



## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Wendell Berry. *Sex, economy, freedom, and community : eight essays*. (New York : Pantheon Books, 1993).

According to Christian poet and moral essayist Wendell Berry, true community can lose its way or begin to disintegrate in several ways: when it is assailed by the triumph of the industrial economy, when freedom is lost because of the grip of various kinds of determinisms, and when love is reduced to sex. The strength this collection of essays is to bring to view these often unnoticed connections between economics, sex, and freedom within the life of a community, both in the possible disintegration of that community, or, properly pursued, as constructive elements in the building and flourishing of a community and its people. Berry cannot easily be categorized as liberal, conservative, or otherwise; rather, he puts forward a constructive vision of Christian community which resists an economy of profit and replaces it with an economy of gift, wherein giving love functions as the heart of the community.

Grenz, Stanley J. *Sexual Ethics: An Evangelical Perspective*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

In this book Grenz offers an evangelical theology of human sexuality that engages the Scriptures, and then draws out implications for the life of the church. Drawing on the broad scope of scripture, Grenz provides an understanding of sexuality (incl. the difference between sexual desire and the desire for sex); details a vital three-part understanding of the meaning of the sex act; shows that marriage and celibacy both reflect key elements of the image of God; and highlights the church's necessary role in shaping godly human sexuality. Along the way, Grenz addresses many issues and practices that are part of human sexual experience. This book, written in the 1990s, does not incorporate the most recent scientific findings, social changes (e.g. same-sex marriage), and church debates; but Grenz's readable and insightful theological perspectives continue to offer an invaluable basis for Mennonite Brethren who are committed to living as sexual people being renewed by Jesus Christ.

Hill, Wesley. *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2010.

As a Christian who describes himself as "homoerotically attracted since puberty", Wesley Hill wrote this book for gay Christians who, like himself, choose not to nurture or pursue their homosexual desires. This book has value for anyone who seeks to order their sexual desires in faithful obedience to Christ. Hill does not provide easy solutions or step programs for those who struggle; instead he teaches Christians how to live out a "radical, upside-down pattern of life" in supportive communities of faith. This book encourages us to find our primary identity in Christ as one of being washed, sanctified and waiting for full redemption, regardless of the nature of our current struggles.

Williams Paris, Jenell. *The End Of Sexual Identity: Why Sex Is Too Important To Define Who We Are*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011.

Jenell Williams Paris teaches cultural anthropology at Messiah College and identifies herself as an evangelical Christian, wife and mother. Paris takes issue with Christians who base their sexual ethics on sexual identities defined by our culture rather than on our identity as defined by Christ. Paris envisions a "post-sexual identity church" where every person is viewed "not according to the patterns of the world" but instead as "beloved creations of God". Even though Paris leaves the reader begging for more concrete examples of her vision, she does challenge the reader to "see" people as Jesus did – not according to their culturally assigned sexual identities, but in keeping with their God-given identity as loved and lovers. This book should cause us to rethink on what basis we judge, label and exclude others and what attitudes and actions we need to change in order to make the church a more hospitable place for all of God's beloved.