



# Saving James

by MICHAEL DELLAPERUTE

## Casualties in the War on Gender

In many ways, James is a typical seven-year-old boy. He loves superheroes, Boy Scouts, and pretend sword fights. Unfortunately, his divorced parents agree on very little, including his gender. Their ongoing dispute has unintentionally placed their child on the front lines of the gender war, where he narrowly escaped mutilation.

James's mother insists that her son is a girl trapped in a boy's body. Consequently, she pursued gender affirmation therapy for James. This popular approach to treating gender dysphoria involved renaming her son Luna, dressing him in girls' clothes, and reinforcing a female gender identity through intensive counseling. James's school respected his mother's wishes and permitted him to identify as female. However, when his mother sought to administer puberty suppressing hormones to facilitate a more convincing transition later in life, James's father intervened. James's case ended up in a Dallas courtroom, where a shocked nation watched as a judge initially ruled in favor of his mother. James's father immediately appealed the decision, and he and James's mother now share custody. James has since reidentified as male, and his ordeal, while true, is as disturbing as the war itself. James narrowly escaped becoming the latest casualty in the culture's ongoing gender crisis.

James's plight illustrates just what is at stake in the

contemporary campaign against male and female. Social activists are prepared to treat children like James as collateral damage so long as his suffering advances the concept of gender fluidity and lines their war chests. While James may have survived the latest offensive orchestrated by gender affirmation advocates, unless the church prepares to respond on behalf of children like him, others may not be so fortunate (James 1:27). James had to withstand multiple attacks by a culture that is growing belligerent to the Biblical concept of a gender binary (Gen. 1:27). Assessing the four philosophical guerrilla tactics of gender terrorists can help the church repel the next wave of hostilities.

### 'Born This Way'

First, James had to endure the "born this way" assault carried out by a culture that prioritizes feeling over fact. This belief insists that gender dysphoria is innate and unaffected by environmental factors. The default catchphrase employed by gender affirmation advocates is "assigned at birth," as though a doctor's declaration "It's a boy" has the power to form Y chromosomes and shape male genitalia. The church must vigilantly refute this assault by continuing to teach that all human beings are created either male or female at conception (Ps. 139:13) and by honoring the God-ordained distinction between the two genders (Deut. 22:5).

Chromosomes, gonads, and sexual characteristics aside, a stockpile of evidence exists to defend children from the “born this way” assault, beginning with twin studies. James has a twin brother whose gender identity has never been called into question. If gender dysphoria is innate, as gender affirmation advocates insist, then twin studies should be the equivalent of a weapon of mass destruction. But twin studies actually suggest the opposite, so they are strategically avoided by gender affirmation pundits. Shared comorbid factors, on the other hand, support the fact that environment plays a significant role in the development of gender dysphoria. These factors include sexual trauma, emotional abuse, physical abuse, family dysfunction, peer pressure, social media influence, parental influence, autism, and mental illness. While not every gender-dysphoric child experiences all of these factors, James’s environment, including his parents’ divorce and his mother’s persistence, likely contributed to his gender dysphoria. Addressing these elements will do far more to resolve James’s condition than prescribing puberty suppressors. Finally, Christ Himself affirmed the gender binary of humanity when He declared, “He who made them at the beginning made them male and female” (Matt. 19:4). Therefore, had James been successfully pressured into puberty suppression, he would have been chemically altered to resemble something he is not, rather than carefully taught to accept who he is.

### Attack on Desistence

Next, James had to survive the attack on desistence, or the natural resolution of gender dysphoria. It is universally acknowledged that if gender dysphoria is not affirmed, the condition will resolve in most cases. However, when children are subjected to gender affirmation, desistence rates plummet. By coercing children into embracing their gender nonconformity, gender affirmation proponents manipulate them into seeking unnecessary, costly, and harmful treatments. This approach benefits transgender advocates at the expense of children like James, resulting in a major ethical conflict. The estimated cost of gender transition for a child like James, including chemical, social, psychological, and surgical treatments, is upwards of half a million dollars. For gender affirmation proponents, this figure represents the spoils of war. The process of puberty suppression would set children like James on a course that leads directly to cross-sex hormone therapy and surgical transition. For the majority of transgender women, prostitution, sexual assault, physical assault, and suicide are far more likely outcomes than appearing on the covers of glamour magazines. In the end, the indoctrination process of gender affirmation serves only the social and financial interests of the advocates, not the best interests of the children they heartlessly parade like human shields for profit.

### Myth of Harmless Puberty Suppression

Third, James had to overcome the myth that puberty suppression is harmless and reversible. In reality, puberty suppressors

have been neither tested nor approved for treating gender dysphoria. Their use constitutes “Mengele-esque” experimentation on children. Puberty suppressors are designed and approved to treat precocious puberty, a medical condition that causes a child’s reproductive organs to develop prematurely.

Reproductive maturation begins in the brain when the hypothalamus releases bursts of GnRH. Fluctuating levels of this powerful hormone trigger the pituitary gland to secrete two additional hormones that initiate gonadal maturation. High doses of synthetic GnRH halt gonadal maturation by maintaining consistent blood levels. This treatment, which primarily affects the child’s brain, tricks the pituitary gland into shutting down. For precocious puberty, when the child reaches an appropriate age, hormone therapy ceases and normal puberty resumes. For gender dysphoric children, GnRH agonists prevent gonadal maturation, causing otherwise healthy children to become stunted and sterile. Even gender affirmation activists agree on this point. Therefore, while all of the long-term consequences of these powerful hormones remain unknown, their use is far from harmless or reversible.

### Overthrow of Nonmaleficence

Finally, James needed to struggle against autonomy’s overthrow of nonmaleficence. For the better part of the past three thousand years, nonmaleficence, “First do no harm,” has governed medical ethics. Lately, unbounded autonomy has usurped nonmaleficence. Unbounded autonomy insists that if a child self-diagnoses as the opposite gender, then society is responsible to facilitate the child’s transition. However, unbridled autonomy cannot be implemented with any consistency—for if a child pretends to be a superhero, then it is acceptable to permit the child a degree of autonomy regarding dress or play, since the behavior poses no harm to the child. Nevertheless, if the same child truly believes he or she is a superhero and desires to take flight from the roof, gatekeeping becomes essential, even at the expense of the child’s autonomy. Allowing a child to attempt flight would not only constitute negligence on the part of the parent due to its violation of nonmaleficence, but it would also be detrimental to the health and well-being of the child. The unrestrained form of autonomy championed by the culture essentially encourages the child to jump.

Fortunately for James, his father recognized the danger of gender affirmation and was willing to serve as gatekeeper, even at great personal sacrifice. For other children living in a hostile culture, the church needs to count the cost and champion the gender resistance. This good fight can be won only by refuting the “born this way” assault, by realizing the truth of desistence, by recognizing the danger of puberty suppression, and by reinstating nonmaleficence as an ethical priority. **B**

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