

STATEMENT OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

Seattle Pacific University

As a community of men and women committed to following Christ, Seattle Pacific University recognizes the centrality of Biblical teaching when it comes to a discussion regarding human sexuality. We recognize, as well, the diversity of opinions within our community when it comes to the interpretation of Scripture regarding this subject. Recognizing our commonalities as well as our diversity, therefore, we affirm the following:

Human beings are created in the image of God, male and female, and are of inestimable worth. Because they are created in God's image, human persons must be treated with respect and dignity by all institutions in society whether those persons be male or female, young or old, rich or poor, believer or unbeliever, homosexual or heterosexual. This priceless value constitutes the theological and anthropological foundation of our discussions regarding sexuality. We, therefore, affirm the fundamental worth of all human persons, including those with whom we disagree.

Human beings are created in the image of God, as male or female. That is, the explicit relational dimension of human persons and the inherent differentiation of gender is foundational to our understanding of creation itself. Our discussions and considerations of human sexuality, therefore, take place within these assumptions. Human sexuality is both a relational truth and it is gender differentiated.

Human sexuality is intended by God to include more than the contemporary cultural emphasis upon genitalia. Our sexuality is intended by God to reflect the whole of our sensual and relational createdness. We, therefore, renounce the equation of sexuality with genital sex and the false representation of sexuality found in pornography. We believe this overemphasis upon genitalia results in the dehumanization of all persons, especially women and children.

We recognize the need to affirm the Christian virtues of holiness and godliness in this very significant dimension of being human. We assert that holiness and godliness as they relate to human sexuality require more than the avoidance of evil. These dimensions of spirit-filled character involve the positive celebration of who we are as created beings. Therefore, we are to interact with one another with great responsibility, respect and with unselfish love.

The delight we experience within the context of our sexuality requires us to treat our sexuality with a sense of stewardship, a trust that extends not only to ourselves but also to others. Therefore, we remind ourselves, as well as those beyond our community, of the responsibility not to engage in the sexual exploitation or the sexual harassment of others. This stewardship is particularly important in the human institutions of church, work, friendship, marriage and family. In particular, we affirm the institutions of marriage and family as central to the purposes of God. We believe it is in the context of the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman that the full expression of sexuality is to be experienced and celebrated. While we affirm the institution of marriage, we also recognize and affirm the call of some to singleness and celibacy.

Because the issues surrounding human sexuality are controversial, as a community of learning we recognize that our discussions and considerations regarding sexuality, whether in writing or in the classroom, must be treated with personal and spiritual sensitivity and with scholarly care. Therefore, we agree to evaluate our teaching and our pronouncements regarding sexuality in the light of the historic understanding of the Christian Church and the authority of the Biblical witness. In this spirit we agree to submit our teachings and pronouncements to one another as followers of Christ.

Last of all, recognizing the sinfulness and fallenness of our human nature, we acknowledge our need for God's grace and mercy in our actions, discussions and considerations of human sexuality. We seek God's grace that we might rise above our human weaknesses and God's mercy that we might live in unity with one another in the midst of our brokenness and in response to the call of God upon our lives to love one another and thus fulfill the law of Christ.