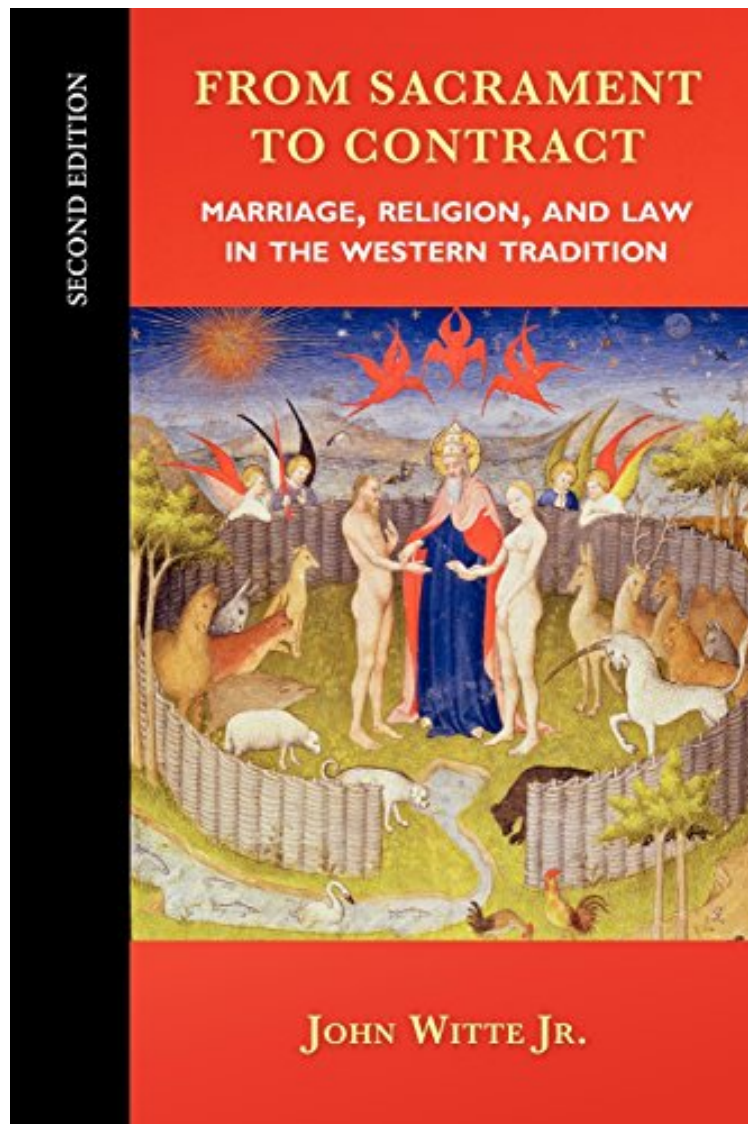


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From Sacrament to Contract, Second Edition: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition

John Witte Jr.

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I teach a course on Christian marriage and related ethics of sex, and this book is absolutely indispensable for a historical survey of Christian thinking on marriage and how that thinking affected Western culture and law for 20 centuries. A terrific book.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful Introduction from an incredible scholar
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I had no idea about the history of marriage before I read this book. It's a fascinating insight into the different forms of Christian Western marriage and made the class I was taking fun (where I thought it was a dreary prospect). Would thoroughly recommend, even if just out of an interest. It's an incredibly accessible book for those from a non-religious background.

This newly revised and enlarged edition of John Witte's authoritative historical study explores the interplay of law, theology, and marriage in the Western tradition. Witte uncovers the core beliefs that formed the theological genetic code of Western marriage and family law. He explores the systematic models of marriage developed by Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, and Enlightenment thinkers, and the transformative influence of each model on Western marriage law. In addition, he traces the millennium-long reduction of marriage from a complex spiritual, social, contractual, and natural institution into a simple private contract with freedom of entrance, exercise, and exit for husband and wife alike. This second edition updates and expands each chapter and the bibliography. It also includes three new chapters on classical, biblical, and patristic sources.

"From Sacrament to Contract is a penetrating study of five conflicting models of marriage and their impact on domestic legislation and organization over the last millennium. Rarely has the interaction of religious belief, law, and marriage been so incisively illuminated. This book is a touchstone for a new intellectual history of religion." Steven Ozment, McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History, Harvard University [praise for the first edition]

"From Sacrament to Contract takes the reader on a fascinating tour through the legal, philosophical, and religious ideas that have shaped and reshaped Western thinking about the relations between men and women. Concise and forward-looking, Witte's monograph makes a wise and welcome contribution to current conversations about the present and future status of marriage in our society." Mary Ann Glendon, Learned Hand Professor of Law, Harvard University

"This book, by the leading scholar in the field, provides a readable and insightful exposition. In addition to addressing questions of law, religion, history, and sociology, Witte provides a spiritual meditation on what it means to be a human: a husband, wife, mother, father, or child. To believers this book will bring instruction and enlightenment; to others it will bring understanding." Michael W. McConnell, Mallery Professor of Law and Director of the Constitutional Law Center, Stanford Law School, and Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution

"This book should long be the standard reference for anyone interested in knowing how Europeans have sought to connect the personal and the public in the family life." The Christian Century [praise for the first edition]

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"Witte provides what is unquestionably the finest history of western marriage in the Christian epoch." The Journal of Law and Religion [praise for the first edition]

About the Author
John Witte Jr. is Jonas Robitscher Professor of Law, Alonzo L. McDonald Distinguished Professor, and Director of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University. A world-renowned expert on church and state, he is the author or editor of numerous books and articles on the subject.