

European Forum for LGBTI Christian Groups 38th Annual Conference

June 25/26 to 30th 2019



We are pleased to announce that registration for the London Conference of the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups is now officially open. The first date includes the Trans Pre-conference, which is being arranged by members of The Sibyls.

The Sibyls is in its second year of membership of the Forum, and the annual conference has landed on our doorstep in London, so we would like to encourage as many Sibyls as possible to sign up, and find out first-hand what the Forum is and does, and why the membership groups are at the heart of everything. The trans Pre-conference runs from Wednesday after lunch to Thursday Lunchtime. Details of it are given on the next page:

Here is where you can register: Click on this link for:
[the registration page for London 2019.](#)

If you couldn't possibly afford to attend this event, it is possible to apply for a scholarship through the Agape Fund, but be aware that these awards are very limited and the window for application will close soon.

The Trans Pre-conference is a great chance to meet other trans people from many countries. Shanon Ferguson gives some details here:

"The Trans Preconference has been running now for 4 years and was started to offer a safe space for those who identify as trans* to gather, to assist and advise the Board regarding trans* issues and to offer information and education to other members".*

This year we will have the opportunity to explore the relationship between gender and sexuality, pastoral issues, being trans* in the UK and the work of the European Forum Trans Working Group.

There will be time to relax and socialise with music and a little pampering (hand/foot massage)!

It would be great to see you in London and have a strong Sibyls delegation. If you have any questions about registration etc, I can hopefully provide any information you need. elainesommers007@yahoo.co.uk

Finally, here's a short video of what we did two years ago when our conference attendees joined the Equality March in Gdansk Poland. Can you spot me in purple clutching our Forum banner?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cALtRG0Lsyk>

Continued:



**Trans Pre-Conference
At The
European Forum for LGBTI
Christian Groups
38th Annual Conference June 25/26 to 30th
2019**



The Trans pre-conference is open to all trans* people, friends, families supporters and allies

The aim of the preconference is to offer a safe space for those who identify as trans* to gather, to help each other, to assist and advise the Board regarding trans* issues, and to provide information and education to other members. Therefore the focus is on providing a framework for free sharing and discussion. It is not on the dissemination of new techniques. .

There are four sessions in the Trans pre-conference: The provisional programme is as follows

Wednesday 25th June

Session 1: Pastoral Concerns

This session will be introduced by the Rev Dr Tina Beardsley. Christina (Tina) Beardsley is a Church of England priest and former hospital chaplain, who worked for over three decades in pastoral ministry. From 2006 to 2014 Tina was a Changing Attitude, England Trustee for Transgender people. She co-leads the Sibyls workshop 'gender, sexuality and spirituality'. She is the author of *The Transsexual Person Is My Neighbour: Pastoral Guidelines for Christian Clergy, Pastors and Congregations*. In addition she is co-author and editor of two Sibyls Books "*This is My Body*" and "*Transfaith*", both published by Darton Longman and Todd. This is soon to be followed by a third book which is currently being written

Dinner

Session 2: Transgender Issues in the United Kingdom and Broader Perspectives

This session will also relate to broader worldwide concerns. It will be organised by the Sibyls Committee. An informal panel discussion will take place. It is expected that the panel members will include those from different religious traditions, including Catholics and Quakers. It is hoped that someone who is able to represent trans issues in the current Church of England "*Living in Love and Faith*" project, which has been given the goal of seeking to develop inclusive teaching on LGBTI matters, will also be present

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Thursday 26th June

Session 3: Issues of Gender and Sexuality from Trans Perspectives

This will include consideration of how these relate to the experiences of gender and sexually variant people more generally. The session will be introduced by Dr Susan Gilchrist: Susan, now retired, has taught in higher education for nearly 50 years. From 1969 she has been directly involved in the work of reconciliation in violent tribal conflict situations. She has engaged in social and scientific studies and research into the driving forces behind identity formation and gender dysphoria together with the interactions that are encountered. A second theme in her work is an extended social, historical and theological study on the implications of this research for the Christian Church. Details of this work and papers and presentations which have been made or submitted to senior HNS panels, conferences, parliamentary committees and other groups are given in her website www.tgdr.co.uk

Session 4: The Work of the European Forum on Transgender Issues

This session will be convened by the Rev. Shanon Ferguson, formerly Senior Pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of North London and CEO of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. Shanon is currently a research student and volunteer Chaplain at Roehampton University. Shanon is sponsored by the Suzanna Wesley Foundation to carry out doctoral studies *in 'Transgression, Transfiguration, Transcendence: investigating gender binaries from the perspective of Christian spirituality and the Bible.'* The research involves not only questioning and offering alternatives to the commonly held view that gender is, and only can be, understood as male or female, but also looks at the impact this has on both the individual and the church and their relationship with each other and a Trinitarian God. Shanon is a co-president of the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups and will be considering trans" issue from the Group's perspective.

Elaine Sommers is a member of the Sibyls Committee and is a Co-President of the European Forum. Shanon Ferguson has been a Co-President of the European Forum. Susan Gilchrist is a member of the Sibyls Committee and on the London Planning group for the European forum

Draft version prepared by Susan Gilchrist