

Human Sexuality Resource List January 2024

Introduction

Since the setting up of the Working Party on Human Sexuality, the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church in Ireland has produced resources to enable discussion around human sexuality.

By following this link <https://irishmethodist.org/human-sexuality> you'll find the material that was directed for study and discussion by local churches as well as an earlier resource list.

The purpose of this additional Resource List is not to provide recommended reading. Rather the list is designed to give details of a range of materials written from different perspectives. We hope that these resources will enable those who wish to engage to gain an understanding of a breadth of views.

Resource: Book

Author: Sam Allberry

Title: *Why Does God Care Who I Sleep With?*

Publication: The Good Book Company, 2020

Length: 128 pages

Synopsis: Christians are increasingly seen as outdated, restrictive and judgmental when it comes to sex before marriage, cohabitation and homosexuality. In fact, for many people, this issue is one of the biggest barriers for them considering Christianity. Readers will be shown that God himself is love and his blueprint for sex is designed to help us to flourish and live out our full humanity.

Resource: Book

Author: James V. Brownson

Title: *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: reframing the church's debate on same-sex relationships*

Publication: Eerdmans, 2013

Length: 304 pages

Synopsis: In *Bible, Gender, Sexuality* 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. Brownson carefully analyses 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, honour and shame. Central to his argument is the need to uncover the moral logic behind the biblical text.

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Resource: Book

Author: Paul Chilcote

Title: *Active Faith*

Publication: Abingdon, 2019

Length: 112

In chapter 1 of this book, Paul Chilcote focuses on truth and the practice of humility. It is helpful read as we seek to engage with scriptural truth in the midst of difficult conversations.

Resource: Book

Author: Rachel Gardner

Title: *The Sex Thing: Reimagining conversations with young people about sex*

Publication: SPCK, 2021

Length: 210 pages

Synopsis: Aimed primarily at Christian parents and youth leaders but useful for anyone who wants to speak clearly and confidently in a world of rapidly changing social attitudes. Rachel Gardner is a trusted voice who offers tips and guidance drawn from years of experience offering a framework for conversations about sexuality that are holistic and holy and pointing to a sexual ethic that young people can thrive in.

Resource: Book

Author: Steve Harper

Title: *For the Sake of the Bride: Restoring the Church to Her Intended Beauty*

Publication: Abingdon Press, 2014

Length: 112 pages.

Synopsis: Within the context of the debates which have arisen within United Methodism, and arising from his own experience, in this book Steve Harper makes a plea for Christian Conversation - respectful dialogue - in the midst of controversy.

Resource: Book

Author: Justin Lee

Title: "Unconditional: Rescuing the Gospel From the Gays-Vs-Christians Debate"

Sold in the US under the title "Torn".

Publication: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014

Length: 254 pages.

Synopsis: A passionate Christian from a conservative evangelical background, Justin Lee shares his own stories of coming to terms with his sexuality and offers a practical guide for Christians who disagree on how we can continue to relate to, learn from and love one another.

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Author: William Loader

Title: *Making Sense of Sex: Attitudes towards Sexuality in Early Jewish and Christian Literature*

Publication: Eerdmans, 2013

Length: 176 pages.

Synopsis: In this book William Loader provides an overview of the ancient texts which provide us with the biblical-era sexual values of Romans, Greeks, Jews and Christians. He distils his five previous books on sexuality into a form that is accessible to those who may not have a detailed understanding of Greco-Roman period, drawing out the over-arching themes and exploring what it means to be both human and sexual beings.

Author: William Loader

Title: *Sex, Then and Now: Sexualities and the Bible*

Publication: Cascade Books, 2022

Length: 146 pages.

Synopsis: In this book, William Loader provides a careful and concise guide to the Bible's teaching on sex and sexuality within its ancient contexts. Exploring how the biblical authors and the people of their time view sex and sexual issues, Loader asks *then* questions such as: did they see sex positively or as something dangerous; how did they view marriage; do their views of marriage relate to the way most people see marriage today; what were the understandings of human nature that underpinned their discussions of appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour; how did they view sexual relations between people of the same gender? By providing information about sex *then*, Loader offers the reader a basis for discussing sex *now* and for how to approach discussions that continue to create consternation, confusion, and often conflict in today's world.

Resource: Book

Authors: William Loader, Margaret DeFranza; Wesley Hill, Stephen Holmes

Title: *Two Views on Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Church (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology)*

Publication: Zondervan, 2016

Length: 224 pages

Synopsis: This is a useful book because it presents different scholars with different views in conversation and dialogue with each other.

Resource: Book

Author: Oliver O'Donovan

Title: *Church in Crisis: The gay controversy and the Anglican communion*

Publication: Cascade Books, 2008

Length: 119 pages

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Synopsis: Oliver O'Donovan cuts through the noise of the loudest voices in the debate, raises the theological stakes, and urges us to engage the moral question of same-sex marriage in a humble posture, looking to the authority of Scripture, engaging the tradition, and listening to gay Christians' experiences before jumping to any conclusion.

Resource: Book

Author: Bridget Eileen Rivera

Title: *Heavy Burdens: Seven Ways LGBTQ Christians Experience Harm in the Church*

Publication: Brazos Press, 2021

Length: 240 pages

Synopsis: Rivera argues that religious faith reduces the risk of suicide for virtually every American demographic except one: LGBTQ people. She discusses how generations of LGBTQ people have felt alienated or condemned by the church, contending that as many LGBTQ people face overwhelming challenges in navigating faith, gender, and sexuality, Christian communities that uphold the traditional sexual ethic often unwittingly make the path more difficult through unexamined attitudes and practices.

Resource: Pamphlet

Author: Preston Sprinkle

Title: *15 Reasons For Affirming Same Sex Relations And 15 Responses*

Publication: The Centre for Faith, Sexuality and Gender

Length: 16 pages

Synopsis: Preston Sprinkle offers a summary of the main discussion points among Christians in the area of same-sex relationships. Coming from a traditional/conservative perspective, Sprinkle does his best to offer the very best version of the opposing arguments and, while it inevitably misses some nuance, this short document remains a very good primer.

Resource: Book

Author: Preston Sprinkle

Title: *People to Be Loved: Why Homosexuality Is Not Just an Issue*

Publication: Zondervan, 2015

Length: 208 pages

Synopsis: Homosexuality is one of the most divisive topics among evangelical Christians today. In *People to Be Loved*, Preston Sprinkle challenges those on both sides of the debate to consider what the Bible says and how we should approach the topic of homosexuality in light of it. His personal view is the historically Christian view of marriage, but he writes with compassion regarding the treatment of gays in church life. From the Preface: 'Some of you may affirm same-sex relations while others may not. I am writing this book for both of you – all of us- for anyone who cares to know

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what the Bible says (and doesn't say) about homosexuality. We're going to hold our views with a humble heart and an open mind.'

Resource: Book

Author: Preston Sprinkle

Title: *Does the Bible Support Same-Sex Marriage? 21 Conversations from a Historically Christian View*

Publication: David C Cook, 2023

Length: 240 pages

Synopsis: Preston Sprinkle, co-founder and president of *The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender*, holds the historically Christian view of marriage and has written this resource aimed at encouraging respectful and thoughtful conversations around the question "Does the Bible support same-sex marriage?" Even though same-sex marriage is not currently under debate by the Methodist Church in Ireland, many are aware of the debate in wider Christian circles – which can end in divisiveness and confusion instead of thoughtful conversation. The author carefully answers 21 of the strongest cases for same-sex marriage and offers a gracious and thoughtful, biblically-based response to each one.

Resource: Book

Author: Paul David Tripp

Title: *Sex in a Broken World: How Christ Redeems What Sin Distorts*

Publication: Crossway, 2018

Length: 192 pages

Synopsis: Sexuality is a fundamental part of what it means to be human—part of God's beautiful design when he created all things. And yet, sex in our world today looks nothing like the way that God intended it to be. Sexual brokenness surrounds us and, in one way or another, affects us all. This sexual brokenness reveals our deep need for redemption—something quick fixes, mere behaviour modification, or a set of rules can't provide. Honest and direct yet kind and caring, this book points us to the only place we can find help for sexual brokenness—the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.

Some web-based resources

Resource: Article

Web Address: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/3-november/news/uk/new-evangelical-group-sets-out-its-inclusive-credentials>

Title: *New Evangelical group sets out its inclusive manifesto*

Publication: Church Times, 2023

Length: 1,100 words

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Synopsis: in this article, journalist Madeline Davis writes about the new “Inclusive Evangelicals Network. She includes links to their website as well as to some other resources.

Resource: Video

Web Address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMsv6ZBK8SE&t=2s>

Title: *Side A & B Gay Christians debate sexuality with Brandon Robinson and David Bennett,*

Publication: Premiere Unbelievable

Length: 1 hour 11 minutes

Synopsis: In this discussion, two gay Christians explore their different perspectives on sexuality, marriage, celibacy, the church and why they see things differently.

Resource: Video

Web Address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bspz9yWnMk&t=5s>

Title: *Christian, gay and celibate (or not)? with David Bennett, Taylor Telford & Billy Hallowell*

Publication: Premiere Unbelievable

Length: 1 hour 23 minutes

Synopsis: Two friends, both gay, both Christian theologians, discuss celibacy, scripture, discipleship, their differing views, and other things.

Resource: Podcast

Web Address: <https://bit.ly/4aWZQ59>

Publication: Church Times, 2017

Length: 28 minutes

Synopsis: In this podcast the Rev. Steve Chalke discusses his controversial views on how to interpret or even re-interpret key Bible passages on gay relationships.

Resource: Website

Web Address: <https://www.centerforfaith.com/>

Title: *The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender*

Synopsis: Includes a Resources section, online courses and webinars, and a blog

Stated purpose: ‘We seek to address two primary needs in the church: one, to help leaders cultivate a more robust biblical ethic of marriage, sexuality and gender; two, to help churches and organizations create a safe and compassionate environment for LGBT+ people, their families, and anyone wrestling with their sexuality or gender identity.’