

Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Book Review by Andrew M. Bowden, September 2014; “Marriage: Can We Have Justice Without It?” by Robert P. George, *Plough Quarterly*, Autumn 2014; “Judicial Activism, Judicial Abdication”, *National Review*, November 3, 2014; “Tim Cook: Is Being Gay a Gift of God?” by Jim Denison, *Denison Forum*, October 31, 2014; “Top Ten Harms of Same-Sex ‘Marriage’” by Peter Sprigg, FRC.org; “The New Normal” by Sophia Lee, *World*, September 20, 2014.

Bowden, a grad student, grants that emeritus professor William Loader, whose *Making Sense of Sex* (Eerdmans, 2013) he reviews, “has established himself as an expert in the field of ancient Jewish and Christian views on sexuality”. But he complains that Loader now “lobbies against discrimination against homosexuals who should be allowed to express themselves like everyone else”. Like Bowden and his wife are allowed? He ridicules the idea that “such discrimination should be dropped just as it was towards slaves and women.” He says: “Loader seems to assume that his research into ancient sexuality gives him the expertise to approve modern ‘developments’ and to disregard texts that differ. This raises an important question: If someone is an expert about ancient sexuality, does this also make one an expert about modern sexuality? Loader seems to think so, since he freely offers his opinions about modern sexuality, yet without the backing of any scientific research on the topic.”

To the contrary, it’s *because* Loader sees the *difference* between ancient assumptions and findings of scientific research, that he concludes as he does. But Bowden assumes that *his own lack of such research* in ancient assumptions, let alone *his own lack of expertise* in the *scientific* study of sex, gives *him* the *expertise* to *reject* Loader’s conclusions. Bowden and most of our fellow ETS members – though not all – impose their *ignorance* of homosexuality into ancient texts *and* today’s experience, while oblivious to relevant research.

George teaches jurisprudence but he’s better known for fighting against marriage for gay couples. Complaining that justice is now “a very individualistic concept of rights [that are, he claims] incompatible with Christian faith”, he fails to see *self-centeredness* itself, as the *assumption* behind Jesus’ command to love others *as we love ourselves*. Knowing how *we* want to be treated should tell us how to treat *others*. So, George’s loving *himself* enough to marry *his* college sweetheart, as he did, should clue him into loving *others* enough to allow *them* to marry whom *they* will. As he doesn’t! He says that, “the goal is the flourishing of each human person in all the diverse aspects of his or her personality and being”, yet he fights *against* such flourishing for *others*, demanding imposed lifelong celibacy with its high rates of depression or the enforced estrangement of a *mixed-orientation* marriage he’d never want for himself. He sees marriage as the “best department of health, education, and welfare”, yet fights *against* such blessings for *same-sex* couples. His activism thus adds to the terrible *strain* of mixed-orientation marriages, *duplicitous*, *promiscuous*, *broken* families, *adversely* impacted kids and *divorce*.

Aggressively self-assured of “the will of God” on what was foreign to ancient cultures, and thus, *biblically unaddressed*, his opposing *same-sex* marriage now apes outdated proof-texting on “the will of God” against *mixed-race* marriage of but a few decades ago.

Upset that the Supreme Court “ducked” marriage equality, *National Review* contends that, with “marriage redefined” as *NR* puts it, the “next” changes will be to *polygamy* and *polyamory*. But polygamy was *traditional* marriage under *male dominance* and ours is a gender-egalitarian society. *Legal polyamory* is oxymoronic!

NR frets loss of *gender role* or *anatomical* “complementarity” when *real* complementarity in marriage – same-sex or heterosexual – is in the *fascinating otherness* of a cherished partner. It’s not about a vagina or penis *per se*; it’s about a particular *person*. *NR* spins fear fantasies about kids of gay couples *committed* to bringing them up right while nearly half the kids born to mothers under 30 are out-of-wedlock births and 72 percent of black kids don’t have dads.

In shockingly selfish self-contradiction, *NR* asserts that, “defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman restricted nobody’s freedom. Same-sex couples were free to live as they chose, they lacked only official recognition of their unions”. “Only” *that*, hm? – all the social, economic and other support given to legally married couples and their kids?

Denison faults Apple CEO Tim Cook’s calling his being gay “among the greatest gifts God has given me” and saying it’s “made me more empathetic” toward the marginalized. Jesus called for such identification with the marginalized, but Denison’s too busy doing anachronistic eisegesis. He violates his own advice: “The right way to seek God’s will is to ask first what Scripture intends to say, then apply that intended message to our context.” But what’s addressed *to* ancients wasn’t *intended* to address what was *foreign* to them, i.e., *our* understanding of same-sex *orientation* and same-sex marriage of *peers*.

Sprigg tries to have it both ways: “*relatively few same-sex couples even bother to seek such recognition or claim such benefits*” (italics his). He fears gay couples’ kids will be *eligible for benefits* if a partner dies! So, punish the kids? He says kids won’t have “a married mother and father”! Has he seen the stats on kids of *single-mothers* abandoned by *heterosexual* impregnators? One in three American kids is *already* reared in a biological father-absent home. Sprigg fears schools will teach that gays should have equal rights! As was feared about equal rights for women and blacks? He says *his religious* liberty will be at risk! Do all *heterosexual* marriages meet *his* standards? He fears fewer will marry, fewer babies will be born and monogamy and lifelong marriage will wane! Does he not know that all this is now the case *without* marriage equality?

Lee says the film, *Love is Strange*, is a “debased cultural shift in which homosexuality is utterly ordinary.” She dislikes the depicting of an “aging gay couple ... as an ordinary, loving, dedicated couple.” She complains: “The subtle but sinful message here is, *So what if it’s homosexual love? We’re all humans with real emotions, real experiences and responses. We all recognize true love.*” She *resents* what others *respect*: that same-sex couples cherish each other through health and illness no less than do heterosexual couples. She and *World* don’t get this; they refuse to get this. And, as a result, gays and millennials aren’t getting the Gospel. Ironically, this same issue of *World* carries a relevant quote from Gypsy Smith: “There are five Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Christian. But most people never read the first four.”

