

Transgender & Christian

A Coming Out and Coming Home Story

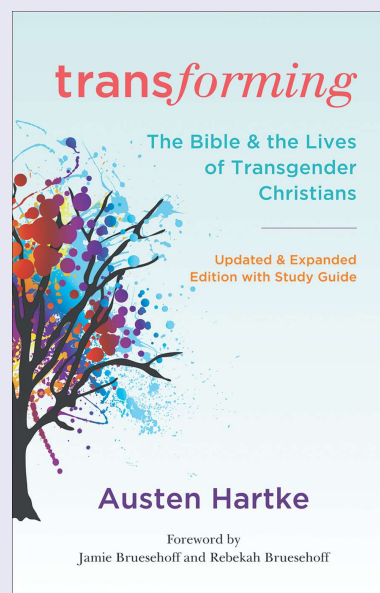
Three Big Questions

- + What does the Bible say? +
- + What does it mean to be transgender? +
- + Will I be able to find a faith community? +

What does the Bible say?

Topics include:

- Genesis 1 and 2 – The creation of gender
- Deuteronomy 22:5 – Clothing and gender expression
- Deuteronomy 23:1 – Changing our bodies
- Stories of changed names in the OT and NT
- Matthew 19 – Jesus and the acknowledgement of gender diversity
- Acts 8 – Welcoming gender-expansive people into the church
- and more!

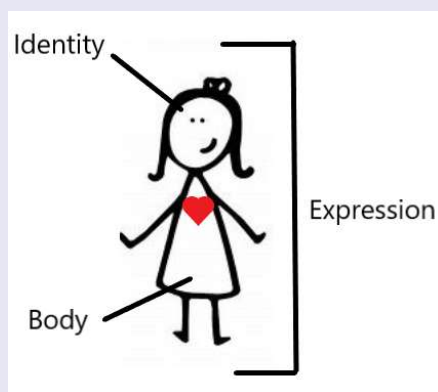


What does it mean to be trans?

Gender

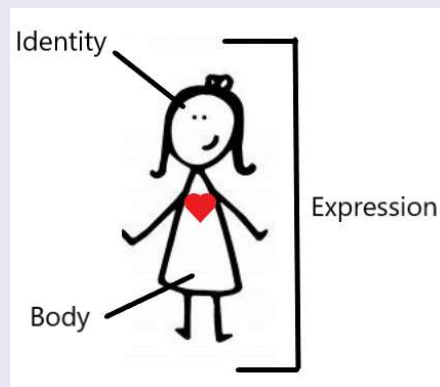
Your gender is made up of three different facets which all affect each other.

- **Your body** – Your internal and external reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormone levels, and brain matter.
- **Your gender identity** – Your internal self-perception and experience of being female, male, both, or neither.
- **Your gender expression** – The way you show your gender to others through clothing, hair, mannerisms, voice, etc. which have gendered values in your society. Taking on specific gender roles can also be part of our gender expression.



Complex Bodies

- You may hear the body part of this equation referred to as someone's **assigned sex**. All people have an assigned sex based on a visual examination of their external genitalia at or before birth.
- While most people are **endosex**, meaning they have sex characteristics that can be clearly assigned either male or female, about 1.7% of the population is **intersex**, meaning they have differences in sex development.



The Trans Umbrella

- **“Transgender”** is often seen as an umbrella term that incorporates many different gender identities. (The word **“cisgender”** is used to refer to people who have a gender and assigned sex that match.)
- Identities often under the trans umbrella include:
 - A **transgender man** is someone who was assigned female at birth but who knows themselves to be male.
 - A **transgender woman** is someone who was assigned male at birth but who knows themselves to be female.

The Trans Umbrella

- A **nonbinary person** has a gender identity that doesn't conform to the male/female binary.
- An **agender person** may not experience their gender identity at all, or at a lower level than others.
- A **genderqueer person** may have a gender identity or experience that doesn't fit neatly into any category!
- We sometimes use the phrase **gender diversity** or the descriptor **gender-expansive** to talk about people who fall outside of gender norms in their society.

Gender Diversity Today



Will I be able to find a faith community?

Affirming Baptism

“O God, in renaming your servants Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Peter, and Paul, you gave them new lives and new tasks, new love and new hope. We now hold before you our sibling Austen. Bless him with a new measure of grace as he takes this new name.”



April Anti-Trans Legislative Risk Map

We are getting closer to Sine Die for many states. As state legislative sessions close, states will lose the chance to pass anti-trans legislation. Here is the risk of each state!

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Risk Category	Color
Worst Anti-trans Laws	Dark Red
High Risk Within 2 Years	Red
Moderate Risk Within 2 Years	Orange
Low Risk Within 2 Years	Light Orange
Safest States With Protections	Light Blue

Imminent potential to raise risk category (Yellow Triangle)
Imminent potential to lower risk category (Green Plus)

What does church allyship look like?

Using the right names and pronouns

- A 2018 study from the University of Texas at Austin found that transgender youth ages 15 to 21 who had their chosen name used at school, work, home, and with friends had 71% fewer symptoms of severe depression, a 34% decrease in reported thoughts of suicide and a 65% decrease in suicide attempts. Having even one context in which a chosen name could be used was associated with a 29% decrease in suicidal thoughts.
- A 2018 study from San Francisco State University found that the use of the correct pronouns for a nonbinary individual made them more likely to seek healthcare when they required it, and further studies in 2019 and 2020 confirmed that gender-expansive people will avoid interactions with healthcare providers when wrong pronouns have been used.

What do I do when I mess up?

1. Apologize briefly. Don't spend longer apologizing than you spent on the original mistake!
2. Don't beat yourself up. We all make mistakes!
3. Ask yourself if there might be some barriers for you in using new pronouns for this person. Are there emotions that you need to talk through with someone?
4. Practice using the right pronouns with someone else, or practice them while you're driving, in the shower, etc.
5. Don't give up! This is so important to the person you're talking with, and it's worth it to show you care.

Using inclusive language

- Language about God
 - How does our gendered language in reference to God affect how we know God and ourselves?
 - Ex: “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”
- Language about the community
 - Does the gendered language we use to refer to others in our community actually reflect the diversity in the pews, in the pulpit, and in Sunday school?
 - Ex: “Brothers and sisters in Christ...”
- Language in music
 - How do we organize, if not by gender?
 - Ex: “Men on stanza 1, women on stanza 2”
 - How do we rethink the language in our hymns/worship songs?
 - Ex: “Thou my great Father and I thy true son,” in Be Thou My Vision, changed to “Thou my redeemer my love Thou hast won” by Eleanor Hull for the Chalice Hymnal

Continuing education and conversation

- Adult education sessions
- Book groups
- Table talks and panels
- Sermon talkbacks
- Including gender diversity in educational curriculum
- Movie nights
- Bible studies
- Small groups
- Preparing people to engage with anti-trans rhetoric

Countering misinformation

1. Being trans is a mental illness.
2. All trans people medically transition.
3. Doctors are doing gender-related surgery on children.
4. Tons of people are “de-transitioning” and experience transition regret.
5. Being trans is a “social contagion.”
6. Trans people are a danger to children.
7. Trans people are too powerful (or too weak?) to play sports.

Sharing resources

- Offering building space to trans groups
- Donating a portion of tithes to local trans organizations
- Sponsoring trans people resettling in Minnesota

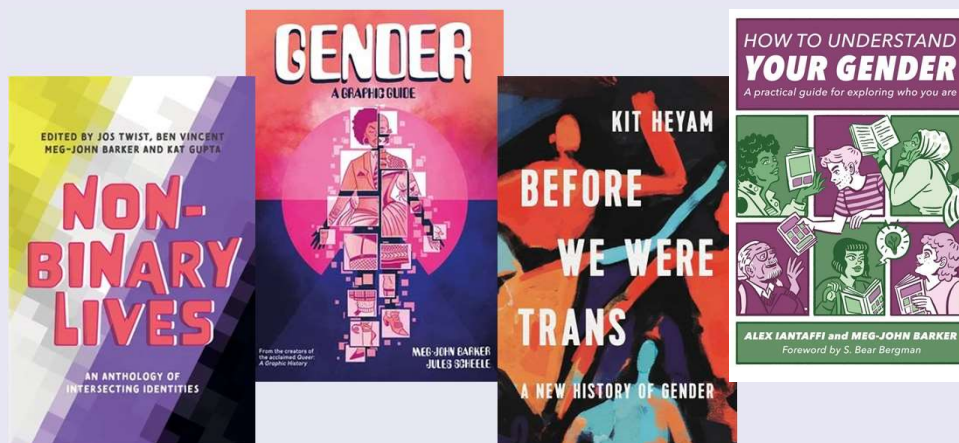
Advocacy and pride in public

- Coordinating presence at local events
- Sharing information about current legislation
- Writing letters to local media
- Planning programming with local trans orgs
- Signage (when you can back it up!)

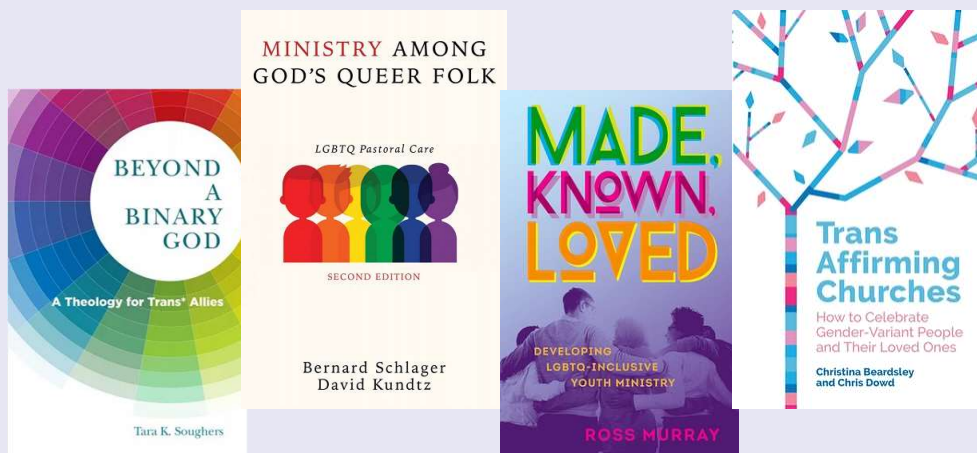
Pastoral care

- Have resource lists available for community members, including:
 - Trans-specific support hotlines
 - Gender-affirming care in your area
 - Safe housing in your area
 - Support for parents and caregivers
- Have liturgy available for:
 - Preparation for hormone therapy
 - Preparation for surgery
 - Renaming (with or without remembrance of baptism)
 - Special days including Trans Day of Remembrance (Nov 20th) and Trans Day of Visibility (March 31st)

Resources on Gender Diversity



Resources for People in Ministry



Keep going!

- **Resources for trans folks, family members, and pastors:**
<https://transmissionministry.com/resources>
- My contact info:
 - **Website:** www.austenhartke.com
 - **Email:** info@austenhartke.com
 - **Facebook:**
www.facebook.com/AustenHartke
 - **Twitter:** @AustenLionheart

Transmission
 Ministry Collective
www.transmissionministry.com