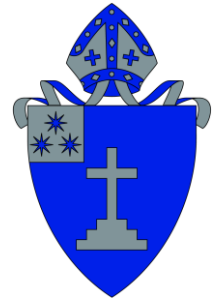


# Submission to the Ma Whea Commission by the Anglican Diocese of Nelson.



## Executive Summary:

This submission represents the findings of the working party formed by the Standing Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Nelson to formulate a response on behalf of the Diocese to the Ma Whea commission. The working party focused on biblical, cultural and doctrinal issues relating to human sexuality and the blessing and ordination of people in same sex relationships. The following points summarises the findings of the working party, which are presented in detail below and have been approved by Standing Committee.

- Genesis 1 and 2 forms the biblical foundation for understanding human sexuality based on “creation norms”, norms affirmed in the teachings of Jesus and the rest of the New Testament. Human beings were created male and female as complementary heterosexual beings, where sexuality at its highest level of intimacy is the sole preserve of the marriage relationship, defined as a covenantal heterosexual union of one man and one woman for life.
- The biblical prohibition of certain sexual practices includes same sex practices. The biblical passages examined from both the Old and New Testaments all identify homosexual activity of any kind including that which is between consenting adults in committed relationships as contrary to what God has ordained as the right ordering of sexual relations. Indeed Judaism stands out as a culture where homosexual practices are forbidden based on the Old Testament laws against such acts.
- Research into the biology of human sexuality identifies that sexuality, including homosexuality, is predominantly a learned rather than innate behavior with any genetic influence being very weak or an indirect influence. This view is supported by cultural analysis, where even though the practice of homosexuality has a wide range of variability within cultures around the world, it is clear that such practices are culturally conditioned.
- The argument for “civil rights” in relation to homosexual practice, marriage and ordination does not compare to civil rights based on race or gender. The move to

normalise homosexuality within the church through same-sex blessings and the ordination of those in same-sex relationships furthermore sets up a contradiction in trying to make a civil right of that which Scripture teaches to be morally wrong. However, it is worth noting that the denial of societal or church approval for homosexual behavior does not imply that the Church condones the persecution, harassment, or denial of legal status of practicing homosexuals.

- The previous ability of the Church to change its practices, as in the marriage of divorcees and the ordination of Women, represent the Church altering its practice to more fully conform to what Scripture teaches. The case for change was argued on scriptural rather than cultural grounds, a position not possible with the normalising of same sex practices for which no scriptural grounds can be found.
- Constitutionally, the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia is a church that is founded firmly upon the doctrines and sacraments of Christ as commanded in Scripture and identified as unalterable “Fundamental Provisions.” This means that as a Church, we are not at liberty to create any form of worship or ceremony that is contrary to Scripture which would include any form of blessing of same sex unions and the ordination of those who are engaged in homosexual activity in any form or who see it as a God ordained expression of sexuality.
- The formularies of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia identify marriage as a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman. This alongside the canons of the church, defines “chaste” to be the right ordering of sexual relationships as between male and female, expressed as celibacy before marriage (heterosexual) and faithfulness thereafter, both in terms of the biblical understanding and in terms of marriage and ordination. Same sex relationships and same sex sexual practice cannot therefore be considered to be “chaste.”

## **Introduction:**

This submission will examine three areas relating to the issue of same-sex relationships and marriage:

- Biblical Response
- Cultural Response
- Doctrinal Response

In undertaking this work, we want to identify our hermeneutical approach, with reference to one of the formularies of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia which cannot ever be revoked - the 39 articles. Article 20 says the following:

Of the Authority of the Church. “The church has authority to decree forms of worship and ceremonies and to decide in controversies concerning the faith. *However, it is not lawful for the church to ordain anything contrary to God's written Word. Nor may it expound one passage of Scripture so that it be repugnant to, contradicts another passage.* So, although the church is a witness and guardian to Holy Scripture, it must not decree anything contrary to Scripture, nor is it to enforce belief in anything additional to Scripture as essential to salvation.”

That “one passage of Scripture may not be expounded so as to be repugnant to or contradicts another passage” defines our hermeneutical approach, through considering specific passages within their historical, cultural, and literary context within the wider meta-narrative of scripture. The theological importance of the biblical meta-narrative is then of central importance through what is known as “Biblical Theology” - the drama of scripture as canonically received.<sup>1</sup> While encompassing the historical-critical methodology of biblical criticism, biblical theology specifically focuses on the theological themes that run through out the Bible, such that Scripture is read “in its totality according to its own, rather than imposed

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<sup>1</sup> N T Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, vol. 1, Christian Origins and the Question of God (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 82. Biblical Theology is different to, but not exclusive of Systematic Theology and Philosophical Theology. For an overview of Biblical Theology see Craig Bartholomew et al., eds., *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 5, The Scripture and Hermeneutics Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

categories”,<sup>2</sup> and the “unity of the narrative exercises hermeneutical priority over isolating its parts”.<sup>3</sup> As a result we believe this approach provides the clearest possible interpretation for this current discussion. Scripture as canonically received provides the fullest understanding of God’s self-revelation by remaining faithful to the theological pattern of Scripture by placing importance on the context of the text<sup>4</sup> and the theological themes that unify Scripture.

## **The Biblical Response**

### **Affirming Marriage**

When you look at what scripture teaches about human sexuality it is important to begin with what it affirms and what it does not say. As is often the case, the place to begin is in the pre-fall Genesis creation narratives.<sup>5</sup> These narratives articulate the Judeo-Christian worldview, expressing the core beliefs of our faith, detailing the question of origins, the nature of God, and the purpose of humanity. Included in the portrayal of humanity are key details around human sexuality and how that is meant to be worked out.

In Genesis 1:27 we read, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Here it is clear that the plan of God for humanity was that first as a created order we were made in God’s image as spiritual beings with rational, moral and spiritual faculties. We alone out of all creation have the capacity to relate on a personal level with God. However, with the words ‘male and female he created them’ comes the recognition that we were meant for more than just a one-on-one relationship with God. We were also created as complementary and sexual beings with the ability to relate

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<sup>2</sup> C. G. Bartholomew, “Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretations”. In *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*, C. G. Bartholomew, M. Healy, K. Moller, & R. Parry (eds.), vol. 5, The Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2004), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher J H Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Nottingham: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 315. A fruitful way to understand the biblical meta-narrative then is to talk of the “*missio Dei*” (mission of God). The Church’s mission in this context is to participate in God’s continuing mission for all people and the whole of creation. See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, vol. 16, American Society of Missiology (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 370-93. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Nottingham: InterVarsityPress, 2009), 67-68.

<sup>4</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*: 195.

<sup>5</sup> The early chapters of Genesis are described as “mythology” in its stricter academic sense – a narrative giving expression to a symbolic universe or primitive cosmology (Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient cosmology and the Origins debate*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), 14-15.), proto-historical story (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, ed. John D. W. Watts, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 54.), or primeval history (Tremper Longman, *How to Read Genesis* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 64 and 101-25.). “Theological history” is a broader term also utilized. See Longman, *How to Read Genesis*: 60.

to one another and to procreate. By defining humanity in terms of “male and female” sexuality is identified as part of the created order.

In Genesis 2:18 the idea of being complementary beings both relationally and sexually is expanded when God says, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” In this verse comes a recognition that because we are made in God’s image with this capacity for relationship that a truly human life cannot be lived in isolation. We need companions with whom to relate and the highest form of our ability to relate is found when men and women come together in a lifelong and sexually exclusive relationship where they have the potential to experience the peak of human intimacy, companionship and enrichment. It is worth noting that the one created for a man as his sexual complement was a woman and not another man. Furthermore the phrase “a helper suitable for him” means literally in the Hebrew - one who protects, succors or even rescues and one who is his counterpart or equal. Women were not created as subordinate domestic servants but rather as equal partners who complement men in relationships of mutuality.

Furthermore, in Gen 2:24 there is an explanation as to how this relationship between a man and a woman is to be regulated, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” Here we discover a key truth about sexual expression and the nature of marriage. And that is, in marriage, a new relationship is formed that takes precedence over all others. When a couple comes together in marriage they first have to leave their parents. The words ‘leave’ and ‘united’ describing this process are actually covenantal terms, used to describe Israel’s relationship with God and the ways in which this was at times forsaken, broken and at other times renewed or returned to. In other words, God sees marriage as a covenantal relationship, which brings a commitment that is so significant that it is life-long and takes priority over every other relationship. In this context the true counterpart for the man is the woman and their difference is complementary. The notion of “one-flesh-ness” (Gen 2:23-24) defines the biblical concept of marriage as given by God and the appropriate place for sex - the physical union of a man and woman which points to the bringing together of that which was separated (woman from rib of Adam). Therefore, the unity of Adam and Eve is the model for all subsequent marriages. What is most significant is that this image of “one-flesh-ness” flows throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Jesus refers to this specific view in Matt 19:5-6, “Have you not read that he who

made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder” and Mark 10:7-10, by bringing together two of the Genesis passages to endorse the key aspects of marriage as covenantal, a union of equals, lifelong and between a man and a woman only. Paul also uses this understanding of marriage but extends it (Ephesians 5:30-31), by identifying human marriage (male and female) as the earthy type that points to or reflects the grander spiritual type (Christ –groom and Church - bride). The design of marriage in Eden points to the union of Christ and Church, such that the purpose of marriage transcends the human relationship, and points to a complete unity as God designed – a unity that is upheld by the Church. The point of all this is that marriage by definition (biblically and canonically) is a **specific type of relationship** – a relationship ordered by God as between male and female, a relationship in which complementarity and unity are central, and a relationship that points to the new creation and the unity between Christ and the Church.

**In summary**, Genesis 1 and 2 put forward just one standard, a standard endorsed by Jesus in the gospels and the various Epistle writers, and there are no alternatives or variations to that standard. Human beings were created male and female as complementary heterosexual beings. Furthermore, while our sexuality can be expressed in many ways from our choice of clothing to our use of language, the highest form of that expression is in physical sexual intimacy. Genesis makes it clear that sexuality at that level of intimacy is the sole preserve of the marriage relationship. And marriage is defined as covenantal heterosexual union of one man and one woman for life. A union designed to provide a deep-felt level of partnership and companionship in their highest forms. It is also therefore the only context in which children can be produced and is therefore the primary environment in which children are to be raised and nurtured to adulthood. For some, the use of Genesis 1 and 2 as the biblical foundation for understanding human sexuality reflects both an ancient, pre-rational view and one conditioned by Jewish culture. However, it is the fact that Genesis 1 and 2 bases the biblical understanding of human sexuality on “creation norms”<sup>6</sup> means that this understanding hold for all cultures and times. This standard or norm therefore provides the basis of the texts that prohibit same sex acts for it is has to be acknowledged that the texts that stand against same

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<sup>6</sup> Davis, John Jefferson, *Evangelical Ethics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (Phillipsburg:P&R Publishing, 2004), 130.

sex acts must have a reason for doing so. And that reason can only be that those acts contravene the overarching will and purposes of God for human sexuality as revealed to us within the Genesis creation narratives and gospel accounts of Jesus' teaching.

### **The Verses that Speak against Same Sex Acts.**

The above sections focus on affirming what the Bible says about marriage and human sexuality. This section will examine passages that prohibit certain sexual activities. A central reason for taking a look at texts that take a stance against same sex acts is because there are many who would argue that they don't really say what they seem to be saying. Therefore, it is important to explore some of the arguments put forward that try and negate what many would argue is a fairly plain and clear reading of scripture. For while it is possible when looking at a passage in isolation to come up with a range of possible interpretations, including ones that would seem to negate the idea that homosexual activity is condemned in scripture, it very quickly becomes clear that as soon as you begin to look at your passage in its historical, cultural, geographical, and literary context within the wider meta narrative of scripture, and when you compare it to passages that textually have to stand alongside the one you are looking at, then in every case the other alternative interpretations fall away and you are left with just one possible interpretation. It is also very important to state at this point that what scripture condemns as outside the purposes of God for human sexuality is same sex acts. Nowhere though does the Bible condemn same sex attraction. People have little control over how sexual orientation develops but what they do have control over is their actions. What the Bible prohibits, as outside the purposes of God, is same sex acts *not* same sex orientation.

There are fourteen passages in the Bible that refer to same sex activity - Ten in the Old Testament and four in the New that will be considered:

#### *Old Testament.*

Of the ten Old Testament passages against same sex activity, four occur in 1 and 2 Kings and in each case what is being condemned is male temple prostitution (referred to by the Hebrew word *Kedesh*) which had at times even been practiced within the confines of the temple (2 Ki 23:7). In Deut. 22:5 cross-dressing is condemned, most likely because it conflicts with the natural order as given in Genesis, but possibly also because masquerading as the opposite sex was at times part of the worship of Astarte, and in Deut. 23:18 the earnings of a male cult prostitute, referred to in slang as a *keleb*, literally a "dog," are forbidden as acceptable

offerings to the Lord. We think most would accept the condemnation of temple prostitution as something outside the purposes of God for human sexuality. The idea being of course that as part of your offering at a shrine or temple you engaged in ritual sex with a prostitute. By doing so, you were promoting the likelihood that the gods would bless your land with fertility. Cross-dressing might be harder to accept as an unacceptable practice but when seen in the light of how it was used in the worship of Astarte and how strongly the order given in Genesis affected Jewish thinking, that everything was to remain within the boundaries put in place at creation, it at least serves to reinforce why they felt so strongly about homosexual practice as being something that fell outside the creation boundaries of Genesis.

The other four passages in the Old Testament can be grouped into the two passages from Leviticus and the two similar incidents in Genesis 19:1-17 and Judges 19:22-26.

- *The story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:1-17).*

Sodom and Gomorrah were two cities that had become corrupt and evil in their behaviour and practices. According to Ezekiel chapter 16 they were prosperous trading cities that thought so highly of themselves and their achievements that they had become arrogant, gluttons, materialistic, had lost compassion for those in need, and had drifted into detestable practices. In Jude 1:7 detestable practices are further clarified in that Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. The outworking of this lifestyle or practice was that when two male visitors arrived in the town the menfolk of the town wanted to have these strangers brought out so that they could rape them, have homosexual sex with them.

The significant word in this text is *yada* “To know”, which some suggest does not refer to sexual activity here but rather to a desire to get to know the two visitors much as a neighbour might like to meet guests we have staying in our own homes. Now while *yada* can also be translated in this way, it doesn’t fit the context here.

- Lot was afraid to let the men sleep on the street for a start
- Lot offered his daughters in an obviously sexual manner
- Jude states that the city is condemned for sexual immorality and perversion (Jude 1).



That this story talks of sexual violation is clear, but does this passage condemn same-sex activity? The answer is yes and no. Part of the self indulgent lifestyle within Sodom and Gomorrah was a growing level of sexual immorality and hedonism that would have expressed itself in many forms from promiscuity through to homosexual practices and all of these would have been among the detestable practices mentioned in Ezekiel. Sexual immorality including homosexual practices was therefore part of the reason the cities were being judged because all those practices stood in contrast to how Israel understood the right ordering of human sexuality from the Genesis accounts.

It is further argued that it is only homosexual rape that is being condemned and not consenting same sex relationships. However it is clear that homosexuality was an accepted part of all the surrounding cultures of that time as can be read in the preserved writings of the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Canaanite cultures, and therefore it would have already been present in Canaanite society in a variety of forms from temple prostitution through to homosexual relationships between consenting adults that were of a more long term and committed nature. That same sex relationships of this sort existed is confirmed in various Midrashim. For example:

- Sifra Aharei Mot 8:8-9, a Midrash on Leviticus 18:3, it is stated, "What did they do? A man married a man, and a woman married a woman, and a woman married two men." To which the Jewish scholar Maimonides responded to in this way, "For women to be sexually active with one another is forbidden, as this is the practice of Egypt, which we were warned against: 'Like the practice of the land of Egypt...you shall not do, nor shall you do as they do in the land of Canaan'".
- Midrash Rabbah, mentioned twice in the midrashim on both Genesis (26:5) and Leviticus (23:9): "Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi Joseph, 'The generation of the Flood was not wiped out until they wrote marriage documents for the union of a man to a male or to an animal.'"

That marriage was occurring between people of the same sex even at this time is clear, and that it was condemned is also clear. It might not have been common but it did occur and was included as a condemned practice by Jewish writers precisely because it went against the Genesis order. So you cannot argue that the Sin of Sodom and Gomorah precluded

committed same sex relationships. They were also condemned with every other form of sexual immorality.

- *Leviticus.*

Lev 18:22 "Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.

Lev 20:13 "If a man lies with a male as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

It is known that the cultures surrounding Israel at that time were accepting of homosexuality in many forms and in their law codes it is only mentioned in a punitive way when there was for example a case of homosexual rape or a false accusation of being the passive partner. But when we come to the laws laid down in Leviticus we find that the prohibition is very broad, condemning therefore, every form of homosexuality possible from temple prostitution, to pederasty right through to same sex acts between consenting adults. In contrast to the surrounding cultures, there is no form of homosexuality that is acceptable.

What's more, the practice is condemned as an 'abomination' (*ebhah*) punishable by death, the strongest of three words translated as abomination in the Old Testament and used for offences deemed specially heinous in God's sight like idolatry and sexual immorality, as is the case here. Sometimes people argue that abomination is not a strong condemnation because it is also used to describe prohibited animals, birds or fish that should not be eaten or for eating sacrificial food after a prescribed time. While it is true that the word abomination is used in those contexts it actually translates two different Hebrew words *Sheqets* and *Pigool* which are less strong in the level of condemnation they convey. *Ebhah* the strongest word is in general reserved for idolatry and sexual immorality and has at its heart the idea that certain practices are abominations because they cause people to be led astray from God and his purposes for us.

In Lev 20:13 homosexuality attracts the death penalty, putting homosexuality on a par with adultery (Lev 20:10) or the worst cases of incest (Lev 20:11, 12). Of note is that both parties involved in homosexual intercourse are punished here: the passive partner and the active are both put to death. The implication being that the act of homosexual sex is between consenting partners for if it were a question of homosexual rape as in the case of heterosexual rape only

the rapist would have been executed. This is supported by the fact that wherever a non-consenting sexual act has occurred it is qualified by both the context and the use of a term like “seize and lie” as in Deut 22:23-27. In other words these two passages in Leviticus condemn every form of homosexual practice as being outside the norms for the right ordering of human sexuality given to us by God.

Some try and argue that these passages are only condemning temple homosexual prostitution but the way these passages are worded as described above prevents us from accepting that definition. Furthermore temple homosexual prostitution is itself specifically condemned elsewhere in Deut 23:17 as a stand alone practice that was detestable, but here in Leviticus it is clear from the generic all-encompassing language that all forms of homosexual practice are unacceptable.

Others try and argue that these passages are irrelevant to us today because the Levitical laws were primarily designed to help distinguish Israel from the nations around them, and that the laws were more arbitrary in nature than moral or absolute. They point to laws on things like not blending two different fibres together, not eating rabbit, shellfish and so on. They argue that because we do wear mixed fibres today, do eat shellfish and rabbit that we can therefore ignore the laws of Leviticus as only being relevant to the people of Israel of that time and not for us today. However, as you read Leviticus there is a multitude of laws covering many and diverse areas of interest. There were laws on how to operate the tabernacle, laws on priestly duties, how to offer sacrifices, clean and unclean foods, sexual purity, ethical behaviour and more. As a consequence these laws did make the nation of Israel stand apart from the nations around them but that was not their primary purpose. The primary purpose was to define Israel as a nation, to shape their behaviour and practice as a people devoted to Yahweh and to the principles of right living. As a result there would have been laws that were only relevant to that time and place but there would have also been universal truths, absolutes that stand across time. Laws on how to manage temple sacrifices, on the observances of feasts, on various Sabbaths, on priestly duties etc. are obviously laws that were peculiar to Israel alone and do not apply to us today. But then there are laws on ethical behaviour (not defrauding or slandering others, not lying, cheating or stealing, bearing grudges and so on) that are still relevant today. Laws like those defining clean and unclean foods are harder to define but seem to be based more upon distinctions between wild and domestic animals, carnivorous and herbivorous creatures and because of an understanding about how various creatures were

meant to behave in their allotted environments. There is no evidence to suggest that they were there simply to create a point of difference with the surrounding nations.

Leviticus Chapter 18 stands apart as a clear section of teaching that is global in application introduced with a clear injunction not to do as the nations around them did and finishing with a warning that not obeying these instructions will result in Israel being defiled, being cut off, and being vomited out of the land as had happened and was happening to the surrounding nations. The implication here is that unlike some of the other laws that were distinctly for Israel's practice alone, the laws on sexual purity applied to God's expectation of how all of humanity should behave sexually. This is also reflected in the fact that many of these laws on sexual purity were also reflected in the laws, although not always the behaviour, of the nations surrounding Israel. Adultery, pre-marital sex and incest were all condemned. Indeed early Canaanite laws proscribed either death or banishment for most forms of incest, but by the fourteenth century BC, the penalties were reduced to no more than the payment of a fine.

In regards to the laws on homosexuality in chapter 18 and elsewhere the stance taken in Leviticus is striking in comparison to the views of the surrounding nations. Whereas they saw homosexual acts as quite acceptable, Leviticus prohibits all forms of homosexual intercourse even where it was consensual. As previously suggested, the reason for this prohibition comes from a growing awareness that many of the most fundamental principles of Old Testament law are derived from the Genesis creation narratives – when God deliberately created them male and female in order that they should 'be fruitful and multiply'. Given that homosexual acts are not even potentially reproductive, they have no place in the thinking of Genesis chapter one. Nor do they have a place in Genesis chapter two where Adam is provided with a helper suitable for him, a woman not another man, a wife not a same sex companion. Eve is the one with whom he will create a one-flesh union. It seems therefore that Israel's rejection of homosexual acts derives from its doctrine of creation and its resultant view on the right ordering of human sexuality. To legitimize homosexual acts would frustrate the divine purpose and deny the perfection of God's provision of two sexes to support and complement one another, hence the prohibitions in Leviticus.

**In summary,** since the verses prohibiting homosexual sex fall within a list of other prohibited sexual acts, there is a logical extension to the suggestion that we can ignore all the teaching of Leviticus because it is only relevant to that time and place. If we then accept

homosexuality, it also stands to reason we should apply the same rule to the rest of chapter 18 and accept other prohibited sexual practices such as bestiality, and incest. Rather, it is clear that Leviticus includes both universal and absolute truths that apply across all time as well as some that were distinctive to just that time. Chapter 18 is clearly one that is universal for all time especially when seen in light of the rest of scripture.

*New Testament – Romans and 1 Corinthians.*

- *Romans 1*

Rom 1:26 “Because of this [idolatry and rebellion], God gave them over to shameful lusts. Females exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural. 27 In the same way the males abandoned natural intercourse with females and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion”.

Romans chapter one describes the growing level of depravity, degradation, sexual immorality and sinful desires that occurs when humanity rejects the obvious truth about God. In verses 26 and 27 Paul gets very specific and describes some of that depravity in more detail,<sup>7</sup> which includes homosexual activity. The language of “shameful lusts” and “unnatural” indicates a violation of morally accepted principles of right and wrong, a going outside of God’s right ordering of human sexuality. This view is enhanced by Paul’s deliberate use of the Greek words for ‘male’ and ‘female’ rather than the words for ‘men’ and ‘women’. Here Paul is implicitly referring back to the Genesis accounts where God made humanity in his image as ‘male and female’ (Gen 1:27), defining what is “natural” in terms of sexual activity. The use of male and female also makes the condemnation, as in Leviticus, very generic and not limited to just, for example, male temple prostitution, but all forms of homosexual practice whether consenting or not.

Some have tried to argue that Paul is referring to Pederastic relationships but this is precluded for several reasons. Firstly he talks about lesbianism alongside homosexuality, secondly he does not use the Greek word *paidēraistia* (love of boys) which specifically denotes pederasty, thirdly he describes a mutual relationship rather than a pederastic one “inflamed with lust for one another,” and lastly we find that “men” commit acts with other “men” and not with

“boys.” Others have also tried to argue that Paul is actually only addressing a heterosexual who is acting against his or her nature through homosexual acts, not a homosexual for whom homosexual acts would be in accordance with their nature. However, throughout Greek writings the phrase “against nature” never means, “what is natural to me” and for Paul specifically “nature” was grounded in the Genesis narrative of creation, which describes very clearly the right ordering of human sexual function and relationships and male and female complementarity. The term “nature” then does not refer to sexual orientation but to the right ordering of human sexuality in general as defined in Genesis 1 and 2. So Romans 1:26-27 clearly condemns homosexual activity as unnatural in any form and contrary to how human sexuality is meant to be expressed.

- *1 Corinthians chapter 6, verses 9-11*

9 “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders, 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

The important emphasis in 1 Corinthians chapter 6: 9-11, is that persistent, habitual sinful living (with identified particular lifestyles and activities) will result in some not inheriting the Kingdom of God. There are three activities and words to take note of with reference to sexual practices.

1. The first is the Greek word *Porneia* (from which we derive the word pornography) which is well translated by the NIV as sexually immoral and generally speaking was a generic term used to cover all extra-marital and sexually inappropriate activity including prostitution, sex before marriage, and homosexuality.
2. The second word is *malakos* which translated means soft or effeminate and generally speaking was a slang term used to refer to male prostitutes, or boys kept for homosexual sex with an older man or in general the passive partner in a homosexual relationship. Some have tried to argue that it can just mean effeminate and while this is true, in this context where the preceding and following terms all relate to sexual sin it seems obvious which of the two meanings is meant.

3. The last word is *arsenokoites*, which is variously translated as homosexual offenders, those who practice homosexuality, or simply as homosexuals. It appears twice in the New Testament and 73 times in other literature (literature however that is always later than Paul's writings). In almost every place that it appears, it is in a vice list, as in 1 Cor 6:9, which means that it is a non-acceptable practice. In the few places it appears outside a vice list, *arsenokoites* always refers to same sex activity which would tend to indicate that what is being condemned here is again homosexual practices. Significantly, it would seem that Paul has invented this word - a neologism - by utilizing the Greek terms used in the Septuagint for Lev 18:22 and Lev 20:13. The Septuagint condemns in the Leviticus passages a man lying sexually (Greek *koitai*) with a male (Greek *arseno*) as with a woman. It seems very likely therefore that Paul has simply combined *arseno* with *koitai* to produce *arsenokoites*. By doing this Paul is condemning exactly what Leviticus condemns, homosexual acts of any kind as being unnatural and contrary to the Genesis creation narrative.

**In summary**, the biblical verses examined - Genesis 19, Leviticus, Rom 1 and 1 Cor 6 - all condemn homosexual activity of any kind, not limited to just male temple prostitution or pederasty but all forms of homosexual sex and relationships (consenting or otherwise), as unnatural and contrary to what God has ordained as the right ordering of sexual relations in Genesis 1 and 2. The Biblical picture both in what it affirms as the right ordering of human sexuality and in those places in what it condemns as wrong, identify that homosexual practices are incompatible with God's view of sexual expression and that heterosexuality is more than just the norm, it is the only acceptable practice.

Before leaving this section on the Biblical views of homosexuality, it is worth noting the argument that because Jesus never spoke against same sex activity in the Gospels that it therefore wasn't a problem for him. As scholars have identified, the reason as to why Jesus did not speak out against homosexuality was - that like many cultures around the world today,<sup>8</sup> it simply wasn't an issue in Judaism. Indeed Judaism stands out as a culture where homosexual practices are forbidden based on the Old Testament laws against such acts as has been discussed. A couple of example illustrates this point:

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- Within Judaism in the Mishnah<sup>9</sup>, there is recorded a debate between the Sages and Rabbi Judah (Kidd 4:14). In the debate Rabbi Judah writes that a bachelor should not herd animals, nor should two bachelors share a single blanket for fear of homosexuality. The sages countered in the Gemara on this passage (Kidd 5:10) that it is permissible because the Talmud says, “Israel is not suspected of homosexuality.” In other words it was a safe thing to do because homosexuality was considered to be absent from Judaism.
- The Jewish historian Josephus in his 2<sup>nd</sup> book “*Against Apion*” writes: “But, then, what are our laws about marriage? That law owns no other mixture of sexes but that which nature hath appointed, of a man with his wife, and that this be used only for the procreation of children. But it abhors the mixture of a male with a male; and if anyone do that, death is its punishment”.

Interestingly, Josephus’ discussion of sex is in the context of a committed relationship in which he sees only marriage as legitimate. Furthermore, he states that heterosexual intercourse between a man and his wife is the only natural form of sexual expression, and what is condemned is the lying of a male with a male, which in the present discussed context about committed sexual relationships means that even same sex committed relationships are outlawed. However, even if you reject that the context is about committed sexual relationships then it can only be a broad prohibition against all forms of same sex activity because of the use of the generic phrase “male with a male.”

Judaism was unique in the ancient world in its’ stance against homosexuality, and it is important to remember that Jesus ministered almost exclusively in a Jewish context where it had always been very clearly understood that homosexuality contravened the purposes of God for sexual expression and therefore there was actually no need for him to address the topic. The Torah, Talmud (Mishnah and Gemara) and other Jewish literature, wherever homosexuality is mentioned, always take a negative position against it. In contrast, within the

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<sup>8</sup> (e.g. The Siriono Indians of Eastern Bolivia and one of the sub tribes of the Dani people of the New Guinean Highlands).

<sup>9</sup> The Mishnah is a collection of oral debates between Rabbinic sages from 100 BC to 200 AD.



Greek culture in which Paul was working homosexuality was practiced and hence his reason for speaking against it. Furthermore, although it is clear from his context why he had no need to speak about homosexuality, it is clear that in Jesus' discussions on marriage in the synoptic gospels, especially through his referring back to Genesis 1 and 2 that he understood marriage between a man and a woman to be the right, proper and only domain for sexual activity, and thereby implicitly rejected everything else, including homosexuality.

## **Biology and Sociology of Homosexuality.**

### ***Biology***

In understanding the issue of homosexuality and the issues facing the Anglican Church in terms of ordination and same-sex marriage, we need to consider some of the biology around how sexual attraction develops, and in particular to ask "are people born gay?" One of the strategies used to normalise homosexual activity in our current culture is to suggest that homosexuality is innate (biologically speaking). However, in a recently updated study of the literature spanning 20 years of research and 10,000 scientific publications on homosexuality, Neil and Briar Whitehead clearly show that sexuality, including homosexuality, is predominantly a learned behaviour, with an approximately 10% nature (genetic/biological) and 90% nurture (learned or environmental) effect for homosexuality.<sup>10</sup>

There is clearly a distinction between gender (determined biologically) and sexual attraction. At birth we are born biologically as male or female (recognising that in a very small number of cases this distinction is undefined e.g. born with both genitalia). Sexual attraction however, does not develop until we undergo maturity – a transformation that is activated by the biological and hormonal compulsions of puberty but shaped by the nurturing environment in which we mature and the experiences that occur during that time. This maturation will result in a sense of gender identity and the expression of some form of sexual attraction as we approach adolescence. In modern surveys, an average of 2.4% of the total adult population are bisexual or exclusively homosexual/lesbian.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Whitehead, N. E. and Whitehead, B. K., *My Genes Made Me Do It: Homosexuality and the Scientific Evidence*, revised edition, 2010), 10. First published by Huntington House in 1999, and the revised second edition 2010 is available free from <http://www.mygenes.co.nz/download.htm>.

The scientific field of epigenetics investigates the interplay between biology (genetics) and environment (nurture). For humans to develop into healthy individuals in every way, from how we relate to others through to our expression of sexuality, we require a nurturing environment where we are shown affection and care, are provided with food, warmth and safety, and role models for development.<sup>12</sup> For the vast majority of the population who declare themselves as heterosexual, the variables that influence their gender identity development and their subsequent heterosexuality include factors such as the presence of a mother and father who will model the relational interplay between men and women. The presence of a Mother and Father also allows for the child to bond with them at key times during their developmental years. If one of the sexes is missing then it can result in deficits in how a child develops and matures. The obvious biological differences between the sexes causes parents and society as a whole to intuitively and culturally treat children in different ways according to their sex. This contributes to the forming of the male and female gender identity, a gender identity that sets the stage for how we are attracted to that which is different from us. There is also a wide range of normative and healthy cultural and environmental factors that condition and shape our gender identity and sexual attraction. Factors like our first sexual experiences, how well we connect or form friendships with both sexes, the messages we are receiving from the specific society in which we live, and so on.<sup>13</sup>

It has been shown that when such an environment is lacking that there is an increased chance that a person will be predisposed toward a same-sex attraction.<sup>14</sup> For example a NZ study has shown that those who experience their parents divorcing at an early age are twice as likely to develop a same sex attraction (although obviously not every child who goes through a divorce is going to become same sex attracted).<sup>15</sup> Another factor is child abuse - a child who experiences child abuse is 6.75 times more likely to develop a same sex attraction than one who wasn't abused. However, not every abused child becomes same sex attracted but the abuse will obviously make it harder for the child to emotionally bond when it needs to with those of the sex that perpetrated the abuse, especially if the perpetrator was their father. It is

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<sup>11</sup> Whitehead and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 45 and 57. This figure is an average of 2.9% (males) and 1.8% (females). About 1% of adult males are exclusively homosexual and 0.6% of adult women exclusively lesbian.

<sup>12</sup> For a good survey of developmental factors see chapter 3 in Whitehead and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 61-94.

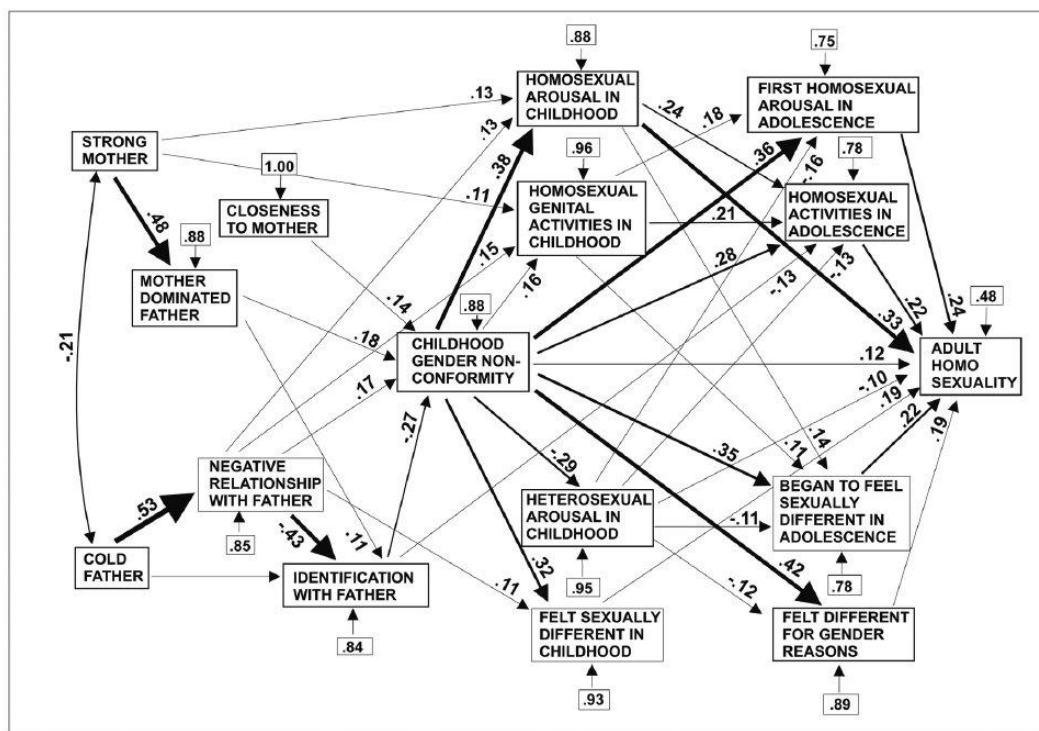
<sup>13</sup> For a summary see Whitehead and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 80.

<sup>14</sup> Whitehead and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 81-89.

<sup>15</sup> Whitehead and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 71.

also recognised that rape has a similar effect.<sup>16</sup> For others, adolescent sexual experimentation is key - your first experience of sexual arousal is incredibly powerful in shaping your future sexual attraction. There are many other factors identified from gender non-conformity, confusion caused by messages from the media through to sex education programmes in schools which normalise same sex attraction today as a valid option. All of these factors taken together can predispose some to head down a path that results in their forming a homosexual orientation. This is best shown in path analysis studies as depicted in the image below, which accounts for 76% of adult homosexuality.

Figure 28. Path Analysis, Male homosexuality. My Genes Made Me Do It. NE and BK Whitehead, 2010, p.213



Chapter Eleven: Path Analysis—Social factors do lead to homosexuality

There are several other areas of scientific studies that identify a greater environmental influence over genetics for same-sex attraction; the most convincing are twin studies.<sup>17</sup> In monozygotic twins (identical twins) you would expect 100% concordance rate if homosexuality was genetic - In other words if one twin was gay, the other would have to be. However, in a major Australian study it was discovered that where one of a pair of identical twins was gay the other twin was gay only 11% of the time, not 100%.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, in a

<sup>16</sup> Whitehead and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 85.

<sup>17</sup> See chapter 10 in Whitehead and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 174-210.

<sup>18</sup> Whitehead and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 176-177. This figure does not show that 11% of identical twins have same-sex attraction (only 2-3% do), or that only 11% of homosexual twins are genetically

recent study, Whitehead has identified that the genetic contribution to same-sex attraction is presently “weak for men and modest for women, but may well downgrade ultimately to zero for men and weak for women” with further research. Correspondingly the non-shared environmental factors will increase further indicating the importance of unique reactions to personal experiences.<sup>19</sup> Therefore it is clear from twin studies that “those with same-sex attraction are not born that way”.<sup>20</sup>

There is also a noticeable difference in the incidence of homosexuality in cities versus rural environments in America. A study of this demonstrated that in rural environments the proportion of homosexuals was 1.3% of the population while in the twelve largest American cities the figure was 9.2%. In other words, there were seven times as many gay men by proportion of the population in large cities as opposed to rural areas, implying a strong environmental effect not genetic.<sup>21</sup> Similarly if you finish your education at high school as a woman you stand a 0.4% chance of being a lesbian or bisexual where as if you gain a university degree you stand a 3.6% chance of being gay or bisexual. This degree of difference (nine times higher) is indicative of environmental influence not genetics.<sup>22</sup>

**In summary**, research indicates that same-sex attraction is not innate – that there is no single genetic cause, and any genetic influence is likely to be multi-gene (as is the case for most traits) and have a very weak or indirect influence.<sup>23</sup> The predominant factor in same-sex attraction is individual response to environmental factors. It is also important to note that not everyone who has a genetic predisposition ‘actualises’ their condition, meaning we can draw a distinction between same-sex attraction and the choice to engage in homosexual activity. And so, on balance, the argument that same sex activity should be declared “natural” or even within God’s created order because of the apparent existence of a genetic predisposition is unpersuasive.

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affected and 89% are not. All twins (and every human being) are affected alike by genes, shared environment and random factors.

<sup>19</sup> Whitehead, Neil E. “Neither Gene or Choice: Same-Sex attraction is mostly a unique reaction to environmental factors”. *Journal of Human Sexuality* no.3 (2011), 81-114. Quote from page 105-106. Downloaded from [http://www.mygenes.co.nz/whitehead\\_twinjhs.pdf](http://www.mygenes.co.nz/whitehead_twinjhs.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Whitehead and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 179

<sup>21</sup> Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*,

<sup>22</sup> Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 53-57. Approximately 1% of adult males are exclusively homosexual and 0.6% of adult women are exclusively lesbian. The figure for bisexuality and exclusive homosexuality combined, rises to about 2.9% for males and 1.8% for females, an average of 2.4% of the total adult population.

<sup>23</sup> Whitehead, “Neither Gene or Choice”, 107.

## *Sociology*

Moving from the above discussion of biological factors, the wide ranging nature of the practice of homosexuality amongst cultures around the world both now and in the past adds further weight to the influence of environmental factors being the determining factor for same sex attraction. For many, the changes in our cultural acceptance of homosexuality necessitates the current discussion on church beliefs and practices. As stated in the previous section, we believe that any proposed changes would be outside of the Biblical understanding of sexual activity and marriage, and that across cultures and across time there has always been marriage specifically between male and female (or it's equivalent) as a cornerstone of human society. Furthermore, being disciples of Jesus, rather than minimizing the moral mandates of the Old Testament, raises the moral requirements (Matthew chapter 5), where "Christ is the transformer of culture",<sup>24</sup> and Christians are not to be conformed by the standards of this world (Romans 12:1-2). What this means is that the Christian worldview exists over and above culture, and indeed seeks to conform human culture to biblical standards, not the other way around.<sup>25</sup>

Culture plays an important part in human sexual practices and so it is worth noting the incredibly variable range of same sex expression found in differing cultures around the world. The reality is that there is a huge variety of homosexual practices between cultures and even within them. In some it is unknown while in others it is obligatory. "In fact, anthropologists have found such huge variations in heterosexual and homosexual practice from culture to culture, and such sudden changes in sexual practice and orientation, even over a single generation, that they mostly want to say that all sexual behaviour is learned. In the words of one writer J. Rostand, "In the secret coming together of two human bodies, all society is the third presence."<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to Judaism, within ancient Greek culture there was a social custom where an older married man was encouraged to mentor a younger boy and have homosexual sex with him. The man would mentor the youth and teach him to be a man and would even help him find a wife as he became older. In this example the boy starts out exclusively homosexual in his relationship to his bisexual mentor, and then is strongly encouraged to become bisexual at

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<sup>24</sup> Niebuhr, H. Richard, *Christ and Culture*, 1951

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion about worldview see Goheen, M.W. and Bartholomew C.G. *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

maturity. The Greek model was found in early imperial Greece, medieval Persia, and at various times in China and Byzantium. The Aztecs and Mayans also subscribed to the Greek model.

Accepted homosexual practice was also found in the Sudan, in feudal Japan among the Samurai, and in, Libya where, fifty years ago, males “talked about their masculine love affairs as openly as they discussed their love of women.” The Mameluke rulers of Egypt imported young boys from the Asian steppes, and according to one account from the early 1900s, Arabic speakers in North Morocco believed young boys would not learn the Koran properly unless they had sexual relations with their teachers. Sexual activity with boys or slaves was sometimes regarded as a right among those with power and status. Amongst the Big Nambas in Vanuatu, a father actively sought ‘guardians’ for his sons who would mentor them and have sexual relationships with them.<sup>27</sup>

Another example is the Melanesian model where men passed through three compulsory and sequential stages: passive exclusive homosexuality, active exclusive homosexuality, and exclusive adult heterosexuality. Many of the cultures practicing it were in Papua New Guinea, and perhaps the best-known group was called the Sambia (a pseudonym). The Sambia believed that boys were naturally girl-like and would not develop manly qualities and sexual maturity unless they ingested semen. The culture required adolescents to fellate regularly (often daily) young boys after they were taken from their mothers at about age seven. When the boys reached the initiation rite at puberty, they then had to repeat the process with younger boys as their social duty. They continued to do this throughout adolescence, until they reached marriageable age. Then they had to stop all homosexual activity, become exclusively heterosexual, and marry. Any man who still wished to engage in homosexual activity with those of his own age or younger was considered aberrant, a “rubbish man.” (About 5% continued with the practice.) However two such radical shifts in behaviour in one lifetime would not be possible if homosexuality were genetically mandated.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 116.

<sup>27</sup> Whitehead, and Whitehead, *My Genes Made Me Do It*, 118

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

**So, in summary**, even though the practice of homosexuality varied amongst cultures around the world, it is clear that such practices were culturally conditioned.

### **Rights and Justice**

Much of the current discussion on homosexuality is focused on the issue of civil rights. This is often equated with the civil rights afforded to others previously repressed because of gender and race. There is however an objection to such an argument, since “unlike one’s race or gender, [homosexuality] it not a truly involuntary condition”.<sup>29</sup> As suggested in the previous section, homosexuality is a learned (culture) rather than predetermined (biological or genetic) behavior and so does not compare to civil rights based on race or gender. The notion of civil rights in the case of homosexuality also conflicts with the moral teachings of Scripture outlined previously, where homosexuality is outside of God’s intended order for creation. The move to normalise homosexuality within the church through same-sex blessings and the ordination of those in same-sex relationships therefore sets up a contradiction in trying to make a “civil right of that which Scripture teaches to be morally wrong”.<sup>30</sup> However, it is worth noting that the denial of societal or church approval for homosexual behavior does not imply that the Church condones the persecution or harassment of practicing homosexuals. (See Appendix 1 for pastoral response).

### **Haven’t We Changed our Mind in the Past Biblically?**

For some, the current issues around human sexuality and a desire to change the Church’s position can be related to previous issues where the Church has changed its attitudes. The two obvious examples are: allowing the marriage of divorcees, and ordaining women. There is then a valid question to ask, “If we are willing to change our practice in these situations, then why not when it comes to same sex blessings and the ordination of practicing same sex individuals”. The answer however is that through a better understanding of Scripture it became apparent that for whatever reason we had allowed other influences to affect our interpretation of scripture and having recognised that, the Church validly altered its practice to more fully conform with what scripture truly teaches. Therefore the emphasis was on a correct interpretation of Scripture, not a rejection of Scripture - so that the case for change was on scriptural rather than cultural grounds. For those who would argue that we are simply proceeding down the same track with same sexual attraction, as we have shown, it is not

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<sup>29</sup> Davis, *Evangelical Ethics*, 134.

possible to make a biblical case normalising same sex practices. To illustrate this, difference we will briefly explore the issues of divorce and the ordination of women to the priesthood.

### *Divorce.*

In the past the Church took a very literal view on divorce based on Jesus' perceived teachings in the Gospels - only allowing for divorce in the case of adultery and not allowing the re-marriage of divorcees except in the case of adultery (Matt 5: 32; 19:3-9). The Anglican Church has since altered its position to allow for divorce and for the re-marriage of divorcees in a wider range of circumstances. The reason for this change is a more clear understanding of Jesus' teachings. When we look at the biblical context Jesus was responding to it was rabbinic interpretations of the Mosaic injunction on divorce from Deuteronomy 24, which were allowing divorce for "trivial" reasons.<sup>31</sup> Jesus however in contrast to the implied permission of Deuteronomy and the scribal tradition of Hillel highlights the Genesis ideal and regards divorce, apart from adultery, as illegal and thereby renders both parties as adulterers if they remarry. The reason he adds apart from adultery is because adultery in the Old Testament ended in the stoning/death of the guilty party, which was not allowed under Roman law. Divorce in this case as a substitute for death of the guilty party clearly signaled the end of the marriage and the freedom of the non-guilty party to marry again.

In a similar way to Moses and Jesus, Paul too makes some exceptions to the ideal recognising for him the unique state of the church and his position in it. In 1 Cor 7 he allows for couples to divorce and does not specify that it has to be on the grounds of adultery. Then further on in Corinthians he allows for divorce and remarriage on the grounds of religious incompatibility, where one party in a marriage is not a believer and wishes to divorce (1 Cor 7:12-15). Interestingly Paul very clearly states that this is his solution to this situation and not an instruction from Jesus and that this is the rule that he lays down in all the churches. In other words Paul feels, like Moses, that he has the right to put in place provisions to unique and difficult situations while still holding to the ideal of marriage.

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<sup>30</sup> Davis, *Evangelical Ethics*, 135.

<sup>31</sup>The school of Hillel says: "(He may divorce his wife), even if she has burned his supper, as it is said: '...because he has found in her a scandalous thing' (Deut 24:1). Rabbi Aqiba says: "(He may divorce his wife), even if he has found another more becoming than she, as it is said: "and if she does not find favor in your eyes" (Deut 24:1). --- ,*Mishna Gittin* 9.10



*The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood.*

The ordination of women is a further example where church practices have been corrected on biblical grounds, resulting in the “acceptance of the equality of ministry for men and women”.<sup>32</sup> As already indicated, the creation account in Genesis 2 identifies “male” and “female” as having equal status in the eyes of God, with both being made in the image of God. Complementarity rather than subordination is the creation distinction. The New Testament also gives clear examples of women in leadership roles in the Church. For example:<sup>33</sup>

- There is neither male or female: for all are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28)<sup>34</sup>
- There is women leadership of early house churches - for example Lydia, Chloe, Nympha, and Priscilla (Acts 16:12-15, 40; Col 4:15, 1 Cor1:11, 16, 19; Rom 16:3-5.
- Women were involved in evangelism and teaching – the best example is Priscilla who Paul names ahead of her husband Aquila (Acts 18: 18, 26, Rom 16:3, 2 Tim 4:19). Priscilla is also involved in teaching (Acts 18:26).

**In summary**, we have already noted earlier the covenantal, lifelong, sacramental nature of marriage as something to be honoured and preserved reflecting the highest form of intimacy in human relationships. This is the ideal for marriage that Jesus holds to and highlights in response to the very liberal situation of divorce in the first century AD. Sadly however, we live in a non-ideal world and so beginning with Moses, demonstrated by Jesus and continued with Paul responsible pastoral leadership takes into account the whole health of people and makes provision for the untenable situations that some couples find themselves in and to allow for divorce and even remarriage. In no way though does this lessen the biblical ideal for marriage, nor does it make divorce something to aspire to, but rather a sad but sometimes necessary solution to broken marriages. Scripture has also been used to correct previous cultural/patriarchal obstacles to women ordination in various denominations. In contrast to

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<sup>32</sup> Allan K Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Church and Society in New Zealand*, 3 ed. (Wellington: Education for Ministry, 2004), 150. For a historical summary see pages 141-154.

<sup>33</sup> For a good outline see C C Kroeger, "Women in the Early Church," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments*, ed. Ralph P Martin and Peter H Davids (Downers Grove: IVP, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> A central passage for allowing women elders in the Presbyterian Church. See Peter J Lineham and Allan K Davidson, *Transplanted Christianity: Documents illustrating aspects of New Zealand Church history*, 4 ed. (Palmerston North: Department of History, Massey University, 1997), 354.

the current issue around same sex practices, this correction affirms biblical principles and affirms the equality of male and female within the creation mandate.

### **Constitution and Change.**

So far we have identified the biblical and cultural aspects that we believe affirm the norms for expressing human sexuality as between male and female. The current discussion identifies two points worth noting in our Church's constitution: How change can be effected; The nature of Marriage.

*How does the Constitution allow us to effect change.*

When the constitution of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand was established in 1857, the writers established unalterable "Fundamental Provisions" (clauses 1, 5 & 6). These provisions outlined the core values for the Church of Christ with an Anglican ecclesiology in Aotearoa, New Zealand. People of course have freedom to develop and hold different views but they do not have the right according to our constitution to alter anything we do in such a way that it affects those fundamental provisions.

- **Clause 1** of Part A of the Constitution states

This Church holds and maintains the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ as the Lord has commanded in Holy Scripture and as explained in: The Book of Common Prayer 1662; Te Rawiri; The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons; The Thirty Nine Articles of Religion; A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

- **Clause 3** allows the making and modifying of rules to reflect our current situation as long as they do not affect doctrine. For example, the bicultural revision in 1992 was permissible under the constitution because these changes did not change the fundamental principles of 1857.

- **Clause 6** states that the provisions are fundamental and cannot be altered, revoked, added to or diminished by General Synod or any Diocesan Synod.

When we come to the 39 Articles article 20 states the following on the Authority of the Church.

The church has authority to decree forms of worship and ceremonies and to decide in controversies concerning the faith. *However, it is not lawful for the church to ordain anything contrary to God's written Word. Nor may it expound one passage of Scripture so that it be repugnant to, contradicts another passage.* So, although the church is a witness and guardian to holy Scripture, it must not decree anything contrary to Scripture, nor is it to enforce belief in anything additional to Scripture as essential to salvation.

**In summary**, the Anglican Church in New Zealand is a church that is founded firmly upon the doctrines and sacraments of Christ as commanded in scripture and we are not at liberty to create any form of worship or ceremony that is contrary to Scripture and this includes the solemnization of marriage. So in determining our definition of marriage we need to look at how marriage is defined in both Scripture and in the Church's formularies. It is worth noting that any attempt to re-define marriage must therefore justify that definition from Scripture and show how the past understanding was in contradiction to scripture.

*The Nature of Marriage: Formularies, Canons and Services.*

The teaching enshrined in the Formularies is further enlarged by considering the whole of the service to be used at any specific wedding.

- Canon III Title G (1.3).

The minister shall provide education to the parties seeking marriage on the Christian understanding of marriage, or see that such education is provided by some other competent person, in accordance with any Guidelines that General Synod may from time to time issue. In particular the minister shall ascertain that the parties understand that Christian marriage is a *physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman*, entered into in the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind and will, and with the intent that it be lifelong. The Church's teaching on Christian marriage is enshrined in the Formularies of the Church and is expressed in all the marriage services in the Formularies and in the introduction for the congregation to Christian marriage in *A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, (See Schedule II of this Canon as follows).

- SCHEDULE II

The following are the major relevant excerpted sections from the Formularies to be read in conjunction with the proposed Canon, clause 1.3. The teaching enshrined in the Formularies is further enlarged by considering the whole of the service to be used at any specific wedding.

1. Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship - God's blessing enables husband and wife to love and support each other in good times and bad. For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share life together in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is based upon a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman, made and celebrated in the presence of God and before a priest and congregation. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 779)
2. Marriage is a gift of God our Creator, whose intention is that husband and wife should be united in heart, body and mind. In their union they fulfil their love for each other. Marriage is given to provide the stability necessary for family life, so that children may be cared for lovingly and grow to full maturity. Marriage is a way of life to be upheld and honoured. No one should enter into it lightly. It involves a serious and life-long commitment to each other's good in a union of strength, sympathy and delight. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 780)
3. Praying is an outlook, a sustained energy, which creates a marriage and makes love and forgiveness life-long. Eternal love never fails; our love needs to forgive and be forgiven. As we pray and forgive we minister reconciliation. Those who marry are God's ministers to each other of reconciliation and change. As they grow together, wife and husband foster one another's strengths, they provide each other with reassurance and love needed to overcome their weaknesses. From this beginning God draws them now to a completely new life. They become awake to each other, aware of each other, sensitive to each other's needs. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 785f.)
4. Marriage is the promise of hope between a man and a woman who love each other, who trust that love, and who wish to share the future together. It enables two separate people to share their desires, longings, dreams and memories, and to help each other through their uncertainties. It provides the encouragement to risk more and thus to gain more. In marriage, husband and wife belong together, providing mutual support and a stability in which their children may grow. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 790)

5. Marriage involves caring and giving. It involves learning to share one's life with another person, forgiving as Christ forgives; enjoying the love and meaning which can be found together. It involves facing together whatever adversity may arise. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 790)
6. [Marriage is to be entered into in the fear of God], duly considering the causes for which Matrimony was ordained.

First, It was ordained for the increase of mankind according to the will of God, and that children might be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name.

Secondly, It was ordained in order that the natural instincts and affections, implanted by God, should be hallowed and directed aright; that those who are called by God to this holy estate, should continue therein in pureness of living.

Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and in adversity. (*Book of Common Prayer*, 1928.)

It is worth noting here that some would argue that according to the 1928 Book of Common Prayer marriage was created in the first instance for procreation and it is therefore the duty of every couple to have children. Today they would argue we don't see having children as the primary purpose of marriage and that even a marriage without children is still a marriage and that therefore we have already drifted away from that original understanding of marriage so why not in other ways as well. While this can be argued it is not entirely correct. The 1928 Prayer Book mentions it first simply because in Genesis the concept of having children is the first consequence of having been made as heterosexual beings mentioned in Gen 1:28.

Obviously from the later references in Genesis this ability to procreate is assumed to occur within the context of the covenantal union we call marriage, but at this point speaking to humanity as a whole, in an unpopulated world God is simply saying to the human race to go and be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the earth. It is a generic command to the human race as a whole not a specific command to individual marriages. Marriage is not primarily about procreation but is the only context in which procreation should occur.

**So to summarise** our formularies defining Marriage as;

1. A solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman.

2. A divine institution for the good of humanity for the right ordering of society, given to provide the stability necessary for family life, so that children (if they come) may be cared for lovingly and grow to full maturity.
3. Ordained as the appropriate environment for the expression of sexual intimacy.
4. Involving caring and giving. It involves learning to share one's life with another person, forgiving as Christ forgives; enjoying the love and meaning which can be found together. It involves facing together whatever adversity may arise.

*Issues around Ordination: Defining "Chaste".*

- Title D, Canon 1, part A clause 10.4

A significant issue in the current debate is the meaning of the word "Chaste" (Title D, Canon 1, part A clause 10.4 and 10.4.1). For some when read in isolation, the emphasis is on long term commitment, therefore you can have chaste heterosexual relationships and chaste homosexual relationships. Our argument is that any definition of "chaste" can not be read in isolation from the other canons or formularies of the Church, in which the right ordering of sexual relationships is between male and female both in terms of the biblical understanding as we have outlined, and in terms of marriage and ordination.

**Conclusion.**

Through identifying and extensively exegeting the applicable passages in Scripture, an examination of biological and sociological factors, identifying cultural patterns, and by examining the Formularies of this Church, we believe that the God-given context for sexual relationships is only between men and women within the covenantal relationship of marriage. It is clear that the practice of homosexuality in any context including committed same sex relationships is contrary to Scripture, and therefore by extension the blessing of same-sex relationships and the ordination of a person who is in a same-sex relationship cannot be condoned, and indeed a person seeking ordination within a committed same sex relationship should indeed be challenged about "the right ordering" of their sexual relationships. Any proposed changes to the existing formularies of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia are therefore illegal and unconstitutional on the basis of the fundamental provisions that require any change to reflect accurately what the Bible teaches in the area of sexuality and marriage.

## Appendix I:



## Diocese of Nelson

### Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

*(Adopted by Synod at Greymouth 9 October 2004)*

*(Confirmed by Synod at Motueka 22 June 2012)*

- A. Synod adopted the following statement, recommended by the Diocese of Nelson Theology Commission, to be the policy of the Diocese, and affirmed that it is a policy statement having force until such time as a future Synod of the Diocese of Nelson revises or replaces it.
  
- B. Synod requested the Bishop of Nelson and his successors to apply this statement as appropriate to the life of the Diocese, including decisions regarding ordination, licensing, and permission to officiate.

### Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

1. Holy Scripture is the final authority on all matters of faith and practice, including marriage and sexuality. The interpretation of Holy Scripture is a matter on which dialogue occurs within the church, and to which the Tradition of the universal church of Jesus Christ and statements of church councils, including Lambeth Conferences, and our own Synod contribute; this statement being such a contribution.
  
2. The church is the people of God in mission to the world, as taught by Scripture, witnessing to new life in Christ made possible through Christ's death on the cross and resurrection to life, and available to all people through repentance from sin and belief in Christ; in this mission the church desires that people experience the true grace of God and freedom in Christ which is the healing of our wounded humanity; this grace and freedom being available to all people, including people of all sexualities and whether or not they are single, married, widowed, divorced, remarried, or otherwise; and to this mission the Diocese of Nelson is committed. This statement is intended to assist rather than inhibit this mission as described above.

3. The clear intention of Scripture is that marriage is a monogamous, lifelong, covenantal relationship between a man and a woman; it is a gift from God which provides a holy and blessed context for a husband and a wife to encourage each other's love for God, to develop their love for each other, to enjoy sexual intercourse, and to begin and nurture family life; it is not equivalent to other forms of relationships described as 'de facto marriage' or 'civil union' even though these relationships may contain elements in common with marriage as defined here; and it is not a relationship into which two people of the same gender may enter.
4. The mission of Christ's church includes the nurture, encouragement, and instruction of single people, married couples and families in the way of Jesus Christ; and the development of faith communities as true and loving expressions of the family of God in which Christian people of all ages and stages in life, including all sexualities, recognise themselves and each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.
5. As an expression of the mission of the church and of this Diocese's commitment to marriage as defined above, ordained priests in the Diocese of Nelson are encouraged to conduct marriage services (providing such conduct is in accordance with Title G Canon 3 of Marriage and relevant civil laws which apply); but because of our commitment to marriage no licensed minister, lay or ordained, may participate in leading any service, ritual, ceremony, or blessing of a relationship which is similar to marriage such as a 'civil union', whether such relationship is between two people of opposite sexes or the same sex, and whether or not such relationship is legally recognized in Aotearoa New Zealand or any other country or formally recognized by the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia.
6. Singleness is an honourable way of life specifically endorsed by Jesus' own example and by the Scriptures. The Diocese of Nelson acknowledges a continuing tension in the life of the church as it seeks to honour both marriage and singleness. (Singleness is here defined as not being in a sexual relationship with another person).
7. Honouring both marriage and singleness in today's church involves facing sensitive pastoral questions concerning people who identify themselves as homosexual, are divorced, or divorced and remarried.
8. While acknowledging that a range of views concerning sexuality exists within God's church at this time, the Diocese of Nelson itself maintains the view that Scripture endorses marriage between a man and a woman as the only acceptable domain for sexual relationships, and therefore does not endorse sexual relationships between people of the same gender.



9. Consistent with clause 8 above the Diocese of Nelson requires its licensed ministers, ministers with permission to officiate, and office-holders to be either single (that is, not in a sexual relationship with another person) or married; and if married to be sexually faithful to their spouse.
  
10. The Diocese of Nelson determines for the guidance of the Bishop of Nelson that clause 8 and 9 above interprets and further defines Title D Canon 1 Part 10.4 and 10.4.1 which read:
  - 10.4 CHASTITY:  
  
Chastity is the right ordering of sexual relationships.
  
  - 10.41 Ministers are to be chaste. Promiscuity is incompatible with chastity.
  
11. The Diocese of Nelson recognises a specific challenge to its mission at this time when voices in the world and in the church are calling for a different assessment of the morality of same sex relationships than that given in this statement; it encourages ministers and congregations to work creatively and compassionately to welcome all people into our churches, especially in this context, people who identify themselves as homosexual.
  
12. The Diocese of Nelson expects that any licensed ministers, ministers with permission to officiate, and office holders in the Diocese will uphold the views of the Diocese as expressed in this statement, both by their example of lifestyle and in their teaching and in any public statements they should make.

## RESOLUTION OF SYNOD 2012

### Motion 6 Statement on Marriage & Sexuality

1. That this Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Nelson reaffirms the Diocesan Statement on Marriage and Sexuality (Diocesan Handbook Appendix L) adopted by Synod 9 October 2004, and would seek to support our General Synod representatives in upholding this view at the upcoming General Synod of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia.
  
2. In doing so, this Synod recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation, and would also affirm a pastoral response to issues of human sexuality - welcoming all people to be members of the Church. It is acknowledged, however, that members of the Church have at times hurt and wounded people by words and actions, in relation to human sexuality. Therefore, in order that the Nelson Anglican Diocese is experienced as a 'safe place' and enabled in its reflection, we affirm:
  - A continuing commitment to love our neighbour, and opposition to all unbiblical and uncharitable actions and attitudes in respect of human sexuality from whatever perspective, including bigotry, hurtful words or actions, and demeaning or damaging language;
  - A willingness to increase our awareness of the complex issues regarding human sexuality;
  - A determination to welcome and to make disciples of all people.
  - That for all who believe, 'there is no distinction' and that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God' (*Romans 3:22 - 23*) and are in need of God's grace and mercy. We seek to be a community modelled on God's love for the world as revealed in Jesus Christ. We wish that all members of the Church, through the teaching of the scriptures, the nourishment of the sacraments, and the prayerful and pastoral support of a Christian community will fulfil their unique contribution to God's purposes for our world.

