

Wheaton alumni rally around gay students

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) in the [May 31, 2011](#) issue

Following a recent chapel series at Wheaton College on "Sexuality and Wholeness," gay alumni and other alumni of the school have formed an organization that aims to present an alternative view from that of a chapel speaker who supported celibacy for gays. More than 400 people signed an open letter to students at the Christian college in suburban Chicago.

"The recent chapel message on Sexuality and Wholeness and surrounding conversations may have left you feeling alienated, ashamed and afraid," reads the open letter. "Many of us felt trapped and unable to respond honestly to these messages while we were students."

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Gore, a spokesman for OneWheaton and a 2004 Wheaton alumnus, said the group wants gay and lesbian students at the school to know that they have support among gay alumni. "As it is, most of those students would be afraid to talk to anybody," he said. "That's just the environment there."

In an e-mailed response to the letter, Wheaton president Philip Ryken told students that the school considers gay people members "of the human family as created in the image of God himself" but remains committed to its covenant that condemns homosexual behavior.

"Many have experienced insensitive or callous responses in this community, for which we repent and seek forgiveness," he wrote, adding that the school condemns violence and injustice toward gays.

Wheaton spokeswoman LaTonya Taylor said the recent chapel series included a sermon from Wheaton alumnus Wesley Hill, author of *Washed and Waiting*, who

"spoke from the perspective of a Christian who experiences same-sex attraction but has chosen to pursue celibacy." —RNS