lower levels of anxiety, advanced moral reasoning and increased critical thinking.

With the rise in people associating with the label 'transgender' the transition in society of gender being chosen rather than assigned, how does that change how we view ourselves in light of our Christian identity? Am I male/man first and Christian second, or am I a Christian first, and a male/man second?

3. Critical outline of the existing literature on the proposed field of research:

Identity formation & Faith

Pamela Estyne King of Fuller Theological Seminary has authored a number of papers on topics around the area of identity formation and the role of religion within it; focusing both on youth people and adolescents. King co-authored "The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective" and in 2017 authored a paper looking at the role of religious service in the formation of emerging adults. In King's paper "Religion and Identity", a positive relationship between religion and identity formation is discussed.

Erin Johnston discusses, in her research of communities of practice, the importance of the formation of holistic identity management. In David H. Kelsey's two volume theological anthropology he examines 'who we are' through our sense of personal identity, the stories we tell and the meaning of being God's creatures.

Eddy van der Borcht edits volume 16 of the Studies in Reformed Theology focused on Christian Identity. This study looks at identity from multiple angles including the theological basis for Christian identity and Christian identity in the public square.

Philip Francis Esler, Aaron Kuecker and Judith Lieu authored books on the area of Christian identity within scripture (Romans and Luke-Acts) and comment on how that relates to the context of the time Jesus was living.

Daniel J. Harrington and James F. Keenan have written extensively on the virtues ethics discussing what Jesus' and Paul's view are, and how that links with how we understand exactly who we are.

Gender/Sexual Identity

John Paul II's Theology of the body and Christopher West's commentary on it.

S. Cornwall and Mark A. Yarhouse have written extensively on the area of sexual identity development. Yarhouse has also written on transgender and cultural change and continues to conduct research for the Institute for the Study of Sexual Identity established at Regent University. Yarhouse is the co-creator of the Sexual Identity Therapy Framework (SITF).

Gender in the bible

Helen Kraus has completed in-depth exegetical study of the use of gender terms across the different 'authorised' version of the bible within Genesis 1-4.

Elaine Graham writes on the link between gender, personhood and theology examining the emergence of gender and an issue within society and evaluating critical studies of gender across the areas of: sexual differences; division of labour; and individual subjectivity (including identity).

Elaine Storkey evaluates the role of gender within pre-modernist, modernist and post-modern society and Richard Briggs build upon that applying it directly to the new testament to identify six hermeneutical theses'. John Piper and Wayne Grudem co-edit a book arguing for the complementarian point of, examining the roles of men and women and touching upon the biological and psychological foundation. Jonathan Parnell and Owen Starachan follow this editing a work which includes an article by Denny Burk on Training our Kids in a Transgender World.

Studies in Church History (Volume 34) focuses on the topic of Gender and Christian Religion. A number of articles included could be relevant to the discussion including Gillian Clark's examination of Augustine's view on gender and creation and a number articles of societal view of gender during different societies and periods of time.

Secular Identity theory

The "Handbook of Identity Theory and Research" edited by Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, Vivian L. Vignoles contains a number of papers on Marcia's theory; the process of how identity is formed; a section on moral and spiritual domains and specifically papers by Kay Bussey on Gender Identity Development and Lisa M. Diamond, Seth Pardo, and Molly R. Butterworth on Transgender Experience and Identity.

Transgender

Ryan T. Anderson explores: the transgender movement; transgender identity; what makes us men and women; and the role of gender in culture. Andrew T. Walker covers similar topics in

his work. Vaughan Roberts reviews the Christian worldview and applies the principles derived from that to questions of gender identity.

Oliver O'Donovan's journal exploring the issue of Christian marriage and transsexuals looks into the psychological case and the popular characterisation of 'a women trapped in a man's body' (or vice versa).

4. Rationale and aims of the project:

Known as a "generation with an identity crisis"; the desire to know and understand who we are has become the question of a generation. Popular within the culture is the redefinition of gender as a social construct that is chosen. The formation of identity, and how we go about understanding who we are. I aim, through this dissertation, to contribute towards the wider discussion of "who we are" and the role our faith plays in helping us discover that. And understand better how we are to respond to the latest cultural shift in gender identity.

5. Methodology and likely analytical tools:

A thematic literature review examining the role of gender identity within the Christian view of identity. Specifically review what gender identity is, from a cultural, secular perspective and how it relates to sexual identity. Then establish a view on Christian identity through a review of anthropological sources and the values/character demonstrated in early Christian practice. Finally we will review the role of gender as described in the bible and how that related to identity within the bible and within culture.

6. Proposed structure with numbered breakdown of sections/chapters:

At a high-level this will be broken down into three sections. The first seeks to establish what identity is, both from a secular and a biblical perspective and how it is formed. The second examines the concept of gender within the biblical narrative and the final section will analyse what impact the cultures view of gender identity has on the biblical notion of Christian identity and the conflict that brings about for those who associate as transgender.

1. Introduction
2. Identity: What is it? How is it formed?
 - 2.1. Gender Identity: What is it? Is it formed/developed? Is it separate/ a separate part of identity?
 - 2.2. Link between Gender and Sexual Identity (if any?)
3. Biblical View
 - 3.1. Gods view of identity
 - 3.2. Identity formation
 - 3.2.1. Anthropology
 - 3.2.2. Values, Character and early Christian practice
 - 3.3. Gender in the Bible
 - 3.3.1. Complementarianism or Egalitarianism?
4. Impact
 - 4.1. Challenges/Conflicts
 - 4.2. Symmetry

5. Conclusion

7. The contribution of the dissertation to existing knowledge:

Bringing together an examination of identity and the role gender it plays within the concept of Christian identity.

8. Statement concerning whether ethical approval is required:

No. Ethical approval is not required as the dissertation will be entirely literature based and will leverage previously completed studies and research; rather than conducting new studies.

9. Initial bibliography of at least 15 relevant references (in the usual Turabian 8 Chicago style format):

Abdelal, Rawi, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Terry Martin. "Treating Identity as a Variable: Measuring the Content, Intensity, and Contestation of Identity." *Apsa*, no. September 2001 (2001): 0–31.

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Althaus-Reid, M. *Liberation Theology and Sexuality*. Reclaiming liberation theology. SCM Press, 2009.

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Bartkowski, John P, and Ghazal Read. "Veiled Submission : Gender , Power , and Identity Among Evangelical and Muslim Women in the United States" 26, no. 1 (2003): 71–92.

Briggs, R. *Gender and the New Testament: Six Proposals for Interpretation*. Biblical Series. Grove Books, Limited, 2001.

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- Russel, Moore. *Christian Ethics: This Year’s Dilemma*, 2009.
<https://www.russellmoore.com/2009/05/04/christian-ethics-this-years-dilemma/>.
- Storkey, E. *Origins of Difference: The Gender Debate Revisited*. Baker Academic, 2001.
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