

A BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE WORKSHOP “PREACHING THE HARD TEXTS”

*The Rev. Dr. David Schnasa Jacobsen
Associate Professor of Homiletics,
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary*

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The number of resources available for pastors dealing with the “hard texts” that are part of the church’s conversation about homosexuality is limited indeed. For one thing, these texts (typically certain verses from Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 and 20, Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and 1 Timothy 1) don’t show up in our lectionaries. Since so much of published work in the field of homiletics participates in the “lectionary-industrial complex”, there is far too little. Still, assuming the preaching the “hard texts” is part and parcel of an ongoing caring conversation set within the pastoral theological task that is preaching, there are some helps worth noting. Hopefully, this bibliography can help you find your own voice and enable a deeper conversation among God’s people.

Allen, Ronald J. *Preaching the Topical Sermon*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992.

Allen offers some very helpful thoughts about when to preach topically and some models for doing so. The sample sermon on homosexuality in the back of the book has some helpful points, though it is uneven.

Allen, Ronald J. and Clark M. Williamson. *Interpreting Difficult Texts: Anti-Judaism and Christian Preaching*. Philadelphia: Trinity, 1989.

This book deals with anti-Jewish sentiments in the New Testament and how to preach them. The variety of stances offered in the book to dealing with scriptural texts may be useful for some preachers to apply in other situations of pastoral concern.

Coffin, William Sloane. *A Passion for the Possible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993.

Coffin’s book features a sermon on homophobia in chapter 7.

McClure, John S. *The Round-table Pulpit*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

McClure’s book sets out a process whereby a lay/clergy sermon conversation group helps develop a sermon that a preacher preaches. Many talk about making the sermon less monological and more conversational. McClure makes a bold attempt to show how it might be done. Perhaps a caring conversation can happen in the pulpit, too.

Patte, Daniel. *Preaching Paul*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Patte is a biblical scholar who wants to make Paul accessible for preaching. Although treating one of our hard texts (Rom 1), his book's interest is more in Paul's overall theological horizon than in the issue of homosexuality per se. Although the book may not help us the way we want, it may prevent us from "eis-egesis" with this hard text.

Ramsey, G. Lee. *Care-full Preaching: From Sermon to Caring Community*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.

Ramsey's fine book seeks to relate preaching more closely to the task of pastoral care, the shape of caring communities, and the horizon of pastoral theology. If our goal *is* caring communities, how can the pulpit help us get there. This book is worth the read.

Shelley, A. Carter. *Preaching Genesis 12-36*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001.

Shelley treats Genesis 19 in chapter 6 of her book. The treatment is, to my mind, not always helpful. Still, she situates that "hard text" within a broader literary and theological horizon that preachers can try on for themselves.

Sider, Ronald J. and Michael A. King. *Preaching About Life in a Threatening World*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987.

This book wants to situate preaching on social issues within the context of the broader Biblical story. It does not deal with the social issue of homosexuality, but may be worth looking at for how to talk about social issues in a way that is not abstract or disembodied.

Smith, Christine M. *Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992.

Smith offers a model for thinking about situations of radical evil in preaching. Chapter 4 is devoted to the problem of heterosexism.

Smith, Christine M., ed. *Preaching Justice: Ethnic and Cultural Perspectives*. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998.

Chapter 8 of this book, by Smith herself, considers matters of preaching justice from a Lesbian perspective. Smith attaches great importance to matters of social location and "listening and knowing" when it comes to preaching.

Smith, Christine M. *Risking the Terror: Resurrection in this Life*. Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2001.

Here Smith reflects on preaching justice in light of the meaning of death and resurrection.