

**Kevin Bourassa and Joe Varnell. *Just Married: Gay Marriage and the Expansion of Human Rights*. Doubleday Canada, 2002. 288pp. \$34.95 (Cdn). ISBN 0385658958.**

REV. CHARLES M. BIDWELL (University of Alberta)

**C**an you imagine a wedding with police protection? Kevin and Joe experienced that and plenty more. They tell us everything in this topical book. It is a combination of a documentary of recent events in Toronto, which have implications for the rest of us in Canada, and an autobiography of this gay couple that is deeply involved in a very public, media-intense marriage. It recounts the drama from the Reverend Brent Hawkes's inspiration to challenge the inequality of marriage as being the exclusive privilege of heterosexual couples, through the experiences of the two couples involved in this challenge, to the subsequent political and legal consequences. It also provides an overview of the legislation prior to this challenge and of the struggles and achievements regarding equality in the courts — in spite of the conservative Christians using religion as a political and social weapon against people who do not share their beliefs.

Of course, there is no solid agreement in the 'gay community' that we should marry, and marriage currently has a miserable performance record. But the key issue is that we have equal recognition with mixed-sex contracts and with that the choice to marry or not. Kevin and Joe take turns in this book to document the chronology of events that led to their decision to participate in the historical act of announcing the banns — a first for Canada and the Americas — and its subsequent effect on their personal and professional lives. Laced with quotes from the media of the day, this documentary is enlivened with their personal accounts and reflections. Aptly titled, *Just Married: Gay Marriage and the Expansion of Human Rights* is part autobiography and part current history and contemporary social commentary. It is a first-hand view of a courageous and their experience of coming out of the security of anonymity and facing the glaring exposure of the media. It is also a gripping tale of how they faced the religious conservatives who sense that granting equality creates a threat to heterosexual coupling. As an ordained clergy in the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), I was pleased

to see true Christian grace in action as they and the Reverend Hawkes engaged their opposition with “soul force” techniques of nonviolent resistance (see <[www.soulforce.org](http://www.soulforce.org)>).

The saga continues in the courts and in the federal and provincial responses. Our lives are going to be touched by this event and it is wise to have the perspective that this book gives its readers.

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**Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd.** *Feminist Theologies for a Post-Modern Church: Diversity, Community, Scripture.* New York: Peter Lang, 2002. 264 pp. US\$29.95. ISBN 0-8204-5572-5.

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**L**orraine MacKenzie Shepherd's book testifies to the impact of postmodern methods in the theological academy. Diverse feminist approaches, poststructuralism, postliberal approaches and postcolonial theory are all shaking up the pre-conceptions exemplified by the historical critical method, which held sway in biblical interpretation for several generations.

Shepherd locates herself as a lesbian feminist pastor/theologian of the United Church of Canada (4). Interestingly, she does not choose the queer construction for her work, although she might be tempted to do so, insofar as it draws on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender identity and experience in church and society. Intersecting identities, another topic of interest to queer theorists, is also a significant subtheme in the book. Her raw material is the work of theologians, three of whom — Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Kwok Pui-lan, and Kathryn Tanner — have an affinity for germinal thinkers who have inspired queer theorists: Judith Butler (55), Jacques Derrida (89), Michel Foucault (108), Gayatri Spivak (81), and others.

In the first part of her book, Shepherd competently summarizes and critiques the work of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Fulkerson, Kwok, and Tanner. All four have responded to the problems of theologies in modernity, including the claims to objectivity, false universalism (15), sexism and patriarchy (or “kyriarchy” in Schüssler