

**Abstract:****Belief in Marriage**By Jane Mair<sup>1</sup>

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In many ways religion and marriage remain closely interlinked and, despite the well established secularity of contemporary family law, some big questions about legal marriage and its foundations in Christian marriage have not been fully addressed. For some couples, in apparently secular societies, religion remains central to their understanding of the meaning of marriage. Scots law has largely ignored or has chosen to avoid direct engagement with the question of what marriage means – what it is for – and therefore its attitude to personal beliefs and understandings is at best inconsistent. Family lawyers might learn from these examples of intersection that the presence of belief in marriage remains significant, despite apparently contradictory evidence of declining religious adherence and formal religious organization. Looking at these points of intersection highlights the continuing interaction between religion (belief) and marriage and it confirms that, despite straight lines of division and decline, there remains perhaps surprising evidence of the continued presence of religion in family law and of the sustained strength of belief in marriage.

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