

“Keller, Moore, De Young on How to Speak to Our Culture About Sex”, Ryan Troglin, ed., *The Gospel Coalition*, August 23, 2016.

In 1954, C. S. Lewis was asked about homosexuality. He recalled 1918, when he was an atheist and his closest friend, a devout Christian, confided that he was homosexual. He’s said that Arthur “fulfilled the Gospel precept: ‘he judged not’. ... I learned charity from him and failed, for all my efforts, to teach him arrogance.” Lewis dedicated *Pilgrim’s Regress* to him. After their lifetime of letters, Lewis could reply to his recent inquirer: “All I have really said is that, like all other tribulations, it must be offered to God and His guidance how to use it.” In 1955, he noted the “hypocrisy” and “nausea” on the topic, adding, “I think that of very little relevance to moral judgment.” He wrote: “Those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.” In 1960, he assured a homosexual artist that he stood with him and with all his kind against the antigay “busybodies”.

Four Gospel Coalition busybodies now share *their* antigay views while *biblically* and *historically ill informed* and up against the *revisions* of their fellow “Reformed and ever reforming” Christians. Presbyterian Church in America pastor Tim Keller, the Southern Baptist political ethicist Russell D. Moore, mainline Reformed Church in America pastor Kevin De Young and TGC editor Ryan Troglin, a 2015 Southern Seminary graduate, do show some nuance here, but they’re all held hostage to ignorance and church politics.

Troglin opines: “What was unfathomable just 30 years ago is normal today”. De Young joins in: It “would have been unthinkable when we were in school or when Grandpa Keller here was in school.” But Troglin merely *imagines* 1986 and De Young depends on a 9-year-old’s memory. By 1986, Evangelicals Concerned had been a gay-affirming ministry for over a decade, supported by major evangelical leaders – biblical scholars, theologians, mental health professionals and bestselling authors.

EC was founded in 1975, the year *before* Jimmy Carter’s “born again” faith prompted *Newsweek’s* “The Year of the Evangelical”. In 1973, Wally Criswell, two-term Southern Baptist president, hailed *Roe v Wade* and Jesse Jackson began PUSH to decry it. In 1975, De Young and Troglin hadn’t been born even *once*, Moore was 4, Keller, 25. None had any *real life experience* of *evangelical diversity* before the Religious Right’s uprising.

In 1962, seven years *before* Stonewall, over a decade *before* the American Psychiatric Association’s clinical revision on homosexuality, after studies at Dallas Seminary and Westminster Seminary and at USC’s Graduate School, this reviewer was affirming gay Christians. In 1964, on IVCF staff at Penn, and gay affirming, he was not fired. But a new administration at IVCF headquarters refused his reappointment for the following year. Keller was 14. Moore and De Young wouldn’t be born until 7 and 13 years later.

De Young was born in 1977, two years *after* Bob Rayburn, founding president of the PCA’s Covenant College and Seminary, affirmed EC’s founding and urged its launch be during the National Association of Evangelicals annual meeting. Covenant Seminary’s chapel is named in his honor. Earliest EC supporters were an Evangelical Theological Society president, the NIV’s Old Testament chair, Fuller’s major systematic theologian, *The Reformed Journal’s* founder and a bestselling author honored in *Christianity Today’s* 40th anniversary issue with a reprint of what she’d written for its very first issue in 1956.

In 1982, when De Young was not yet in 1st grade, his *alma mater*, Hope College, asked this reviewer to address a campus wide assembly convened by social psychologist David Myers. To the speech, “Hope’s Gays and Gays’ Hopes”, seminary faculty responded with their essential agreement and the retired seminary president fully affirmed it.

By this time, EC had had seven summer retreats, with keynotes by Rosalind Rinker, ranked by *Christianity Today* as *the major* author who’d

“shaped evangelicals” in *CT’s* first 50 years, and by Anderson, Fuller, Hope, and Messiah College faculty. Keynoters would later come from Wheaton, Calvin, Asbury, Gordon, Eastern, Trinity (Deerfield), and Samford and include IVCF, Cru, YFC, Young Life leaders as well as ex-“ex-gay” leaders. EC’s 2017 summer retreat, our 75th, features the 108th and 109th guest keynoters.

While TGC men suppose support for gay parity partnerships was “unfathomable” *just 30 years ago* – especially among *evangelicals* – they project such parity partnerships back into the *ancient* world of *patriarchy*, as Keller’s done, saying: “Paul would have been very familiar with long-term, stable, loving relationships between same-sex couples”. But historians, classics scholars and philologists refute such anachronism.

These TGC men have spoken of *their joy in their own marriages*. Yet, in God’s Name, they plot against such joy for those who can meet *such felt* needs only with a *same-sex* spouse. None of these four desires *lifelong celibacy* or a demand that *he* meet *his* sexual intimacy needs with a *man*. Yet Jesus said that *our own needs* should prompt sensitivity to *others’ needs*. (Mk 12:31) De Young does sense that, “a good first step” to knowing “the other” is to know the “more that we have in common”. But even “out of their wealth”, some who meet their own needs try to hinder others’ meeting theirs! (Mk 12:44)

Keller’s gay brother died of AIDS. He’s said this gave him “a new sympathy” for gays. But *sympathy isn’t empathy*. Yet his media manager shows such *empathy* – and publicly. Says Keller: “Christians are called to love and serve the practical needs and interests of all their neighbors, including gay people”. Isn’t a *loving marriage* something *practical*?

As Moore’s forebears did on slavery, Jim Crow and interracial marriage, Moore gripes: “Unless you affirm almost complete sexual liberty you’re going to sound like a bigot”. Surmising it may “take years” to get people to *reject* same-sex marriage, at least Moore resists an old pro-slavery theologian’s prediction that abolitionists might not change their minds *until* Judgment Day, *when*, at long last, they’ll learn how very *wrong* they were.

But Moore is sensitive to “always being overheard [by] that same-sex attracted person who is sitting in the last row of the church who is wondering, ‘is the Gospel for me?’”. He fears his side can “end up creating a lot of collateral damage”, as he’s noted “ex-gay” efforts did. Digressing from *The Gospel*, *The Gospel Coalition* *does* do lots of damage.

Keller says pro-gay support can be “undermined” by switching from what, to an extent, he rightly sees can be faulty “freedom”. But he foists a *false analogy* of a fish’s freedom onto human sexual orientation, saying, a fish is free only in the water where it *finds* itself. Coming out of where it *finds* itself, it can’t *survive*. But some people *find* themselves in *same-sex orientation* just as others *find* themselves in *heterosexual orientation*. Trying to cope *outside their given* orientation, *can they thrive, will they survive?* Could Keller?

Paul gave better guidance: “Owe no one anything but to *love* each other”, and noting that Jesus said that *this sums up* the Law and Prophets. (Rom 13:8; Matt 7:12, 22:39)

