

## **Marriage Education and Enrichment Reading List for Pastors, Church Leaders, and Counselors**

(See also “Marriage Education and Enrichment Reading List for Couples,” “Marriage Education and Enrichment Curriculum Materials,” “Marriage Education and Enrichment Organizations and Websites,” in the [Marriage Education and Enrichment](#) section under [Best Practices Articles and Recommended Resources](#) at [www.marriagelovepower.net](http://www.marriagelovepower.net) or search by title or topic at [www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/intergenerational-family-ministries)).

*A Manual to Create a Marriage Savers Congregation*, by Michael J. McManus (Potomac, Maryland: Marriage Savers, Inc., 1999), 9311 Harrington Drive, Potomac, MD 20854, 301-469-5873, [harriet@marriagesavers.org](mailto:harriet@marriagesavers.org). Chapters focus on marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, rebuilding troubled marriages, reconciling the separated, and working with stepfamilies, as well as how to organize a congregation for comprehensive marriage ministry. Materials from different “Marriage Saver Congregations” illustrate various approaches, and an extensive appendix contains sample brochures, letters, forms, and “Steps in Creating a Community Marriage Policy®.”

*Blessed be the Bond: Christian Perspectives on Marriage and Family*, by William Johnson Everett (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1990). Although this book is now out-of-print, in 2011 the author made a free revised and updated version available as a download at [www.WilliamEverett.com/books-and-articles-free/](http://www.WilliamEverett.com/books-and-articles-free/). The author explores social changes that have taken place in the way we think about marriage and family life, emphasizing the theological concepts of sacrament, covenant, vocation, communion, and marriage as a “manifestation of God’s redemptive purposes in re-creating our world.”

*Close Companions: The Marriage Enrichment Handbook*, by David R. Mace (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1982) The author describes the new companionship model for marriage brought about by changes in our society; the skills couples need in order to make this model work; and strategies for providing marriage preparation, enrichment, and therapy. [purchase at [www.bettermarriages.org](http://www.bettermarriages.org)]

*Counseling African American Marriages and Families*, by Edward P. Wimberly (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997). The author describes the cultural context which impacts the marriage and family life of African Americans, providing guidance for pastors to work effectively with them. He also provides insights and tools that can enhance a pastor’s work with persons of any ethnic heritage: the use of family systems theory; a narrative approach to theology and Scripture; and an emphasis on the love ethic as the cornerstone of marriage and family life.

*Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know*, by Reverend Al Miles (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2011). The author explores the complex problem of domestic violence and offers guidance for ministering effectively with both perpetrators and victims. Warning pastors of the dangers inherent in naïve and untrained approaches to such situations, Miles makes a strong case for referrals to trained professionals and for all pastors to take part in

domestic violence prevention training. Miles helps pastors see how they may inadvertently encourage and excuse violent behavior, while at the same time blaming the victims. He also recommends specific strategies for ensuring the safety of victims and for holding their abusers accountable. [Available through popular booksellers and Cokesbury, 800-672-1789 or [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)]

***Family Ministries Desk Reference: Holistic Responses to Contemporary Challenges***, by Patricia D. Fosarelli (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). The author addresses a number of common challenges experienced by families (addition of new members, loss, single parenting, blending families, caring for aging parents, parenting adolescents, moving, substance abuse, depression). After clarifying physical and emotional aspects of each challenge, the author proposes specific individual and congregational responses and relevant resources for effective ministries in each situation.

***Family Ministries: Helping Families Become Centers of Faith Formation***, by Mary Jane Pierce Norton (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008). Part of the Guidelines series for United Methodist church leaders, this booklet provides general guidance, specific suggestions, and recommendations for resources for local church family ministries. (Available through Cokesbury, 800-672-1789 or [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)]

***Marriage Counseling: A Christian Approach to Counseling Couples***, by Everett L. Worthington, Jr. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1989). The author provides a Biblically-based theory of marriage and marriage therapy which draws on many secular theories of counseling and therapy, but integrates them into a Christian framework. He describes specific techniques for assessing a couple's relationship, for promoting change and growth, and for helping couples avoid slipping back into old patterns.

**"Marriage Enrichment Groups: A How-To Guide for Leaders"** (Winston-Salem, NC: Better Marriages), may be purchased as an ebook download from [www.bettermarriages.org](http://www.bettermarriages.org). This booklet explains why Marriage Enrichment Groups are valuable and how to organize and lead one. It provides clear guidelines for leaders to share with participants and instructions for different types of group interactions. Persons with group leadership training and experience may use this guide to start and maintain a vital couple support group ministry.

***Marriage Enrichment in the Church***, by David and Vera Mace (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1976). The authors succinctly discuss the importance of marriage, the nature of Christian marriage, and ways churches can become vitally involved in strengthening marriages and family life.

***Marriage Enrichment: Preparation, Mentoring, and Outreach***, by Richard A. Hunt, Larry Hof, and Rita DeMaria. Phil.: Brunner/Mazel, 1998). This book provides an overview of marriage enrichment concepts and programs. Part 1 summarizes basic assumptions of the marriage enrichment movement, its history and its potential. Part 2 discusses some of the major programs available, and Part 3 reviews current research. Part 4 focuses on such recent developments as new approaches to therapy, utilizing mentor couples, and working to change the social climate for marriage.

*Marriage: Just a Piece of Paper?* edited by Katherine Anderson, Don Browning, and Brian Boyer (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 800-253-7521. This companion book to the national PBS documentary reviewed below offers a variety of essays on topics related to marriage and divorce in our contemporary culture, interspersed with personal narratives illustrating various themes. Selections analyze how we arrived at our current situation, the effects on children, and directions we might take to improve the quality of family life.

*Marriage Savers: Helping Your Friends and Family Avoid Divorce* (formerly “...Stay Married,”) by Michael J. McManus (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995). The author writes passionately about the church’s need to do all it can to help couples form lasting, healthy marriages and about the necessity for community marriage agreements and reforms in marriage and divorce law. He describes specific programs providing relationship education for the young, effective marriage preparation for engaged couples, enrichment for couples who have been married for a while, and strategies for helping couples in crisis. (Also available at [www.marriagesavers.com](http://www.marriagesavers.com))

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