

## Transgenders' as Gender Refugees: An Analysis of Faith and Reason in a Technological Age

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### Abstract

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“Then God said, “Let Us (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) make man in Our image, according to Our likeness [not physical, but a spiritual personality and moral likeness]” Genesis 1:26. This Judeo-Christian understanding of the creation of man is being challenged by Transgenders' and their desire to change their gender from that which was assigned to them at birth. For long man has looked at two genders, male and female but transgendered people challenge this narrative by proposing an alternate gender. One which is more fluid and not limited to sexuality. With technological advancements in the medical field, Gen 1: 27 raises disturbing questions. Could transgenders also be made in the image and likeness of God or are they gender outlaws? As human beings we all possess the special identity of image of God. This article therefore, grapples with the question of God's action of making human beings in His own image and likeness in relation to the technological crisis that has advanced sex change and hormonal treatments. Inspired by the works of Brendan Sweetman, Pope John Paul II and Scott Appleby, this paper challenges Christians to go out of their comfort zone and embrace transgenders as individuals like them. Individuals with dignity. Individuals with the same Heavenly Father such as them. It proposes respect for peace especially in the church by being, militants for peace.

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**Keywords:** Faith, Gender, Reason, Transgender and Technology

### Introduction

Are men and women different? If so, what makes them different? Or maybe the question should be, what makes you certain that you belong to a specific gender? Is it as obvious as your physical anatomy and reproductive organs? Or is there more to it?” At first glance, the physical anatomy seems to be the deciding factor. But, let us take a case where a man is involved in an accident and his reproductive organs are destroyed and he loses his ability to produce sperms. Would you still consider him to be a man? How would he define himself without that capacity, without that aspect that makes him a man? Certainly, gender is not in the genitalia. Could it be that a man defines himself by the fact that he has more testosterone than a woman? What happens when those levels drop to the point which is considered feminine or where a female has more levels of testosterone than a man?

What of a woman? Perhaps a woman defines herself by her ability to bear a child and menstruation. Is it not possible to be a woman and not be able to bear a child or even menstruate? Certainly. Clearly it is not about the physical anatomy or the chromosomal make up because in the cases above the notions of gender fluidly mixed. So how would you know certainly that you belong to a certain gender? Is it a matter of just knowing that you belong in a specific category, male or female? Well, what does it mean to be gender fluid, like transgender people who know that, their body does not match their brain sex? Could some of these differences between sexes be considered as social constructs? Should gender be constrained to only male and female or can human beings express a number of alternate genders?

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At the genesis of every epistemological inquiry, some basic questions linger on the mind: “Who am I?”, “Where am I from and where am I going?” ... The responses often given already carry a path to knowledge. The religious practitioner appeals to a Divine of his origin, while a scientist answers with proof from evidence (*ex videre*). Based on the responses given, a handful of men have been led to see a contradiction between these two sources of knowledge. During the early medieval period, this problem was expressed in terms of faith and reason. Natural reason was seen as the handmaid of theology. Later, it was viewed as such, that reason alone cannot give us answers to some of these questions, while faith presents us with unquestionable answers-dogmas even though the purview of sexuality has for the longest period been the “focus of fierce ethical and moral debate” (Weeks, 2009, p. 2).

The advent of technology, which attempts to free itself of all metaphysical presuppositions proposed in both philosophy and theology, posits another dimension, some philosophers think that technology already conflicts with faith since its methodology and other intricacies do not follow faith criteria. Others think that the two courses are independent and so, to believe in technology one must let go of faith and to do faith, let go of technology. Yet, others think that it is possible to have a dialogue. While others hold that it is possible to integrate faith, reason and technology.

Ours is a generation where man sees faith as a hindrance to freedom and as such man has been seeking to use technological advancement to give meaning to his existence. The quest for freedom has become man’s goal and man is ready to take any risk to prove that he is free from the chains of faith. Transgender and sex change has been one of the areas that man has used to show that he lives in a world where he is free to do whatever he desires, particularly in cases where he/she feels that the body does not reflect his inner feeling of who he/she is.

People with a fluid gender identity that is neither male nor female confront the ontological theory that gender falls into set binary categories. The gender binary system is repeatedly problematized by men and women who transgress gender stereotypes, by sissy boys and tomboys, by intersex people and by transgender people and many others. Sexual orientation binaries are destabilized when people move between and beyond gay and straight identities. Other methods of conceptualizing gender and sexuality which take into account the full range of lived genders rather than merely male and female exist but are highly contentious. Gender and sexual dimorphism are still frequently re-inscribed and cemented in society. People who move beyond or exist outside of the binary system are methodically socially barred through the process of social institutions, church institutions and discourses that privilege heterosexuals over transsexual and intersex people. The insertion of gender diverse people in theology, law, sociology and in various talks about gender leads to a problematization of the postulation which rests on the impression that male and female are only categories and these categories are discrete. This paper seeks to unpack some of the mysteries that lies with transgenders and sex change through the lens of faith, reason and technology. It champions Brendan Sweetman’s idea of focusing on lower order beliefs which are more inclusive; focusing on the common grounds we share as human beings rather than higher order beliefs. The paper will also have a faint aroma of Scott Appleby’s notion of “militants for peace”.

## **1.0 Definitions**

### **1.1 Transgender**

The transgender community contend that transgender is “an umbrella category” which involves different groups of people and practices that challenge the norms of gender vis-à-vis sexuality. This category includes “transvestites, cross-dressers, queer people, intersex individuals’ female and male drag, and some butch/femme practices” (Hines & Sanger, 2010, p. 1). It is imperative to note that, transgenders are “people who change gender but do not have body modification surgeries” (Ekins & King, 2010, pp. 50-51). This group is known as transgenderists have also been referred to as “gender blending’, ‘gender mixing’, ‘gender fucking’ and ‘gender crossing’ people (Ekins & King, 2010, p. 1). In this work the term transgender will be used to refer to individuals who cross traditional gender boundaries, that is, people who change their gender and in turn have body modification surgeries or hormonal treatments to adopt the identity of the opposite gender (Ekins & King, 2010, pp. 50-51). Transgenders were initially diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder (GID), currently referred to as gender dimorphism whose cure was sex-assignment surgery (Tellis & Bala, 2015, p. 154).

## 1.2 Reason

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary reason is “a sufficient ground of explanation or of logical defense; especially: something (such as a principle or law) that supports a conclusion or explains a fact.” Charles Hodge as presented by Anderson added that reason is “that by which a person comprehends the meaning of a proposition” (Anderson, 2008).

## 1.3 Technology

The word technology stems from the Greek word *technologia* which means the “systematic treatment of an art or craft” (American Heritage Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> Editions, 2000). It will be used in this piece of literature to denote the systematic advancement of medicine to enable sex change because “technologies are not just exterior aids but also interior transformations of consciousness” (Ong, 2013, p. 81). Medical advancements transform the consciousness of transgenders by allowing them to reconstruct their bodies unequivocally transforming their lives.

## 1.4 Faith

In this literature two definitions of faith will be employed. The first is that faith is, “a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence towards us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise of Christ; both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Allen, 2009, p. 84). However, when using a definition such as the one above, it limits the readers understanding of the term faith as it purely religious and linked to the person of the Holy Spirit and Christ. It is in this regard that Philip Smith notes that there are two kinds of faith—thin faith and thick faith. “Thin faith is the trust in our basic epistemic faculties” and “thick faith on the other hand is belief in some comprehensive doctrine” (Smith, 2014, p. 10). These two definitions are imperative in including individuals of all faith and no faith at all in this highly-contested debate.

## 2.0 Context Of Emergence Of Transgender

There have existed fierce debates among scholars about what gender is. The word transgender was coined in the 1980s, but the meanings as we know it today was given in 1992 after it appeared in a small pamphlet by Lislle Feinberg. The term transgender was used to refer to people whose personal identities fall within the spectrum of “transvestite” and “transsexual” (transvestite will mean someone who simply changes into the dresses of the opposite sex and transsexual will be someone who completely changes their genitals to become a member of the other gender group). The term transgender became more of an umbrella word that covered different individuals with different sexual orientations that moved beyond the traditional categories of male and female (Stryker, 2006, p. 4). Transgenders’ therefore raise questions about the construction of gender identities “particularly the extent to which we can shape and re-shape individual and collective identities” (Hines & Sanger, , 2010, p. 12).

These people spend a great portion of their lives trying to express an innate sense of gender which is different from their birth sex. History has taught us that people are often afraid of the unknown, and since gender has traditionally been regarded as just male and female, transgenderist tend to face negative reactions and rejections when their orientation is noticed in society. Many societies look at transgenders as perverts, people with mental issues or sexual deviants. Because of lack of understanding between sex and gender, or sexuality and gender, many societies tend to associate transgenders with homosexuals. At other times people believe transgender is a matter of lifestyle choices this view ignores the medical basis of brain sex condition (Sen, 2005, pp. 1-2).

Like all other human beings in society who seek to live in peace and harmony, transgender men and women desire to live free in a society where they are respected, and this can only be achieved if they are granted equal rights and opportunities that are warranted by their dignity as members of the community in which they belong. In our contemporary society, transgender people still face challenges at all levels and they are publicly discriminated upon and mostly regarded as outcast (Sen, 2005, p. 2).

Transgendered people are usually not comfortable with their bodies and this creates distress to them as they possess characteristics that do not fit with their identities as either male or female. This represents an embarrassment for them as they are forced into identities by society that don’t represent their biological make up. They tend to remain timid as society does not understand them and their needs (Sen, 2005, pp. 7-9). Due to the stereotyping attitudes towards transgender men and women, many societies have resorted to use both legal regulations and social policies to suppress any sort of gender variance in society. Because of these laws and policies, transgenders’ have come to face discrimination at work place, in public spaces and even violence (Bolich, 2008, p. 115).

Discrimination against transgender men and women is common especially in societies where being a transgender is regarded as a mental disorder. In other situations, they are discriminated upon in employment opportunities and many have even lost their jobs because of being transgender. Transgender men and women have witnessed hate crimes, and this get worse because many laws passed against hate crimes are usually based only on religion, race and colour with no regard for sex or transgender as such these crimes against the transgendered is hardly recognized as hate crimes in society (Bolich, 2008, pp. 116-120).

In the United Kingdom, the Gender Recognition Act 2004 expects transgenderits to provide proof of 'living in a gender'. How is one meant to provide proof of 'living in a gender'? This criterion questions the idea of what gender really is and how an individual relates to his or her gender identity. How does one 'acquire' gender? What does it mean to 'live in' a gender? Therefore, the Gender Recognition Act births binary conceptions of gender that have its foundation on an aesthetic view of the body. Sharon Cowan in her article '*Gender is no substitute for sex*' claims that a right or wrong body discourse 'depends on the dichotomous framework of sex and gender in order to make sense of the non-sense of transsexuality'" (Cowan, 2005,p. 72). She believes that this dichotomy expects 'post-operative transsexual people to fit within existing sex and gender structures. Despite the vagueness of the legal language transgender people present themselves as either men or women because their bodies fit a specific aesthetic model of gender. Andrew Sharpe maintains that 'it is clearly the expectation of the government that surgery will occur' (Sharpe, 2007, p. 71) if one keeps his or her 'wrong body' Sharpe maintains that this obstructs the 'diagnosis of gender dysphoria' (Sharpe, 2007, p. 72). In both arguments the state promises to alter the legal status only to the point that a person matches the form of a gender binary. The law eliminates the body as both the standard for gauging whether an individual should be handed a specific legal status. This sort of accounts as evidence for proving that one has lived in, is living in and planned to live in his or her acquired gender. Since the Act does not require individuals to undergo re-assignment surgery and hormone therapy how can a person show that they have taken decisive steps to fully live in the acquired gender. Therefore, Sharpe is correct to express the fact that recognition turns on how one appears in a gender. However, parliamentary debates show that this appearance is disjointed from how the body conforms to certain pre-determined gender norms therefore the above must be the test for legal recognition not whether the person looks the part in the acquired gender (Hc Deb. (23 February, 2004), Col. 53). This is unsuitable and incoherent to our wider aspiration to act in response to the needs and concerns of a small minority group. The main point is the fact that one should appear in the gender without looking the part. It therefore shifts our understanding of recognition. One takes on a gendered identity when they take on a place in society. In the perspective of the GRA the practice of recognition accounts for who is seen as a man or woman legally and can claim rights. Without recognition an individual's human rights are limited.

In Iran sex change is legal and is subsidized by the Government. This is uncommon for a county in the Persian Gulf region. The Shiite nation permitted sex-change surgeries as early as the 1980s when Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa which authorized the procedures. Although in Iran homosexuality is punishable by death and there have been claims that the government authorizes sex-change surgeries in a bid to prevent cases of homosexual acts. Sex change takes on some coercive power (Janet , 2009). Shiite teachings hold that sometimes an individual's true identity can be hidden. Ayatollah Khomeini therefore held that unlike Sunni teachings which hold that an individual's "true gender" cannot be changed, in order to unearth the true gender of an individual who feels trapped in their own body, surgery and hormonal treatment can be used. He believed that an individual's gender does not change when they get the surgery, the only change is that the hidden self becomes more visible (Dede, 2015). Although on the surface the sex-change surgeries seem positive not all transgenders' want to undergo surgery "risking loss of sensation and sexual pleasure to achieve comfort in their bodies" (Calafia, 1997, p. 247) when they can have hormonal treatments.

### 3.0 Technological Innovations and Transgender

Self-awareness has over time given more meaning to human life. The ability of man to think, research, and experiment has put him in a position to explore and uncover the secrets of nature. Man no longer depend completely on environment but he uses his ability to plan and work to improve his human condition in society. Contrary to ancient beliefs about transgendered people who were perceived as perverts or outcast in some societies, mankind is making some unexpected discoveries about the biology of the transgendered (Delgado, 1973, p. 34). Contemporary man is beginning to understand his biological makeup, he is acquiring the information and technical knowhow needed to modify his own biology, in this case understanding that transgendered people are not necessarily perverts but that is how they were biologically made Delgado, 1973, p. 38).

From time, immemorial, mankind had the false idea that the only specie that existed among the human race was just male and female. The natural reaction to the absurd or something we do not understand is fear, laughter or ridicule. This is the case with transgendered people in society. They are considered immoral, absurd and unacceptable. As growing awareness of different genders in society, and as technological and scientific innovations encompasses our present civilization, value systems of family, lifestyle, and religion are falling apart leaving a great void in society (Delgado, 1973, p. 35). Transgenderism and sex change are challenging the very root of man's belief in the Supreme Being who created just man and woman in his own image. With all these challenges to technology, it is reasonable to take advantage of the quality lifestyle technology has provided us while at the same time searching for solutions to the problems that are created by technology (Delgado, 1973, p. 37).

Indeed, medical technological advancements in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has led to outgrowth of transgenderism and sex change. "Without endocrinology, there would be no hormonal treatment or genital surgery" (Hausman, 1995, p. vii). Although not all transgenders want to carry out sex changes, the advancements in the medical arena has meant that transgenders' are considered "subjects of those who engineer them" (Hausman, 1995, p. 9) by presenting 'orthodox' gender as being easy to manipulate through discourse and that man and woman (gender) is socially constructed. Technology has now paved the way for gender-bending gender recognition via non-normative bodily aesthetics. Drawing from Ong's (1992) notion of technology affecting the consciousness of beings, "transgendered people are not only born into the wrong body, they are people who bridge male/female categories or combine them in new ways" (Califia, 1997, p. 247) thereby, challenging the gender-founded dichotomy of what heterosexuality means through religious eyes (Sharpe K. , 2010, p. 187).

#### 4.0 Technology and Faith

To clearly establish the mutual relationship which scientific study of matter and religion can and must have, we need to understand that often their relationship has been that between opposites. Science is seen as an evil force and other times it is seen as a saviour. The philosopher Teilhard holds that the idea is not to make science valuable and indispensable, but to make us love science in a Christian way, by establishing two propositions: "analysis in scientific procedure leads us at first away from God; but science shows us the systematic structure of the world and so leads us back to the centre of things, God" (Chardin, 1965, p. 21).

With the advent of science, "creative and providential power that directs the world has gradually degenerated in the eyes of science into a cluster of evolutionary laws..." (Chardin, 1965, p. 21) Teilhard shows how scientific analysis has led us away from God when he says, "one after the other, Godhead, mortality, life, feeling, continuity... have been wiped out, to be replaced by a swarm of ever more impersonal elements... everything is, ultimately, nothing but plurality and unconsciousness. A critical look into sciences and how that has emerged as an essential component in our understanding of God's plan. Man is still the pivotal point of the universe, even in scientific research. "The scientist realizes better than most of us that the rationality on which science depends can be found only in a single creature, and that this creature alone has the incredible power of encompassing the universe in the sweep of his mind" (McMullen, 1968, p. 37).

Scientific progress should not slacken logically our effort rather it serves to make the impetus of our moral and religious acts more certain and asserting itself in us more imperatively. In fact, "the scientific synthesis of man (...) is continued just as necessarily in moral progress as the chemical synthesis of proteins is continued in biological manifestations" (Chardin, 1965, p. 33).

Science has taught us by the means of its analytic method "that in the direction in which things become complete in unity, there must lie a supreme centre of convergence and consistence, in which everything is knit together and holds together" (Chardin, 1965, p. 34). All religions preach purity, charity and self-denial. But what are these if they do not lead to unity-unification of man in himself (purity); unification of men among themselves (charity) and the unification of all in one (self-denial). The divine one is not added to the world. He is the alpha and omega, the principle and end, the foundation stone and key stone, the plenitude and plenifier. He is the one who consummates all things and gives them their consistence. He is the single centre into which our science ventures when it descends the road of matter and the past (Chardin, 1965, p. 34).

Faith and science seem to agree on the criterion of objectivity. This is so because, like science, the truth of faith (dogma) is disengaged from the arbitrariness of subjectivity; it is the same for all. There, however, there exists a striking difference between the two. Whereas scientific truth is impersonal and by its nature imposes itself; the truth of faith entails a free personal engagement and implies a personal encounter. The concern for objectivity in science however could be the great profit to the education towards a right attitude of faith. This is especially so because it is frequent to see faith deviate into sentimentalism and subjectivism by its appropriation of personal views.

Whilst clearly technology has fostered improvements in the sphere of transgenders' and has unequivocally transformed how we think, how we see things and our cultural values, some individuals believe that technology should be used in a much more positive way than is being used in the current transgender debate. Monsma and Eerdmans in their book *Responsible Technology* hold that, technology should be used to give God thanks. They quote Colossians 3:17 which states that, "whatever you do, whether in word or deed do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him". Their primary argument is that although most people are not directly linked to the creation and re-invention of some of these technologies which do not give thanks or glory to God, they are consumers of such technologies which goes against Christian fundamentals (Monsma & Eerdmans, 2010, p. 2).

Many Christians firmly believe that gender-bending is a violation of God's intentional plan for sex and sexuality. Transgenderists are therefore seen as gender outlaws as they go against the two sexes- male and female. Although God's plan for sexuality and gender is being seen to turn upside down, we must be militants of peace. We must find common grounds that can allow some form of interaction. Gender-benders often find themselves in challenging positions when it comes to integrating religious beliefs into their everyday lives. Aside from passages in the Holy Bible which refer to eunuchs such as The Acts of the Apostles 8:26-40 and Isaiah 56:3-5, the issues of transgender identity are rarely addressed which leaves a vacuum in their lives. Transgenders have struggles reconciling their identity and their faith. It is our view that that when the bible states that, "And God made all things and was pleased with them." That includes transgender individuals. Every human being is "fearfully and beautifully made". Nobody is a mistake. Everyone is made in God's image and likeness- male and female, all shades and races. Transgender people are just part of the variances of God's creation on earth. One could possibly argue that because the bible gives distinctions between males and females and not a continuum of sexuality between the two poles, that those are the only two recognized forms of human sexuality. Such reasoning does not give grounds for claims such as a man feeling trapped in a woman's body and vice versa. Could it be that all these distinctions are merely learned and socially constructed?

## 5.0 Faith and Reason

John Paul II relates how the ancients used the adage, "Know thyself" to become part and parcel with knowing natural law. We can know things in two different ways, we can know them by the means of scientific knowledge, or by faith. Faith will help us to apply our reason to give us a glimpse of comprehensibility in the face of ambiguities such as evil and injustice in the world. Ultimately both philosophy and reasoned faith (theology) aim at the same purpose, to make sense out of our existence and point to the right "path of life" (John Paul II, 1998, no. 1). "There are three sources of information available to an individual through which to search for knowledge about the self: The Physical World (a highly visible, and quite easily measurable source of information about one's self e.g. weight, height etc.), the Social World, and the Psychological World (describes our inner world; looking inwards and directly consulting our attitudes, feelings and thoughts for meaning)". Rosmini, however contended that faith without reason withers into myth and superstition. Man's intellectual life is in constant development, "Man is required to engage in discourse his intellect because he is rational (Wallace, 1977, p. 13). Consulting one's own thoughts and feelings can result in meaningful self-knowledge.

Faith always and must go along reason for where reasoning ends, faith takes over. For when we accept the truths of faith, reason intervenes and helps us understand better what we believe which becomes part of our make-up. St. Anselm said, "Faith seeks understanding and faith is the starting point for the search of truth" (Wallace, 1977, p. 49). And that the safest way to arrive at the truth is starting from faith, or revelation and not from reason. In the search for truth, is "the good of the intellect what the intellect exists for to know the truth. It is in man's capacity to know the truth" (Kelly, 2002, p. 31). So clearly is seen that faith and reason are so interwoven as "reason seeks to integrate the unknown with the known, faith seeks to integrate the unknown with the divine" (Joshua, 1988, p. 171). Also, "every human being is a philosopher and by our nature, we desire to know and understand. In pursuing enquiry, we are realizing the good of the mind which aims at truth" (Joshua, 1988, p. 172).

For both are important to man in knowing himself “reason is the necessary coefficient of faith, faith without reason is mute and reason without faith is deaf” (Joshua, 1988, p. 172). The light of the Gospel shines high above all human systems. The divine wisdom is utterly perfect and has no need of any philosophical system to save mankind. But there is no conflict between revelation and true philosophy for truth cannot contradict truth. Philosophy then in company with the truth assists the mind by giving it a natural orientation towards and a remote preparation for faith. Philosophy through the use of reason dispels errors, prejudices and doubts which appear as obstacles to full assent to revelation (Wallace, 1977, pp. 13-18). Ancient philosophical teachings furnished the corpus for medieval theological formation. Such as the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle were amended by the schoolmen. Philosophy perfects the exposition of theology making it clearer and enriching its dogmas with new, positive and well-founded proofs. Man’s knowledge involves a movement from reason to revelation or from philosophy to theology. The theologian’s two roles include refuting error and imparting necessary knowledge which are furnished by reason in philosophy.

### **6.0 Finding Meaning in Human Existence**

The craving to find meaning in human existence is an ineradicable and inevitable yearning in man. The desire for happiness underlies the search to find meaning in life. The condition of meaninglessness in life is an age-old problem which has led to horrendous consequences on man. Due to man’s spiritual nature, he is rational, free and responsible and as such he can transcend himself, his experiences, his interest in power, wealth, and sensual pleasure which provide solely ephemeral satisfaction and find lasting and ultimate meaning in God alone. Scholars like Frankl noted that no one can give another person meaning. He insists that there is always meaning in life, at least potentially, up to the last moment (Onah, 2000, p. 103). It is left to everyone to discover this meaning by himself or herself in whatever situation he or she finds himself or herself. The use of the word ‘discovery’ is very important because it is meant to emphasize that meaning is not invented as if life in itself is meaningless and man is the one to make meaning out of life; a point which Sartre holds (Onah, 2000, p. 103). This is not the view of Frankl who sees life as essentially and unconditionally meaningful. Also, meaning is subjective in the sense that it is personal. Each person perceives meaning from his perspective. Worthy of note is that failure to find meaning in life can lead to very unpleasant consequences.

Transgendered people over time have tried to find meaning in life. They have faced rejection from the society and this has pushed them to seek means and measures that enable them to be recognized, appreciated by society, and their dignity as human beings recognized. Human existence, which is specifically human mode of being, is meaningful. True enough, Frankl admits that the meaning of life always changes, but it never ceases to exist (Frankl, 1959, p. 113). Philosophers like Frankl contends that “man is not free from conditions, be they biological or psychological or sociological in nature, but he is and always remains, free to take a stand toward these conditions, he always retains the freedom to choose his attitude toward them” (Frankl, 1964, p. 43).

It is in this light that we can assert that man who has been made by God for himself can find lasting and ultimate meaning in God alone. Our lives will remain restless until we find rest in God alone (Augustine, 1960, p. 43). Therefore, man can find life meaningful only when he fully comprehends himself and he can fully understand himself only by knowing and acknowledging the Being from whom his existence springs.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has presented a tapestry of issues that affirm the complex nature of faith, reason and technology vis-à-vis transgendered persons and sex change. The interplay between faith and reason has been murky and controversial with many claims that, “It is logically impossible to reconcile reason and faith” (Smith G. , 1979, p. 101). Apostle Paul discusses this clearly in Ephesians 4:18 when he addresses the hardness of hearts which is due to a level of spiritual ignorance. In other words, a person can distort reason to the level where it cannot be used to showcase true conclusions from what is there. God is not known through ignorance but by reason and this is enhanced by philosophy. Thus, philosophy is the natural friend and faithful servant of theology. Men wish to be led towards goodness and to faith itself by their reason. Thus, both philosophy and theology benefit mankind.

In that light the French Philosopher Thomas Kuhn’s “paradigm shift” is imperative in addressing the schema between transgenders’, faith, reason and technology. Intellectual worldviews need to change so that we can reshape policies and eventually the future into a more accepting space for differences. The technological advancements in the medical field has greatly contributed to the already brewing confrontation to worrying heights.

This article is targeted to challenge not just ‘religious folk’ but to educators of peace, lay men and common *mwanachi* (citizen) as we all value one thing, human dignity. Peace is the, positive realization of the dignity of the entire human family. We must be “pursuers of peace” at all levels (Smock, 2001, p. 2). “When mankind can evolve technologically to new heights and form what Marshal McLuhan calls global village. Why is it not possible for us to evolve mentally as well to establish a peaceful world?” (Nazar Ul Islam Wani: 2013, p. 1) Drawing from the language of Brendan Sweetman, how can we frame transgenderism and sex change so that it falls in the category of lower order beliefs and not higher order beliefs? How can we avoid this enclavish situation that would resist and reject any kind of dialogue from people considered outliers? Appleby stated in his book, *Ambivalence of the Sacred* that, we have “to identify and enlarge the common ground we share” (Appleby, 2000, p. 279). Our humanity, love for others, respect for others should be that middle-common ground. It is an indisputable and comprehensible truth that each man wants his life to be worth living, good and meaningful. But unfortunately, society has made transgendered people to think that life is a meaningless project. This is either because in their search for meaning in life, they are frustrated along the way or completely miss the right means to arrive at their goal.

According to Appleby religious peacemakers are important to the whole peace process. The peace process referred to in this case, is that which involves valuing people from all walks of life, accepting them. The church should be a place where all types of people can walk into, a sort of spiritual hospital where the sickly are not discriminated against or refused to see the Doctor of Doctors. At the end of the day in as much as one may not agree with the choices of transgender people, they are still children of The Most High. Religion ought to be a rheostat. The church ought to create a space where such outliers feel comfortable to fellowship with others of the same faith. A kind of home for them and not a hostile judgmental environment. God has love and appreciation for the things He created and as those made in His image and likeness, we ought to reflect that love to others who are not like us. Failure to do so, one’s view of the world is limited and therefore their view of God is boxed and limited. Peace should be an ontological vocation for each human person. Everyone should heed the “Hippocratic command to do no harm.” The onus is on us as militants for peace to reduce the conflictual nature of the current faith-based wars as Appleby would say. In other words, whatever steps we take, we shouldn’t make a bad situation worse. We should not “other” another group of people. We need to stop all forms of religious disparagement. This is the time that religion must show its real soul

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