

ECO Theology

Gender, Sexuality, and the Kingdom
Breakout

2025





The Standing Theology Committee

Questions Curated via Slido:





The Book

Coupon for half off at ECO Store



**Gender, Sex, and the Kingdom
Theology Resources**

2025





The Problem

- Rise of LGBT and Fall of Christendom... is there linkage?
- Strategies of engagement typically try to save the church by political alignment
- **How do we love one another as Christ loved us?**



Words Matter with the Word of God

The problem with the church is that our gospels have been subverted, so our behavior manifests the world rather than Jesus.



Yarhouse's 3 Modes

1. Divergence
2. Disability
3. Diversity

Source: Yarhouse, Mark A. *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015.



Hamartiology Creates Soteriology

Typically, people talk about Jesus as a *solution*, which means we define him by the *problem*.



3 Gospels

1. Forensic Gospel (**D**ivergence)
2. Therapeutic Gospel (**D**isability)
3. Affirmation or Liberation Gospel (**D**iversity)



Forensic/Law and Order

Problem: Sin is lawbreaking

Solution:

1. Jesus kept the law
2. Jesus paid the legal debt by his sacrifice
3. Acceptance of Jesus transfers legal guilt



Forensic/Law and Order

Practices:

1. “Just stop sinning”
2. Moral responsibility falls on the individual



Forensic Ecclesial Outcomes

Best Case:

- Help establish the right order of society, or at least the church
- United front of morally upright people influencing the world with good



Forensic Ecclesial Outcomes

Worst Case:

- Behave before belonging (exclusion of visible sinners)
- Vilification of sinners. “Us and them”
- Moral policing
- Deviant behavior creates secrecy/hiding
- Revelation of secrets destroys trust and trustworthiness



Forensic Problems

Alignment to right-wing of culture war — failure to be ambassadors.

Soteriological logic rooted in medieval justice concepts no longer valid:

- Capital Punishment
- Transferrable guilt
- Scapegoat mechanism, punishment of innocent for the wicked



Forensic Problems

Partial Truth

- Sin is indeed lawbreaking (but this is a symptom of rebellion)
- God, in Jesus is forgiving debt, not paying it. “Erasing” Col 2:13-14
- See books like Rillera, *Lamb of the Free* (Cascade, 2024)



Therapeutic Gospel

Problem: Sin is brokenness

Solutions:

1. Jesus fixes a broken system
2. Jesus heals broken people



Therapeutic Gospel

Practices:

1. Spiritual Formation/Disciplines
secular form in Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
2. Group talk therapy (small groups)
3. Interventions (professional therapists when amateur pastors won't do)



Therapeutic Ecclesial Outcomes

Best Case:

- Welcoming group... “We’re all broken sinners here”
- Desire for moral change through safe and consensual practices/therapeutic interventions



Therapeutic Ecclesial Outcomes

Worst Case:

- Bait and Switch (“Come as you are, but we want you to change to be like us”)
- Gaslighting (“We’re not the problem, you are”)
- Therapy is about normalization, not about truth...
waffling
- Conversion Therapy



Therapeutic Problems

Partial Truth

- Sin is never called a “fall” in the Bible
- Sin is never described as “brokenness”
- Rom 8:20-21 Creation “subjected to futility” by God “in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”
- Sin isn’t brokenness, it’s enslavement, waiting for the church to do its job



Affirmation/Liberation Gospel

Problem: Sin is Bigotry, Ignorance

Solutions:

1. Jesus loves (read affirms) everyone
2. Church must join the moral arc of the universe as it heads toward justice through inclusivity



Affirmation/Liberation Gospel

Practices:

1. Protest and Direct Action
2. Political engagement
3. Celebratory rituals



Affirmation Ecclesial Outcomes

Best Case:

- Inclusive, welcoming community
- Supports social minorities and outcasts
- Are nice people



Affirmation Ecclesial Outcomes

Worst Case:

- Cheap grace
- Cheerleader church
- Political action requires leftist alignment and mission drift
- Pointless institution persisting on endowments



Affirmation Problems

Partially true

- Sin is enslavement... but to the powers
- “Affirmation” is a form of colonialism
- The arc of the moral universe is toward Babylon, not the kingdom. The confusion is mistaking the world for the kingdom (i.e. Christendom)



3 Ways to Culture War and Harm

Forensic: Right wing

Therapy: False middle waffling

Affirmation: Left wing



The 4th Way

Jesus is not a *solution* to a problem. Jesus is the king.
Kingship of Jesus *reveals* sin.



Biblical Gospel: The Kingdom of God

- Kingdom means kingdom, whole body, incarnate (not spiritual only)
- Inclusion is by allegiance/fidelity/*pistis*
- Mission is to reveal the kingdom:
A community that shows what it looks like when and where God is king.
 - “Lord of Time” and *Sabbath Gospel*

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ECO Theology and The Seminary

The best of the church is in the seminary, the best of the seminary is in the church





Q&A

