

# FROM AGENDER TO ZE

A Glossary for the Gender Identity Revolution

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# From Agender to Ze

## A Glossary for the Gender Identity Revolution

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*originally for The Gospel Coalition*

graphics by Sara Dixon



# Introduction

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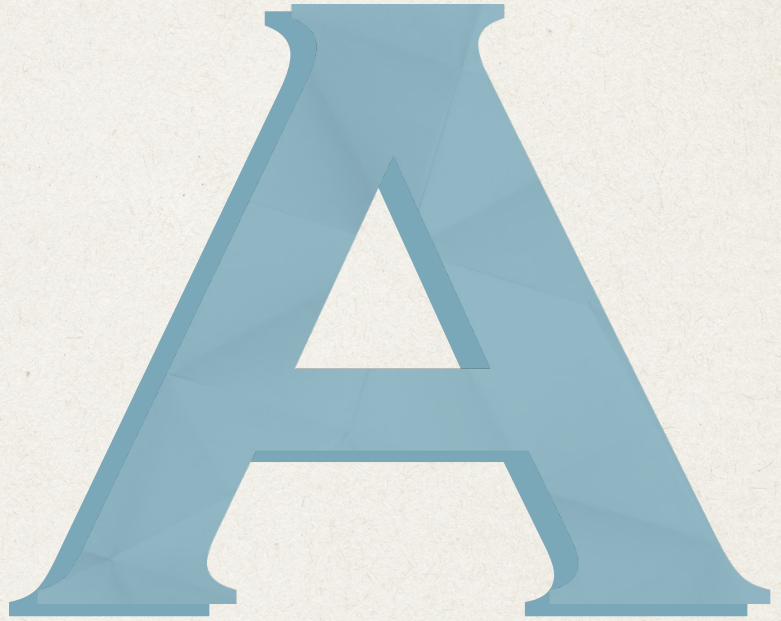
As Christians, we look to the Bible as our authority when speaking or thinking on any issue. In reference to issues surrounding the transgender movement, Vaughan Roberts reminds us that we aren't talking about 'issues' but 'image-bearers.'<sup>1</sup> In our discussions surrounding this complex reality, it is important that we educate ourselves and speak with truth and compassion – remembering that all truth is ultimately compassionate.

Learning the language and terms associated with this movement has proved to be challenging even among proponents of the movement. As Nancy Pearcey states, “The term transgender has been expanded into an umbrella term covering several categories that used to be distinct...”<sup>2</sup> This booklet seeks to provide a concise definition of terms associated with transgenderism. It is not exhaustive and will, most likely, need revisions from time-to-time. That said, RYM hopes this is a ministry tool that will assist students, parents, & youth workers in loving their neighbors well.

[Note: The initial form of this resource appeared as an article at The Gospel Coalition entitled, *From Agender to Ze: A Glossary for the Gender Identity Revolution* by: Joe Carter.]







## Agender

A term for people who consider themselves to be without a gender ('a-' meaning "without"). Sometimes referred to as genderless, genderfree, non-gendered, or ungendered person.

## Androphilia

A term used to refer to sexual attraction to men or masculinity that can be used as an alternative to a gender binary heterosexual or homosexual orientation. (See also: gynephilia.)



# Bigender

A person who has two gender identities or expressions, either at the same time, at different times, or in different social situations. (See also: genderfluid.)

# Binary

A term for people who associate with typical male or female behaviors. The opposite of non-binary or genderqueer. (See also: cisgender.)





# Bisexual

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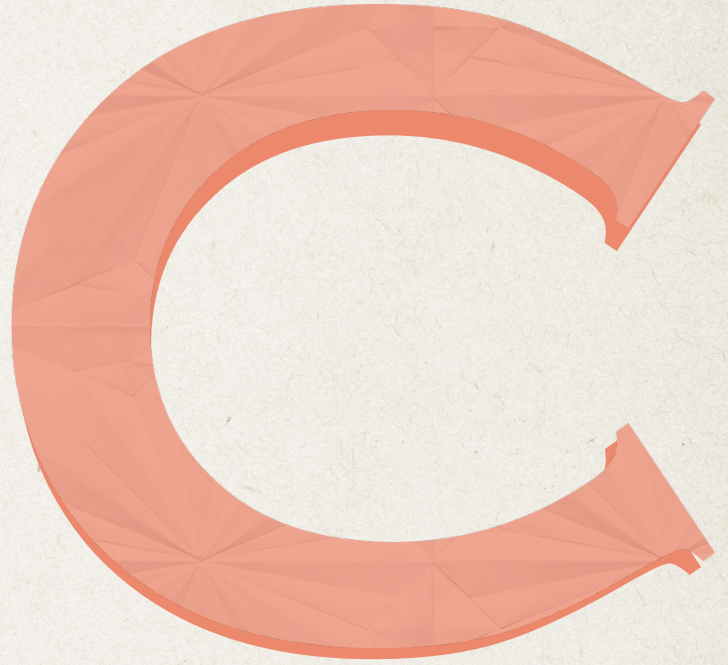
A person who is attracted to two sexes or two genders, but not necessarily simultaneously or equally. Although the term used to be defined as a person who is attracted to both genders or both sexes, that has been replaced by the number two (2) since the LGBT community believes there are not only two sexes or two genders but multiple gender identities. Within the LGBTQ community, a person who is sexually attracted to more than two biological sexes or gender identities is often referred to as pansexual or omnisexual.

# Butch

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A term used by the LGBTQ community to refer to masculine gender expression or gender identity. A nonbinary butch is a person who holds a nonbinary gender identity and a butch gender expression, or claiming butch as an identity outside of the gender binary. (See also: femme.)





# Cisgender

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A term used to refer to people who have a match between the gender they were assigned at birth, their bodies, and their personal identity. Cisgender is often used within the LGBTQ community to refer to people who are not transgender. (In general, Christians should avoid using this term since it implies that cisgender and transgender are equally normative, i.e., the opposite of “heteronormative.”)



# Femme

A term used by the LGBTQ community to refer to feminine gender expression or gender identity. A nonbinary femme is a person who holds a nonbinary gender identity and a femme gender expression, or claiming femme as an identity outside of the gender binary. (See also: butch.)

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# Gay

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Until the mid-20th century, the term gay was originally used to refer to feelings of being “carefree,” “happy,” or “bright and showy,” though it also added, in the late 17th century, the meaning “addicted to pleasures and dissipations” implying a that a person was uninhibited by moral constraints. In the 1960s, the term began to be used in reference to people attracted to members of the same sex who often found the term “homosexual” to be too clinical or critical. Currently, the term “gay” is used to refer to men attracted to people who identify as men, though it is also used colloquially as an umbrella term to include all LGBTQ people. (The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation considers the term “homosexual” to be offensive and recommends that journalists use the term “gay.”)





# Gender Identity

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A term used to refer to an individual's personal sense of identity as masculine or feminine, or some combination of each. The LGBTQ community and their allies (e.g., the Obama administration) consider gender to be a trait that exists along a continuum and is not inherently rooted in biology or physical expressions.

# Genderfluid

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A term used for people who prefer to be flexible about their gender identity. They may fluctuate between genders (a man one minute, a woman the next, a third sex later in the day) or express multiple gender identities at the same time.



# Genderqueer

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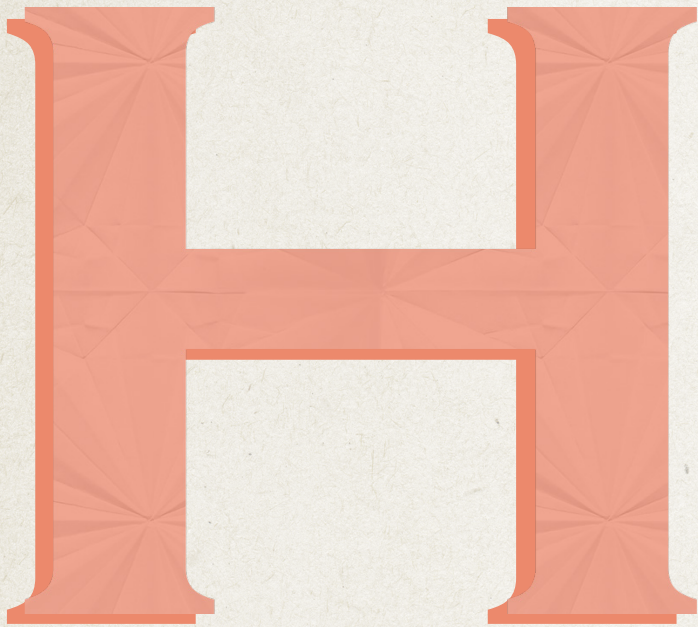
An umbrella term for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine. Sometimes referred to as non-binary, gender-expansive, pangender, polygender). (See also: Bigender, Trigender.)

# Gynephilia

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A term used to refer to sexual attraction to women or femininity that can be used as an alternative to a gender binary homosexual or heterosexual orientation.





# Heteronormative

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Popularized in the early 1990s in Queer Theory, the term refers to lifestyle norms that hold that people fall into distinct and complementary genders (man and woman) based on biology with natural roles in life that may or may not be socially constructed. Heteronormativity presumes that heterosexual behavior is the norm for sexual practices and that sexual and marital relations are only fitting between a man and a woman. (The Christian worldview is “heteronormative.” The Bible clearly presents gender and heterosexual sex within the bounds of marriage as part of the goodness of God’s created order.)



# Intergender

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A term for people who have a gender identity in the middle between the binary genders of female and male, and may be a mix of both.

# Intersex

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Intersex is a general term for a variety of physical conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. The variations in sex characteristics may include chromosomes, gonads, or genitals that do not allow an individual to be distinctly identified as male or female. Intersex is a physical condition while transgender is a psychological condition. The vast majority of people with intersex conditions identify as male or female rather than transgender or transsexual. (The term "hermaphrodite" is now considered outdated, inaccurate, and offensive as a reference to people who are intersex.)





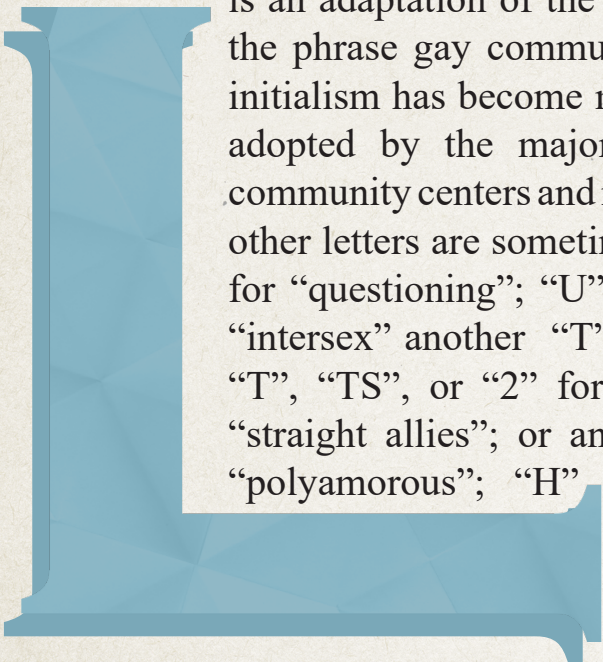
# Lesbian

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The term most widely used in the English language to describe sexual and romantic attraction between people who identify as females. The word is derived from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos, home to Sappho (6th-century BC), a female poet that proclaimed her love for girls. The term “gay and lesbian” became more popular in 1970s as a way of acknowledging the two broad sexual-political communities that were part of the gay liberation movement.

# LGBTQ

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An initialism that collectively refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and Queer communities. In use since the 1990s, the term is an adaptation of the initialism LGB, which itself started replacing the phrase gay community beginning in the mid-to-late 1980s. The initialism has become mainstream as a self-designation and has been adopted by the majority of sexuality and gender identity-based community centers and media in the United States. Along with LGBTQ, other letters are sometimes added. Other variants include: An extra Q for “questioning”; “U” for “unsure”; “C” for “curious”; an “I” for “intersex” another “T” for “transsexual” or “transvestite”; another “T”, “TS”, or “2” for “Two-Spirit” persons; an “A” or “SA” for “straight allies”; or an “A” for “asexual”; “P” for “pansexual” or “polyamorous”; “H” for “HIV-affected”; and “O” for “other.”



A large, stylized letter 'M' in a vibrant orange color. The interior of the 'M' is filled with a complex, low-poly geometric pattern, giving it a faceted, crystalline appearance.

# Man/Woman

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In LGBT parlance, terms that refer to a person's chosen gender identity, regardless of biological characteristics.

# Non-binary

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See “genderqueer.”

A large, dark grey letter 'N' with a textured, mottled appearance, resembling stone or weathered metal. It has a solid, blocky design with a slightly distressed surface.



# Queer

An umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities that are not heterosexual, heteronormative, or gender-binary. The term is still controversial, even within the LGBTQ community, because it was once used as a homosexual slur until it was re-appropriated in the 1990s. The range of what “queer” includes varies, though in addition to referring to LGBT-identifying people, it can also encompass: pansexual, pomosexual, intersexual, genderqueer, asexual, and autosexual people, and even gender normative heterosexuals whose sexual orientations or activities place them outside the heterosexual-defined mainstream, e.g., BDSM practitioners, or polyamorous persons. (In academia, the term “queer” and its verbal use, “queering,” indicate the study of literature, academic fields, and other social and cultural areas from a non-heteronormative perspective.)

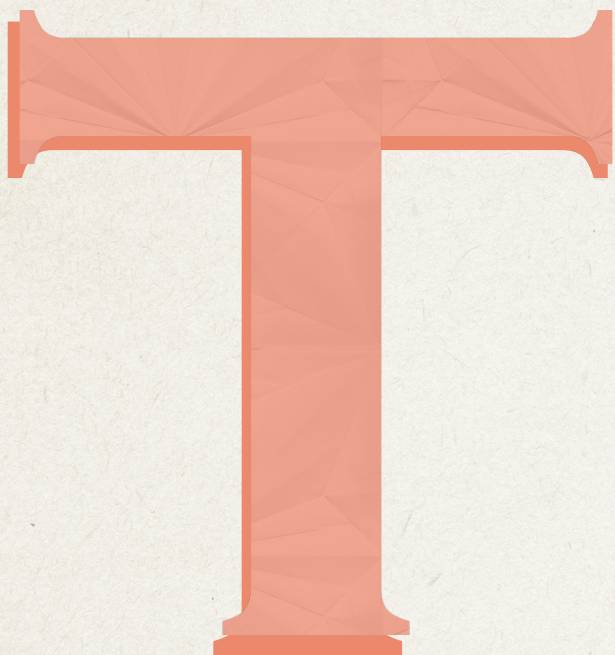




# Sex

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The term was previously used to distinguish between the physical identification assigned as at birth (e.g., male, female, or intersex). It's now used by LGBT groups and their allies (such as the Obama administration) as synonymous with a self-chosen gender identity.



# Third gender

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A concept in which individuals are categorized, either by themselves or by society, as neither man nor woman (though not necessarily intersex). Sometimes also called “third sex” or othergender. (See also: Queer.)



# Transgenderism

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An umbrella term for the state or condition of identifying or expressing a gender identity that does not match a person's physical/genetic sex. Transgender is independent of sexual orientation, and those who self-identify as transgender may consider themselves to be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, or asexual. Approximately 700,000 individuals in the United States identify as transgender.

## Trans man

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A transgender person who was born a female but claims the gender identity of a man (i.e., a biological female who identifies as a male).

## Transsexual

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A narrower term used to refer to people who identify as the opposite of their birth gender designation, regardless of whether they have undergone or intend to undergo hormone replacement therapy and/or sex reassignment surgery.



# Trans woman

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A transgender person who was born a male but who claims the gender identity of a woman (i.e., a biological man who identifies as a woman).

# Transvestite

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A person who cross-dresses, or dresses in clothes of the opposite sex, though they may not identify with or want to be the opposite gender. (All transexuals are transgender, but transvestites do not necessarily fall into either of the other categories.)

# Trigender

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A term for a non-binary (i.e., genderqueer) gender identity in which one shifts between or among the behaviors of three genders. These genders may include male, female, and third gender (e.g., genderless, non-gender, polygender, etc).

# Two-spirit

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A term used by some Native American LGBT activists for people who possess qualities of both binary genders.





Ze

A gender-neutral pronoun used to replace he/she. (Sometimes spelled as Xe.)

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<sup>1</sup> Vaughan Roberts, *Transgender: A Talking Points Book*. (The Good Book Co: 2016), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Pearcey, *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions About Life and Sexuality*. (Baker Books: 2018), 196.



