

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR STUDY WILSHIRE BAPTIST CHURCH INCLUSION & DIVERSITY STUDY GROUP

The following bibliography represents the wide range of perspectives Wilshire's Inclusion and Diversity Study Group has been reading. The presence of a title within this list does not imply endorsement by the study group or any individual member of the study group. In fact, each member of the study group has found resources on this list with which they disagree. We encourage the congregation to investigate multiple resources from this list and to read from differing perspectives for greater understanding. The titles appearing in **red type** constitute a prioritized short list for those not wanting to explore the entire list.

THE BIBLE AND DECISION MAKING IN THE CHURCH

Hamilton, Adam. *Making Sense of the Bible: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today.* HarperOne, 2014.

Denominations from evangelical to mainline continue to experience deep divisions over universal social issues. The underlying debate isn't about a particular social issue, but instead it is about how we understand the nature of Scripture and how we should interpret it. Best-selling author and United Methodist pastor Adam Hamilton offers a lay-friendly approach to reading and interpreting the Bible, especially on difficult topics. The book has one brief chapter on homosexuality, but the biblical interpretation principles may be the most helpful content.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Scripture & Discernment: Decision Making in the Church.* Abingdon, 1983.

Because the church claims to be a community of faith, it does not reach decisions simply on the basis of good management policy or the analysis of market trends or efficiency or even ideological consistency, but in response to God's activity in the world that presses upon us and urges us to decision. Catholic theologian Luke Timothy Johnson says the church decides what to do on the basis of two realities: Scripture and discernment. Because it calls the church into being, Scripture is the fundamental authority in the church's life. Yet it is not enough for a congregation simply to turn to the Bible when a decision must be reached, for Scrip-

ture does not directly address all issues which face the church today, and those it does often reflect greatly differing historical and social contexts than our own. He proposes bridging this gap through discernment, a model found in Acts 15.

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES OF GAY CHRISTIANS

Chu, Jeff. *Does Jesus Really Love Me? A Gay Christian's Pilgrimage in Search of God in America.* Harper Perennial, 2013.

Part memoir and part investigative analysis, this book explores the explosive and confusing intersection of faith, politics and sexuality in Christian America. The author writes about the journeys of gay Christians, tacking into account the stories of events from Brooklyn to Nashville to California, from Westboro Baptist Church to the pioneering Episcopalian bishop Mary Glasspool. Chu, a journalist and trained theologian, captures spiritual snapshots of Christian America at a moment when tensions between both sides in the culture wars have rarely been higher.

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

"Gay," "Christian," and "celibate" don't often appear in the same sentence. Yet many who sit next to us in the pew at church fit that description, says author Wesley Hill. As a celibate gay Christian, Hill gives a glimpse of what it looks like to wrestle firsthand with what it means to remain faithful to God while struggling with the challenge of homosexuality. Weaving together reflections from his own life and the lives of other Christians, such as Henri Nouwen and Gerard Manley Hopkins, Hill advocates neither unqualified "healing" for those who struggle, nor their accommodation to temptation, but rather faithfulness in the midst of brokenness.

Lee, Justin. *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-Vs.-Christians Debate.* Jericho Books, 2012.

As a teenager and young man, Justin Lee felt deeply torn. Nicknamed "God Boy" by his peers, he knew he was called to a life in the evangelical Christian ministry. But Lee harbored a secret: He also knew he was gay. Here he recalls the events—his coming out to his parents, his experiences with the "ex-gay" movement, and his in-depth study of the Bible—that led him, eventually, to self-acceptance. More than just a mem-

oir, Torn provides insightful, practical guidance for all committed Christians who wonder how to relate to gay friends or family members or who struggle with their own sexuality. Convinced that “in a culture that sees gays and Christians as enemies, gay Christians are in a unique position to bring peace,” Lee demonstrates that people of faith on both sides of the debate can respect, learn from, and love one another.

Vines, Matthew. *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships*. Convergent Books, 2014.

As a young Christian man, Matthew Vines harbored the same basic hopes of most young people: to someday share his life with someone, to build a family of his own, to give and receive love. But when he realized he was gay, those hopes were called into question. The Bible, he'd been taught, condemned gay relationships. Feeling the tension between his understanding of the Bible and the reality of his same-sex orientation, Vines devoted years of intensive research into what the Bible says about homosexuality. Writing from a conservative theological viewpoint that yet embraces acceptance of homosexuality, he tells his own story and in the process discusses biblical teachings, celibacy and love.

ON LOVING ALL PEOPLE WHILE ENGAGING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Gaede, Beth Ann. *Congregations Talking About Homosexuality: Dialogue on a Difficult Issue*. Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.

Gaede weaves together the stories of many congregations and how they faced and dealt with the issue of homosexuality. The book does not take a theological stand, but rather draws on the experiences of others who have struggled with how to address this issue from a position of respect for all views. Gaede is a Lutheran pastor and freelance writer.

McKnight, Scot. *A Fellowship of Differents: Showing the World God's Design for Life Together*. Zondervan, 2015.

Scot McKnight shares his personal experience in the church as well as his study of the Apostle Paul to answer this question: “What is the church supposed to be?” He concludes that the church the Apostle Paul talks about is designed by God to be a fellowship of difference—how people differ socially—and differences—how people differ culturally. God did not design the church to be a two-hour experience on Sunday but

a mixture of people from all across the map and spectrum. The church McKnight grew up in was a fellowship of sames and likes. There was almost no variety. The church is “God’s world-changing social experiment” of bringing unlikes and differents to the table to share life with one another as a new kind of family, he concludes. The church is God’s show-and-tell for the world to see how God wants us to live as a family.

Marshall, Joretta. “Ministry to Women Developing Lesbian Identities.” In *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care*, edited by Jean Stevenson Messier. Fortress, 1996.

As a collection of writings by various authors, this book underscores how gender and public policy issues need to be emphasized, explores several specific issues of women—especially issues of the body—in a way that is counter to the prevailing dichotomy between mind and body, and concentrates on women as the care providers. Chapter 8 is about women and same-sex attraction.

Merritt, Jonathan. *Jesus Is Better than You Imagined*. FaithWords, 2014.

Jonathan Merritt, the son of a prominent Southern Baptist pastor, shares vulnerable stories of how he learned to encounter Jesus in unexpected ways. Through a 60-hour vow of silence in a desert monastery, he experiences Jesus in silence. When a friend dies of a rare disease, he sees Jesus in tragedy. Through confronting childhood sexual abuse, Jonathan discovers Jesus in honesty. In an anti-Christian-themed bar, he finds Jesus in sacrilege. And when he’s almost kidnapped in Haiti by armed bandits, he experiences Jesus in the impossible. Although Jonathan finds himself in places he never dreamed of, he doesn’t lose his way. Instead, these experiences force him back to the Bible, where he repeatedly offers fresh, sometimes provocative, interpretations of familiar passages.

Phelps, Joe. *More Light, Less Heat: How Dialogue Can Transform Christian Conflict into Growth*. Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Joe Phelps is pastor of a CBF congregation in Louisville, Ky. Here, he pinpoints what separates the Christian left and right and offers tools to engage in constructive dialogue.

Special Issue: Proceedings from a Baptist Conference on Sexuality and Covenant. *Christian Ethics Today*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Fall 2012.

This journal collects papers presented at “A Baptist

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Butterfield, Rosaria. *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert.* Crown and Covenant, 2012.

Rosaria Butterfield, by the standards of many, was living a very good life. She had a tenured position at a large university in a field for which she cared deeply. She owned two homes with her partner, in which they provided hospitality to students and activists who were looking to make a difference in the world. There, her partner rehabilitated abandoned and abused dogs. In the community, Rosaria was involved in volunteer work. At the university, she was a respected advisor of students and her department's curriculum. And then, in her late 30s, Rosaria encountered something that turned her world upside down—the idea that Christianity, a religion that she had regarded as problematic and sometimes downright damaging, might be right about who God was, an idea that flew in the face of the people and causes that she most loved. What follows is a story of what she describes as a “train wreck” at the hand of the supernatural. These are her secret thoughts about those events.

Denison, Jim. *Homosexuality: A biblical overview.* Published online at <http://www.denisonforum.org/morality/24-homosexuality-a-biblical-overview>, July 23, 2011.

Jim Denison is the former pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas and now heads the Denison Forum on Truth and Culture. He is a frequently cited apologist against acceptance of homosexuality. In this column, he addresses a traditional view of key biblical texts related to homosexuality as he seeks to answer one question only: “What does the Bible intend to teach on this subject?” This column is a response to the writings of Walter Wink (see citation below).

Gagnon, Robert A.J. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics.* Abingdon, 2002.

Gagnon, a professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, offers a thorough analysis of the biblical texts relating to homosexuality. He argues that the Bible contains a unanimous witness defining same-sex intercourse as sin. He does so while rigorously engaging biblical scholars and historians who have written both for and against this understanding of same-sex intercourse. In addition, he contends all

Conference on Sexuality and Covenant” convened at First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., in April 2012. The conference was designed and sponsored by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology. The conference explored several topics of sexuality: divorce, homosexuality, dating, geriatric sexual activity—all with an eye on the implications for the church, especially the Baptist church, and another eye closely focused on the teachings of Scripture.

Vader Wal-Gritte, Wendy. *Generous Spaciousness: Responding to Gay Christians in the Church.* Brazos Press, 2014.

Committed Christians may respond differently to gay and lesbian Christians. How can we engage those with whom we might disagree and navigate our journey together in a way that nurtures unity, hospitality, humility and justice. Through her extensive experience in ministering to gay and lesbian Christians, Wendy Vander Wal-Gritter has come to believe we need a new paradigm for how the church engages those in the sexual minority. She encourages generous spaciousness, a hope-filled, relational way forward for those in turmoil regarding a response to gay and lesbian Christians. This book offers a framework for discussing diversity in a gracious way, showing that the church can be a place that welcomes a variety of perspectives on the complex matter of human sexuality. It also offers practical advice for implementing generous spaciousness in churches and organizations.

Via, Dan O., and Gagnon, Robert A.J. *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views.* Fortress, 2009.

In this brief book, two New Testament scholars with different viewpoints discuss the relevant biblical texts on the subject of homosexual behavior and orientation. Discussing both Old Testament and New Testament texts, each author also raises important interpretive and moral questions and then offers a response to the other's main assertions. Chief questions examined by each include what the Bible has to say about homosexuality and homosexual behavior, the meaning of those texts in their cultural contexts, and the larger hermeneutical dilemma of what kind of authority the Bible's teaching, if recoverable, has for Christians today.

attempts to classify as irrelevant for our contemporary context the Bible's rejection of same-sex intercourse fail to do justice to the biblical texts.

Grenz, Stanley K. *Welcoming But Not Affirming: An Evangelical Response to Homosexuality.* Westminster John Knox, 1998.

Evangelical scholar Stanley Grenz asks whether same-sex relationships are a viable, God-given way of giving expression to our sexuality. He reviews scientific research, the history of Christian teaching on homosexuality, the issue of biblical authority today, and the practical issues the church now faces, such as the blessing of same-sex unions, the ordination of homosexuals, and the church's public stance on gay rights issues. Ultimately he proposes that it is possible for Christian communities to welcome homosexuals without affirming same-sex unions.

Hays, Richard. "Homosexuality" in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation, A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics.* HarperOne, 1996.

In one chapter of this theological textbook, the former dean of Duke Divinity School addresses the biblical basis for a traditional interpretation of Scripture on homosexuality.

Mohler, Albert, ed. *God and the Gay Christian? A Response to Matthew Vines.* SBTS Press, 2014.

The president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and other faculty members wrote this book to counter the writings of Matthew Vines. Taking a strictly conservative biblical interpretation, the authors point by point take exception with Vines' interpretation and experience as a gay Christian.

Marin, Andrew. *Love Is an Orientation: Elevating the Conversation with the Gay Community.* IVP Books, 2009.

Andrew Marin's life changed forever when his three best friends came out to him in three consecutive months. Suddenly he was confronted with the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community firsthand. And he was compelled to understand how he could reconcile his friends to his faith. In an attempt to answer that question, he and his wife relocated to Boystown, a predominantly LGBT community in Chicago. And from his experience and wrestling has come his book, a work that elevates the conversation be-

tween Christianity and the LGBT community, moving the focus from genetics to gospel.

Paris, Jenell Williams. *The End of Sexual Identity: Why Sex Is Too Important to Define Who We Are.* IVP Books, 2011.

Anthropologist Jenell Williams Paris offers a Christian framework for sexual holiness that accounts for complex postmodern realities. She assesses problems with popular cultural and Christian understandings of heterosexuality and homosexuality alike. The End of Sexual Identity moves beyond culture-war impasses to open up new space for conversations in diverse communities both inside and outside the church.

Soards, Marion L. *Scripture and Homosexuality: Biblical Authority and the Church Today.* Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

Presbyterian theologian Marion Soards, writing from a compassionate traditionalist viewpoint, explores what the Bible says and doesn't say about homosexuality. Soards reflects on the meaning of the biblical text and subsequent Christian history as he struggles with the issue of how Christians should respond to and comprehend God's will in dealing with homosexuality. Ultimately, he advocates a heightened sense of both biblical authority and Christian compassion.

Stanton, Glenn T. *Loving My (LGBT) Neighbor: Being Friends in Grace and Truth.* Moody, 2014.

As director for global family formation studies at the conservative evangelical ministry Focus on the Family, Stanton often debates with LGBT advocates across the country. "I get to hang out and become friends with those who live on the other side of the same-sex marriage issue from me," he says. "We disagree on certain convictions, but we still admire and esteem one another. ... Since when was it decided that people who see the world in polar opposite ways can't be friends?"

ON LOVING ALL PEOPLE WHILE MAINTAINING THAT SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS ARE PART OF GOD'S DESIGN FOR CREATION

Achtemeier, Mark. *The Bible's YES to Same-Sex Marriage: An Evangelical's Change of Heart.* Westminster John Knox, 2014.

In the early 2000s, Mark Achtemeier embarked on

a personal journey with the Bible that led him from being a conservative, evangelical opponent of gay rights to an outspoken activist for gay marriage and a fully inclusive church. Here, he shares what led to his change of heart: the problems with excluding groups of people and the insights into the Bible's message that led him to recognize the fullness of God's love and support for LGBT persons. He argues that reading snippets of Scripture out of context has led to false and misleading interpretations of the Bible's message for gay people.

Brownson, James V. *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships*. Eerdmans, 2013.

James Brownson argues that Christians should reconsider whether or not the biblical strictures against same-sex relations as defined in the ancient world should apply to contemporary, committed same-sex relationships. Presenting two sides in the debate—"traditionalist" and "revisionist"—Brownson analyzes each of the seven main texts that appear to address intimate same-sex relations. In the process, he explores key concepts that inform our understanding of the biblical texts, including patriarchy, complementarity, purity and impurity, honor and shame. Central to his argument is the need to uncover the moral logic behind the biblical text. Brownson is a Reformed Church in America seminary professor.

Dwyer, John F. *Those 7 References: A Study of 7 References to Homosexuality in the Bible*. BookSurge Publishing, 2007.

Dwyer provides both a comprehensive and summary exegesis of, as the title suggests, the seven biblical references commonly used to claim that God condemns homosexuality or homosexuals, or both. He attempts to show that such claims are misguided. He offers alternative exegesis of each passage, but he does not condemn persons who believe that gay people are inherently sinful. He simply shows that scripture cannot truly be called upon to support such beliefs.

Gushee, David. *Changing Our Mind*, 2nd ed. David Crumm Media, 2015.

David Gushee is CBF Baptist and a ethics professor at Mercer University. Over a one-year period he penned a series of columns about his study of same-sex issues that ended up chronicling his personal and theological journey of changing his mind about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender inclusion in the church.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. "Homosexuality and the Church: Scripture and Experience," in *Commonweal* magazine. Published online at <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/homosexuality-church-1>, June 11, 2007.

Luke Timothy Johnson is a Benedictine priest and professor at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Beginning from a conservative biblical view, he argues that the relatively small set of same-sex unions gets singled out for moral condemnation, while the vast pandemic of sexual disorder goes ignored. This "scapegoating" of homosexuality, he says, has less to do with sex than with perceived threats to the authority of Scripture and the teaching authority of the church.

Rogers, Jack. *Jesus, the Bible and Homosexuality*. Westminster John Knox, 2009.

Presbyterian professor and church official Jack Rogers argues unequivocally for the ordination of homosexuals and for the extension of full and equal rights in society to all people who are homosexual. Christianity, he contends, has moved through history in the direction of ever-greater openness and inclusiveness. It is inevitable, he believes, that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people will one day walk in the same steps as other Christian leaders. He details his own personal change of heart on the issue, examines how he believes the church misused the Bible to justify slavery and the denial of rights to women, and links these efforts to efforts today to use biblical texts to deny equal rights to gays and lesbians.

Wilson, Ken. *A Letter to My Congregation*. David Crum Media, 2014.

This book was written by Ken Wilson, pastor of the Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, Mich., as a means of explaining to his congregation how his views on same-sex relationships changed over time. He details his own painful search through the Scriptures and pastoral experience in seeking to find a way forward for today.

Wink, Walter, ed. *Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches*. Augsburg Fortress, 1999.

This resource presents short pieces from some of the nation's most prominent church leaders—Protestant and Catholic, mainline and evangelical—who address the fundamental moral imperatives about homosexuality. Through personal testimony, factual clarification

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and moral suasion, examine the biblical witness and biblical authority, the nature or character of homosexuality and sexual orientation, and many related topics. Contributors include Elise Boulding, Ignacio Castuera, John B. Cobb Jr., William Sloane Coffin, Peggy Campolo, Bishop Paul Egertson, James A. Forbes Jr., Maria Harris, Barbara Kelsey, Morton Kelsey, Gabriel Moran, David G. Myers, Richard Rohr, Ken Sehested, Carole Shields, Donald W. Shriver Jr., M. Mahan Siler Jr., Lewis B. Smedes, and Walter Wink.

Wink, Walter. *Homosexuality and The Bible*. Published online at <http://forusa.org/content/homosexuality-bible-walter-wink>.

In this brief online pamphlet, the professor of biblical interpretation at Auburn Seminary advocates both a progressive view of biblical interpretation and a new spirit of tolerance among Christians who disagree: “We have not reached a consensus about who is right on the issue of homosexuality. But what is clear, utterly clear, is that we are commanded to love one another. Love not just our gay sisters and brothers, who are often sitting beside us, unacknowledged, in church, but all of us who are involved in this debate. These are issues about which we should amiably agree to disagree. We don’t have to tear whole denominations to shreds in order to air our differences on this point.”

Tanis, Justin Edward. *Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith*. Pilgrim Press, 2003.

Justin Tanis, a transgendered ordained minister in the Metropolitan Community Churches, seeks to explore the spiritual nature of transgendered persons, to listen to the stories of others like himself, and to provide theological reflection on the ministries of, by and for this particular community. The book includes an introduction to trans issues, an overview of gender variance and the Bible, reflections on the intersection of transgendered people and faith communities and how to create a genuine welcome for trans people in those communities, as well as a theological analysis of gender as a calling and transgendered body theology.

Yarhouse, Mark. *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*. IVP Books, 2015.

Mark Yarhouse, an expert in sexual identity and therapy, challenges the church to rise above the political hostilities of gender debates and listen to people’s stories. Here he offers a Christian perspective on transgender issues that eschews simplistic answers and appreciates the psychological and theological complexity. The result is a book that engages the latest research while remaining pastorally sensitive to the experiences of each person.