

ASC/Working Group on Doctrine Report on Marriage and Same-Gender Relationships: What does Science really say?

Dr.N.E.Whitehead

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N.E.Whitehead is a semi-retired research scientist who worked with The New Zealand Government, Japanese Universities, and the United Nations. He has more than 150 published papers, and about two dozen of these relevant to same-sex concerns may be found at www.mygenes.co.nz. These emerged from about 25 years of research on the subject. A book examining the possible innateness of same-sex attraction may also be downloaded from there cost-free.

“In our time, scientific research generally supports the view that people who are attracted to someone of the same gender were born that way. This knowledge supports the view that same-gender sexual attraction can be understood as part of God’s good and diverse creation rather than unnatural. If the Church accepts this understanding of science then the WGD believes that the Church should offer the covenant of marriage to same-gender couples.”

Page 7, B23 Assembly Standing Committee Report on Marriage and Same-Gender Relationships

The reverse of the above statement is true, and this has been known for nearly twenty years from twin studies. Science generally supports the view that people who are attracted to someone of the same gender were not born that way and a numerical estimate of the degree of influence (significantly less than 35%) is possible.

If there are identical twins of whom one is gay, the percentage of co-twins who will also be gay is only 10-15% (Bailey, Dunne, & Martin, 2000). They have the same genes, therefore genes are not primarily responsible. They have very similar upbringing; therefore upbringing is not primarily responsible. The mainstream conclusion from twin studies is that same-sex attraction is predominantly (at least 65%) caused by erratic factors which differ even between identical twins (N. Whitehead, 2011). The conclusion is based on many very large studies since the year 2000 and is very unlikely to change. It summarises all possible influences known and unknown, and which may be found in future (N. Whitehead, 2011).

The degree of influence of erratic factors is unusually large for same-sex attraction compared with, for example, common psychological traits.

If one is “born that way” the influence should be very clear even in adolescence. However the twin study of a very large USA group (The ADD-Health study) found zero genetic contribution to same-sex attraction (Bearman & Brueckner, 2002).

There is enormous fluidity in adolescent attractions from year to year which slowly become more fixed and predictable with age (Savin-Williams, Joyner, & Rieger, 2012).

Same-sex attraction is a good example of relative *lack* of prenatal preprogramming, compared with, for example, the onset of puberty the features of which are 90% genetically influenced (Silventoinen, Haukka, Dunkel, Tynelius, & Rasmussen, 2008). The timing of puberty is quite restricted, but the timing of first same-sex attraction is so variable that it must be very little under pre-programmed influence (N. E. Whitehead, 2013).

Even if it could be demonstrated that some biological trait was inborn, science itself could say almost nothing about whether it was good except for whether it contributed to some utilitarian goal. But this would not be morally good, which arises from a different system of thought.

Diversity is scientifically good in a genetic sense, in so far as its influence leads to perpetuation of the species, but same-sex attraction does not significantly do that.

The best data shows that the median length of gay relationships is 4.5 years (N. Whitehead, 2017), and this is from internal dissension rather than outside pressure (West, 1977). This is so short that any children present will almost inevitably suffer through the equivalent of a divorce.

The science offers very little support to the proposal that people are born destined to same-sex attraction.

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