

“Clarity in a Culture of Shame”

David Warkentin

October 22, 2015

<i>Spectrum</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Biblical Basis</i>	<i>Church Mandate</i>
Full Exclusion	Any form homosexuality is unacceptable (identity and practice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abomination (Lev. 20:13) • Penalty – sin (Rom. 1:26-27) • Will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-11) 	Diligent and clear proclamation of judgment towards all forms of homosexuality
Limited Exclusion	Homosexual practices are unacceptable and homosexual desire is sin that can be corrected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sin (Rom. 1:26-27) • Freedom in Christ (Gal. 5:1; Rom. 6:1-4) • Healing – Jam. 5:16 	Proclamation of judgement along with the loving promise of healing and transformation
Silence	Don't ask, don't tell	None	Avoidance
Limited Inclusion	Same as limited exclusion, except willing to include those identifying as homosexual but who remain celibate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sin (Rom. 1:26-27) • Freedom in Christ (Gal. 5:1; Rom. 6:1-4) 	Emphasis on the sinfulness of homosexual acts, but alongside all other sins. Focus on the shared call to discipleship and pastoral response
Full Inclusion	Homosexuals, including same-sex monogamous couples, are able to be fully-integrated members of the church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic (love and justice) • God is love and we are commanded to love (1 Jn. 4:8; Mt. 22:34-40) 	Full affirmation of homosexuality by repenting of past rejection/exclusion, speaking out against exclusion, and publicly affirming same-sex unions and ordination
Alternative or “Third-Way” Approaches	Rejects labels altogether or allowing sexual identity to determine belonging. It is shared allegiance to Jesus that unites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual Submission (Eph. 5:21; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; Jam. 4:7-12) 	Developing practices of dialogue and relationship (i.e. safe spaces) with the goal discerning faithfulness together locally

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Mennonite Brethren Confession of faith

“Discipleship”

- *Disciples maintain sexual purity and marital faithfulness and reject immoral premarital and extramarital relationships and all homosexual practices. To be a disciple means to be true to Jesus in everyday life.*

“Marriage, Singleness, and Family”

- *Marriage is a covenant relationship intended to unite a man and a woman for life. At creation, God designed marriage for companionship, sexual union, and the birth and nurture of children. Sexual intimacy rightfully takes place only within marriage...God calls all people, single and married, to live sexually pure lives.*

Questions

“Honest clarity and humble conviction”

- What does this look like in your congregation? In our denomination?

Unity

- What does unity look like between churches within our denomination?
- What does unity look like with other churches/denominations?

Biblical authority

- How do we navigate a shared commitment to the bible that results in such diverse conclusions?