

A BOOK REVIEW
THE BODY GOD GIVES/A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO TRANSGENDER THEORY
DECEMBER 24, 2025

SKIP TO PAGE 1. THIS IS A FORMATTING ERROR ON THE PART OF MICROSOFT WORD, WHICH EVEN IT COULD NOT CORRECT. SORRY DEAR READER

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“THE BODY GOD GIVES/A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO TRANSGENDER THEORY”

DECEMBER 24, 2025

TITLE OF BOOK: *“The Body God Gives/A Biblical Response to Transgender Theory”*

AUTHOR: Robert S. Smith, PhD from Australian College of Theology, who is an ordained Anglican Minister and a Lecturer in Theology, Ethics and Music Ministry at Sydney Missionary and Bible College, and who has authored a companion book, *“How We Should We Think About Gender and Identity?”*, and Co-Authored *“The Gender Revolution: A Biblical, Biological and Compassionate Response”*.

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I am making this Review somewhat reluctantly. I am reluctant to provide this Review because I know that it will come across as being a negative Review, and it is not my intention to express negative opinions about the good work of a talented author by which he makes an excellent effort to fill the hole in an Evangelical Theological/Biblical critique of the so called “Transgender” issue or “Transgender Theory”. He most certainly fills that hole. For anyone, whether a pastor, academic theologian, or interested Christian who has any questions about what Scripture has to say about Transgender Theory, or the recent explosion of so-called “Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria”, this book will answer those questions, and will hammer home those answers. Furthermore, if anyone, whether a pastor, academic theologian, or interested Christian wants to know whether or not the Bible answers questions such as: 1) Are there more than two sexes, meaning are there sexes other than those of male and female?, 2) Can a person have a body of one sex (e.g. male or female), and the soul of the opposite sex?, 3) Is Sexual Transitioning through medical means Biblically Ethical, or is the performing of such Medical Transitioning ever Biblically Ethical for a Christian Medical Professional?, 4) Can there be, within an individual, a separation, a disconnect or discordance between the individual’s biological sex (i.e. male or female), and the individual’s “Gender” (i.e. how the individual personally perceives themselves (e.g. an individual who is biologically a male perceives themselves as being a female)), 5) Can Biological Sex (i.e. male or female) of an individual actually be separated from that individual’s “Gender”?, or 6) Are Sex and Gender actually two different things, or when we speak of an individual’s sex or gender are we referring to the same things?, then this book can respond to those questions, and can be used to hammer home the answers to those questions.

My issues with this book are not based upon any concerns about its subject matter, or the marvelously complete and detailed manner in which the author deals with that subject matter, that being a detailed, theological/biblical case against Transgender Theory or Transgenderism generally. He does that by way of a very well written, extremely well researched and documented fashion. His writing is clear. His research and argumentation are excellent. His conclusions are clear and well supported. His countering arguments against those who have differing opinions or theories are well stated. So, what is my problem? Candidly, I don’t know

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that I have a problem with this book, but I do have some overriding Questions: 1) Who Was This Book Written For? 2) Who Are Those of Its Intended Audience? 3) Who Should I Suggest Should Read This Book?

When I Review a book, I always like to suggest the types of individuals who I think will be benefitted by it and should read it, whether they be pastors, church leaders, Christian teachers, or other Christians who have an interest in the subject matter. I fear that even if a pastor or leader or anyone else has a huge question of whether or not the Bible deals with any of the Questions which are set forth above, he or she will be so overwhelmed with the voluminous treatment given to these questions by this book that he or she will come away with a recall of very limited information and very few “take-aways”. At this point, those of you Dear Readers who have read any of my Book Reviews on the TEI Website are probably laughing out loud. You know that all of my Reviews are way, way too long. That being the case, how can I criticize an author for voluminous, overwhelming treatment of any subject? I admit my failings with succinctness. I admit my failings in being able to do anything with brevity. That said, however, I think that if you read any of my Reviews you will see that, in the cases of most of the books I have reviewed I have taken away from that book a great deal of valuable, take away information which I want to share with my readers. I just cannot do that in the case of this book. Candidly, it has overwhelmed me. As I have read it, I have found myself muttering, repeatedly, “Ok, Already, I Get It”. But having “Gotten It”, I have been forced to wonder: “What Do I Do With This?”, “How Can It Help Pastors, Teachers, Christian Counselors, or Christian Parents Who Are Having to Deal With the Transgender Issue?” In my really humble opinion and respectful of our wonderful author’s magnificent scholarship opinion, I don’t think that there is any take away from this book other than a conclusion that it is Biblically clear that Transgender Theory, or the theory that there can be a separation within a given of individual of that individual’s biological sex from one’s gender (e.g. a biological male has the gender of a female, meaning that they perceive themselves as being a female) will not pass muster. If there are questions or arguments or differing opinions about what the Bible says about that Take Away, then this book more than adequately deals with those questions, arguments or opinions.

We, in our family, are confronting a Transgender issue. We read this book in the hopes of finding some helpful suggestions about how to deal with the issue. We didn’t find that. I don’t think that any pastor, Christian counselor, Christian teacher or Christian parent who is trying to deal with such an issue will find any particular help in this book. In fact, at the conclusion of the book our author candidly concedes that he has not provided any information about how those confronted with trying to help others through a transgender problem might do so. If some practical advice about the transgender issue is sought, then (although even it is lacking in some respects) one might look to Preston Sprinkle’s book, *“Embodied/Transgender Identities, The Church & What The Bible Has to Say”* which is the subject of a Review of September 15, 2025. He or she will not find that advice in this book. He or she will be able to use this book to say “this transgender thing is just plain biblically wrong”, but he or she won’t get a clue about what to do to correct that wrong with any individual.

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So, for whom do I think this book is written, and who will be best helped by it? Right or Wrong, I think that those of the Academy, Academic Theologians or Seminary Professors are the proper audience for this book. However, I do want to add one caveat. If you want to have a serious case study of a theological approach to an issue, I have to commend this book to you. The author's detailed explanation of the theological method he applied to the Transgender issues at hand, and of his then application of that method are truly, golden. If you want to study just how a skilled theologian goes about theologically analyzing an issue, then you can find that study in this book. In some respects, the author's explanations of the theological method he used, and of the various theological methodologies which could be used were more valuable for me than were the actual discussions of the transgender issues. Those explanations are of value to anyone studying or teaching theological methodology.

WHAT IS THE AUTHOR DOING WITH WHAT HE IS SAYING?

Our Author wants to fill a hole which he perceives as existing in most of the Evangelical literature which seeks to deal with the Transgender Crises, a Crises which, as he points out, seems to have had its origination in roughly 2013. While he finds that much of the Evangelical literature on the subject is helpful, he finds that none of it provides for a detailed Biblical, Theological approach to the problem. What does the Bible or God's Revelation, whether through nature and the natural sciences have to say about the burgeoning phenomenon in which a boy/man suddenly declares that he is a girl or woman, or a girl or woman suddenly declares that she is a boy or man? Is there any justification for "Transgender Theory", the theory which is espoused by a very vocal minority within society and even Academia and the Medical profession and which holds for the proposition that Sex and Gender are not the same thing (meaning that the terms sex and gender are no longer synonymous but mean separate characteristics of a human being)? As the author states in his Introduction: *"This book is an exercise in theo-anthropology and theo-ethics. Its primary purpose is to evaluate the central ontological claim of transgender theory: that the sexed body does not determine the gendered self. In so doing, it will also assess the moral and practical implications of this claim: that biological sex should not (or at least need not) ground gender identity, guide gender roles and govern gender expression."*

I think it is pretty clear from the above Section of this Review that the Author wants you, the Reader, to conclude that under God's Scripture, the Bible, or under any reasonable Theological Analysis, there is no validity to "Transgender Theory", a theory that Biological Sex and Gender are two different things. Briefly stated, the definition of Biological Sex is clear, and one's Biological Sex is Scientifically determined. While there are cases of some "Sexual Ambiguity" if you will, where a birth condition (a so-called "intersex condition") of an individual can make it somewhat ambiguous as to just what that individual's biological sex is, the Bible, nevertheless, makes it clear that there are but two sexes, male and female. There are not three or more sexes. While, historically, Sex and Gender were always considered to be synonymous terms, those arguing for Transgender Theory (actually a vocal minority) argue that psychologically, scientifically, or even Biblically there can be a separation between one's biological sex and one's gender, Gender being briefly described as the manner one perceives oneself. That is to say that a biological male can perceive that they are a female, or a biological

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female can perceive that they are a male, or, in some cases, an individual of either biological sex, male or female, can perceive themselves as being neither male nor female. The author argues that there is no Biblical support for Transgender Theory, and that those who espouse it are espousing something which is completely non-Biblical. In his, excellently documented and stated view, there is no separation of Sex and Gender, there being two sexes and two genders, male and female, something which the Bible makes abundantly clear. He further argues that “Sexual Transitioning” is Biblically Unethical for both one seeking it and any medical professional performing it.

In a nutshell, this is what you will find in this book. However, the author does provide a very helpful historical outline of the evolution of the theory for separation of sex and gender. Included within this historical discussion are descriptions of “Queer Theory”, “Soft Transgender Theory”, and “Hard Transgender Theory”, all separate theories dealing with differences between Sex and Gender. Under so-called “Cisgender Theory” (what we might argue is “normal”) sex and gender are the same thing, and sex determines gender and vice versa. They are the same thing. Under “Soft Transgender Theory”, Sex is determined biologically, but Gender is determined by the manner in which one perceives one’s self. Under “Hard Transgender Theory”, Gender, one’s perception, determines both one’s sex and one’s gender. In other words, Gender Governs One’s Sex. Under “Queer Theory” (which I, candidly, am not sure I understand) one’s Sex is determined by one’s Gender, and one’s Gender is “performatively constituted” (meaning, as I understand it, one’s gender is sort of a social construct, and is determined by how one performs one’s Gender Role (i.e. performs as a male or female in accordance with social norms, etc.)), and can be somewhat fluid. The author analyzes each of these Transgender and Queer Theories, biblically, and demonstrates how they fail to pass the test of God’s Word.

I don’t want to understate the importance of much of the information contained in this book. My issue is not with the information *per se*, it is with what, in my view, is the overabundance of that information. That said, let me try to very briefly outline some of the information which this book provides:

1) THEOLOGICAL METHOD: We often hear about, and even teach about the importance of one having a good “Theological Method”, but then seldom describe or identify either an appropriate Theological Method or even the manner in which we have used it in approaching a theological issue. In Chapter 3, the author does a brilliant job of describing the various Theological Methods which were available to him, and includes excellent descriptions of *Biblical Exegesis*, *Biblical Theology*, *Systematic Theology*, and *Pastoral Theology*, and then describes the reasons why he has used, in approaching the theological issue of transgenderism through the use of a *theo-anthropological* and a *theo-ethical* perspective, which are grounded in Holy Scripture which must be “...allowed to govern and guide, illumine and evaluate, confirm and correct the interpretation and application of other sources of knowledge...(with the Bible functioning)...effectively as the fundamental, regulative control belief for theology”. (Note: You can almost hear echoes of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral in this statement.) In my opinion, for me personally, Chapter 3’s explanation of an Evangelical Theological Method provides the most helpful information in this book.

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2) KEVIN VANHOOZER'S DRAMA OF REDEMPTION MODEL: The author finds that Vanhoozer's Drama-of-Redemption Model provides a methodological paradigm guide in the author's endeavor to move beyond the Bible in search of theological responses to the transgender issue, that Model being one which views the Meta Narrative of the Bible as one which provides a drama (almost a play) in which we should seek to place ourselves. The author states that "going beyond the Bible biblically is ultimately a matter of participating in the great drama of redemption of which Scripture is the authoritative testimony and holy script."

3) THE INVENTION AND SUBVERSION OF GENDER: In Chapters 4 and 5 out author traces the historical evolution of human thinking, first about Sex (unbelievably, at one long past historical moment the belief was that there was but one sex, Male, and that women were Males whose male organs were inside their bodies), and secondly about the Invention of "Gender" as being different than, and differentiated from biological sex, and, eventually as, pursuant to some theories (Hard Transgenderism and Queer Theory holding that Gender even governing over biological sex). The emergence of Transgender theory is described. Interestingly enough are the descriptions of the opposition to transgender theory which is offered by those on the "feminist" side, meaning feminist women who strongly oppose the idea that a non-biological "woman" can actually be considered to be a woman who should be entitled to the same rights and privileges of a biological woman. Many of these feminists actually oppose the participation of transwomen, meaning men transitioning to a woman, in women's sports, women's private spaces, and women's activities generally.

4) RECLAIMING SEX AND GENDER: As pointed out in 3) above, "a major point of tension within Western Societies and a major source of division within feminism is whether biological males who identify as women should be regarded as women". Many feminist women dismiss the claims of transwomen and are openly hostile towards the intrusion of genetic males (even post-operative genetic males) into women-only spaces. There seemed to be only two options: either accept biological determinism and exclude transwomen from the category of being a woman, or reject biological determinism and include trans women as women. Queer theory stepped into the middle of this debate. Queer theorists hold that "gender is performatively constituted and that sex (as it is already 'gender') is determined by gender". So, sex is not grounded in biology, but is grounded in gender, and gender is grounded in one's performance as a male or female or neither. Gender/Sex is "open to different cultural constructions and is flexible (albeit grounded) in personal expressions." The many, overwhelming philosophical, psychological, medical and societal problems attaching to the separation of sex and gender and transgender theory are described in Chapter 6.

5) THE CHALLENGE POSED BY TRANSGENDER THEORY: "Despite the overwhelming problems (philosophical, psychological, medical, and social) faced by transgender theory, it is increasingly common for gender identity (i.e. one's 'internal sense of being male, female, both or neither') to be accepted as the infallible gauge of a person's gender and, in the harder form of transgender theory, for it to be regarded as the appropriate determinant of sex. So then, in popular parlance it is often said that 'gender is between your ears, and sex is between your legs'. Hard gender theory claims that what 'is between your ears' (i.e. one's subjective gender identity) reveals your true sex-regardless of what is between your legs." Hence the claims that some men menstruate or can become pregnant or that some women have penises. The philosophical,

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psychological, cultural, societal and medical arguments against these claims of transgender theory are described by our author.

6) PART THREE/SEX, GENDER, AND TRANSGENDER IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE: Look, I don't want to denigrate the extensive information provided by Parts 1 and 2 of this book, as those parts are generally described in 1) through 5) above, but it seems to me that FINALLY, in part 3 of the book, the Biblical Perspective on Sex, Gender and Transgender Theory we get to what I thought was to be the main point of the book. Here, starting with Genesis 1 and 2 (devoting 3 whole chapters to this effort), and moving forward through the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, text by text, the author presents, describes and argues in detail and with great persuasiveness for the proposition that God created mankind, male and female, in His Image, that the body, the biologically sexed body, is part of that which God so created and is precious to God, and that there are but two God created sexes, male and female (both in God's Image and of equal standing and importance before God), and that there are but two sexes and genders (synonymous terms) male and female. There is no separation between the biological sex of the individual and the individual's gender. Transgender theory is biblically refuted in huge detail.

7) CONCLUSION: "The central claim of transgender theory (in both its hard and soft forms) is that the sexed body *does not* determine the gendered self and, as a consequence, *should not* (or at least *need not*) ground gender identity, guide gender roles, and govern gender expression". The author has evaluated these claims by explaining the Evangelical Theological Method and how it can be used to so evaluate these Transgender Theory claims. He has, thereby, reached the following conclusions which are itemized at page 368 of his book:

"a) There are and remain only two human sexes-male and female. Intersex conditions do not constitute a third sex.

b) The two sexes are equal in dignity and value (both being made in the image of God) but different in form and function.

c) Because the biological (sex) undergirds the psychosocial cultural (gender), sexed embodiment is foundational to personal identity.

d) Human beings are psychosomatic unities. Because sex is first and foremost a bodily property, the soul takes its sex from the body (meaning that there is no such things as a body or brain of one of the two sexes and a soul of the other of the two sexes)

e) To the extent that the body's sex (or the male-female distinction) is denied, disguised, or diminished, gender will be inauthentic and unfaithful.

f) If a husband or wife transitions genders, the marriage and its witness will be formally (if not also substantially) undermined.

g) The divine purpose is to raise our bodies with their biological sex and the gender identity that corresponds to that sex. "

"In view of Scripture's consistent affirmation of both the sex-and-gender binary and the sex-and-gender connection, the claim of transgender theory has been found to be without foundation and so its implication does not follow. The sexed body *does* determine the gendered self and so *should* ground gender identity, guide gender roles, and govern gender expression." The Bible speaks to transgender issues in many and varied ways and it does so from its opening pages in Genesis.

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HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

I would normally tell you, Dear Reader, to read the entire book. I will not do so here, unless you want to make an extensively detailed study of Transgender Theory, how it came to be what it is, and how it is problematic even in the secular world, and then how it has no Biblical support. Otherwise, I think that you can get a more than adequate feel for and understanding of this book by reading its opening, excellent Introduction, then reviewing its Table of Contents/Index, and then reading its Conclusion, Chapter 12 beginning at page 367. You can thereby get a very good understanding of the book's contents, and can then make a decision about whether or not you want to read parts of it, meaning its individual Chapters and Parts. Note that an excellent Conclusion appears at the end of each Chapter and Part of the book, and, by reading these Conclusions, you can make a decision about whether or not you want to read part or all of the Chapter or Part. Furthermore, the various subparts of each Chapter are well highlighted by Headings. So, I think that you can really pick and choose what parts of this book you want to read in detail. Then you can put this book on the library shelf and hold it for future reference material.

IS THIS BOOK SUITABLE FOR RETENTION IN THE TEI LIBRARY OR FOR USE IN A TEI/ECLI CLASS?

This book should be held in the TEI library so that it can be consulted by those pastors or teachers or students who want to have a better understanding of how to approach the Transgender Theory issues or Transgenderism in general from a Biblical perspective. It can also serve to provide good lessons in how to develop and use a good Evangelical Theological Method. I don't believe that this book is suitable for use in any of TEI's/ECLI's classes, unless a special class dealing with transgenderism is formed. In that case, this book, or parts of it, and Preston Sprinkle's *Embodied* which is mentioned above and which is the subject matter of an earlier Review can provide some good textual material for discussion. Additionally, Chapter 3 of this book, in which the author describes various Theological Methods, and the manner in which he has selected one to be used in approaching the Transgender issue, can provide excellent information for a class on hermeneutics or a class in which Theological Method is being discussed or taught.

PERSONAL NOTE

The author admits that he is not trying to provide pastors, teachers, leaders, parents or others with practical advice about how to approach Transgender issues, or to help those wrestling with a transgender problem or someone who is struggling with such a problem or with so-called Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria, a problem which is confronting many of our children and young people. So, I am still wanting to know: What Do You Suggest That We Do to provide necessary help in a Godly, Loving manner?

Thank You

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Dan Simon