



RESOURCES

• Human Identity •

A GOOD NEWS APPROACH TO GENDER ISSUES

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EEA believes that the Gospel always takes first place. That is why we advocate that Christians must always maintain a Good News approach, balancing truth and grace whatever issue they are working on. On gender and sexuality issues, this means Christians take the approach of:

1. Being sensitive and respectful, bearing in mind that gender and sexuality can be difficult issues and that many bear hurts from confusion, rejection, abuse or discrimination.
2. Explaining clearly and compassionately the biblical and scientific truths about
 - There being 2 sexes, male or female. Natal or biological sex is genetically determined by chromosomes and cannot change. A tiny number of people are intersex, where their physical development in the womb has caused malformation.
 - Gender being a social and psychological concept of how we feel about being female or male. Generally our gender identity matches our natal sex. Men and women are different but they vary in the extent to which they exhibit what are understood to be male and female characteristics and whether they take on roles which are culturally said to be more male or female. This is normal and should not be confused with gender dysphoria.
 - Gender dysphoria being a psychological condition when natal sex does not match someone's perception of their gender. It affects a small number of people but should be taken seriously as it is their real experience, can cause deep distress and demands a compassionate response. There is very little scientific evidence but much opinion about the causes. There is no scientific evidence whatsoever that some people have been "born into the wrong body". Medical gender reassignment treatment is irreversible, results in sterility and involves lifelong medication. It is abusive to encourage this course of action as the preferred, default response to someone's gender dysphoria.
 - Gender ideology and mainstreaming being terms with varied meanings. These can mean necessary efforts to stop abuses and discrimination towards people, normally women, because of their gender. But sometimes these words describe a strategy moving towards destroying the idea of male and female, and to promote Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender & Intersex (LGBTI) and radical women's rights. EEA believes we need to take seriously the problems of violence, harassment, abuse or discrimination facing the LGBTI community or women and girls. However, the terms LGBTI rights or gender / women's rights are often used to mean a whole package of rights that go beyond what most Christians will support.
3. Working to ensure every individual knows their infinite worth as a human being, created in God's image and loved by Him. The Church's job is to be a welcoming community for all, helping everyone to discover and rest in their eternal identity of being children of God, while allowing Him graciously to help every one of us to overcome our own brokenness, fears and confusion. We should not minimise the numbers of families or individuals distressed because of the identity brokenness they or a family member experiences.
4. Promoting the family as God's gift to maximise the chances of happiness, stability and flourishing from birth to death. God's best plan for family is that there be a lifelong married man and woman and their children, in close relationship with their extended family. This model is not always possible but should still be what we aspire to.
5. Working to protect people from the potential psychological and physical damage of gender identity change, medical gender reassignment or claiming gender fluidity as their identity.

6. Caring for those struggling with gender dysphoria and who often live with psychological distress with or without medical gender reassignment treatment or with health damage that is a result of lifelong hormone treatment.
7. Supporting the role of parents in bringing up their children and, as primary care givers, to work out for themselves how this will be done.
8. Resolving especially to protect children from being encouraged to disrupt puberty, experiment sexually or change their gender. This issue is a child protection matter.
9. Encouraging children to be free to play as they wish, choose subjects and career aims as they wish, being free from gender-based pressure, while not pretending there are no differences between boys / men and girls / women. We want boys and girls to feel confident in their God given gender. Giving freedom to children includes not directing them towards exploring cross-gender identity or same-sex orientation.
10. Supporting responsible, age appropriate sex and relationships education, to include strong condemnation of bullying on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (and ongoing school policies to ensure bullying does not occur). Parents should be involved in sex education and maintain their human right to educate their children as they wish, including exemption from some lessons.
11. Neither exaggerating nor minimising the problems that people with gender dysphoria have or the impact that promoting gender fluidity as the norm can have on society.
12. Supporting women's interests when it is about combatting discrimination, bullying, violence or objectification of women's bodies or promoting maternity leave, equal pay and other employment rights etc. Abuse against girls and women is unacceptable and remains far too common, unfortunately even within the Church.
13. Protecting all people from violence, discrimination and violations of their human rights, irrespective of their gender or their sexual preferences. This does not change our belief that the right to marry or adopt children should be for heterosexual couples only, or that "reproductive rights" should not include the right to an abortion. Members of the LGBTI community should be treated with respect.
14. Protecting freedom of conscience and expression for all. This includes freedom for organisations with a faith ethos like schools and hospitals and for any teachers, medical workers or those responsible for marriages and placement of children into care to respectfully opt out of performing any task that violates their conscience.
15. Campaigning for common sense policies to provide support for those with gender dysphoria. We wish to do this in collaboration with the majority of society who we believe agree that children should not be encouraged to experiment in actual sexual behaviour, view pornography or question their gender identity. Let children be children!

This paper is based on a longer policy framework document approved by EEA's Public Policy Authorisation Team.