

Annotated Bibliography for Church-wide Conversation on Marriage

The following resolution was passed by Executive Council in June, 2004:

Resolved, that the Executive Council, meeting in Burlington VT, the 13th day of June, 2004 hereby initiates a process leading to a church-wide conversation on the subject of marriage, including

- a. the biblical and theological basis for marriage;
- b. the history of marriage as an institution;
- c. the economics of marriage
- d. the relationship between the church and the state on the subject of marriage;
- e. the societal purposes served by the institution of marriage;
- f. the characteristics of marriage that promote or undermine such societal purposes; and
- g. public policy regarding the dissolution of a marriage, and

Be it further Resolved, that the Standing Commission on National Concerns identify materials related to the foregoing subjects and prepare and distribute an annotated bibliography to Executive Council and to the Church through the Church Center's web site, and

Be it further Resolved, that Executive Council asks the Joint Committee on Planning and Arrangements to schedule a Conversation on Marriage during the 75th General Convention and

Be it further Resolved, that dioceses be urged to hold such Conversations on Marriage as well.

To that end, the Standing Commission on National Concerns offers the following bibliography. In order to gather suggestions for materials, we sent notification of this project to dioceses, bishops, and seminaries throughout the Episcopal Church. We also appealed to the wider church through the HoB/D listserv. While we did not get as much of a response as we had hoped for, we learned there was a lot of accessible information out there for people to explore. We also learned that our own church members are doing some very creative research, thinking and writing on marriage themselves. Please note that the materials here mentioned are but a small sampling of the materials that can be found with an internet search. All one has to do is google "marriage bibliography" and a myriad of choices are presented for your research. Several of the works suggested below also include bibliographies, providing a fascinating read in and of themselves. The materials before you now are resources of which the commission either has personal or

conversational knowledge, gathered through our church wide search. In choosing what would be included in this bibliography, we favored those resources that fit the guidelines of Executive Council's resolution and of which we had some working knowledge. The annotations come from many people and sources and are informational only.

Undertaking this project has taught us some fundamental things. There is a tremendous amount of ignorance about marriage in our society and in the church. It is nonsense to assume from our experience of marriage today, that marriage as a societal construct is, in fact, something we therefore understand. The role of marriage has changed dramatically over time and generations, influenced by such things as changing economics, the experience of love between the spouses, and the introduction of artificial birth control. We are witnessing such fluidity of marital change in our own day and age, that it underlines the importance of holding a church-wide study of and conversation on marriage. Someone who uses these bibliographic materials will be broadly educated in this field and more able to make wise decisions in those matters regarding marriage that will continue to come before the church.

Allen, Joseph J., ed. *Vested in Grace: Marriage and Priesthood in the Christian East* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001)

The essays in this book offer insights to Western believers from the perspective of the other great body of faithful Christians in the world. Practices and application of principles are really quite different in the East, when it comes to the intersection of holy orders and matrimony. Their use of *oikonomia*, the "economic theology," for example, theoretically allows great flexibility in such matters. The trajectory in the West takes us toward a more liberal law, which over time then tend to become strictly applied. *Oikonomia*, on the other hand, takes even the strictest of laws and provides a way to apply them with compassion, a reverse trajectory. Given the difficulties in our Church and the increasing political polarization in our Western culture, the economic practices of the East might provide some insight if not relief.

American Anglican Council: *Web site*

An annotated and categorized bibliography on marriage and sexuality may be found by going to the web site below and using their search link. Simply type in the words "marriage bibliography."

<http://www.americananglican.org/Issues/Issues.cfm?ID=93&c=16>

Bouchet, Stacey; Ooms, Theodora; and Parke, Mary. *Beyond Marriage Licenses: Efforts to Strengthen Marriage and Two-Parent Families. A State by State Snapshot*. (CLASP Pub No. 04-05: 75 pages)

Over the past ten years, every state has undertaken at least one activity or made at least one policy change designed to strengthen marriage and/or two parent families – although most of these efforts have been modest. This 75 page report, which is the first to provide a state-by- state description of government-related activities in couples and marriage policy, includes profiles of seven “high-activity” states and descriptions of at least \$90 million in recent federal grants for marriage-related demonstration projects, technical assistance, and research and evaluation. For printed copies, contact Angela Parker at aparker@clasp.org. (Center for Law and Social Policy)

Brundage, James A. *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (University of Chicago, 1987)

An encyclopedic review of the history of marriage, with extended reflection on the debates concerning the constitution and purposes for marriage, and the role of marriage in the church and church in marriage.

Brown, Peter. *The Body and Society; Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)

Brown’s exhaustive historical study might prevent our inadvertent retrojection of modern assumptions onto the earliest practices, which post-modern readers typically find shockingly rigorous.

Cott, Nancy F. *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Harvard University Press, 2000)

Now considered one of the standard works on the history of marriage in what is now the United States, Cott details a complex and evolutionary picture that was always more pragmatic than ideological. She also discusses the interplay between religious and social meanings of marriage, and how this interplay has always affected public policy.

Coontz, Stephanie *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage* (Viking, 2005)

Coontz, a historian and Director of Research and Public Education on Contemporary Families, presents a concise history of marriage, and argues that a polemical “pick and choose” approach to this history has distorted current discussions about the nature of marriage. She also highlights the enormous changes in marriage in the past three decades, and suggests questions about relationships and commitments that need further exploration and debate.

Graff, E.J. *What is Marriage For?* (Beacon Press, 2004)

It has very good historical information. The subtitle is "The strange history of our most intimate institution," which alerts us to the fact that she is going to pull out some interesting observations about where we have been in terms of marriage. She is making her case for including gays and lesbians in the institution of marriage. She makes a strong case, I think, but even if one disagrees with her conclusion, the book is a real eye-opener in terms of giving insight into a lot of assumptions about marriage which are not valid.

Haller, Tobias Stanislas BSG *Laufolly Joined: Same-Sex Marriage in Light of the Church's Traditional and Liturgical Practice* (April 1997)

This Masters thesis prepared for General Theological Seminary, was judged the most valuable produced in the seminary the year of its writing. In addition to the reflections on the history and theology of marriage, the paper contains an indepth tabular analysis of the Marriage Rites of the Anglican Tradition from 1662 to the present, and a very extensive bibliography. It may be accessed through the following internet link: <http://home.earthlink.net/~bsg/lj.htm> (from information provided by the author)

Hodder, Harbour Fraser *The Future of Marriage* Harvard Magazine (Cambridge, Nov-Dec 2004, beg. p. 38)

This article, drawing particularly on the research, experience and reflection of historians, ethicists, law professors and theologians like Nancy Cott, Peter Gomes, Elizabeth Bartholet, Janet Halley, Dudley Rose and Martin Whyte, discusses the changing economic and cultural context of marriage today, including questions and concerns around same-sex marriage. The role of parenting is looked at in both same and opposite sex households, with reflections on the influence of the multiplicity of family patterns in today's world. A side-bar article on the demographics of age at marriage and on divorce and remarriage trends is also included.

Jordan, Mark D. *Blessing Same-Sex Unions: The Perils of Queer Romance and the Confusions of Christian Marriage* (University of Chicago Press, 2005)

Jordan, the Candler Professor of Religion at Emory University, offers a critique of the current debate about gay marriage, highlighting what he sees as the misconceptions and wish projections of both proponents and opponents. He suggests that “marriage” itself needs further definition, and that everyone participating in the debate would do well to define terms and expectations. The book is particularly illuminating about the influence of the wedding industry and popular romantic ideas in this debate.

Liturgy Marriage: Sacrament or Civil Union? Bushofsky, Dennis ed. in chief, Ross, Susan A. guest editor, Vol. 20, Number 3, 2005 (Taylor & Francis, Inc. Philadelphia)

“Marriage is this astounding mystery into which we are invited, to carry on God’s loving purposes for the whole creation,” says Janice Erickson-Person in her essay *Sacred Territory*, included in this volume of the Journal of the Liturgical Conference. This collection of seven essays looks at marriage from the perspectives of differing Christian traditions and viewpoints. The essay authors offer much for us to consider in holding a thoughtful and full discussion of marriage.

Marshall, Paul V. *Same-Sex Unions Stories and Rites* (New York, Church Publishing 2004)

This book has been described as an enhanced version of an earlier pre-General Convention book published as a lengthy PDF file. This “enhancement” turned up in several resource lists, perhaps because it contains real-life stories of two couples who have their unions liturgically blessed and also contains the full texts of several blessing rites. (information gleaned from several recommendations)

Morris, John *Portraits of Marriage: A Brief History of an Ever Changing Institution* 2005 – a work in progress

In this almost completed book, Morris offers 21 pictures of differing marriage traditions that have underpinned marriage at various times in our Judeo-Christian history. Morris writes with an accessible flair, like a tour guide in a portrait gallery, eager to present not only the solid facts of the picture one is

viewing, but also the human interest story that goes with it. This work refreshingly brings to life this subject we've been analyzing from so many scholarly angles. A reader may email the author at jcmvt@sover.net to receive the introductory chapter and perhaps further chapters as desired.

Myers, David G. and Scanzoni, Letha Dawson *What God Has Joined Together? : A Christian Case for Gay Marriage* (Harper San Francisco, 2005)

A new and distinctive perspective from two prominent evangelical Christians, this book argues that marriage greatly benefits society, and should be available to all people. Using both biblical and sociological insights, the authors make their case that gay marriage is justifiable and should be accepted by other evangelicals. Myers is a professor of psychology at Hope College in Michigan, and Scanzoni is an author and editor of the magazine, *Evangelical Ecumenical Women's Caucus Update*

Shumway, David R. *Modern Love, Romance, Intimacy, And the Marriage Crisis* (NY University Press 2003)

Shumway examines two "discourses," romance and intimacy, through several genres of print and film, arguing that these media have been important conveyers of standards for loving and being loved. He provides interesting insights into the genesis of American values relating romance and intimacy with marriage and points out the media's failure to show adequately how to satisfy those standards. Very academic; footnotes provide broad bibliography.

Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London, 1977)

In this densely written book, Stone provides detailed analysis of family relationships from 1500-1800 and gives insight into the thought processes and values of that period in history. (information gleaned from an internet review)

Taber-Hamilton, Rachel K. (The Rev.) MA, MDiv *Cultural Relativity and Common Humanity* (South Whidbey Record, 2004)

This article, based on the author's doctoral studies in Anthropology and Folklore, first came to my attention when posted on the General Convention HoB/D listserv August 3, 2005. Taber-Hamilton's research into earlier cultures offers a reality check to those of us who harbor a romanticized view of marriage rooted in benevolent traditions. At the same time she puts forth a discussion of the placement of marriage within the sacramental life of the church, that claims the cultural high road. She offers the notion of our common humanity, as held forth in

that sacramental life, as the sacred ground on which the societal values of tolerance, acceptance, and respect for difference can stand. This short essay is a provocative read. It may be accessed through the website www.staugustinesepiscopalchurch.org as Marriage Article: Cultural Relativity and Common Humanity.

Temple, Gray *Gay Unions In the Light of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason* (Church Publishing New York, 2004)

A surprising book from an Episcopal priest who self-identifies as part of the "charismatic" movement, this is also making the case for including gays and lesbians in marriage. It is very well reasoned and pushes anyone with Anglican loyalties to see that our historic sources of authority are actually supportive of this case. His exegesis of some of the "hot passages" relating to sexuality is really good.

United Church of Christ *Web site*

If one logs on to www.ucc.org, thus getting the UCC homepage, and types the words "marriage and sexuality" into the search link window, an extensive list of resources will open up before your eyes. The resources, all annotated, include bibliographical, educational, and polity materials, as well as a few online articles as well.

Webber, Christopher *Re-Inventing Marriage: A Re-View and Re-Vision* (Morehouse, 1994)

Webber offers a lot of good historical background and very thoughtful comments about where we are now. Because he speaks as a pastor and also a scholar, he is quite reality-oriented about what is being experienced in the church and in marriage these days. He has good proposals for ways to move forward.

Witte, John, Jr. *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1997)

Witte's insightful study of five models of marriage – Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anglican, and Enlightenment – and their impact on and conversation within the context of society, religious belief and law is an important contribution to the debates of the day. His ability to both lift up the historical roots and highlight the shades of difference and perspective among the traditions is masterful.

Wolfson, Evan *Why Marriage Matters : America, Equality, and Gay People's Right to Marry* (Simon & Schuster, 2004)

Wolfson, an attorney and Executive Director of Freedom to Marry, was formerly the marriage project director for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and co-counsel in the historic Hawaii case, *Baehr v. Miike*. From such a vantage point, Wolfson is well-suited to argue for the social and personal value of same sex marriage not only for gay people, but also for American society itself. This book is an introduction to some of the recent court cases that have helped shape the debate about gay marriage, as well as the politics behind them.

The following people contributed resources, were book readers and authors of annotations:

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