

USING TRANSGENDER LOGIC – A CALL TO RESPECT GOD’S IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT. How does one describe the identity of Judeo-Christian God? Theological responses usually begin by stating God’s essence (spirit, being, deity), describing God’s attributes (eternal, goodness, truth) or explaining God’s roles (creator, ruler, sustainer). Nevertheless, when Moses asked God, “Who are you?” God answered with a name, an individual term which revealed more than the actions or descriptions of an impersonal power, but one of a personal being named YHWH. The name of God opened the opportunity for humans to have a relationship with Deity. They had a way to address God and enter into dialogue. Yet, the question being raised today is how does that dialogue exist? Which pronouns should be used in conversation with the Divine? Should God be referred to as He, She, or They, or does it really matter? Transgender dogma has informed and insisted that society use the pronouns which match an individual’s proclaimed identity. Pronoun identification to the transgender community is of utmost importance. Recent literature emphasizes gender affirmation as a level of respect, acceptance of the individual, and critical to the healthy maintenance of a relationship. Transgender logic is grounded in the requirement that individuals determine personal pronouns for themselves. According to their basis of their logic, is God to be viewed as one gender, two genders, no gender, or all genders? This article will explore four different views and conclude with God’s opinion of chosen pronouns.

KEY WORDS: logic, gender, transgender, pronouns, God

Introduction

The transgender movement has brought to light a part of language most people take for granted – pronouns, those words to describe people when not using their name. Traditionally, pronouns referred to the biological birth gender of a person. Modern culture supports a new form of logic purported by the transgender community. This logical premise proposes that a pronoun should be a personalized title determined by the owner, rather than an assumption made by

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others. The inference suggests that pronouns are no longer to be associated with generalized grouping (such as male/female), but unique statements of each human being. The conclusion results in society being admonished not to presume knowledge based on gender expression (relating to how one looks or acts) but should always inquire after one’s gender identity in order to correctly address them. The practical implications ensue a preferred way of human interaction. Proper introductions are made by asking a new acquaintance to state their name followed by their correct pronouns, such as she/he/they/ze.

This logic explains how correct gender affirmation promotes the well-being of the individual (Glynn 2016: 336-344). A level of respect for personhood is defined by such addresses, as Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network teaches, “Including pronouns is a first step toward respecting people’s gender identity, working against cisnormativity, and creating a more welcoming space for people of all genders (GLSEN).” A glance at various gender-educating websites describes proper pronoun usage as validating and inclusive. Affirming a person’s identity is essential as it begins with recognition and acceptance of the individual, continues by reinforcement of a fixed identity (both to the person being addressed and to the one addressing), and concludes in displayed respect (McGlashan and Fitzpatrick 2018: 246, 250). The individual feels cared for and seen; thus, using correct pronouns is simply a basic courtesy. Psychologists assert this practice as “critical to the well-being of transgender populations” (Glynn 2016: 342).

While using correct pronouns provides “feeling validated in their gender expression, feeling supported, and subsequently, feeling less emotionally stressed,” conversely, “failing to appropriately use pronouns may damage...relationships” (Brown et al. 2020: 74, 80). Misgendering means labeling another person by a gender or pronoun in a manner they do not identify. Even using the term “preferred pronouns” minimizes the importance and reality of “chosen” pronouns (Hillard 2019: 561). “Gender isn’t a preference,” according to Reimagine Gender, “it’s just who we are!” (Reimagine Gender, n.d.). Better Up, a coaching and care company which assists organizations to develop inclusive workspaces, teaches, “When someone identifies themselves to you, you refer to them in that way as a sign of respect and acknowledgment. To do anything else is a not-so-subtle rejection of their identity. It communicates to these people that they aren’t welcome or accepted” (Cooks-Campbell, 2022). Those who have been misgendered describe their emotional response as dismissed, alienated, and humiliated. It is demoralizing to be purposefully labeled differently over and over. Present day studies are exploring the connection between invalidation and emotional dysregulation (Martell and Williams 2022: 200-202). Erin Clawson, attorney and advocate for transgender rights, contends, “Continuous and intentional misgen-

dering, or being referred to by the incorrect pronouns, can be mentally damaging to a transgender person” (Clawson 2019: 249).

It is highly offensive to misgender another person with purposeful intent or to continue to use the wrong pronoun with no effort to change. In some cases, intentionally misgendering another is considered part of a hate crime (Crown 2021). This is an international issue of importance. The Equal Representation group in Scotland insists that one always apologize for using a wrong gender pronoun. The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission of Australia lists “refusing to call someone by their preferred name or use their preferred pronouns” as the first example of gender identity discrimination. Egale, the Canada Human Rights Trust, cites purposefully not using the requested gender pronoun as transphobia and cisnormative bullying and harassment. The American Civil Liberties Union in Tennessee, USA describes trans children face:

extreme cases of harassment and danger. In fact, 76 percent of them already aren’t allowed to use their correct pronoun in the classroom, and 78 percent heard negative remarks about trans people in school. This number is severe, to the degree that it could even be deadly. Around 40 percent of trans people report a suicide attempt in their lifetime, with 92 percent of these attempts being made by young people under the age of 25. (ACLU 2022)

Incorrect identifying pronouns causes great distress and is increasingly being called an “act of violence.” Therefore, according to the trans logic, respecting a person’s personally chosen identity is the ethical thing to do.

How does this relate to God? If pronouns are important, then how does one address the Divine? “I am God, and there is none like me,” God says, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts that your thoughts” (Isaiah 46:9; 55:9). Biblical writers describe God as unique (Exodus 9:14; Jeremiah 10:6; 1 Samuel 2:2; 1 Kings 8:23) The Divine Being is not human or human-like. There is no physical body or equality of logic, so how can humans enter into a relationship with a God they cannot understand? How can they communicate and with which pronoun should they correctly address God? This article will review four views: one gender, two genders, no gender, all genders, and close each section with their statement of how to view and portray God (“thus, God should be referred to as”). The article will conclude with listening to God’s personal pronoun choice.

God Is One Gender

The names for God – *Yahweh*, *Elohim*, *Shaddai*, *Sebbaoth*, *Adonai*, *Kurios*, and *Theos* – are all in masculine gender (Singleton 1978). Scriptures overwhelmingly use nouns that represent a masculine identity, including *father*, “Jesus said... ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’” (John 20.17); *husband*, “For your Maker is your husband, the LORD OF HOSTS IS HIS NAME” (Isaiah 54.5); *king*, “For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD OF HOSTS” (Isaiah 6.5); and *master*, “Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; FOR I AM YOUR MASTER” (Jeremiah 3.14). While God’s attributes have been described at times in feminine metaphors and similes, there is a difference between attributes and identity. There is no biblical title ascribed to God as mother, wife, queen, or mistress. God’s personhood has never given a feminine name or referred to with feminine pronouns such as “she”, “her”, and “hers”.

Additionally, biblical writers refer to God’s pronouns as He/Him. The psalmist proclaims, “Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Psalm 100.3). Joseph declared, “God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” (Genesis 50.24). Prophets testify, “For the Lord God does nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3.7). Apostles teach, “is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also?” (Romans 3.29). Revelation exclaims, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God” (Revelation 21.3).

Some theologians explain the necessity for a masculine God to attest to His dominance and authority. Feminine imagery, traditionally given the role of submission and subordination, contradicts God’s character. Diodore of Tarsus taught “it is clear that [women who cover their heads] is not an image of God, although she shares in the same soul” (Parmentier 2002: 561). Gerald Bray summarizes this view, “The Bible says that men and women are both created in the image and likeness of God, but the New Testament makes it clear how this is to be understood. The male is created in God’s image directly, whereas the female is created in the image of the male, and hence of God-but indirectly” (Bray 2003: 270). Thus, masculine, not feminine, representations are worthy of God.

The greatest proof of the masculinity of God occurred in the incarnation. Jesus Christ, in the appearance of a man, represented the “visible fullness of the Godhead” (Colossians 2.9). Not only was he born a male, but it was also pre-determined and prophesied that he would be a man. His being a male is an historically proven fact, not something ascribed by male chauvinists or patriarchal leaders. Nowhere in Scripture or history was Jesus Christ said to have been a

woman. His names, *Iêsous* and *Christos*, definitively describe the Son of God in masculine terms. Jesus also instructed His disciples in whose masculine name to baptize and to pray (Matthew 6.9, 28:19).

Thus, God should be referred to as one gender – masculine. God is not to be compared to the pagan deities of the surrounding times and cultures, which represented themselves in dual genders of gods and goddesses. It is the sole use of male terminology which proves Him as unique. Kreeft and Tacelli observe, “The Jewish revelation was distinctive in its exclusively masculine pronoun because it was distinctive in its theology of the divine transcendence. That seems to be the main point of the masculine imagery” (Kreeft and Tacelli 1994: 98). The applications of this belief provide a foundation for God’s hierarchy and authority over mankind. Thomas Rees explains, “The first effect of distinguishing too sharply between God and all created being was to set Him above and apart from all the world” (Rees 1956: 1259). Yet, Rees continues, God reveals Himself preeminently as a Father,

It is his customary term for the Supreme Being, and it is noteworthy that Jesus’ usage has never been quite naturalized. We still say “God” where Jesus would have said “the Father.” He meant that the essential nature of God, and His relation to men, is best expressed by the attitude and relation of a father to his children; but God is Father in an infinitely higher and more perfect degree than any man. (Rees 1956: 1261)

God is always depicted as masculine, and Jesus always referred to Him in masculine terms. This is what makes Christianity different. To portray God as **He/Him**, separates the sacred from the secular.

God Is Two Genders

The traditional church asserts the canon of Scripture was written in the male language as God intended and translated correctly in a clearly understood masculine manner, but Reta Halteman Finger, one of the founders of the Christian feminist movement, disagrees with those who think the Bible must portray God as only male:

I cannot affirm this statement—that everything in the original documents of what became our Bible was exactly what God wanted to say. This omits the human aspect of the texts and the cultural limitations of the writers. It [claim that the Bible translation] must include the “masculinity of God’s words,” which I see as a reflection of patriarchal cultures that the gospel of Jesus came to challenge. (Finger 2018)

Christopher Seitz agrees that language is culturally bound and imperfectly reflects reality, and biblical language is “open to revision by subsequent cultures” (Seitz 2001: 24). Current theological culture has revised the views of the past. Modern biblical translations, broadened international philosophies, and examinations of patriarchal hierarchies, provide the motivation for believers to question ecclesiastical traditions. Is God truly male? If the answer is affirmative, feminist leader Mary Daly uncovers the eventual sinful temptation, “Since God is male, the male is God” (Achtmeier 2006: 1 citing Daly 1975: 21). Too much emphasis has been attributed to the God-male, male-God connection. Seitz observes that “God has a ‘name’ that refers directly to divinity, but ‘Father, Son, Holy Spirit’ is not it” (Seitz 2001: 24).

God chose to use many feminine terms and metaphors to self-represent in Scripture. In the Old Testament *Elohim* is the Creator. Joan Schaupp explains, “For women, the significance is that the *ruach Elohim* of Genesis 1.2 is a feminine noun accompanied with a feminine-ending verb form, *m’rechephet*. Thus, the ‘spirit of God hovering’ is a metaphorical allusion to the feminine in God” (Schaupp 2000: 18-19). This is the same verb phrase used in Deuteronomy 31.11 describing God as a mother eagle. A bear with her cubs and a hen with her chicks present other metaphors (Hosea 13.8; Matthew 23.37; Luke 13.34). Isaiah 46.3-4 also depicts God in maternal language with a womb and as one who carries and bears Israel. Isaiah also describes God as a woman in labor and a comforting mother (Isaiah 42.14; 66.13). In the New Testament, “Jesus-Sophia” utilizes feminine examples to teach about God’s kingdom (Johnson 2010: 57).

Contrary to traditional thought, feminine titles and descriptions were used in church history. Syriac theology portrayed the Holy Spirit as mother (Parmentier 2002: 580). Clement of Alexandria, Chrysostom, and Julian of Norwich were some who addressed God as both Father and Mother (Haddad 2004: 3-5). The Greek church fathers did “not feel constrained to use exclusively male images when they speak of Christ. Indeed, the fathers often do not hesitate, when they speak of Christ, to use female imagery” (Parmentier 2002: 572). While there are other recorded examples of those who acknowledged God’s maternal or feminine descriptions, feminists maintain that these images have been historically overlooked or downplayed to uphold the masculine-only preference.

Christian feminists believe that male-only terms condense the infinite Spirit to a one-sided character, restraining the worship of the vastness of God. Thompsett suggested broadening terminology to include “other images of God – drawn from the whole range of experience, social classes and cultures – are called for, lest we make our images of God too small” (Thompsett 1986:43). In order to balance alleged patriarchal and misogynic religious views, Christian feminists

placed an emphasis on celebrating a non-masculine form of God. God is no longer just the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob but also the God of Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel. In the early 1980s, the Inclusive Language Lectionary produced by the U.S. Council of Churches redefining terms like “Abba” from “Father” to “Father and Mother,” and changing Jesus’ relationship with God from “son” to “child” (Sharrock 2012: 91). The Methodist Church in Great Britain followed suit almost ten years later by deciding “the use of female imagery is compatible with faithfulness to Scripture--indeed Scripture itself points in this direction and also gives us examples of that imagery” (Sharrock 2012: 91).

The greatest proof of the masculinity and femininity of God occurred in the creation. The *imago Dei* refers to both genders. God says in Genesis 1:26, “Let us make *adam* in our image, after our likeness. And let *them* have dominion...” (emphasis added). It is clear that God is speaking of the plural mankind form, not of a single created male, and verse 27 further clarifies it is both sexes, male and female. Tribble emphasizes, “Clearly, ‘male and female’ correspond structurally to the image of God” (Tribble 1973: 17). On this *imago Dei* point, even conservative Christian groups like Focus on the Family agree, “according to the language of Scripture, it takes *both* man *and* woman – or, to put it another way, *mankind as a whole* – to reflect God’s image in a complete way” (FOTF 2017).

Feminist theology, like that of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, proposes that if masculine and feminine elements were created to equally represent God, then describing God in three masculine personages (Father, Son, and “male-like” Spirit) is unbalanced. “A Heavenly Father, Mother, and Son would seem more rational” (Stanton 1993: 14). Thus, Mary Daly’s quote inspired a redefinition of the description of God and a reversal of terminology. Instead of God’s persona promoting masculinity, feminist theology turned the focus to one of neutrality at least, as portrayed by Harriet Sherwood statement, “If I am made in the image of God, then God is not to be seen as male. God is God” (Sherwood 2015).

Thus, God should be referred to as two genders – masculine and feminine. The application of a two-gender view exposes a one-sided masculine or “Father-God” imagery which leads to a form of idolatry (Thompsett 1986: 43). Describing God as male is, in their view, too close to a manufactured likeness. Ruether insists:

We have to acknowledge the principle that the male has no special priority in imaging God... to take one image drawn from one gender and in one sociological context (that of the ruling class) as normative for God is to legitimate this gender and social group as the normative possessors of the image of God and representatives of God on earth. This is idolatry. (Ruether 1984: 16)

Feminists argue that even though mainstream Christianity teaches that both men and women are made in the image of God, in practicality it is the male image of God that is promoted and worshipped by the church (Johnson 2010: 42). The revealed Word demands that God is not to be pictured or worshiped as a male figure, or as the commandments teach, making an image of God in the likeness of a man (Exodus 20.4). To portray God as **He/Her** is properly directed veneration.

God Is No Gender

Tension exists in the feminist view, a struggle between choosing to prefer the masculine or feminine form of God. Phyllis Trible, described as an “esteemed pioneer in the text-based exploration of women and gender in Scripture,” expressed her own initial struggle:

I face a terrible dilemma: Choose ye this day whom you will serve: the God of the fathers or the God of sisterhood. If the God of the fathers, then the Bible supplies models for your slavery. If the God of sisterhood, then you must reject patriarchal religion and go forth without models to claim your freedom. (Trible 1973: 31)

If a one-sided gender view leads to an idolatrous idea of God, would comparing God to two-genders solve the problem or would it compound the problem making God an idol in the form of both women and men? Other Christian feminists recognize the danger of identifying God in either direction and prefer neutrality above feminizing God. Rachel Treweek, female Anglican bishop of Gloucester, questioned the exclusivity of calling God mother. “There’s something about the whole connotation of ‘mother’ that has a sense of dependency for me. It’s not how I want to be looked at. I see myself as a leader, as leading from among people” (Sherwood 2015). Trible came to an important realization that her problem need not be an either/or decision but found a third way to “reread (not rewrite) the Bible without the blinders of [patriarchy]... to translate biblical faith without sexism” (Trible 1973: 31). The important point these Christian feminists realize is “not that God must now be called feminine and not masculine, but that God must not be understood as exclusively either masculine or feminine” (Thompson 1986: 43).

However, gender-neutral pronouns such as “It/They” do not fit a personal God. Gail Ramshaw, in her work “De Divinis Nominibus: The Gender of God,” presents a solution of using God/Godself/Divine as the best terms for deity (Ramshaw 1988: 202). Madeleine L’Engle uses a creative expression of El/Elself, based on the Hebrew name for God (L’Engle 2017: 13). Treweek keeps it simple;

not desirous to offend, she simply uses the term “God” rather than using any pronouns such as He or She (Sherwood 2015).

The realization that God is neither feminine nor masculine is not a new concept. Historically, the Judeo-Christian teachings refer to God as having no sex/gender. Moses warned the Israelites, “Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD SPOKE TO YOU AT HOREB OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE FIRE, beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of *male or female*” (Deuteronomy 4.15-16, emphasis added). Instead of a form, God interacted with people in the forms of fire, clouds, and wind. The Psalmist asks in Psalm 139.7, “Where can I go from your Spirit?” The New Testament also expresses that God is spirit (John 4.24; 2 Corinthians 3.17). God does not have a material body, and therefore, is neither male nor female.

Different Christian branches agree that God is non-gendered. The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry teaches, “God does not have a gender. He is neither male nor female. Gender is a biological characteristic, and God is not a biological being” (Slick 2014). The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: He is God” (Part One, Section Two, Chapter One, Article I, Paragraph 2, Subpoint II). Nicolae Moșoiu admits the traditional Orthodox view is “consistent with the scriptural testimony which did not assign gender to the divine being” (Mosoiu 2016: 59). Anglican bishop, Hugh Montefiore passionately expresses,

Does this mean that God is male? The very question verges on the absurd... God exists eternally, and in the eternal sphere there is no sexual differentiation. *God has no gender.* He is neither male nor female... The fact that we use the masculine pronoun in referring to him points to the inadequacy of our language, not to the maleness of God. (Montefiore 1994: 130-131, emphasis in original)

Thus, God should be referred to as no gender – neither masculine nor feminine. However, this is a difficult practice to uphold as pronoun habits are difficult to break and the desire is strong to relate to God on personal terms. Analogous language is provided for mankind’s benefit in revelation, yet it must always be remembered that God transcends a human description and comprehension. Isaiah 55:8-9 reiterates, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways,’ declares the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” The

application of this view reminds humans that God is greater than all creation, as Elihu admits, “Behold, God is great, and we know him not” (Job 36.26). Humans are honored to represent a reflection of the Divine. While both sexes must be embraced for humanity to correctly understand the image of the Godhead, they offer a limited image-bearing because God is neither male nor female. To portray God as **YHWH/God** (no gender) shows a proper humility for who God is.

God Is All Genders

God does not have a biological sex, but does that mean that God is genderless, or can humans choose to call God whatever they favor because God is sexless? Tribble taught that God is a God of the masculine and of the feminine. She explained that the genders are not at war with each other, but complementary to each other. Likewise, while God is worshiped as a judge and king, there is an equal balance of God as servant, helper, nurturer, and liberator. “We need to see the dynamic relationship between God as the source of our being and God as the empowerer of our aspiration and growth toward new being, toward redeemed and fulfilled humanity” (Ruether 1984: 17). The idea that God is not “either/or” plants seeds for a broader view of God to grow.

In recent years, the movement of inclusion has been made not to proclaim that God is neither male nor female, but that God *is both* masculine and feminine *and* everything in between. Kate Bornstein, author of *My New Gender Workbook*, teaches that “No gender is a space containing all genders – those that exist, and those as yet unimagined” (Bornstein 2013: 28). To celebrate the International Transgender Day of Visibility, Anna Sheetz from the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City prays,

Oh, God of pronouns, we give praise to the great one, the one who was identifiable as God. “I am what I am,” you say. The great “they”, the incarnate he and she, the God of trans-being. Impregnating Mary, fathering God. Breastfeeding God of many breasts, you... shatter all stereotypes, making every single person male and female. Male and female, intersex, non-binary in your image. Exactly in your image. (Sheetz 2022: 38, 39)

As described in the prayer, the modern view of God’s image has transformed to an all-inclusive entity from which modern-day humans have evolved. God’s changed image developed along two distinct trajectories.

First is the concept that God originally created one human as a mix of male and female, not as two distinct beings. This theory finds support in the Jewish Talmud. The Hebrew term *adam* is a generic term for mankind. It comes from a word-play for “taken from the earth” (*ha-’adamah*) and could be translated as

“earth creature” (*ha-’adam*). Patriarchal tradition is accused to have taken this universal *adam* and merged it with Adam, the name given to the first man, as the same entity, to state their case that God created a male being first. However, it is argued, the creation account in Genesis teaches that God created *adam* (“generic mankind”) first, and that this human was a creature bisexually formed (they/them) (Horowitz 1979: 184-185). Kiser suggested genderless phraseology to reflect this such as, “Generic Human Creature from the Dust which was then later separated (Genesis 2.21-23) into male and female” (Kiser 2013). The genders became differentiated in Genesis 2 when woman was created out of man, and Milne reinforces that even after physical/biological separation, there seemed to be a singularity or equality in name; it was only after the fall, Milne states, that the feminine form was named “Eve” (Milne 1989). The importance of declaring *adam* as a hermaphrodite, a human containing both the essence of male and female while not being distinctly male or female, would clearly demonstrate that mankind was created as the similar image of a gender-inclusive God. Elijah Marcelle-Ezekiel Westerfield describes the results of surveyed transgender participants who “felt a connection with a higher power and specifically viewed themselves as made as transgender by God” (Westerfield 2012: iii). The practical outcome of such a view can imply that mankind is not only able to call God whatever they like, but more importantly, that humans should seek to be fluid in gender in order to image God more correctly.

A second foundational support describes the godhead as a complete fulfillment of a spectrum. Traditional Christianity defines creation in binary extremes: darkness/light, land/water, birds/fish, men/women. Trans Christians argue that creation is not clearly defined separations but a spectrum of options within categories. For example, God separated the land from the water, yet nature still includes rivers that run through the land and contains mud where land and water are mixed together. Darkness and light include times of dusk and dawn. Flying fish and flightless birds display such a spectrum. Austen Hartke uses Revelation 1.8 as God’s self-description. “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,’ says the Lord.” Hartke points out that God is not just the extremes at either end but instead uses that terminology to explain that the Divinity encompasses all things, from one extreme to the other and everything in between (Hartke 2017: 12:50). Likewise, when Genesis reveals that both male and female are made in the image of God, that does not mean that God is two separate things (male and female), but the spectrum of everything between those two endpoints. God is all-inclusive of every gender state and, because of the infinite nature of the deity, even more diversified than humans can imagine. To limit God to the revealed “male and female” binary is to restrict God’s boundless being. Transgen-

der believers feel pity for those who cannot understand, “Unfortunately, many people are stuck with that view of scripture. And it’s sad because it limits them. It limits their view of the world. It limits their view of God. The box they keep their God in is too small” (Westerfield 2012: 38). When God creates men and women in Genesis 1, it occurs after creating opposites in every other corner of creation. Humans, then, are also created in an opposite pair – male and female. However, a literal reading of the binary restrictions in Genesis 1 constrains the creative work of God. The totality of Scripture shows that God’s creation exists in spectrums.

Thus, God should be referred to as all gender – all masculine, feminine, and the entire spectrum of possibilities. The application of diverging from a God who is stuck in a particular category (male, binary, or non-gendered) to a God who is fluid demonstrates itself practically in the worship of such a God. This is not a God that transcends creation, but a God who encompasses all variants of creation. Because He/She/They identifies with us, then we can identify with Him/Her/Them. Sheetz closes the prayer by stating,

God of pronouns who said, “You can call me he or she or they, whatever makes you feel closest to me.” Invisible and visible god, on this day where visibility and celebration, belatedness, affirmation, and acceptance is the bare minimum, remind us that you are the god of pronouns, so you affirm and you celebrate them. (Sheetz 2001: 49:35)

The attractiveness of this view lies in the key applications to God’s trans-nature and God’s accessibility, acceptance, and affirmation. God can be viewed in whatever way a believer chooses, in the way that makes God “feel closest” to them. Acceptance is always available because there is nothing on the spectrum that God is not, so there is no fear of being shunned or being called different. God provides only affirmation and celebration because humans represent the encapsulation of all aspects of the divinity without distinctions. To portray God as **They/Them** honors a limitless God (Sprecht 2022).

Misgendering God – A Call for Consistent Logic

As explained in the introduction, the trans movement uses their form of logic to urge society to become all inclusive, representative, and welcoming, which begins with the adherence to personally defined labels and pronouns. Respect, they claim, is of utmost importance. The logic of the trans community states that people are to defer their usage of pronouns and gender identity according to the desires of the individual. The introduction of this article summarized how the correct use of pronouns makes people feel: validated, recognized, accepted,

reinforced (applicable to both parties), cared for, seen, and above all respected. If the image-bearers respond in this way, how much more would God demand such treatment?

However, in the arguments for God's gender identity or neutrality, the logical deference is not afforded to God with the same passion. Indeed, the very actions that outrage the advocates of gender inclusivity are the same actions they commit toward God. The trans Christian community prefers to relate to God in a manner that makes them feel most comfortable and accepted, not based on God's personal revelation. To intentionally call God a different gender is damaging to the relationship, a "not-so-subtle" rejection of God's identity, a communication that God is not welcome or accepted. It is an act of dismissal, alienation, and humiliation. Using the trans logic and terminology, to ascribe to an infinite God *any* other label than God's revealed choice is the worst act of violence, an eternal, immoral hate crime.

God's opinion is not sought out, but rather the relationship's terminology is determined by the human's desire to connect. Being human has limitations on choices and freedoms, which is why humans in life and literature aspire to have all the attributes of God. However, as image bearers of the divine, humans represent God but are not exact copies of God in every way. Humanness is bound to the sexual construct of gender, and the autonomous choices and freedoms mankind thinks it deserves contradicts the existing implanted divine image in being both male and female. This limitation results in deep frustration, driving their personal words, thoughts and experiences to interpret God and the Bible, instead of allowing God and the Word to interpret their lives.

Human views are constantly changing. The image of God has transformed from being "neither male nor female" to being "all male, female, intersex, and non-binary." *This is an inversion of the historical view of the Divine.* Generations constantly vary their ideals of what image-bearing looks like between overtly masculine and feminine characteristics or non-sexual and fluid essences. Thus, they are making God in their image. Singleton implores these generations, "We should not try to make God in our image, whether male or female. We should not give Him a gender any more than we should try to give His skin a particular color, or select His clothes from those worn by a particular class, or make His eyes slanted or unslanted" (Singleton 1978). Christianity is not a religion based on myths and oral traditions passed down and developed over time. Christianity is based on revelation – God revealing the Divine to mankind through the unchanging, inerrant Word. Kreeft and Tacelli challenge, "One issue is whether we have the authority to change the names of God used by Christ, the Bible and the church. The traditional defense of masculine imagery for God rests on the

premise that the Bible is divine revelation, not culturally relative, negotiable and changeable” (Kreeft and Tacelli 1994: 98). That Word is truth, as it has been revealed by a holy God who cannot lie and does not change. What is known about God is only what God has chosen to reveal.

Today, many followers of God do not find it important to discover what has been revealed. The National Center for Transgender Equality reported that 66% of American transgender people were part of a religious community during a point in their lives (Anderson and McGuire 2021: 390). Sadly, there is not a majority of transpeople who are willing to defend God’s position. Out of all the differing views of God’s gender, believers in the trans community should use their own logic and shout the loudest to respect the gender pronouns God has chosen. As stated at the beginning, their premise proposed that pronouns are personalized titles determined by the owners, rather than an assumption made by others. If one is to remain true to transgender logic, then they must answer the question, how is a person on the outside able determine another’s personal identity? The logical answer states that it starts by asking what the chosen pronoun is and how an individual would like to be addressed and identified.

Conclusions. Respecting the Pronouns God Uses for Himself

What pronouns has God chosen to represent the Divine identity? He has made it clearly known what His chosen pronouns are because God is not a God of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). God may be a spirit, and He may be sexless, but God does have a gender – and He has identified Himself as He/Him. Isaiah 43:10-13, 25 states (emphasis added),

“You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “AND MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN, THAT YOU MAY KNOW AND BELIEVE ME AND UNDERSTAND THAT **I am he**. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, AND BESIDES ME THERE IS NO SAVIOR. I DECLARED AND SAVED AND PROCLAIMED, WHEN THERE WAS NO STRANGE GOD AMONG YOU; AND YOU ARE MY WITNESSES,” DECLARES THE LORD, “AND I AM GOD. ALSO HENCEFORTH **I am he**; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work... I, **I am he** who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”

Despite claims that patriarchal religion has leaned toward a masculine partiality or omitted texts that confirmed feminine descriptions, Scripture overwhelmingly points to a He/Him preference. Consider a few additional passages where God’s own voice describes His essence as He (emphasis added).

7. Deuteronomy 32.39a – “See now that **I, even I, am he**, and there is no god beside me;”⁸ Isaiah 48.12 – “Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! **I am he**; I am the first, and I am the last.
9. Isaiah 41.4 – I, the LORD, THE FIRST, AND WITH THE LAST; **I am he**.
10. Isaiah 51.12 – “I, **I am he** who comforts you,”
11. Revelation 2.23 – And all the churches will know that **I am he** who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

Even in Isaiah 46.3-4, the passage provided as proof of God’s femininity, God says “Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age **I am he**.”

God has chosen His gender and has identified His identity through His revelation. Therefore, all mankind should respect that He has a right to be known and called by that gender. C.S. Lewis sums up the argument perfectly,

Christians think that God Himself has taught us how to speak of Him. To say that it does not matter is to say either that all the masculine imagery is not inspired, is merely human in origin, or else that, though inspired, it is quite arbitrary and unessential. And this is surely intolerable; or, if tolerable, it is an argument... against Christianity. (Lewis 1970: 237)

Transgender logic should agree, misgendering the Divine must be surely intolerable. God unambiguously affirms, “I am God, and my chosen pronouns are He/Him.” Anything less than accepting and embracing the preferred masculine pronouns of God is therefore an everlatsting act of violence towards **He/Him**.

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