

Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

Key Points

- In 2018, the Synod adopted the Initial Principles of Engagement as the framework for the development of the Gender Identity Guidelines.
- Standing Committee is now recommending Synod affirm and adopt the Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity (in Annexure A) and agree that the Pastoral Guidelines for Churches, Schools and Organisations (in Annexure B) inform pastoral care throughout the Diocese.
- Synod will also be asked to recommend that the relevant governing body of each Diocesan school and organisation formally adopt the Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity (in Annexure A) and Pastoral Guidelines for Churches, Schools and Organisations (in Annexure B); and implement, and make publicly accessible, a policy which reflects that Statement and the Guidelines.
- Standing Committee is also recommending that Synod adopt the Gender Identity – Practical Guidelines for Churches (in Annexure C [*not reproduced here*]), and commend these guidelines to parishes.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend that Synod –
 - (a) affirm and adopt the attached Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity (*[final form]* in Annexure A) together with the Pastoral Guidelines (*[final form]* in Annexure B) and agree steps to see that Statement and the Guidelines adopted throughout the Diocese, and
 - (b) adopt as a policy the Gender Identity – Practical Guidelines for Churches. [*These guidelines were approved in principle, but not adopted, and are not reproduced here*].

Recommendations

2. Synod receive this report.
3. Synod consider the following motion to be moved at the forthcoming session of Synod, 'by request of the Standing Committee' –

‘Synod, noting the report, “Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity” –

 - (a) affirms and adopts the accompanying Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity (Doctrine Statement) as a principal statement of the doctrines, tenets, beliefs and teachings propagated by the Anglican Church, Diocese of Sydney with respect to Gender Identity,
 - (b) agrees that the “Pastoral Guidelines for Churches, Schools and Organisations” (Pastoral Guidelines) inform pastoral care concerning Gender Identity issues,

and as a consequence –

 - (i) recommends that the relevant governing body of each diocesan school and organisation formally adopt and implement the Doctrine Statement as a statement of the doctrines, tenets, beliefs and teachings on Gender Identity and implement a policy to ensure that the activities of the school or organisation are conducted in accordance with the Doctrine Statement,
 - (ii) recommends that the relevant governing body of each diocesan school and organisation also formally adopt and implement the Pastoral Guidelines,
 - (iii) recommends that the relevant governing body of each diocesan school and organisation compose a publicly accessible policy on Gender Identity, which reflects the Doctrine Statement and Pastoral Guidelines,

- (iv) requests the Archbishop-in-Council to provide advice to diocesan schools and organisations on implementation of the Doctrine Statement and Pastoral Guidelines, and
 - (v) amends the Property Use Policy of the Synod by –
 - (A) replacing the third bullet point in paragraph 9 with the following – “Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity, Pastoral Guidelines for Churches, Schools and Organisations, and Practical Guidelines for Churches”, and
 - (B) inserting a new subparagraph 17(i) as follows – “Events for the purpose of advocacy for expressions of gender identity contrary to our doctrine that gender manifests biological sex”.
4. Synod consider the following further motion to be moved at the forthcoming session of Synod, ‘by request of the Standing Committee’ –

‘Synod, noting the report “Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity”, adopts as a policy the accompanying “Gender Identity – Practical Guidelines for Churches”, and commends the Guidelines to parishes for implementation.’

Background

5. In 2017 Synod passed two resolutions in relation to Gender Identity. Resolution 23/17 was passed in the following form –

“Synod, noting the Gender Identity Report –

- (a) agrees to approve in principle the Initial Principles of Engagement at 9.1 of the Gender Identity Report as a policy of the Synod, and
- (b) in particular affirms –
 - (i) The promise of the gospel is that all who trust in Christ are assured of everlasting peace and wholeness in the resurrection life of the new creation.
 - (ii) All those who have faith in Christ are loved by God and belong to the body of Christ, including those whose personal trials and afflictions in this life include gender identity issues or gender incongruence.
 - (iii) Those who experience gender identity issues or incongruence deserve our compassion, love, and care.
 - (iv) In the beginning, God made humanity male and female, and, in his creative purposes, biological (bodily) sex determines gender.
 - (v) Human nature was damaged and distorted by the Fall but not destroyed. All people continue to be made in the image of God. The experience of incongruence between objective biological sex and subjective gender identity is one consequence of that damage and distortion but in no way diminishes a person’s full humanity.
 - (vi) The human person is a psychosomatic unity, where body and soul come into being at the same time and, in this life and the next, exist together. Embodiment is integral to human identity, and biological sex is a fundamental aspect of embodiment. Preserving the integrity of body and soul, and honouring and protecting the biologically sexed body that God has given are necessary for human flourishing.
 - (vii) The binary distinctions of male and female are to be embraced and upheld in the lives of Christian men and women respectively, and expressed in culturally appropriate ways that conform to Scripture.
 - (viii) We deeply regret that, in the past, some gender non-conforming people have experienced rejection or lack of compassion in our churches and ministries.
 - (ix) Churches, schools, and other Anglican organisations are to be places where all people, including those who experience gender identity issues and incongruence, are welcomed, loved, supported and helped to live in obedience to Christ.”

6. Then by resolution 24/17 Synod resolved –

“Synod commends the Gender Identity Report (‘the Report’) to all Synod members, Anglican schools and other agencies in the Diocese which are called upon to care for people with gender identity issues and asks the governing boards and councils, and the heads and chief executive officers of such schools and agencies, as well as Synod members, to –

- (a) provide comments and feedback to Standing Committee on the Initial Principles of Engagement approved in principle as a policy of the Synod at its session in 2017 by 30 April 2018, and
- (b) ensure any policies, guidelines and procedures which they draft to address this issue are consistent with those Initial Principles of Engagement, and
- (c) consult with the Archbishop about the final form of such policies, guidelines and procedures before they are published, and
- (d) commit to reviewing such policies, guidelines and procedures in light of any revised form of policy adopted by the Synod following its session in 2017,

and requests that the Standing Committee bring to the Synod session in 2018 a revised form of the Initial Principles of Engagement with a view to the revised form being adopted as a policy of the Synod.”

7. Last year, by resolution 49/18 Synod passed the following resolution –

“Synod, noting Synod resolutions 23/17 and 24/17, adopts the revised form of the Initial Principles of Engagement contained in the report 23/17 *Gender Identity Initial Principles of Engagement / 24/17 Development of a final form of diocesan policy for gender identity issues* as the framework from which the Gender Identity guidelines will be developed.”

Discussion

8. In response to resolution 49/18, the Standing Committee asked the subcommittee which it had established last year with responsibility to draft the revised form of the Initial Principles of Engagement, to continue its work in conjunction with the Doctrine Commission to develop proposed guidelines. Successive drafts of the guidelines were discussed with the heads of a number of diocesan schools and organisations.
9. After reviewing the draft documents produced by the subcommittee and the advice of the Doctrine Commission the Standing Committee has settled on a framework for promulgating guidelines for gender identity in this Diocese.

Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity, with Pastoral Guidelines for Churches, Schools and Organisations

10. Firstly, there is the Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity (**Doctrine Statement**), supported by Bible references (attached as Annexure A). Supporting this statement is a document setting out Pastoral Guidelines for Churches, Schools and Organisations (**Pastoral Guidelines**) which flow from these doctrinal statements (attached as Annexure B).
11. Both the Doctrine Statement and the Pastoral Guidelines are intended to apply throughout the Diocese. However, while Synod will be asked affirm and adopt the Doctrine Statement and Pastoral Guidelines on behalf of all the churches and other unincorporated entities in the Diocese, the governance structure of many Diocesan schools and organisations necessarily requires a different process. For these bodies, Synod will be asked to recommend that the relevant governing body, be it a school Council or organisation Board, formally adopt and implement the Doctrine Statement and Pastoral Guidelines for their school or organisation, and compose, and make publicly accessible, a policy which reflects the Doctrine Statement and Pastoral Guidelines.
12. For schools and organisations, some of the issues relating to the implementation of the Doctrine Statement and Pastoral Guidelines in relation to gender identity are particularly complex and these implementation issues will be addressed in more detail through separate advice to be provided by the Archbishop-in-Council.

13. Synod will also be asked to amend the Property Use Policy to refer more explicitly to, and enable implementation of, the Doctrine Statement and Pastoral Guidelines.

Practical Guidelines for Churches

14. Secondly, Synod will be asked to adopt the Practical Guidelines for Churches (attached as Annexure C [*not reproduced here*]), and to commend these guidelines to parishes for implementation.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

DANIEL GLYNN
Diocesan Secretary

9 October 2019

Anglican Church – Diocese of Sydney

Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity

1. The Bible teaches us that God is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3) and that human beings are created in his image (Genesis 1:26), according to his design through and for his beloved Son, Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16). All human beings receive their existence as a gift of God. We are creatures who are not able to create ourselves. We are always accountable to our Creator for the way we use what he has given to us (2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 4:13).
2. From the beginning, God created humanity in the form of two biological sexes – male and female (Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 19:4). The Bible never endorses a divergence between biological sex and gender identity or expression. For example, in Mark 10:6-7 Jesus recognises that the male/female distinction of Genesis 1:27 is the foundation of the man/wife distinction of Genesis 2:24. Nor does the Bible ever envisage a ‘third sex’ – eunuchs are still regarded as male. In the creative purposes of God, gender manifests biological sex, which is either male or female
3. Like the rest of creation, human nature was damaged and distorted as a result of the sin of the first man and woman, but not destroyed by it (Genesis 3:21-22; Romans 1:18-32; 8:19-23). All people continue to be made in the image of God as male or female, though they fall short of the glory of God (Genesis 5:1-2; 9:6; James 3:9; Rom 3:23). But this has impacted every facet of our human nature, including our biology and psychology. The normative relationship between biological sex and gender is disrupted in various ways, but not rendered void or irrelevant. Our gender identity is not simply a social construct. Jesus spoke of how ‘from the beginning God *made* them male and female’ (Matthew 19:4–6). The Apostle Paul wrote of a natural and appropriate distinction between the sexes (1 Corinthians 11:11–12). The experience of incongruence between objective biological sex and subjective gender identity is one of the consequences of human rebellion in the Garden of Eden but this in no way diminishes a person’s full humanity or dignity in God’s eyes (Psalm 8:3–5).
4. Biological sex is a fundamental aspect of embodiment in God’s ordering of human life. Blurring the distinctions between male and female, or seeking to present one’s sex as contrary to one’s biology, is an attempt at self-creation that involves a denial of the biologically-sexed body that God has given to us (Deuteronomy 22:5; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 11:4-5; 13-15; Ephesians 5:29-31). However, in our broken world there are those for whom biological sex is indeterminate or ambiguous (intersex). These cases are complex but do not involve a denial of God as Creator, or any diminution of the dignity and full humanity of such a person.
5. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of forgiveness and new life as well as a summons to repentance and faith (Mark 1:15). In him we are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). By God’s grace we are ‘in Christ Jesus’ (1 Corinthians 1:30), which means our identity is to be found in him. This transcends all other notions of identity and liberates us from our attempts to construct our own identity. The gospel does not do away with gender but rather denies any suggestion of privileged status before God based on gender (Galatians 3:28). It also holds out the promise of a day when all dissonance, frustration and distress will be gone forever (Revelation 21:4). In the interim, God’s offer of eternal life in Christ Jesus includes the gift of his Holy Spirit who transforms us into the image of Christ from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18).
6. God made all people and loves all people (Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 10:18; John 3:16). God’s pattern for human flourishing is good for all people, since all are created in his image, whether or not they have placed their trust in Christ (Matthew 5:43-45; Luke 6:35-36). Christians are called to do good to all people (Galatians 6:9-10), which includes encouraging them to embrace God’s pattern for human wholeness and sharing with them the good news of the Saviour through whom he will make all things new (Revelation 21:5).



I Certify that the Doctrine Statement as printed is in accordance with the Doctrine Statement as reported.

P COLGAN
Chair of Committees

I Certify that this Doctrine Statement was passed by the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney on 22 October 2019.

D GLYNN
Secretary

Pastoral Guidelines for Churches, Schools and Organisations

(To be read in conjunction with the Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity.)

1. Christians need to show compassion to all who experience Gender Identity Issues
 - 1.1. We have an obligation to show compassion, love and care to all those who experience gender identity issues or incongruence, as they too are made in God's image.
2. In considering how to help our brothers and sisters in Christ who experience gender identity issues, we take into account that –
 - 2.1. All those who have faith in Christ are loved by God and belong to the body of Christ, including those whose personal trials and afflictions in this life include gender identity issues or gender dysphoria.
 - 2.2. The biologically-based binary distinctions of male and female are part of the creation that God described as good and so are to be embraced and guarded in the lives of Christian men and women respectively, and expressed in culturally appropriate ways that conform with Scripture.
 - 2.3. The reality and intensity of gender incongruence is something we acknowledge as part of the disruption of the world following the first sin. None of us is immune from the brokenness of the world, though we may experience it in different ways, and all of us need God's compassion and his rescue from sin and its consequences that comes only in Christ.
 - 2.4. God gives to his people the resources necessary to live faithfully as a disciple of Christ in the midst of our brokenness, including his word, his Spirit, and the loving fellowship of his people.
 - 2.5. God has compassion on the struggling and vulnerable, and is able to bring healing to the experience of gender incongruence, however in his sovereign wisdom, that healing might not be fully experienced in this life.
 - 2.6. The promise of the gospel is that all who trust in Christ are assured of existential peace and wholeness in the resurrection life of the new creation.
3. Believers in Christ who experience this issue are encouraged to consider the following –
 - 3.1. While gender dysphoria may be a lifelong battle for you, God's word declares that all those who have faith in Christ are loved by God and belong to the body of Christ, and that nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
 - 3.2. Fix your eyes on Jesus, and look forward to wholeness and relief from suffering and temptation in the new creation.
 - 3.3. Seek options that maintain the integrity of your physical and mental unity, and which honour and preserve the maleness or femaleness of the body God has given you.
 - 3.4. Seek regular Christian fellowship.
 - 3.5. Share your struggles with some mature Christian people so you can receive Christian compassion and support, as well as accountability and encouragement.
 - 3.6. God desires your wholeness and wellbeing, and he will be patient with you, and his grace will sustain you.

4. Churches, Organisations, Schools and individual Christians who care for people who experience gender identity issues and dysphoria can show this love by –
 - 4.1. Remaining faithful to the teaching of the Bible, including upholding the goodness of God's design of male and female.
 - 4.2. Ensuring that churches, organisations, schools and other persons or parties are adequately informed about gender identity issues and dysphoria, and the relevant teaching of the Bible.
 - 4.3. Showing compassion, active love, care, and support even though you may disagree with the choices or behaviour of those for whom you are caring.
 - 4.4. Being patient and sensitive to a person's needs, listening carefully to their experiences, and seeking to alleviate their distress; recognising that vulnerable persons require specific approaches to care.
 - 4.5. Seeking to provide an environment that does not exacerbate the person's distress.
 - 4.6. Being committed to pray for the person, including their physical and psychological wellbeing.
 - 4.7. Praying for the person's salvation (if they are not a Christian).
 - 4.8. Rejecting all bullying, ridicule, mistreatment, and abuse of gender non-conforming people.
 - 4.9. Avoiding rigid and unbiblical gender stereotypes.
 - 4.10. Pursuing and affirming evidence-based pathways for treatment, which are consistent with Scripture.
 - 4.11. Differentiating between compassion for the person, including an understanding of the distress of their situation or condition, and agreeing with, celebrating, or validating any treatment protocol for transition.

5. Public engagement about gender identity issues by Churches, Organisations, Schools and individual Christians should –
 - 5.1. Be informed about and embrace the teaching of Scripture on sex and gender.
 - 5.2. Seek the common good of all people, through concern and involvement in public debate and policy formation.
 - 5.3. Show grace, by being loving, gentle, courteous, wholesome, and humble, which may include recognising the good in our interlocutor's arguments.
 - 5.4. Affirm what is true. God's truth is good, and applies to all people, whether or not they accept or recognise its wisdom. Cultural awareness and effective communication may shape how we express our viewpoint, but it cannot alter our adherence to biblical truth.
 - 5.5. Show love, as public engagement is an expression of love for our neighbour, and withdrawal from such engagement may signify a failure to love.
 - 5.6. Seek to point people to Jesus and the full, rich salvation that is found only in him.
 - 5.7. Be informed about the different dimensions of the public debate. There are those who promote transgender ideology, and those who experience gender incongruence, who are vulnerable members of our community. The needs and claims of the two groups can be different, and must be carefully distinguished in any public engagement on these matters.
 - 5.8. Be courageous, knowing that God is sovereign over all.



I Certify that the Pastoral Guidelines as printed are in accordance with the Pastoral Guidelines as reported.

P COLGAN
Chair of Committees

I Certify that these Pastoral Guidelines were passed by the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney as a policy of the Synod on 22 October 2019.

D GLYNN
Secretary