



Is Marriage a ‘Must’ or a ‘Bust’? Enlarging the Justice Agenda

**The 2008 Carter Heyward Scholars Program Lecture
Episcopal Divinity School
November 13, 2008**

Marvin M. Ellison

Obtaining a right does not always result in justice.¹

Paula Ettlebrick

As the presidency of George W. Bush was sinking, a cartoon pictured the President at a press conference. A reporter asks, “Mr. President, Iraq and Afghanistan are in chaos, polar ice is melting, the middle class is disappearing. What response do you have to all of that?” Mr. Bush replies, “Marriage is between a man and a woman.”²

Shift now from the painfully surreal to the painfully real: During the 2008 election season, proponents and opponents of California’s Proposition 8 spent in excess of \$70 million to secure or prevent the freedom to marry for same-sex couples, the most expensive ballot measure in this nation’s history. Two other restrictive Constitutional amendments were passed in Florida and Arizona along with an Arkansas measure that prohibits single adults, as well as same-sex couples, from becoming foster parents or adopting children. Given the intensity of these anti-gay campaigns, it’s safe to say that whenever two or more are gathered, we’re wise to expect significant conflict regarding marriage and family rights for same-gender loving people.

Listen to a sampling of voices in this contentious debate:

The first voice is that of marriage traditionalists. Tony Perkins, president of the Washington-based Family Research Council, when asked about California's Proposition 8, said, "[This was] the most important thing nationally on the ballot. We have survived bad presidents. But many, many are convinced we will not survive this redefinition of marriage."³ Glenn Stanton at Focus on the Family has argued similarly: "[So-called] same-sex 'marriage,'" he asserts, "is being forced upon us by a small, but elite, group of individuals dressed in black robes – judges – who say that thousands of years of human history have simply been wrong. That is a very arrogant notion that will bring great harm to our culture." "God bestowed [marriage] upon mankind, and we tamper with it at our own peril." "[R]edefining marriage in this way [is] the first step toward abolishing marriage and the family altogether."⁴ Why? Because marriage equality erases gender differences. As Stanton explains, "Gender would become nothing. . . . Real, deep, and necessary differences exist between the sexes. [Same-sex marriage] rests [instead] on a 'Mister Potato Head Theory' of gender difference (same core, just interchangeable body parts). [But] if real differences [do] exist, then men would need women, and women would need men" in order to be complete. For marriage traditionalists, same-sex marriage is a "bust."

A second voice is that of marriage advocates. Andrew Sullivan, gay social critic and author, has written, "This debate is ultimately about more than marriage and more than homosexuality. As an argument it is a crucible for the future shape of democratic liberalism."⁵ "Including homosexuals within marriage, after all, would be a means of

conferring the highest form of social approval imaginable.”⁶ Again, Sullivan writes, “Gay marriage is not a radical step; it is a profoundly humanizing, traditionalizing step. It is the first step in any resolution of the homosexual question – more important than any other institution, since it is the most central institution to the nature of the problem. . . . If nothing else were done at all, and gay marriage were legalized, ninety percent of the political work necessary to achieve gay and lesbian equality would have been achieved. It is ultimately the only reform that truly matters.”⁷ For marriage advocates, same-sex marriage is a “must.”

A third voice is that of marriage critics: Gay social theorist and historian John D’Emilio, in an article entitled “The Marriage Fight Is Setting Us Back,” argues that “the campaign for same-sex marriage has been an unmitigated disaster. The battle to win marriage equality through the courts,” he writes, “has done something that no other campaign or issue in our movement has done: it has created a vast body of new antigay law. Alas for us, as the anthropologist Gayle Rubin has so cogently observed, ‘Sex laws are notoriously easy to pass. . . . Once they are on the books, they are extremely difficult to dislodge.’” Moreover, D’Emilio argues, “as a movement” haven’t we been “pushing to further de-center and de-institutionalize marriage? Once upon a time we did.”⁸

Jewish feminist theologian Judith Plaskow and her partner Martha Ackelsberg agree. “We love each other,” they write in the Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion, “and we’ve been in a committed relationship for nearly twenty years. We are residents of Massachusetts. But we’re not getting married.” Why not? Because, they explain, “focusing on the right to marry perpetuates the idea that [a range of social and economic] rights ought to be linked to marriage. Were we to marry, we would be contributing to the

perpetuation of a norm of coupledness in our society. The norm marginalizes those who are single, single parents, widowed, divorced, or otherwise living in non-traditional constellations.” They question, therefore, the wisdom of reinforcing “the centrality of marriage to the social order.”⁹ The problem is not, as Focus on the Family insists, the devaluation of marriage in this culture, but rather the over-valuation of marriage as a marker for social status and as the exclusive conduit for allocating social and economic benefits, from health care to inheritance rights.

Similarly, Mary Hunt argues, “I remain of mixed mind, not to mention mixed emotion, on the question. I seek relational justice for all rather than legal remedy for a few. . . . Although I support enthusiastically the right of same-sex couples to marry, I am not persuaded that it will inevitably lead to greater relational justice, a feminist goal.”¹⁰ For marriage critics, same-sex marriage is a “bust.”

Despite their differences, both marriage advocates and marriage critics are in full agreement that, as a matter of simple justice, if different-sex couples have the freedom to marry, then same-sex couples should have that same freedom, and yet justice is never simple. As important as it is to defend the freedom to marry for same-sex couples, I would argue that limiting justice to a liberal framework of acquiring equal rights downplays or ignores altogether other important justice considerations, including reordering social power and debunking cultural ideology, including religious claims, that legitimate sexual and other social hierarchies.

One set of these justice concerns is about marriage as a cultural practice. Ours is a marriage culture, in which upwards of 90 to 95% of all adults marry at least once by age 65, but what commends marriage as a site for human bonding? Patriarchal marriage

is unethical because it is constructed on the basis of gender hierarchy and male control of women's lives. Marriage traditionalists say that a valid marriage requires gender difference, but the sub-text is gender inequality, with a dominant male and submissive female. Think of the Southern Baptist Convention's invitation for wives to submit graciously to their husband's leadership. Is there an alternative, non-oppressive model of marriage, and what would ethical marriage require of its participants and the community?

Another set of justice concerns is about the role of the state. Why should marriage or any other adult intimate relationship be licensed by the state? Or, again, why should civil marriage be privileged as the exclusive conduit for a wide range of social, economic, and cultural benefits, especially given the diverse ways people form intimate partnerships and create families other than through marriage? What are the community's obligations to recognize and support these diverse patterns in addition to marriage or even instead of marriage? What would it mean to de-center and de-institutionalize not only heterosexuality, but also marriage, the primary institution that undergirds heteronormativity?

I agree with Mary Hunt and other feminist marriage critics that the ethical agenda should be relational justice for all families and relational justice in all families. In a pluralistic society, people of faith and good will should be concerned about more than the vitality of the marital family. At the opening of the twenty-first century, we must draw a larger picture of love, commitment, and family with ample room for same-sex partnerships, one-parent households, extended families, blended families, and other relational configurations, including plural relationships. Because the strength of family as a cross-cultural institution is its adaptability, we should be focusing not on family or

relational form, but rather on things that truly matter: protecting the dignity and well-being of all persons; insisting on the qualities of mutual respect, non-violence, and care in every relationship; sharing power and goods fairly; and making sure that every family receives the support and resources necessary for its members to thrive. Not marriage, but relational justice as a component of a more comprehensive social and economic justice should be our moral vision.

While it is true that winning (or beginning to win) the freedom to marry for those unjustly denied this right is a good and worthwhile pursuit, it's also true that gaining equal marriage rights is not unambiguously good. The inclusion of gay men and lesbians within the ranks of married couples may be beneficial for those who can elect this newly available option, but it may also further entrench the hegemony of state-sanctioned marriage and strengthen the "special rights" accorded to the marital family, to the detriment of other relational patterns. If so, then same-sex marriage would not have a broadly transformative effect, especially if it continues to privilege the married, devalue the unmarried, and reinforce current patterns of social and economic inequities. Yes, expanding marriage rights will do some good, but it will not accomplish what truly needs doing: to promote a more complex, more demanding, and ultimately more liberating justice agenda that aims, in Mary Hunt's words, at "relational justice for all rather than legal remedy for a few."

Stated differently, a comprehensive justice requires of us more than adding queer families to the mix and stirring. Inclusion is good; transformation is better. Expanding the circle is necessary, but not sufficient as a change strategy. More challenging is to dig deeper and transform the cultural assumptions and power dynamics that place so many at

disadvantage while granting others unearned privileges. Marriage equality matters, but only within a comprehensive justice framework that confronts not only sexual and gender oppression, but also white racism, economic exploitation, and cultural elitism. Moving in the direction of greater relational justice will mean queering our communities, such that all persons, whether partnered or not, and all families, whether state licensed, church blessed, or not, are guaranteed the resources necessary for flourishing. A social justice framework for thinking about marriage and the common good is urgently needed to highlight the fact that the quality of our marriages, partnerships, and other social relations rises and falls in relation to prevailing social, economic, and cultural conditions and their relative fairness. The personal is not only personal; it's also political, economic, and cultural.

The church, because it has an explicit mandate to pursue compassion and justice in all things personal and political, may make a significant contribution in education and advocacy for relational justice, but only if it can deal constructively with three hotly contested matters: the sex question, the assimilation question, and the question of how best to name the crisis in marriage and family.

First, the sex question: Marriage is about many things, including economics and property, reproduction and childrearing, care giving and community responsibilities. It is also about the regulation of sex. Sex is an occasion for great cultural anxiety, given how sexual mores have been so thoroughly influenced by Christian sex-negativity. This sex-negativity is reinforced by sexual fundamentalism, the notion that the only morally acceptable sex is heterosexual, marital, and procreative. Those abiding by this standard believe that they have a moral duty to police others and keep them under control.

Respectable people are those who marry, restrain their sexuality, and settle down, thereby establishing their credentials as responsible adults. In contrast, gay men and lesbians are, by definition, “out of control” because we reside outside the marriage zone. Queerness has become cultural code for a generalized immorality and sexual immaturity, again because gay sex is not marital and, therefore, not properly constrained.

Advocates of same-sex marriage have, by and large, dodged the sex question and not dealt forthrightly with the sexual ethics question, including what makes sex holy and good. Instead, they have tried to make their case for equal marriage rights by downplaying sex. Often they seek to normalize gay men and lesbians by de-sexualizing homosexuality. Their constant message is that gayness is a non-threatening difference similar to left-handedness and eye color. Moreover, they insist that same-sex couples are not really interested in altering the institution of marriage, but only in joining the ranks of the “happily conjoined,” thereby reinforcing rather than upsetting the status quo.

Playing down sexual difference and sanitizing gay sex are efforts to reduce the threat that gay identity and culture pose to dominant norms. According to this strategy, safety and access to basic rights, including the right to marry, require making queerness invisible. In the process, the prevailing norms and structures of compulsory heterosexuality go unchallenged. The moral problem becomes mystified, once again, as the “problem” of homosexuality and whether a minoritized group of outsiders can ever properly qualify to gain access to majority-insiders’ privileges by becoming “like them.” Defined this way, the solution to injustice is for gay men and lesbians to conform, as best we can, to heterosexist norms or at least not flaunt being too happily deviant.

Take, for example, William Eskridge, a gay legal scholar, who defends the legal right to marry for same-sex couples, but in buttressing his case, relies on sex-negative and homophobic arguments. His book, subtitled “From Sexual Liberty to Civilized Commitment,” suggests that even in the midst of an HIV/AIDS pandemic, gay men have been “more sexually venturesome” than others and, therefore, are “more in need of civilizing.” His argument in favor of marriage rights is that “same-sex marriage could be a particularly useful commitment device for gay and bisexual men.”¹¹ If marriage becomes the normative expectation among gay men, he argues, gay male cruising and experimentation with multiple anonymous sex partners will give way “to a more lesbian-like interest in commitment. Since 1981 and probably earlier, gays were civilizing themselves,” he continues. “Part of our self-civilization has been an insistence on the right to marry.”¹²

To argue that marriage is a necessary social control mechanism to tame men’s sexuality only reinforces the sex-negativity already so much in evidence among social conservatives. To argue, as Eskridge does, that “same-sex marriage civilizes gay men by making them more like lesbians” presumes, first of all, that women are not really interested in sex or sexual pleasure, but instead concerned only with intimacy and making relational commitments.¹³ Moreover, marriage’s primary purpose becomes sexual control, this time of gay men. In the process, sexual fundamentalism is never critiqued, much less debunked.

If some marriage advocates have adopted a strategy of either de-sexualizing homosexuality or of safely containing homoeroticism within marriage, an alternative, more risky, but in the long term more productive change strategy is to launch an

enthusiastic, non-apologetic defense of gay and lesbian sex (and, more generally, of healthy eroticism), spell out a principled critique of heterosexist norms, and reformulate a sexual ethic no longer based on heterosexual marriage as normative. On this score, a non-reconstructed Christian tradition will hardly be helpful. The conventional Christian approach does not offer a positive ethic of sex. Rather, it promulgates a highly restrictive moral code aimed at controlling and containing sex within strictly defined marital boundaries.

The prevailing Christian code --celibacy for singles, sex only in marriage--is no longer adequate, if it ever was, for at least three reasons. First, this code is fear-based, punitive, disrespectful of human personhood, and aimed at control rather than empowerment of persons. Second, the Christian marriage ethic is not sufficiently discerning of the varieties of responsible sexuality, including among singles and same-gender loving people. Third, it is not sufficiently discriminating in naming ethical violations even within marriage and has been way too silent about sexual coercion and domestic abuse. A reframing of Christian ethics is needed to realistically address the diversity of human sexualities and place the focus not on the “sin of sex,” but on the use and misuse of power, the dignity of persons, and the moral quality of their interactions.

In my judgment, the renewal of Christian sexual ethics depends on de-centering both heterosexuality and marriage and re-centering the ethical focus on justice-love as the central expectation for all sexual and social relating. This justice-love standard calls for egalitarian intimate relationships whether these are marital or not. What matters is not the sex or gender expression of the partners or their marital status, but whether the relationship exhibits mutual respect and care, a fair sharing of power and pleasure,

ongoing efforts to maintain health and prevent transmission of disease, and, in those cases where it applies, avoiding unintended pregnancy. This justice-centered ethical framework also gives pride of place to pleasure as a moral resource and guide. It also defends the freedom of sexually active adults not to marry, without penalty or prejudice.

About the assimilation question: Some queer-identified marriage critics worry that the current push to acquire marriage rights reflects how (at least some) gay men and lesbians are seeking status and safety by mimicking heterosexuals. Of course, that's happening in some places, but it can be fairly argued that something far more interesting and potentially transformative is also under way. Considerable evidence suggests that the majority heterosexual culture is coming to resemble gay culture with its gender flexibility, experimentation with family forms, and celebration of the pleasures of non-procreative sex. "Contrary to popular belief, and even some gay rights rhetoric," Michael Bronski writes, "gay people have not been patterning their lives on the structures of heterosexuality; rather, the opposite has occurred. Heterosexuals who have increasingly been rejecting traditional structures of sexuality and gender have been reorganizing in ways pioneered by gay men and lesbians." This process may be thought of as reverse assimilation. The lesson, Bronski suggests, may be that "Only when those in the dominant culture realize that they are better off acting like gay people will the world change and be a better, safer, and more pleasurable place for everyone."¹⁴

The Religious Right with its notorious "straight agenda" is hardly enthusiastic about queering the church or world. LGBT people, singles, and cohabitating heterosexual couples are all morally suspect as "displaced persons" outside the marital system, but it is precisely our marginality that grants us a measure of freedom to invent

alternative ways of creating intimate partnership and family. “Banished from the privileges of marriage,” Alison Solomon writes, “we have been spared its imperatives,”¹⁵ including its gender rigidity, its preoccupation with the couple in isolation from the community, and procreative duty. The pressing question is not whether same-sex couples should marry, but whether any couple should seek a state license for their intimate relationship.

The Religious Right, fearful that this precious freedom from marriage and its mandates may catch on, has launched a “traditional family values” campaign in order to depict queerness – that is, life outside procreative marriage – as dangerous, difficult, tragic, and pitiable. By targeting LGBT people for condemnation, this campaign is clearly aimed at keeping same-sex couples out of the marital “inner circle,” but their primary target audience is the heterosexual cultural majority. Focus on the Family and other organizations certainly want to keep the likes of me outside marriage, but their primary agenda is keeping heterosexual couples pinned into a hierarchical sex/gender system that also naturalizes race and class inequities as divinely sanctioned. Gay bashing sends a signal, to gays and straights alike, that any deviance from patriarchal norms will be subject to ridicule, violence, and even death. Such threats are highly effective in dissuading people from giving credence to, much less acting on, the intoxicating notions of sexual freedom, gender flexibility, and bodily self-determination.

One way to break the marriage debate “logjam” would be for heterosexual couples to begin living and acting more like their LBGT counterparts. Acting in solidarity to rebuild community might well require heterosexually married couples to renounce their marital privilege. After all, why shouldn’t heterosexual couples be

satisfied with having only the more limited legal options of domestic partnerships and civil unions? Shouldn't it be enough for different-sex couples to receive a blessing of their relationships from their religious tradition? Why should anyone, gay or non-gay, seek the state's licensing or authorization for their intimate relations?

Along these lines, I've been impressed by the change initiated by a United Church of Christ congregation in northern New England. This church has been involved for more than a dozen years in the Open and Affirming movement, advocating the full and equal participation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in the life and leadership of the church. A few years ago, when reviewing their policies regarding the use of the church building for weddings and other public functions, the congregation decided to discontinue authorizing marriage ceremonies altogether. Instead, in the church they permit only covenant or union ceremonies for couples, whether same-sex or different-sex. If a couple wishes to marry civilly and has that option, they are encouraged to enter into that legal contract at city hall, but for the purposes of what happens at church, only a witnessing to and blessing of their covenant-making is offered, with no double standards according to the gender of the covenanting partners. This approach does not rule out state licensing of intimate partnerships, nor does it demarcate the word marriage as "state only" or "religion only," but it offers a creative strategy for gaining greater clarity of purpose and role.

About naming the crisis in marriage and family, the feminist and queer justice movements struggle to make explicit the connections between people's personal pain and turmoil in their daily lives and how sexism, racism, and poverty undermine personal well-being and community coherence, especially for those without social power. What is

undermining family life for the vast majority in the U.S. and elsewhere is not same-sex love or same-sex partnerships, not even marriage equality, but rather advanced capitalism's erosion of social and economic security and the destruction of communities, as well as the earth, for the purpose of maximizing wealth for a few.

Under conditions of capitalist modernity, a cultural sea change has taken place, loosening social obligations to neighbors and strangers and eroding communal ties of affiliation and connection. In the process, people have increasingly turned to private relationships, primarily marriage and family, for identity, support, and fulfillment. However, here is a large caveat: intimate, romantic relationships, even enduring ones, are no substitute for a richly textured community life. As historian Stephanie Coontz writes, "It has only been in the last century that Americans have put all their emotional eggs in the basket of coupled love. Because of this change, many of us have found joys in marriage that our great-great-grandparents never did. But we have also neglected our other relationships, placing too many burdens on a fragile institution and making social life poorer in the process." The consequence, Coontz points out, is that "as Americans lose the wider face-to-face ties that build social trust, they become more dependent on romantic relationships for intimacy and deep communication, and more vulnerable to isolation if a relationship breaks down."¹⁶

So what's the solution? Again, Coontz is helpful: "We should raise our expectations for, and commitment to, other relationships [in addition to marriage and family], especially since so many people now live so much of their lives outside marriage. Paradoxically, we can strengthen our marriages the most," Coontz writes, "by not expecting them to be our sole refuge from the pressures of the modern work force.

Instead we need to restructure both work and social life so that we can reach out and build ties with others, including people who are single or divorced.”¹⁷ In other words, we must refuse to reinforce privatized marriage as “you and me against the world,” but rather help each other connect more strongly to our communities and empower each other to participate in, and contribute to, the broader social world.

In the midst of this cultural crisis, the challenge to people of faith is to hold onto a much larger gift than families, valuable as these may be. Our calling is to embrace and revitalize community and celebrate how our lives are utterly social and deeply, deeply intertwined. Our mutual dependence is a gift from God. As Carter Heyward has expressed the matter: “‘We are the boat. We are the sea. I sail in you. You sail in me.’ This is the truth of our lives, and it is the essence of our goodness.”¹⁸

In terms of both care-giving and prophetic social witness, we must also pay close attention to the stresses mounting on almost every household. During the past twenty-five years, beginning with the Reagan revolution and its dismantling of the liberal welfare state, corporate capitalism has demanded that taxes on the rich be drastically cut and social spending radically curtailed. With the morally callous demands for privatization and deregulation (meaning: little if any public accountability or responsibility), neo-liberal economic policies have undermined -- destroyed is not too strong a word -- the common good and steadily pushed economic and social responsibility away from employers and government and onto private households. The mounting personal and communal strains have pushed millions beyond the breaking point, especially the poor and racially marginalized.

Neo-liberalism's ideology of radical individualism has cultivated a gross cultural lie in too many hearts and minds: that whether a person or a community sinks or swims, it's up to that person or community alone. Success belongs to the individual alone. If you fail, no one will come to your aid, especially if you're poor, non-white, and non-English speaking. (Think New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina, think Darfur, and think Cleveland, Ohio.) As one example of the erosion of social solidarity, consider how care for the most vulnerable among us – children, the frail elderly, and people living with cognitive, emotional, and physical disabilities -- is no longer defined as the community's responsibility, but rather has shifted steadily onto the shoulders of mostly women, typically unpaid women at home or privately employed, often poorly-paid immigrant women of color. As Lisa Duggan and Richard Kim observe, "In this context, household stability [and household security have] become a life-and-death issue."¹⁹

In the midst of this cultural crisis, the Right has cruelly played the race card and the sex/gender card, again and again, to scapegoat vulnerable groups and divert attention from the real source of our cultural woes, runaway capitalism and the collapse of democracy. If faith communities have hope to offer, it will only be by encouraging us to name and resist this social and economic madness. To put it bluntly, our credibility, ethically and spiritually speaking, utterly depends on our willingness to resist capitalist plutocracy and our efforts to dismantle Christian patriarchy while we seek to embody a truly liberating spirituality of justice.

One of my favorite authors, Flannery O'Connor, has quipped, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you odd." Celebrating our common humanity requires making an odd, decisively queer turn toward radical equality and plunging in together to

rebuild a vibrant, just, and wildly inclusive social order. Rather than embrace a more modest marriage equality agenda, tonight I've encouraged us to embrace a larger, more disruptive queer agenda. The queer agenda has never been only about sex or even sexual justice, but rather remains a persistent, unwavering demand for a comprehensive renewal of life-in-community. The change we desire, deep down, is not mere inclusion, but rather spiritual, moral, political, economic, and cultural transformation, from the grassroots upwards and from our bedrooms to far beyond.

This progressive agenda reflects our desire for right relation not only in our families, but on our streets and throughout our institutions. But I'd go further. Turning queer is also a spiritual pathway for remaining loyal to God, who, as these things go, is also rather odd: passionate about justice, no respecter of social rank or status, and forever graciously at work "making all things new." Let us give thanks, then, for this conflict about marriage equality and relational justice and instead of running the other way, let's throw caution to the wind and enjoy taking the plunge together toward more and more justice-love.

Marvin M Ellison teaches Christian social ethics at Bangor Theological Seminary in Portland, Maine and is an ordained Presbyterian minister. Email: mellison@bts.edu.

NOTES

¹ Paula Eittlebrick, "Since When Is Marriage a Path to Liberation?" Out/Look 2:2 (fall 1989), 14.

² Cited in Daniel C. Maguire, Whose Church? A Concise Guide to Progressive Catholicism (New York: The New Press, 2008), 137.

³ Lisa Leff, "Same-Sex Marriage Vote Down to Wire," Maine Sunday Telegram Sunday, November 2, 2008, A18.

-
- ⁴ Glenn T. Stanton, “Is Marriage in Jeopardy?”
- ⁵ Andrew Sullivan, “Introduction,” in Same-Sex Marriage: Pro and Con, A Reader, ed. Andrew Sullivan, p. xxvi.
- ⁶ Ibid., xx.
- ⁷ Andrew Sullivan, Virtually Normal: An Argument about Homosexuality, p. 185.
- ⁸ John D’Emilio “The Marriage Fight Is Setting Us Back,” The Gay and Lesbian Review (November-December 2006).
- ⁹ Martha Ackelsberg and Judith Plaskow, “Response,” JFSR 20:2 (fall 2004), 107 and 108.
- ¹⁰ Mary Hunt, “Roundtable Discussion: Same-Sex Marriage,” JFSR 20:2 (fall 2004), 83.
- ¹¹ William N. Eskridge, Jr., The Case for Same-Sex Marriage: From Sexual Liberty to Civilized Commitment (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 9.
- ¹² Ibid., 58.
- ¹³ Ibid., 84.
- ¹⁴ Michael Bronski, The Pleasure Principle: Sex, Backlash, and the Struggle for Gay Freedom (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 242-3 and 249.
- ¹⁵ Alison Solomon, “Get Married? Yes, But Not by the State,” Village Voice January 9, 1996, 29.
- ¹⁶ Stephanie Coontz, “Too Close for Comfort,” New York Times November 7, 2006.
- ¹⁷ Ibid. See also “Study: Gain a Spouse, Lose Your Friends,” Portland Press Herald May 29, 2007, A4.
- ¹⁸ Carter Heyward, Touching Our Strength: The Erotic as Power and the Love of God (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 13.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.