

“The Supreme Court: Greasing the Slippery Slope” by Eric Metaxas, BreakPoint, July 2, 2015; “Statement on Same-sex Marriage: PCA’s View” by L. Roy Taylor, byFaith, June 27, 2015; Jesus Outside the Lines: A Way Forward for Those Who Are Tired of Taking Sides by Scott Sauls (Tyndale, 2015), 240 pp.

With the Supreme Court’s marriage ruling, “the two words that come to mind” – i.e., Metaxas’ mind – are “anything goes”. Same-sex couples now can have just as legal a marriage as Metaxas has been enjoying and “anything goes” is what comes to his mind? How about two *other* words: “Golden Rule”? Billions are spent on porn and 40 percent of kids are born outside the stability of a marriage, but same-sex couples are granted the conservative, constraining framework of legal marriage and this means, “anything goes”?

Accusing Kennedy of “a generously-greased slope”, Metaxas slips on his own “slippery slope”. There’s *no causal connection* between gay marriage and polygamy, pedophilia or who-knows-what’s in Metaxas’ mind. Polygamy failed long ago; Sarah and Hagar are still at odds. ‘60s “Open Marriage” fads failed, as do all inevitably competitive, jealousy provoking 3-ways. Ashley Madison adultery was designed by a double-incentive deceit since postmodern expectations are *egalitarian*. But they forgot about hackers. And, news flash: Three new films reveal that human/android romance is a dud. Who knew?

Accusing Justices of “making it up as they go”, Metaxas forgets that the Constitution requires *interpreting for application* in various circumstances – as does the Golden Rule.

2015 marks centenaries of Booker T. Washington and Fanny J. Crosby. Washington told Southern preachers: “If you want to know how to solve the race problem, place your hands upon your heart and then, with a prayer to God, ask Him how you today, were you placed in the position that the black man occupies, how you would desire the white man to treat you, and whenever you have answered that question in the sight of God and man, this problem in a large degree will have been solved.” Inspired by Jesus’ summing up of the Law and Prophets, Crosby wrote: “Love the Lord, the first command, with thy soul and mind; Love thy neighbor as thyself, both in one combined.”

The Presbyterian Church in America faults the Court: In Eden, “God ordained the marriage covenant to be a bond only between one man and one woman”. Really? The first thing God called “not good” was a *lonely* human and, among all the birds and beasts, no *compatible partner* was found. So, God gave the human *another* human and there was joy at last: “Bone of my bones! Flesh of my flesh!” – a phrase that, all through scripture, refers to *kinship, not gender*. (James V. Brownson) That’s familiarity, family! Citing Genesis 1:27, Paul notes that, *in Christ*, “there is no ‘male and female’”. (Gal 3:28) F. F. Bruce says that this trumps whatever the Bible *seems* to say elsewhere.

Early PCA growth was largely in the once-segregated South where *interracial* marriage was forbidden. But Taylor talks of “timeless truths” and an “Undivided Church”, citing abortion as an example of this while forgetting that white Southern churches *cheered* Roe v. Wade as a “solution” to too many black babies. Christian slaveholders once split up slaves’ marriages if they wanted to sell one of them. The rationalizing texts are no longer used as they once were; churches have moved on. And yet, the 2015 PCA General Assembly failed to pass an apology for all that old racism, postponing this no-brainer to next year.

Sauls, a PCA pastor in Nashville, must take the PCA side. But he relates to people who are “tired of taking sides”. Turning to gay

issues, though, the problem isn’t his taking *his* side; it’s his telling all gays *they* must take his side. Gays are tired of *this*. He sides with celibacy for gays but not for *himself* and his wife. His “way forward” shuts out same-sex couples from sharing intimacy such as he and his wife enjoy. His “way forward” for gays leads only to loneliness of imposed celibacy or to loneliness of mixed orientation marriage. Would Sauls, for himself, desire lifelong celibacy or a marriage to a gay man?

Spinning his “way forward” with Bible lingo, e.g., a “cross to bear”, a “thorn in the flesh”, he overlooks the fact that Jesus and Paul weren’t speaking of enforced celibacy or homosexual orientation. Neither was Genesis 3:16 with its *heterosexual* travails as wages of sin! There’s no agreement on Paul’s “thorn”, but Paul saw it as something to keep him *humble*, given all his privileges. Sauls surely isn’t buying into John Spong’s notion that Paul’s “thorn” was his “repressed homosexuality”! Showing no familiarity with the best of historical and biblical research on these matters, Sauls refers anachronistically to what he calls, “all the direct references to homosexuality” in the Bible. Then, he shifts to what he terms, “the Point of Marriage”, i.e., “everlasting marriage to Jesus”. But, *this* point is *beside* the point, and it’s rationalization, for Sauls did not let it stop *his* marrying Patti.

Jesus was, indeed, “outside the lines” of the religious establishment and that’s usually very wise. Folks “outside the lines” of today’s religious establishment sense Jesus at their side, as have the “outsiders” and marginalized down through all of church history.

Sauls’ chapters start with quotes, usually from a Christian. Four of these Christians – Anne Lamott, Bono, Brennan Manning and Nicholas Wolterstorff – *affirm* same-sex marriage. He says W. H. Auden was “a gay man who remained unmarried and celibate out of obedience to Jesus”. Not true! Auden sought intimacy in Berlin’s male brothels and attempted what *he meant* to be a faithful gay *marriage* with his “dearest Chester” to whom he wrote: “If only we have faith in God [we might] realize all that love is intended to be.” But Chester was a promiscuous, self-centered brat. It didn’t work. Auden then penned this poignant line, “If equal affection cannot be / Let the more loving one be me”.

Marriage was no option, homosexuality was a crime and “their kind” was adrift alone. In effect, Sauls assigns gays to live back in those old days. If heterosexuals were not allowed to marry, what would *they* do? Most hook up and cohabit even if they do get around to marrying. A third in church are divorced. Most Ashley Madison adulterers list themselves as “Christian”.

Sauls’ most insensitive sentence, for gays *and* for the Gospel, is a cringer that *World* magazine’s Marvin Olasky cheers as a clincher. A gay man asked Sauls to affirm his union with a man he calls, “the love of my life”. In his Acknowledgments, Sauls called Patti, “the love of my life”, adding, “Here’s to another twenty years of dancing outside the lines.” Yet, of the gay man and “love of his life”, Sauls twists the phrase and writes, “to affirm his union with the love of his life would mean I’d have to deny the love of mine.” It’s past time for new wine skins for Jesus’ new wine. (Lk 5:38)

