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Love, Hope, and Listening: An Oral History of LGBTQ Topics and Responses at Hope College

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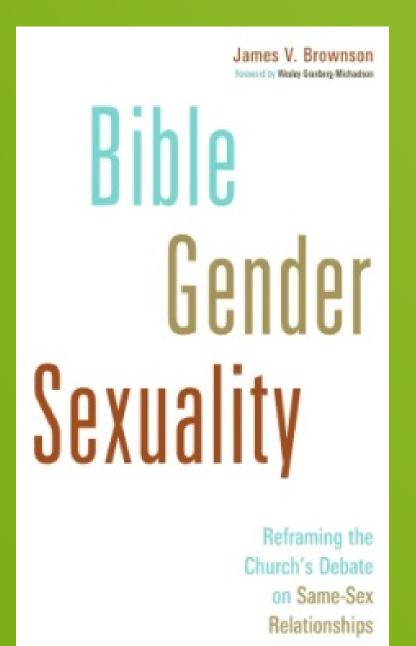


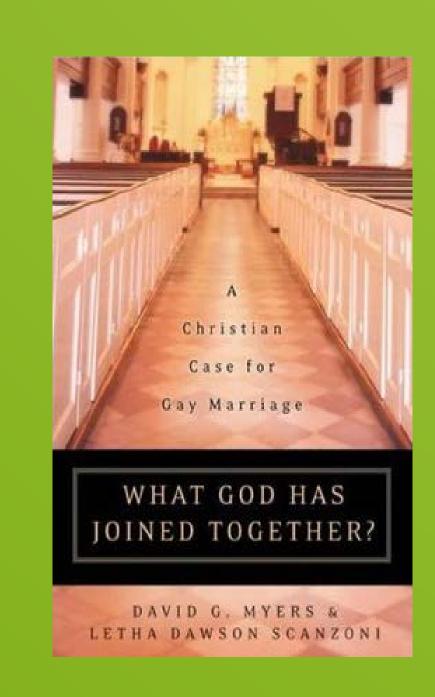
Abstract

'he intent of this project is to provide the Hope College ommunity with an informative compilation of documents nd interview testimonies about LGBTQ topics on campus ver the years. The local collection of archived reports, ooks by local scholars, student projects (i.e. essays and a lm), and newspaper articles covering LGBTQ topics ould benefit from a current addition. There is not a readily vailable resource that references all of these genres of formation across a breadth of time, as my project intends do. Such an addition would have a two-fold purpose: , to refresh the campus's collective memory of Hope ollege's LGBTO history and, secondly, to record current erspectives on LGBTQ people and realities at Hope.

Summary of Summer Research

I began this multi-part project with a foundation of academic research. During May 2013, I worked with my current mentor Priscilla Atkins to do extensive archival research. I viewed and read a variety of sources: documentaries and other informational films, recordings of speakers at Hope years ago, student-produced written and film projects, library books, newspaper articles, reports, meeting minutes, policies, and statements.





Themes from Summer Research

We are in the "Muddled Middle" concerning...

- . Reputation versus Reality
- . Tensions Between Statements & Policies
- . Spectrum of Diverse Christian Perspectives
- 4. Social Context for LGBTQ Students

Love, Hope, and Listening: An Oral History of LGBTQ Topics and Responses at Hope College

Katherine Sauer Mentor: Priscilla Atkins Women's and Gender Studies, Hope College

Quotes

The interviews took place during a three-week period in March 2014 and total about eighteen hours of conversation. Below are some quotes from the interviews that I conducted this semester. See handout for more excerpts.

"It's really hard for students to find any resources in Holland or in the Hope community."—Kate Pritchard

"Hope College also lacks a policy statement of non-discrimination/against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. And so that's another point of controversy because, overwhelmingly, people support such non-discrimination policy and faculty at least would wish for that at Hope."—David Myers

"I don't really know where I stand."—Andre Gilchrist "I don't think it is

dealt with. I think

there is a lack of

dealing with it."—

Kate Root

'Unfortunately, ... or maybe it's not unfortunate. There are a plethora of ways to interpret the Holy Scripture. There are so many ways we could interpret the Bible. So, to make this interpretation the only interpretation that the school goes by seems to be going against the idea of a liberal arts education, in which we are open to interpretation and look through different lenses at different texts."—Allyson Hoffman

"Room for All really does mean all."—Alum/former staff member

...a third or more young [of] people that leave the church state that the church's stance or teaching about homosexuality are either an important or a very important reason for why they've left the church. And so at Hope, I think that's a really big concern, a really important issue, and something that we need to acknowledge."—Joanne Stewart

"Jesus was kind of social justice, right? He would take underrepresented people or people who were cast out, and he reached out to them and helped them. I don't see Hope doing that."—Jeffrey Howard

> "I think most people enter these conversations wanting to do the 'right thing,' wanting to be a good Christian, and wanting to think faithfully about this."— Alum/former staff member

"With the new strategic planning process, there is, I think, fresh hopes that Hope College will become officially, as well as in practice, a more inclusive and welcoming place, and a more winsome Christian place by virtue of doing so."—David Myers

"So then they formed a Task Force that was trying to navigate and negotiate this difficult middle ground. If Hope has been anything, it's been a place where it tries to walk that thin line, that thin middle ground in all kinds of areas and issues."—Jane Dickie

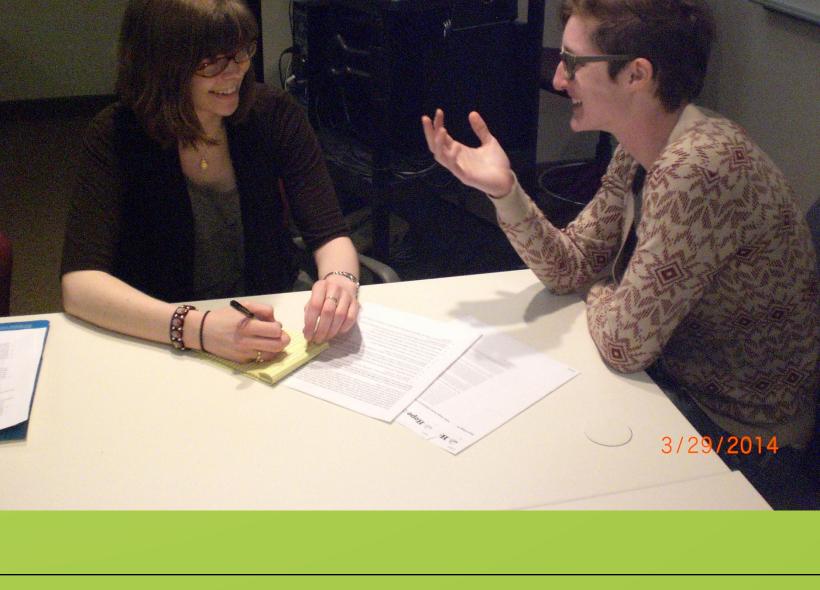
University, which is Catholic. They have a LGBT office, and they actually have an LGBT Studies minor. So, there are places that are conservative that can still do that. And the Catholic church is extremely conservative, but they still manage to do it. It's all under the umbrella of education, and academics, and academic freedom, and learning."—Jeffrey Howard

"Even places like DePaul



Methodology of Interview Segment

- 1. Design interview questions
- 2. Human Subject Review Board (HSRB) Protocol
- Decision tree for exempt/non-exempt status
- CITI course completion
- Design consent form
- Project registration
- 3. Identify interview subjects
- 4. Conduct interviews (video, audio, oral)



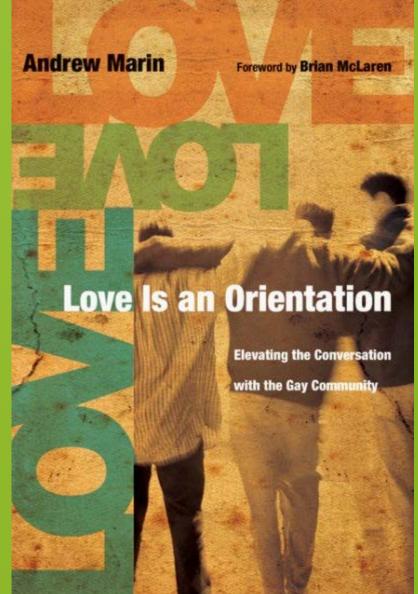
"But anybody who is coming from a position of love or basic human decency has to ignore both love and basic uman decency to not even be willing to listen to someone else's experience."—Angela



Recommendations for Programming and Study at Hope

This project is neither the beginning nor the end of efforts to address topics, issues, and concerns related to LGBTQ people at Hope. Suggestions from interviewees include the following:

- Teach dialogue
- Bring up topic in classroom
- Publish Anchor articles interviewing LGBTQ students on campus
- Continue having Storytelling event
- Reach out to LGBTQ folks in religious formats or contexts (e.g. LGBTQ Bible Study)
- Have symposium similar to CIS on issues of sexuality
- Allow student group to form and be recognized
- GRACES (Growing Respect, Acceptance, Community, and Education on Sexuality)
- Add sexual orientation, gender identity and expression to non-discrimination policy







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