



INTAMS Chair for the Study of Marriage & Spirituality
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies

Intolerable Dissent or Overdue Emancipation? Lay Perspectives on Marriage and the Family

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Keynote Speakers



Jeff Astley

Ordinary theology as lay theology: Listening to and learning from lay perspectives

The paper will give a general overview of my conceptualization of 'ordinary theology', together with an apologia for the importance of its study and a defence against criticisms of its use. I shall concentrate in particular

on the understanding of ordinary theology as lay theology, and the significance of lay theology both within the theology of the church and in dialogue with academic theology. Within this context, I shall argue for the key importance of 'theological listening', illustrating this by reference to recent initiatives on the family in the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

Jeff Astley is an Anglican priest. He recently retired after 32 years leading the ecumenical North of England Institute for Christian Education in Durham, UK. He is an honorary professor at Durham University, and a visiting professor at Glyndwr University and York St John University. Astley is the author or editor of over thirty-five books on Christian education, practical theology or religious faith, including: *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening and Learning in Theology*; *Christ of the Everyday*; *the SCM Studyguide to Christian Doctrine* and *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church*.



Inigo Bocken

Who is a Layman? Historical and philosophical perspectives on the laicus/idiotia

Who is a layman? Since the days of Vaticanum II this question belongs to the central struggling points within the Catholic Church. Though, in fact the figure of the layman is one of the crucial paradigms of modern culture as such. In Modernity one

can observe two opposite developments – there is the important role of specialists in several cultural and social spheres at the one hand, and, at the same time, there is the increasing awareness of the right of every individual to participate in culture. In religious and spiritual affairs the role of specialists seems to be rejected – as we can already see in the process of Reformation till the spiritual individualism of our days. There seems to be an insurmountable tension between this awareness and the need for specialists.

For the religious reform movement of the *Devotio Moderna*, at the threshold of Modernity, the experience of the layman meant to be of a deciding meaning for spiritual life. God has to be found in all kinds of everyday life experience. In this contribution I want to show how the *Devotio Moderna* was struggling with the tension of everyday life experience at the one hand and the theological 'specialist' framework. It was the famous philosopher Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) who was able to see the productive quality of this tension. Can we learn something of this lay-spirituality for our own cultural situation and our own search for spirituality in everyday life experience? Within this perspective, becoming a layman is in fact an ideal, the ideal of a life, oriented towards the spiritual origin in practice. Are we able to find helpful categories within the tradition of the *Devotio Moderna* for our search for spiritual quality of everyday life experiences?

Inigo Bocken (1968), PhD 1997 on Nicholas of Cusa, Academic Director of the Titus Brandsma Institute for Spirituality Nijmegen (NL) and ass. Professor for philosophy of religion at the Radboud University of Nijmegen. Studied philosophy in Antwerp (B) and Louvain (B). Alexander von Humboldt fellow (institute for philosophy at the University of Hildesheim). His work focuses both on early modern spirituality and religious philosophy at the one hand and actual theories of spirituality in the age of modernity at the other.



Annemie Dillen

Appropriation or disowning of discourses and experiences of family life? Practical theological reflections on power balances and bridges between daily experiences and reflections, academic theological and church discourses.

On who's behalf are we speaking? Are we able to let people speak for themselves? I will start my lecture with a reflection on 'ownership' and 'disowning' of discourses and theological reflections on family life. I reflect on various positions: theologians, the church policy makers, catholic believers, those who might call themselves unbelievers, and those who are considered as 'secularised catholics'. Each position has its own characteristics that should be recognized by the others, especially by those positions and discourses that are considered as more powerful. At the same time, it is important to recognize that no position or discourse is free from 'hybridity'. There is overlap, mutual influences and no 'purity' in discourse or experience. I will explain this hybridity in relation to my own position as academic theologian, mother, wife, daughter and sister, and as someone with a position in the Belgian Catholic church policy. On the basis of a complex analysis in line with postcolonial reflections on ownership, hybridity, and power, I will reflect on the relationship and bridges between family experiences and so called 'lay' family theology, academic theological thinking and church discourses. I will distinguish process-related elements, such as the insecurity of family members, induced by an 'expert society' and various forms of normative speaking or various forms of normativity in relation to experiences. In a next step I will also name some concrete themes that may stay hidden in some forms of discourse, due to the complex power structures between the discourses and the people appropriating a specific form of discourse. I will show how we can gain more insight in elements of embodiment, resilience, diversity within and between families and violence by reflecting on the complex relationships between the various discourses and positions named above.

Annemie Dillen (Lier, 1978) is Associate Professor in Pastoral Theology, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven. She is also Chair of the Academic Center for Practical Theology, Chair of the Interdiocesan Service for Family Ministry in Flanders and coordinator of the Elisabeth-website. Her research focuses on theology regarding families and children, domestic violence, religious education in families, pastoral care and diaconal studies. Her PhD (2005), deals with the relation between a traditional theological discourse on families and actual experiences and diversity of families. She received several scientific

prices for this work, that was published as Dillen, A., *Het gezin: à-Dieu? Ethisch, theologisch en godsdienstpedagogisch denken over gezinnen vandaag*. Recent publications: Dillen, A. & Pollefeyt, D. (eds.): *Children's Voices. Children's Perspectives in Ethics, Theology and Religious Education*, Peeters, 2010; *When 'Love' Strikes. Social Sciences, Ethics and Theology on Family Violence*, Peeters, 2009.



Todd A. Salzman

Thinking about sexuality from a lay perspective vs. the official church perspective

Bernard Lonergan's theory of perspectivism asserts that different definitions derive from different perspectives. Perspectivism, adequately accounts for different ways of thinking about sexuality from a lay perspective versus an official church perspective and the evolving definitions of sexual human dignity and norms that facilitate its attainment, which derive from those perspectives. There have been a significant number of ethical methodological developments since the Second Vatican Council to account for evolving perspectives on sexuality, including worldview, sources of moral wisdom, and contextual theology. The most fundamental development in Catholic theology is what Lonergan once described as Vatican II's "acknowledgement of history," that is, a clearly established fundamental shift in methodology from a primarily classicist worldview to a primarily historically conscious worldview. Among other implications, this acknowledgment expanded the consideration of legitimate sources to guide reflections on sexuality, including experience, the sciences, and culture. Finally, contextual theology focuses less on the abstract universality of human nature and shared human experience and more on the concrete particularity of the human nature person and human experience within particular cultures, societies, and histories. It is focus on particularity that has led to different perspectives on sexuality, definitions of sexual human dignity, and norms facilitating its attainment. We consider each of these methodological developments from lay and official church perspectives.

Todd A. Salzman completed his Ph.D. in theology at the KU Leuven in 1994. He is currently professor of theology at Creighton University, Omaha, NE, USA. His areas of special interest are sexual ethics, foundational ethics, biomedical ethics, and international humanitarian law. Todd is married to Katy and they have three children: Ian, Aaron, and Emily.



Joseph A. Selling

Lived experience – A source of morality?

Although many would presume that there is a single topic to be addressed here, there are actually two areas of inquiry that deserve our attention. The obvious questions about what is experience and how does it function, cannot be pursued until we have a clear understanding of what we mean by 'morality'. Most of us equate morality with norms that spell out right and wrong behavior. But there is a very different way of looking at morality that the Catholic Christian tradition has obscured since its standardization of 'moral theology' during the counter-reformation. Because human persons are historically and culturally situated, it is nothing less than shortsighted to think that someone, or some institution, could pre-determine the outcome of ethical decision-making in the absence of empirical data. In order to make the project of moral discourse both comprehensible and realistic, it is necessary to abandon the mythology of moral absolutes and abstract propositions such as the concept of 'intrinsic evil'.

Joseph Selling, S.T.D., is emeritus professor of theological ethics at the KU Leuven. He was the first layperson to be named full professor in the Faculty of Theology since its founding in 1432. His primary areas of interest have been fundamental ethics in general and sexual ethics in particular. He and his spouse, Marcella Sires, live in Brussels, Belgium and have two, adult children.



Eberhard Schockenhoff

Indissolubility of marriage and the case of remarried divorcees

Divorced and remarried Christians often find it difficult to feel at home in the Roman Catholic Church. As long as their first partner is alive they cannot receive the holy communion. Therefore it is no wonder that they often feel as second-class Christians, and not few of them turn their back on the church.

Others try to keep contact with it although they feel neglected. The lecture wants to show ways of reconciliation, that could enable remarried divorcees to fully share in the life of the church. In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary, that the church shows more respect for the experiences of life and the questions of conscience of

the faithful. Furthermore it should set examples showing that remarried divorced Christians are unconditionally welcomed. The lecture also discusses in what way liturgical celebrations and petitions of blessings could help to achieve this purpose.

Eberhard Schockenhoff (1953) studied theology in Tübingen and Rome. In 1978 he was ordained as a priest in Rome, and in the following year he earned his licentiate in moral theology. After three years as a vicar in Ellwangen and Stuttgart and a stint as a tutor at Wilhelm Seminary in Tübingen, Schockenhoff earned his doctorate in 1986. He then worked as an academic assistant under Walter Kasper at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Tübingen while completing his habilitation thesis. From 1990 to 1994 Schockenhoff served as professor of moral theology at the University of Regensburg, and in 1994 he accepted a position as professor of moral theology at the University of Freiburg. He has served as editor-in-chief of the Zeitschrift für Medizinische Ethik ("Journal of Medical Ethics") and as a member of the National Ethics Committee since 2001 and became the deputy chairperson of the latter organization in 2008. He is also a full member of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. His research interests include the history of early Christian ethics, fundamental questions of ethics, bioethics, and medical ethics.



Claire Watkins

Living marriage, learning discipleship, teaching church: the practices of married life as embodied theology for today's mission

This paper brings into conversation the practicalities of married life and the articulation of ecclesial tradition.

Whilst much has been made in recent decades of the idea of the Christian household, based on marriage, as domestic church, this analogy has most often been understood as enabling an application of ecclesiological statements to family life: the married home reflects the church in miniature. What has been under-explored is the idea that the ecclesia domestica can provide fresh ways of understanding the life and mission of church more generally. It is here that the present paper will focus, exploring married and family life as an authoritative locus for learning holiness and mission.

Drawing on practical experiences of marriage, familiar theological themes will be reflected on in fresh ways. Holiness, sacrament, and mission in particular are re-envisioned throughout the embodied theology presented by the living of marriage, so as to offer points of learning for Christian discipleship today. This embodied theology is only reached through the diversity, and complexity of marriage and

family as they are really lived, and so the attempt is made to engage with the articulated experience of those who live this life. Using practical research methods the voices of married people, in all their particularity, are offered not only as a reflection on marriage and family life, but more significantly they are drawn into the service of the wider Christian calling and demonstrated to be a place of learning for the whole of the people of God.

Clare Watkins is a Catholic theologian, teacher and writer. She is a Research Fellow at Heythrop College, University of London, and teaches part time at Allen Hall, the Westminster Seminary in London. She also serves on two British bilateral ecumenical dialogues, and the International Methodist-Roman Catholic Commission, and is an active member of the British and Irish Association for Practical Theology (BIAPT). Clare has researched, taught and published in the areas of ecclesiology and sacrament, and, more specifically, on marriage, the baptismal vocation, Christian education, and 'domestic church.' Publications include: *Living Baptism. Called out of the Ordinary* (Darton Longman & Todd, 2006); *Talking About God in Practice: theological action research and practical theology* (co-authored with Helen Cameron, James Sweeney et al. SCM 2010); and chapters in the Ecclesiology and Ethnography volumes published by Eerdmans (Vol. I ed. Pete Ward; Vol. II ed. Christian B Scharen, both 2012). Clare is married to Guy and they have four children. With Guy she was involved in the International Academy for Marital Spirituality through the 1990s, serving on the Management Committee and Journal Editorial Panel.



Thomas Knieps-Port le Roi

Colloquium organizer

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