



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 11, 2011

“Gay” Activists Target Wheaton College Homecoming

Homosexual activists continue to target Wheaton College, one of America’s most high-profile evangelical schools, most recently during the college’s annual homecoming celebration. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, on the evening of October 7, while other Wheaton students and alumni were involved in legitimate homecoming activities, hundreds of “gay and lesbian Wheaton College alumni, students, staff, and supporters” assembled at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in nearby Glen Ellyn, in the latest effort to force Wheaton College officials to concede that homosexual activity is compatible with the Christian faith — something the school’s administration has thus far been unwilling to do.



Reported the *Tribune*: “For the first time, members of [OneWheaton](#), the recently formed group of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender alumni, and allies of that community, met near the Wheaton campus to enjoy a concert from Christian singer Jennifer Knapp [a Christian singer who says she is now a lesbian] and lead a discussion about being gay and Christian.” The evening featured a panel of four openly homosexual Wheaton alumni who “answered questions from the audience and shared personal testimony about what it was like to struggle with questions about self-identity at a college where students sign a covenant that condemns homosexual behavior,” reported the *Tribune*.

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One of the four, 1989 alumna Ruth Wardschenk, who brought her daughter and lesbian partner to the event, assured those attending: “If you identify as GLBT and Christian, you do not have to choose. You can have a partner or a spouse, you can have a family, you can have a church community.”

José Vilanova, one of the organizers of the alternative “gay” homecoming, told *Time* magazine that when he graduated from Wheaton in 1989, he never planned on returning. “Being Latino, poor, and gay was this spectacular triple threat of wrongness,” he recalled. “I had zero reason to go back.” But with homosexuality being normalized everywhere else, Vilanova decided to join the homosexual activists who are trying to force their alma mater to accept it as well, bringing his partner with him to crash Wheaton’s homecoming.

“OneWheaton’s highly visible presence on campus puts the college in a difficult position,” noted *Time*. “On the one hand, Wheaton students can still get kicked out for being openly and unrepentantly gay.... But at the same time, the college recognizes gay and lesbian alumni as part of the Wheaton family and has a history of embracing those society has marginalized.”

That “family” relationship was what Wheaton College President Phillip Ryken was focusing on in an e-mail message shortly before the school’s homecoming. “Members of any family have areas of agreement and disagreement,” he told the college community. “This is true of Wheaton College’s relationship to



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OneWheaton, a group comprised of alumni but not affiliated with the College. As I have shared in an earlier campus communication, the College agrees with OneWheaton's stated desire to 'affirm the full humanity and dignity of every human being, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.' "

Nevertheless, Ryken continued, "We also remain committed to the Bible's teaching on sexual morality, which has anchored the church throughout its history and is described in our Community Covenant."

In opposition to that historical teaching, OneWheaton has boldly declared: "We do not believe there is anything wrong with being gay. We are joining the conversation at Wheaton to show students that they have the option to live without shame and self-hatred."

As reported by [The New American](#), that "conversation" between Wheaton and homosexual activists actually began back in 2006 when [SoulForce](#), an organization of "Christian homosexuals," descended upon the college to "dialogue" with students, professors, and administrators. During an event at the school's gymnasium, an audience of 1,500 looked on "as the pro-homosexual group confronted the school's administration concerning its scriptural stand against homosexuality," reported *The New American*. SoulForce's spokesman at the event, Jacob Reitan, told the crowd: "It is unacceptable for an institution of higher education with a reputation like Wheaton's to suggest that a student could not, after study, thought, and prayer, come to the conclusion that homosexuality is not a sin without risking expulsion."

As Ryken demonstrated, that historic and scriptural foundation is the standard to which Wheaton intends to hold its students and faculty. Shortly after OneWheaton made its presence known on campus, Ryken circulated an e-mail epistle to all students, faculty, and staff, emphasizing that the college remained "committed to following Christ as faithful disciples, which entails conforming our lives to God's truth revealed in the Scriptures, and specifically to a biblically-based stance on sexual ethics." He added that part of the responsibility of the school's leadership was to "seek to prepare our students to maintain fidelity with the historic stance of the Church on these issues."

He also pointed out in his e-mail that the school's Community Covenant included the call "to pursue holiness in every aspect of our thought and behavior (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 4:7; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:15-16)," and embraced the scriptural condemnation of "sexual immorality, such as the use of pornography (Matt. 5:27-28), pre-marital sex, adultery, homosexual behavior, and all other sexual relations outside the bounds of marriage between a man and woman (Rom. 1:21-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31)."

Such a reasoned (and inspired) explanation appears to have had no impact on the members of OneWheaton, who continue to insist that the lifestyle they embrace and promote is perfectly compatible with the Christian faith — and who continue to encourage deviance from that Christian standard among Wheaton students who find themselves struggling with their sexuality.

In a recent open letter addressed to "[Wheaton Students](#)," the members of OneWheaton appeared to offer a hearty invitation to students confused about their sexuality to launch themselves into homosexual behavior, assuring them that "your sexual identity is not a tragic sign of the sinful nature of the world. You are not tragic. Your desire for companionship, intimacy and love is not shameful. It is to be affirmed and celebrated just as you are to be affirmed and celebrated."

It remains to be seen whether Wheaton officials will continue to tolerate such counsel from an alumni fringe group that flies directly in the face of the school's Community Covenant — as well as both Scripture and church tradition.



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Photo: Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College campus



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