

“Dear Friends of Westminster” by Peter Lillback, September 14, 2023

Westminster Seminary’s President, Peter Lillback, notes with *relief*, that, 2023’s June Pride Month “has officially concluded”, but gripes, “its iconography and creeds remain displayed in many shops and private residences.” He’s been *inside their residences*? To him, “these symbols and sayings designate spaces which are safe and affirming of ideas and beliefs that were unthinkable one hundred years ago.” *Wrong!* 19th Century evangelicals called for compassion for all; and a few called for that for homosexuals.

Over 100 years ago, C. S. Lewis’ “first friend” and, “first love”, as Jack referred to his dear Arthur Greeves, was a young, handsome, bedridden and a very devout Christian when Jack was an atheist. Arthur was also, *openly homosexual*. And each would be each other’s best friend throughout their lives. Shortly before Lewis died on the day of JFK’s assassination, he’d written to his “dear Arthur”, over in Ireland, grieving that, with *both* of them now bedridden, they’d never again *see* each other again in *this* world. Of course, both looked ahead to life together, forever, with Christ.

Lewis was a vocal advocate of The Wolfenden Report’s pro-homosexual position in 1957. He entrusted his literary estate’s custody of a fairly new secretary/companion and a longtime Lewis fan from North Carolina, Walter Hooper, who saved many of Lewis’ works from Jack’s drunken brother Warnie’s bonfires. After the death of Joy Davidman, whom Jack had married for her and her kids’ legal protection, Jack, confided to Hooper, “I’ve always been a bachelor at heart.”

To Lillback: “It is truly remarkable that an ideology loosely held by a small minority years ago has evolved into a religion whose force and influence has swept much of the world” – a bit of overstatement. Yet, his disgust duplicates that of the pagans and Jews against Jesus’ new views, 2,000 years ago and also echo slave-owners’ anger after the Civil War and their descendants’ anger over the end of racial segregation.

It took time for people to accept Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dream that, “his four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the *color* of their *skin* but by the *content* of their *character*.” For too long, there’s been the same sort of ignorance and prejudice against other “little children who grow up” with an unsought sex *orientation* that they no more *chose* than King’s children *chose* their skin *color*. In both, it’s a matter of *genes*, formative years, and *all* they were *given* by God’s Providence.

In all cultural shifts, some accept what facilitates *fairness for all* while others couldn’t care less for *fairness for all*. Thank God, as in the revising of *meanings* of skin *color*, there’s a revising of *meanings* of sexual *orientations*. But sadly, as always, so many try to meet *their own given* needs while *opposing* others’ meeting of *their given* needs. In Machen’s day, some saw WTS’s founder/funder as *homosexual* and didn’t hold that against him, but others smirked behind his back, faulting him for what he never *chose*.

Lillback needs to consult with evangelicals who’ve come to a *lovingly Christian* way of relating with those who, by *no fault* or *credit* of theirs, are same-sex oriented, and are accepted, affirmed and treated as all *want* to be, and all *should* be, treated under God.

Jesus told us to *love each other as we love ourselves*. It’s a truly *effective* standard, for we all *love ourselves*, yet so often, we *hurt* “others” so selfishly. Many “others”, *not* loved by Christians, are those that Christians caricature as “dirty queers”. Still, *some* evangelical Christians truly do love others as they love themselves – including *same-sex oriented* brothers and sisters in Christ, and those *same-sex oriented folks* who don’t yet know the Savior, but might, if they weren’t so disdained in the Savior’s Name.

Lillback should recall the words of Westminster’s founder in his dealing with “a moral fault that no ordinary man could understand”. And, the first recipient of WTS’s doctor’s degree, Marten H. Woudstra, had to deal with his “given” sexual orientation. He then went to Calvin Seminary to teach Old Testament and chaired NIV’s OT translation. He noted that the only same-sex acts condemned in the Bible were *rapes* of slaves and enemy soldiers. The Bible has nothing about same-sex *orientation*. Woudstra was also elected President of the Evangelical Theological Society.

Shortly after EC’s 1975 founding with the enthusiastic endorsement of Bob Rayburn, founding President of the PCA’s Covenant College and Seminary, the noted historian of evangelicalism, Richard Quebedeaux, predicted that “evangelicals will finally come out closer to Ralph Blair than Anita Bryant.” His prediction has been quite clearly fulfilled.

For Lillback’s encouragement, here are some of the evangelicals who’ve endorsed EC’s ministry, e.g., by keynoting EC retreats. Many are now at Home, while others are still here: David G. Myers, Harry R. Boar, Hendrik Hart, Kay Lindscoog, Ray McAfee, Fisher Humphreys, Rosalind Rinker, Eugenia Price, Craig Detweiler, Doug LeBlanc, John W. Landon, J. Roberts McQuilkin, June Hagan, Walt Hearn, Cynthia Clawson, Andrew Kuyvenhoven, H. Wayne House, Robert W. Lyon, George E. Moreland, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Walden Howard, Donald W. Dayton, Roy Clements, Tom Key, Clark Barshinger, Randall Balmer, Ken Medema, John F. Alexander, Marsha Stevens, Reta Halteman Finger, Chip Miller, Stanley A. Rock, Letha Dawson Scanzoni, Charlie Shedd, Val Clear, Jane R. Dickie, Michael J. Christianson, Chuck Smith, Jr., Gerald T. Sheppard, Paul King Jewett, Philip Yancey, Lewis B. Smedes, Jim Rayburn III, Phyllis Hart, Mark Olson, Joan Olson, Douglas J. Miller, Jack Rogers, Howard L. Rice, Doris Akers, Charlie Shedd, Mel White, Amy Plantinga Pauw, Ken Sehested, Nancy Hastings Sehested, Peggy Campolo, Tony Campolo, Virginia West Davidson, Ken Van Wyk, Nancy Hardesty, Marchiene Rienstra, Kirk Talley, Stephanie Sandberg, David Augsburg, Mahan Siler, Caroline J. Simon, James V. Brownson, and more.

Wikipedia’s Westminster website cites Woudstra, Jewett and Blair from WTS’s own website’s list of “Notable Alumni”, and it includes EC’s ministry and Blair’s Homosexual Community Counseling Center.

