

## **A summary of BFC 5 Document**

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church

### **Introduction**

BFC 5 is an exploration of Biblical perspectives of sexuality. Sexuality “is entwined with faithfulness as an integral element in God’s mission for creation.” BFC 5 “does not study specific biblical references to matters such as premarital sex, homosexuality, or other sexual issues.”



We live between the two horizons, perfection of Eden and the restoration of the world (New Jerusalem). Between horizons we continue to hear Scripture and how it interacts with tradition, reason and lived experience to discern what being a faithful church means now.

### **Chapter One**

#### **(A link between sexuality and spirituality)**

Sexuality is our way of being and relating in the world as embodied people.



It also encompasses our minds, feelings, wills, self understandings and erotic longings. As such, we should strive to “carry our sexuality” in its broadest sense in covenant relationship with God and people. In this way sexuality is closely connected to spirituality, and both sexuality and spirituality are rooted in agape love driven by decision rather than pure emotion. This enables us to be instruments of God’s mission in the world. This is the Biblical ideal. Most of Scripture, however focuses on the realities of broken life between Eden and final restoration.

### **Chapter Two**

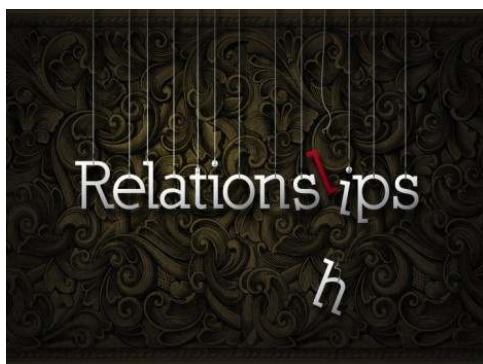
#### **(Perspectives from the Garden of delight)**

Human beings are created in the image of God. In part, this means that human beings are invited to participate in God’s creative activity and to relate to each other in a godly way. When sexual intimacy and one flesh partnership reflect God’s image in relationship, community and covenant wholeness (marriage) our sexuality connects with God’s mission.

In the OT procreation, a consequence of “one flesh” partnership is one of the ways that humans continue to share the blessing of God’s creation with others and mirror God’s covenant love.

### Chapter Three (Broken links)

Since the time that Adam and Eve disobeyed God, human relationships and sexuality (and its partner spirituality) have been characterized by dominance, violence, betrayal, manipulation and inequality. The OT gives us numerous stories where the gift of sexuality is self serving and manipulative rather than marked by covenant wholeness. Biblical prophets also use graphic sexual imagery to underscore Israel's covenant betrayal with God. In the book of Revelation, the image of the whore completely severs sexuality from its intended spiritual purpose, and unmoors its identity with God.



New Testament writers urge their readers to consider the seriousness of breaking of the union between sexuality and spirituality. As Paul writes: "You are not your own."

### Chapter Four (Redesigning the Garden)

It is clear that we are a broken people and we live between horizons (the Garden and the New Jerusalem). Our sexuality and spirituality do not always reflect to each other God's covenant with us, but God still holds hope.



In the OT we encounter many stories where the once forbidden "foreigner" is welcomed and even noted in the lineage of Jesus. Because of our broken sexuality laws are established that limit the harm of this brokenness. God also works to bring good in situations where laws or guidelines have not been met. Jesus and the writings of the New Testament accentuate the possibility of singleness as an important and at times preferred expression of sexuality. Jesus placed allegiance to God's Kingdom as the primary characteristic of his followers; loyalty to family and kinship ties now takes second place to the new family that God is creating in Christ. In marriage, the New Testament urges mutual subordination, respect, love, and sacrifice. While God can work both within and without human sexual procreation, covenant faithfulness continues to be the central image to describe God's plan for the church, world, and all creation.

#### AN INVITATION

If you are interested in further exploration of this document please join us on Sunday February 2 & 9 in the fireplace room after Worship. We will use resources provided by Mennonite Church Canada to guide our discussion. Please bring your own bag lunch.

The full BFC 5 document can be found here - <http://resources.mennonitechurch.ca/Browse/1659>