BROWN: Katie, I know you’re aware of the change in public opinion on LGBT issues. Survey after survey shows greater acceptance shows resistance melting away, and it’s moved pretty fast.

But there is also a growing belief that gender/sexuality will become the defining issue of orthodoxy for a generation of Christians. Do you see it that way? And why wouldn’t the defining issue of orthodoxy be something more traditionally theological, like the divinity of Jesus or the doctrine of the Trinity—issues like that?

McCOY: It’s a great question, Myrna. Well, first, let me start with the first part about the surveys.

I actually don’t really believe that people are eroding in their beliefs. I think it is just become too dangerous to say what we really think—and then along with that, this fear that if parents don’t give unqualified affirmation of their child’s gender confusion, that despite the fact that their child is likely to grow out of it at the time of puberty, they’re told by doctors that they could lose their child to suicide.

And one of the most painful and heartbreaking things is that you see parents wanting to do what is right by their children, and ushering them into therapies, and then eventually surgeries that might be causing irreparable harm. Never mind, we’re just starting to hear about some of the backlash that that could cause as well.

Now, you mentioned how does this fit within orthodoxy, and there really is a direct line first, in every generation, we have issues of doctrine that become our watershed litmus tests, and, and the doctrine of humanity is probably going to be one of them for our generation.

But like all doctrines, it goes back to what is truth? And who defines what is truth? And that goes back to the authority of God. General revelation is a doctrine throughout the history of the church. And it says that there are things that we can know about God from creation and conscience. And gender is one such aspect of creation, it is declaring the order and design and the beauty that God created us to have.

And so when we are suppressing that, like Romans 1 says, We are worshiping the creature instead of the Creator, we are turning that which was given as a gift, to cause us to seek our Creator whose glory we were made for, and in whose image we were made, as well. That becomes eroded and it becomes a source of idolatry. And that is everything that we’re seeing right now.

So it’s not a side secondary issue. It has to do with the purpose and identity of our lives. And what is our highest good, why were we made, who made us and who has the authority and right to say who we are. That’s what this goes back to, and it will indeed be a watershed issue for the church in our generation.

I would encourage every believer to become as informed as he or she can, but then also not to despair. You know, we have technologically what the Greco Roman world did not, but they were just as far from God. They were just as enslaved to ideas of the spirit of the age and also to different sexual sins. And the church in those early centuries turned the world upside down. They did it by proclaiming Christ by living holy lives, and by loving their neighbor. It really is that simple.

And it really is the power of God that will work through us as we as we conform to what is true first in our own lives, in our churches and then in our communities.

EICHER: Katie McCoy, assistant professor of theology in women’s studies at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas.