

“I Happen to Believe that Gay Relationships are Not God’s Best’: Rick Warren Backs Split in Church of England”, *Premier Christian News*, March 22, 2023; “Not an ‘Ordinary Man’: J. Gresham Machen and the Un-Queering of Evangelical Theology” by Austin Steelman, Cambridge Press, March 30, 2023; “Machen and the PCA Today” by R. Carlton Wynne, *Reformed Forum*, Spring 2023.

Fundamentalist Rick Warren gives his *inherent*, but *errant*, idea on what, “I happen to believe” on homosexuality. But *by no choice of his own, he happens to be involuntarily heterosexually oriented*, just as the *homosexually oriented*, whom he faults, *happen to be involuntarily oriented by no choice of their own*. *Sexual orientation is not a choice*. It’s *discovered inside oneself during puberty*, as all research and experience confirms. But Warren *refuses to face facts*, doing so *at the tragic expense of Fundamentalist gay and lesbian youth and their families in his congregation and all across Fundamentalism*.

His given heterosexuality is not to his credit and others can’t be blamed for their given homosexuality, but the latter are blamed and must cope with such a “stigma”. Still, *true facts don’t stop false witnessing*. *Failing to admit that we all discover sexual orientation and need for sexual intimacy within ourselves*, Warren *fails to follow Jesus’ call for all to truly empathize with all others*, in order to, *“treat all others in everything, as you would have them treat you.”* (Matt 7:12) Jesus said this *“sums up all of the Law and Prophets”*.

Warren *boasts of his antigay rhetoric*: “I think I can make a pretty strong case”. But his “case” is *pitifully petty*: “If we were all gay none of us would be here ... what is the purpose of homosexuality? It can’t create.” *Nor can the infertile heterosexuals, nor can heterosexuals who block pregnancy during intercourse or abort their unborn babies*. The infertile *don’t choose* that, but birth control and abortion are *choices*. God said the *first human needed an ezer*, a “helpmate”, a “partner”; *each one needs another*. But the very first womb’s very first fruit murdered *his brother instead of being his brother’s brother!*

2023 is the *centenary* of J. Gresham Machen’s tome, *Christianity and Liberalism*, in which he contrasts the “two essentially different types of thought and life” that led to *his orthodox* Presbyterians leaving *modernism’s* Presbyterians. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church and The Presbyterian Church in America derive from Machen’s great work and his profoundly inspiring influence. 2023 is also the PCA’s *50th Anniversary*.

Steelman, a scholar of evangelical history, writes about Machen’s brilliant life’s labors and brings up what’s been suggested before, Machen’s possible *homosexuality*. “In the early days of 1906, the young [Machen] who would go on to indelibly shape evangelical theology”, wrote home from Germany where he was a graduate student, but, *troubled*, that he, “could never go into Christian ministry because of a ‘moral fault’ that no ‘ordinary man’ could understand.” What was this *distressing*, yet *carefully cloaked unburdening*, sent to his supportive Baltimore family all about?

Steelman analyzes the code as a *personal crisis* as Germany dealt with *homosexual* issues. Machen’s oddities fueled such rumors, *e.g.*, his muttering to himself, “poor old Dassie”, his hosting seminary students with fraternity-like parties, and his own lifetime’s bachelorhood. Still, his *honorable* “scandal” during his

55 years of life was *his brilliantly argued case against Presbyterian modernism*, that his opponents were so *ill-equipped* to defend themselves against. But such well-argued cases prompt the losers to “lose it” by *bad-mouthing brighter* opponents, as gossip of Machen’s homosexuality did prompt such *reaction formation* among his far less brilliant, but theologically liberal, adversaries.

Wynne teaches systematic theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Atlanta and serves as associate pastor at Atlanta’s Westminster Presbyterian Church (PCA). These two ministries were both inspired by Machen’s arguments and his diligence, and they’re well-grounded for a continuing return to truly *biblical* foundations of Christianity.

Wynne notes the PCA’s recent *disputes* over same-sex attracted PCA members’ matter-of-factly referring to themselves as “gay” or as “homosexual”, while they’re *fully committed to celibacy*. Says Wynne: “Whether or not this alleged linguistic obstacle plagues the PCA, most observers of, and participants in, the LGBTQ+ revolution would have little problem discerning the meaning of the phrase, ‘I am a homosexual’.” Could it be that, over a century after Machen’s *covert hint*, *church folks still can’t refer to their same-sex attraction* without having to go on to *explain that they’re totally abstinent?*

Wynne cites a 2020 PCA report: “Even if ‘gay’, for some Christians, simply means ‘same sex attraction’, it is still inappropriate to juxtapose this sinful desire, as an identity marker alongside our identity as new creations in Christ”. *What pious nonsense!* That *scorn is self-serving and a cruel refusal to empathize* with all who *refrain* from meeting *their needs* for sexual intimacy while their critics take for granted their *meeting their own needs*. Do these critics forbid, as *contradiction*, “I’m a sinner saved by grace?” Critics must get *their own sin straight* before taunting PCA brothers’ *self-sacrificing celibacy*.

We *can’t take credit or blame* for a *given identity* in *gender or sexual orientation*. But *censoring* one who resists a *given need* for intimacy throughout one’s life, shows *lack of lovingly empathic support* by all who meet *their conventionally involuntary sexual needs* while *self-righteously* forbidding others’ from even an *honest mention* of theirs.

Wynne doesn’t note it, but two years after PCA’s founding, the founding President of PCA’s Covenant College and Seminary, Robert G. Rayburn, *affirmed* EC’s ministry for revising of *misunderstandings* of homosexuality and the Bible and support for same-sex partnership. Bob *urged launching* EC at the NAE’s upcoming convention. So, we did. My 2023 EC Keynote identifies the many evangelicals who’ve since endorsed EC and keynoted our EC summer retreats across America for nearly half-a-century.

