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**Submission on the 2019 Wangaratta Regulation on the Blessing of Persons in
Civil Marriages
to the Appellate Tribunal of the Anglican Church of Australia**

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Contents

The background	3
The questions	4
Response to Question 1	5
Key definitions	5
Some opposing views.....	8
Christ's teaching on homosexual activity	9
The physical risks of homosexual activity	10
The Red Cross blood battle	12
Did God create homosexuals?	13
Response to Question 2	16
Response to Question 3	17

The background

On 21 October 2019 the Primate made the following reference to the Appellate Tribunal at the request of 25 members of the General Synod:

A. At a session in August 2019 the Synod of the Diocese of Wangaratta purportedly made the Blessing of Persons Married According to the Marriage Act 1961 Regulations 2019 pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Canon Concerning Services 1992.

B. Section 5(3) of the Canon Concerning Services 1992 provides that all forms of service used pursuant to Section 5(2) "must be reverent and edifying and must not be contrary to or a departure from the doctrine of the Church."

The questions

The following questions arising under the Constitution are referred to the Appellate Tribunal:

1. Whether the use of the form of service at Appendix A to the **Blessing of Persons Married According to the Marriage Act 1961 Regulations 2019** made by the Synod of the Diocese of Wangaratta to bless a civil marriage which involved a union other than between one man and one woman, is consistent with the doctrine of this Church and consistent with the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles in the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia.
2. Whether the use of any other form of service, purportedly made in accordance with section 5 of the **Canon Concerning Services 1992**, to bless a civil marriage which involved a union other than between one man and one woman is consistent with the doctrine of this Church and consistent with the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles in the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia.
3. Whether, in light of the determinations to be made in Questions 1 & 2, the Regulations are validly made pursuant to the **Canon Concerning Services 1992**.

Response to Question 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 of the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia (hereafter called “the Constitution”) includes the following two of three Fundamental Declarations, which can never be changed:

2. This Church receives all the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation.

3. This Church will ever obey the commands of Christ, teach His doctrine, administer His sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, follow and uphold His discipline and preserve the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons in the sacred ministry.

Part 1, Chapter II of the Constitution includes, in the Ruling Principles, the words:

“... it is hereby further declared, that the ... Book of Common Prayer, together with the Thirty-nine Articles, be regarded as the authorised standard of worship and doctrine in this Church, and no alteration in or permitted variations from the services or Articles therein contained shall contravene any principle of doctrine or worship laid down in such standard.”

Key definitions

The questions depend on the Constitutional meaning of the following terms:

the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Australia;

Christ’s discipline;

faith;

blessing.

“**Doctrine**” in the Constitution means the teaching of the Anglican Church of Australia on any question of faith.¹

“**Discipline**” in the Constitution means ... in Chapters II to VII and X to XII the obligation to adhere to, to observe and to carry out (as appropriate): ... the faith, ritual and ceremonial of this Church...”²

“**Faith**” is not defined in the Constitution except to say that it “includes the obligation to hold the faith”.³ In the context of the Constitution, faith consists of Anglican beliefs about God and his dealings with mankind as set out in the Old and New Testaments and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer with the Thirty-nine Articles. Matters of faith therefore include Anglican beliefs about the nature of marriage and the actions that are contrary to God’s will, known as “sin”.

The first meaning of the verb “**ble**ss”, according to the online Oxford Dictionary *Lexico*, means to “pronounce words in a religious rite in order to confer or invoke divine favour upon; ask God to look

1. The Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia, s74.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

favourably on”.⁴ It follows that a service of blessing is a where prayers to God are said, seeking his favour on a person, people or thing such as a home, meal, ship or venture.

The Wangaratta Regulation 2019 authorises services of blessing for civil marriages including those involving a sexual relationship between two men or two women. But God cannot approve or bless such sexual activity, since it is condemned in the canonical scriptures of both Old and New Testaments.⁵

The Regulation is thereby inconsistent with the **Fundamental Declaration #2** of the Anglican Church of Australia, which states that all the canonical scriptures of the **Old and New Testaments** “are the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation”.

In 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10, the Apostle Paul lists some behaviours that would prevent a person from inheriting the kingdom of God – that is, receiving salvation. The bars to salvation include theft, greed, drunkenness, slander, adultery – and homosexual offences. The latter term is *arsenokoites* in the Greek, a word coined by Paul to correspond to the sexual activity condemned in Leviticus 18: 22 and 20: 13.⁶ It would not be possible for God to approve or bless continuing behaviour that he has condemned and that would preclude salvation.

The Regulation is also inconsistent with the **Ruling Principles** of the Anglican Church of Australia, since the Constitution states in part I chapter II that the **Book of Common Prayer**, together with the **Thirty-nine Articles**, is “the authorised standard of worship and doctrine in this Church, and no alteration in or permitted variations from the services or Articles therein contained shall contravene any principle of doctrine...”

Article 34 says: “It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men’s manners, *so that nothing be ordained against God’s Word.*” This Article allows variations in Church services, provided they do not contravene God’s Word in the Scriptures. A service of blessing for couples in a same-sex sexual relationship would contravene Biblical teaching⁷ and thereby contravene the Thirty-nine Articles.

Article 7 says: “Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, *no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.*” Thus Old Testament precepts relating to moral behaviour such as adultery, fornication and homosexual activity remain binding on Christians.

The Regulation, by validating the changed definition of marriage in Australian civil law as a union of two persons rather than a man and a woman, also contravenes the Book of Common Prayer.

The service of Solemnization of Holy Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer clearly teaches that marriage is a man-woman union. The priest says at the outset: “Dearly beloved, we are gathered

4. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/bless>, accessed 24/11/19.

5. See for example Leviticus 18:22 and 20: 13, Matthew 15:19, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:9-10.

6. Michael Stead, “The case against same-sex marriage”, *Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia*, Essays from the Doctrine Commission, The Anglican Church of Australia, Broughton Publishing, June 2019, pp 301-302.

7. Leviticus 18:22 and 20: 13, Matthew 15:19, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:9-10.

together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this Congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony...”

The “man-woman union” meaning of marriage has also been affirmed by Christ himself as being instituted by God “at the beginning” of creation.⁸

Biblical teaching on marriage⁹ consistently indicates that it applies to a man-woman union: indeed, despite the prevalence of polygamy in pre-Christian times, Genesis 2:24 refers to a man leaving his parents and joining with his (one, female) wife. In Matthew 19: 4-6, Christ himself affirmed both Genesis 1:27 (God created mankind male and female) and Genesis 2: 24 – thus establishing God’s intention at the beginning of creation to institute marriage as a lasting covenant between one man and one woman.

The notion that marriage could also encompass two men or two women – or that a sexual relationship between two people of the same sex is part of God’s plan for his people – is in direct contravention of God’s law set out in Old and New Testaments.

The Book of Common Prayer, defined by the Constitution’s Ruling Principles to be, along with the Thirty-nine Articles, the authorised standard of doctrine in the Anglican Church of Australia, reinforces this answer. The Solemnization of Holy Matrimony states the doctrine – or disciplinary rule – that:

“so many as are coupled together otherwise than God’s Word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their Matrimony lawful.”

Since God’s Word – in both Old and New Testaments – does not allow same-sex coupling, it follows that any covenant involving such coupling, whether it is called a “civil marriage” or “civil union” or some other term, cannot be given God’s blessing or seal of approval. God cannot bless sin.

The answer to Question 1 is therefore *No*: the regulation *Blessing of Persons Married According to the Marriage Act 1961 Regulations 2019* made by the Synod of the Diocese of Wangaratta is *not* consistent with the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles in the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia.

8. Matthew 19:4-6, Genesis 1:27 and 2: 24.

9. Matthew 19:4-6, Genesis 1:17 and 2: 24, Ephesians 5:22-33, Col 3: 18-19, 1 Peter 3: 1-7.

Some opposing views

Some contributions to the Doctrine Commission's 2019 publication, "Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia" have suggested that New Testament passages condemning homosexual activity:

- (a) did not refer to sexual intercourse between two adults in a loving, lasting, faithful relationship, or
- (b) should be rejected as no longer relevant in the light of "lived experience" in the modern world.

However, as Michael Stead has pointed out, there is no valid evidence for argument (a).¹⁰ Moreover, the Constitution states that the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the ultimate rule and standard of faith for the Anglican Church of Australia – not subjective concepts such as "lived experience", as claimed by Matthew Anstey.¹¹

Dr Anstey also mentioned "scientific evidence" as an authoritative source to help determine Christian doctrine¹² – even though on the issue of same-sex attraction, valid scientific evidence does not support his beliefs. I will explain in more detail later in this submission.

The opposing views of Dr Anstey and other authors supporting the Wangaratta Regulations are therefore not credible.

10. Michael Stead, "The case against same-sex marriage", *Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia*, Essays from the Doctrine Commission, The Anglican Church of Australia, Broughton Publishing, June 2019, pp 296-302.

11. Matthew Anstey, "Scripture and Moral Reasoning", *Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia*, Essays from the Doctrine Commission, The Anglican Church of Australia, Broughton Publishing, June 2019, pp 57, 64, 71; "The case for same-sex marriage", *Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia*, Essays from the Doctrine Commission, The Anglican Church of Australia, Broughton Publishing, June 2019, p 274.

12. Matthew Anstey, "The case for same-sex marriage", *Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia*, Essays from the Doctrine Commission, The Anglican Church of Australia, Broughton Publishing, June 2019, p 275.

Christ's teaching on homosexual activity

It is sometimes claimed that Jesus did not mention, let alone censure, homosexual activity – thus leaving it open for Christians to practise homosexuality in a loving, mutually faithful relationship.

Matthew Anstey says: "Given Jesus makes no reference to homosexuality, his citation of Genesis 2 in his discussion of divorce is interpreted as Christ's endorsement of heterosexual marriage only (i.e. heteronormativity)."¹³

Dorothy Lee says: "The recent book of the Doctrine Commission, *Marriage, Same-sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia*, argues for and against same-sex covenant unions. A number of these articles argue on biblical grounds that there is no theological objection to same-sex covenant partnerships.

"The argument of these essays is that Jesus himself never said a word against homosexuality..."¹⁴

However, this argument is false. Jesus *did* say something about homosexual activity: he condemned it. Sexual intercourse between two men or two women is included in the meaning of the New Testament Greek word "porneiai" found in Matthew 15:19 and Mark 7: 21, where Jesus cites the evil things that come out of a person, making him or her unclean – evil thoughts, murder, adultery, theft, false testimony, slander – and *porneiai*.

The Greek word *porneia* (or *porneiai*, plural) is translated "fornications" in the King James Bible and "sexual immorality" in some other versions. It means "illicit sexual intercourse" and includes adultery, fornication, incest, homosexuality, lesbianism and bestiality, all of which are forbidden in Old Testament law.¹⁵ Jesus's Jewish hearers would have understood the full meaning of *porneiai*. They would have understood his clear condemnation of homosexual activity, along with murder, theft and other sins.

Thus Matthew 15: 19 and Mark 7: 21 convey Christ's doctrine and discipline (*Fundamental Declaration #3*) on same-sex couplings: these couplings are evil. Any Anglican service purporting to invoke God's blessing on same-sex couplings, including those contracted as civil marriages under federal law, cannot be consistent with the Constitution.

13. Matthew Anstey, "The case for same-sex marriage", *Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia*, Essays from the Doctrine Commission, The Anglican Church of Australia, Broughton Publishing, June 2019, p 280.

14. Rev Canon Professor Dorothy Lee, "The Blessing of Civil Unions", Address to the Synod of Wangaratta, 31 August 2019.

15. Kittel and Bromiley both define *porneiai* to include "adultery, fornication, licentiousness and homosexuality": Kittel, Gerhard, "Theological Dictionary of the new Testament", Eerdmans, 1968, vol. vi., pp 581-595; Bromiley, Geoffrey W, "Theological Dictionary of the New Testament", Eerdmans Publishing, 1985, VI, pp 918-921.

The physical risks of homosexual activity

In Romans 1: 27, the apostle Paul condemns those men who “committed indecent acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.”

Ironically, this Bible verse is affirmed by the “lived experience” of many homosexual men past and present: the health risks associated with male homosexual activity are significantly greater than for heterosexual males.

The reasons lie in God’s design of the human body.

Even a brief study of male and female anatomy shows that their genital organs naturally fit together. The male penis and the female vagina appear designed to unite – like male and female parts in carpentry joints, electrical connections or a nut and a bolt.

The female vagina is a flexible tube with three layers of cells in its wall – mucosal, muscle and elastic fibres. It is lubricated naturally, in part by mucus-secreting glands near the vaginal opening.¹⁶

The vagina is elastic as well as strong. It can stretch to fit the male penis, and even further to accommodate the head of a baby as it travels through the vagina during birth. Where there is no birth injury or sexually transmitted infection, the vagina is not readily breached – unlike the rectum, which has a much thinner wall.¹⁷

The rectum is used as a vaginal substitute by most male homosexual couples during anal intercourse.¹⁸ A much smaller percentage of heterosexual couples practise anal intercourse regularly, incurring the same increase in health risks as male homosexual couples.¹⁹

The rectum is a tube containing faeces laden with micro-organisms, without significant natural lubrication. The thin rectal wall is much more easily damaged than the vagina. Micro-tears, causing bleeding from the tiny blood vessels lining the rectum, are believed to occur during every act of anal intercourse.²⁰

It follows that any harmful faecal bacteria, viruses and other pathogens in the rectum can directly enter the bloodstream of the person receiving anal intercourse – putting that person at high risk of various diseases. Pathogens in the rectum can also enter the insertive partner through the eye of the penis and any minor breaks in the skin. The risk is much greater if no condom is used, or if the condom breaks or slips off.

The prevalence of HIV among sexual partners of gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men is 40 times that of sexual partners of heterosexual men.²¹

16. Female Genital Anatomy, Boston University School of Medicine, accessed online, 8/11/19: <http://www.bumc.bu.edu/sexualmedicine/physicianinformation/female-genital-anatomy/>.

17. Glare, Eric, “It’s time to talk top: the risk of insertive, unprotected anal sex”, *HIV Australia*, Vol 9 No 3, Nov 2011.

18. “Out late, a guide for older men coming out”, AFAO (Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations), accessed online 8/11/19: https://www.afao.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/OutLate_2010-archive.pdf.

19. “The Consequences of Heterosexual Anal Sex for Women”, *The Medical Institute for Sexual Health*, August 2016, accessed 8/11/19: <https://www.medinstitute.org/2016/08/the-consequences-of-heterosexual-anal-sex-for-women/>.

20. Glare, Eric, *loc. cit.*

21. “For Your Health: Recommendations for A Healthier You”, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US, accessed online, 8/11/19: <https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/for-your-health.htm>.

The immune response of the receptive partner may also be affected. Research on rabbits and another study on mice have found that sperm deposited in the rectum has a negative impact on the immune system.²²

The insertive partner in anal intercourse is at increased risk of disease unless a condom is used.²³ However, condoms used during anal intercourse are more likely to break²⁴ – and the act of removing the condom, unless protective gloves are worn, puts the user in contact with faecal matter and its associated pathogens.

Not surprisingly, diseases disproportionately associated with anal intercourse include syphilis, gonorrhoea, hepatitis A, B and C, shigella, human papillomavirus, HIV and anal cancer.^{25, 26}

An Australian doctor has written:

“We go to great lengths to encourage people to wash their hands after using the toilet. We even put up signs in public toilets, telling people how to wash.

“Yet the government is proposing to give honour to the insertion of a penis into an anus. You just cannot do this. We need to care for our citizens, including homosexuals. But it does not mean we celebrate what they do, just as we do not celebrate what drug users do to themselves, while caring for them and providing medical treatment.”²⁷

22. JM Richards, JM Bedford, SS Witkin, “Rectal insemination modifies immune responses in rabbits”, *Science*, Vol 224, Issue 4647, pp 390-392, April 1984.

23. “Anal sex and HIV risk”, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US, accessed online, 8/11/19: <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/analsex.html>.

24. Silverman, Barbara G, Gross, Thomas P, “Use and Effectiveness of Condoms During Anal Intercourse: A Review”, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, January 1997, Volume 24, Issue 1, pp 11-17.

25. Dale O’Leary, “The syndemic of AIDS and STDS among MSM”, *Linacre Q*, February, 2014; 81(1), pp 12–37.

26. “Sexually Transmitted Diseases”, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US, accessed online 9/11/19: <https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/STD.htm>

27. Private communication, 2012. The doctor asked to remain anonymous.

The Red Cross blood battle

It is sometimes argued that although as a group, men who have sex with men are at much greater risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections such as HIV, homosexual men in a permanent monogamous relationship are not at risk and the Church should therefore encourage such relationships – for example, by blessing same-sex civil marriages.

However, a ruling by the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Tribunal on a complaint by a homosexual activist against the Red Cross exposes the flaws in this argument.

The Red Cross prohibits a number of different groups from giving blood. They include sex workers, people who inject illicit drugs, men who have had sex with men and people who have come to Australia from sub-Saharan Africa. However, only homosexual activists have condemned their exclusion as unjust “discrimination”.

On 2 August 2005, Michael Cain lodged a formal complaint against the Australian Red Cross with the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commission. He said that his homosexual activity was lawful. He said the Red Cross had unlawfully stigmatised and discriminated against him by refusing to accept blood from any man who has had sex with another man during the previous 12 months.

Mr Cain claimed that the HIV/AIDS risk is not associated with homosexual men per se, but with those (including heterosexuals) who engage in unsafe practices. He said that monogamous homosexual couples who always use condoms should be allowed to donate blood.

The Commission upheld Mr Cain’s complaint. The Red Cross then appealed the decision to the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, which finally handed down its decision on 27 May 2009.²⁸

The Tribunal’s 120-page decision quoted evidence from expert witnesses and noted that:

- Condoms do not guarantee “safe sex” and are only about 80-90% effective.
- While all blood donations are tested for HIV, there is a period of time after infection when the test is unreliable.
- Unprotected receptive anal intercourse is responsible for by far the greatest number of HIV infections in Australia. The insertive partner is also at risk, but to a lesser extent.
- A homosexual man may believe his relationship is monogamous, but he cannot guarantee his partner’s fidelity.
- A homosexual man who always uses condoms in an apparently monogamous relationship is nevertheless still at risk of HIV because condoms do not give 100% protection and there is a relatively high prevalence of HIV (5-10%) in the Australian homosexual community.
- Men who have sex with men are at higher risk from other blood-borne diseases such as syphilis and hepatitis B and C.
- The Red Cross does not accept blood from other groups at higher risk of blood-borne diseases such as HIV, including people who inject illicit drugs, prostitutes and their customers, and people from certain overseas countries and their partners.

28. *Cain, Michael v The Australian Red Cross Society*. The Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Tribunal’s 2009 decision on this case was available for some years on the website of the Tasmanian Magistrates Court, but is no longer accessible online. A summary was published in *VoxPoint* magazine, August 2012, pp B, C.

- The estimated incidence of HIV per year in Australian homosexual men in general is between 60 - 121 times greater than for Australian heterosexual men in general.
- The HIV incidence for monogamous homosexual men who always use condoms is nearly twice as great as for heterosexual men who never use condoms.
- Australia has one of the safest blood supplies in the world. The blood supplies in Spain and Italy, where homosexual men are allowed to donate blood in some circumstances, are less safe than in Australia.

The complaint determination lasted nearly four years, at great cost to the taxpayer. But Mr Cain said he would continue to fight for the homosexual “right” to give blood – despite expert evidence that blood banks need to discriminate against several groups of people in the interests of public health and safety.

Did God create homosexuals?

It is sometimes argued that people with same-sex attractions are born that way, so God must have created them with these feelings – and if they are expressed in a context of loving mutual commitment, their sexual activity is in line with God’s will.

However, there is no evidence that same-sex attraction is either fully inherited via genes or the result of hormonal exposure in the womb. Life experiences – possibly very early in life – play a much more significant part than genetic tendency in the development of same-sex or bisexual attraction.

God did not “create” homosexuals any more than he created drunkards, whose activities are also condemned in the Bible.²⁹ Some drunkards may have been predisposed to alcohol addiction by genes or life experiences such as a dysfunctional family in childhood, beyond their control. However, the success of “12 Step” programs like Alcoholics Anonymous shows that with help, they can abstain and overcome their problem.

Studies of identical twins who grow up to have different sexual orientations despite having the same genes and the same hormonal exposure in the womb show that these factors are not significant causes of homosexual attraction.³⁰ Other studies show that sexual orientation is particularly changeable during adolescence – it is not immutable.³¹

An article by Dr Mark Ellis MD, “Identical Twin Studies Prove Homosexuality Is Not Genetic”, was published in *The Aquila Report*, 30 May 2015. He said (in part):³²

Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: “gays” were not born that way.

29. 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10.

30. Niklas Langstrom, et al, "Genetic and Environmental Effects on Same-sex Sexual Behavior: A Population Study of Twins in Sweden", *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2010, Vol 39, pp 75 80; A Burri, et al, "Genetic and Environmental Influences on Female Sexual Orientation, Childhood Gender Typicality and Adult Gender Identity", 2011, *PLoS ONE*, Vol 6, Issue 7, e21982.

31. Matt Shipman, “Study Highlights Fluid Sexual Orientation in Many Teens”, North Carolina State University, 4/11/19, <https://news.ncsu.edu/2019/11/teen-sexual-orientation/>.

32. Mark Ellis, “Identical Twin Studies Prove Homosexuality Is Not Genetic”, *God Reports*, US, 11/5/13, <http://godreports.com/2013/05/identical-twin-studies-prove-homosexuality-is-not-genetic/>. See also: Ed Young, “No, Scientists Have Not Found the ‘Gay Gene’ – the media is hyping a study that doesn’t do what it says it does”, *The Atlantic*, 10/10/15.

"At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.

Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is "gay", the co-twin should also be "gay".

But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction, the chances the co-twin also has same-sex attraction are only about 11% for men and 14% for women," Dr Whitehead says.

Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."

Dr Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

For example, one twin might have exposure to pornography or sexual abuse, but not the other. One twin may interpret and respond to their family or classroom environment differently than the other. "These individual and idiosyncratic responses to random events and to common environmental factors predominate," he says.

The first very large, reliable study of identical twins was conducted in Australia in 1991, followed by a large U.S. study about 1997. Then Australia and the U.S. conducted more twin studies in 2000, followed by several studies in Scandinavia.

"Twin registers are the foundation of modern twin studies. They are now very large, and exist in many countries. A gigantic European twin register with a projected 600,000 members is being organized, but one of the largest in use is in Australia, with more than 25,000 twins on the books," Dr Whitehead says.

A significant twin study among adolescents shows an even weaker genetic correlation. In 2002 Bearman and Brueckner studied tens of thousands of adolescent students in the U.S.³³ The same-sex attraction concordance between identical twins was only 7.7% for males and 5.3% for females – lower than the 11% and 14% in the Australian study by Bailey et al conducted in 2000. In the identical twin studies, Dr Whitehead has been struck by how fluid and changeable sexual identity can be.

"Neutral academic surveys show there is substantial change. About half of the homosexual/bisexual population (in a non-therapeutic environment) moves towards heterosexuality over a lifetime. About 3% of the present heterosexual population once firmly believed themselves to be homosexual or bisexual."

33. Peter Bearman, Hannah Brückner, "Opposite-Sex Twins and Adolescent Same-Sex Attraction", Semantic Scholar, US, 2002, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Opposite-Sex-Twins-and-Adolescent-Same-Sex-Bearman-Brueckner/2e3b7ab65ef2d4cd988a504fef0120b955599065>.

“Sexual orientation is not set in concrete,” he notes. Even more remarkable, most of the changes occur without counselling or therapy. “These changes are not therapeutically induced, but happen ‘naturally’ in life, some very quickly,” Dr Whitehead observes. “Most changes in sexual orientation are towards exclusive heterosexuality.”

Numbers of people who have changed towards exclusive heterosexuality are greater than current numbers of bisexuals and homosexuals combined. In other words, “ex-gays” outnumber actual “gays”. The fluidity is even more pronounced among adolescents, as Bearman and Brueckner’s study demonstrated. “They found that from 16 to 17-years-old, if a person had a romantic attraction to the same sex, almost all had switched one year later.”

“The authors were ‘pro-gay’ and they commented that the only stability was among the heterosexuals, who stayed the same year after year. Adolescents are a special case – generally changing their attractions from year to year.”

Still, many misconceptions persist in the popular culture. Namely, that homosexuality is genetic – so hard-wired into one’s identity that it can’t be changed. “The academics who work in the field are not happy with the portrayals by the media on the subject,” Dr Whitehead notes. “But they prefer to stick with their academic research and not get involved in the activist side.”

Even though same-sex attraction is not genetic, Dr Whitehead disagrees with those who contend that homosexuals “choose” their orientation. “There can be little informed, responsible choice involved if first attraction is about age 10,” he notes. “At that age no-one chooses lifetime sexual orientation or lifestyle in any usual sense. SSA is discovered to exist in oneself rather than chosen.”

Response to Question 2

As explained in answer to Question 1, Anglican doctrine under the Constitution teaches that sexual activity by two people of the same sex is sinful and cannot be blessed.

Thus the use of any other form of service, purportedly made in accordance with section 5 of the Canon Concerning Services 1992, to bless a civil marriage which involved a union other than between one man and one woman is *not* consistent with the doctrine of this Church and *not* consistent with the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles in the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Response to Question 3

As shown earlier in answer to Questions 1 & 2, the Regulations are *not* validly made pursuant to the Canon Concerning Services 1992.