For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 8*

RECORD

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Kirk Franklin, black contemporary Gospel singer, is apologizing to gavs for the homophobia in the black churches. Says Franklin: "More than anything, I'm trying to peel back those layers [that] keep people away from God and keep people away from experiencing the love of God, [and all that] gets in the way of the true essence of one of the most simplest things we could ever say to somebody: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life'." Referring to the "hurtful and painful things that have been said" about gays in the black churches, he says: "It is horrible that we have made it where the Bible is a homophobic manual. That's not what the Bible is. I mean, you want to talk about things that God gets at pride and jealousy and envy and arrogance. But what we also see is God sending his son to save us all, because we are all, straight, gay or whatever, lost and in need of a savior, and there's room at the cross for all of us."

Sammy Rhodes blogs: "An Apology to LGBTQ Brothers and Sisters from a Theological Conservative". He is a college chaplain in the Reformed University Fellowship of the conservative Presbyterian Church in America.

After the mass murders in Orlando, Rhodes humbly confessed his and his fellow evangelicals' silence: "I've (often) cared more about my theology appearing 'correct' and orthodox than I have about loving millions of LGBTQ brothers and sisters. ... I'm speaking mainly for myself, although I hope I'm not alone." He asked for *forgiveness* for, among other things, the hate and injustice, for jokes, for not listening and "for being more like Job's counselors than anything resembling Jesus."

Rhodes has also written a book, *This* is Awkward: How Life's Uncomfortable Moments Open the Door to Intimacy and Connection. The Religious Right's World magazine reviewed the book with a note of caution. Jen Wilkin said his "discussions of sexual dysfunction may be too much information for younger teens" and his "quotes from movies like *Brokeback Mountain* might also be construed as recommendations". Yet, his book addresses college students, not "younger teens".

A "Shame List" of the "absolute worst" Christian colleges for LGBT students is meant to point up "harmful and shameful acts of religion-based prejudice and bigotry". "Shame List" schools have requested or received religious exemptions to the Obama administration's interpretation of Title IX.

Yet, for decades, some administrators, professors, students and alumni of these "Shame List" schools supported gay students. But much of that was certainly unofficial, under the radar and before the muscle of the Religious Right began to be exercised and scared off likely donors.

For example, in the 1960s, Anderson College's chair of social work was an invited speaker at a meeting of the pioneering lesbian group, Daughters of Bilitis. DOB leaders, who knew of their speaker's supportive position, were shocked when a man showed up to speak. They'd mistaken the name, "Val" Clear, for a woman's name. And the first major evangelical leader to support the founding of Evangelicals Concerned in 1975 was the founding president of Covenant College and He urged EC's public Seminary. launch be done during the convention of the National Association of Evangelicals.

Nearly a decade ago, Gordon College officially printed and distributed, campus wide, personal stories written by twelve of Gordon's gay and lesbian students. Years before that, Gordon had hosted the EC founder's campus presentation of the case for evangelical affirmation of same-sex partners. Earlier still, EC's founder was an invited speaker at Barrington College, an evangelical school that, in 1985, merged with Gordon College.

More recently, an Andrews University gay student who was concerned about gay student welfare, received the administration's assistance, and now, as a proud AU graduate, encourages other LGBT students to "work with your school to make your school a better place not just for yourself."

Grove City College is on the "Shame List" for having an "ex-gay" guest speaker, even though GCC psychology professor Warren Throckmorton repeatedly disputes "ex-gay" claims on his blog.

And, with specific reference to Title IX, "Keeping Faith Without Hurting LGBT Students" is an Oklahoma Baptist University professor's essay in The Atlantic. OBU's Alan Noble explains: "Both conservatives and liberals tend to approach the issue in absolute and uncompromising terms. But", he suggests, "There are ways to resolve this conflict that will allow for both religious freedom and protections for LGBT students while minimizing further litigation. By increasing transparency about Title IX exemptions and codes of conduct, easing the transfer process for students who cannot abide by the codes of conduct, and taking a strict stance on bullying and abuse, religious schools can retain their distinctive mission while protecting students."

Julien Baker is a serious Christian and a lesbian. She's also a young singer and songwriter. Born in 1995 and reared in a Christian home in Tennessee, she prepared herself for the possibility that here same-sex orientation would not be well received. Yet, she'd always had a good home life and was especially close to her dad.

She planned to come out to her parents but, before she saw her way clear to do so, her dad saw her kissing her then-girlfriend. She says: "I just started to cry." All three of them stood there

and then her dad started "hugging us both". He said: "There's nothing you could ever do to make you not my daughter." After her girlfriend left, Julien says she was sitting on the couch, crying, and saying to her dad, "I think I'm going to hell." She remembers: "He grabs the Bible off the shelf and spends the next hour reading verse after verse saving that I am God's beloved child and saying, 'I'm going to prove to you God loves you'." Now, not only is she receiving her family's wholehearted love but, she says, her friends, including those at church, are loving her, too.

"Papa you're the one that taught me / And with his blood he bought me." So begins the last verse of "Heaven Sent", Parker Millsap's ballad of a gay son's loving letter to his preacher dad who's told him, "it's not allowed, [says] it's a sin / [but, replies the son] It's how I've always been." The ballad ends: "Daddy you're the one that claimed / That he loved me through the flame / Now why can't you do the same / Now, I've been born again / But first, I was born in sin / Did you love me then?"

Millsap, who isn't gay himself, was reared in a conservative Christian home. He tells NPR, "It's not a protest song or an anthem. It's an intimate exchange. ... I hear the protagonist sort of interrogating what he's been taught about God's love, and its limits."

Tim LaHaye, 90, died on July 25. He was a major leader of the Religious Right and co-authored the popular *Left Behind* series, with 65 million copies sold as of 2016. But *Christianity Today* assessed his books as being full of "sweeping generalizations, quirky analysis of human nature, and imprecise exegesis".

LaHaye's 1978 book, *The Unhappy* Gays, was reviewed in EC's Fall 1978 *Review*: "Of course, LaHaye's homosexuals are unhappy, and they will remain unhappy if they take no more realistic view of themselves than LaHaye takes. From cover to cover, his book is filled with all of the twisted false witness bearing, 'god and country' rhetoric, and cruel hoax promises of 'cure' that continue to make life so unhappy for those homosexuals and their families who foolishly believe that LaHaye knows what he's talking

about." LaHaye, himself, called his book, "the model of compassion".

LaHaye's wife, Beverly, founded the Rightwing organization, Concerned Women for America. Their son, Lee, is CFO of CWA. Leftwing journalist Max Blumenthal, in his 2009 book, *Republican Gomorrah*, wrote that Lee LaHaye is said to be "openly gay" and footnoted, he's "never denied the designation".

Phyllis Schlafly, 92, died on September 5. A veteran anti-Equal Rights Amendment activist, attorney and a major leader of the Religious Right, she'd claimed that same-sex marriage would be one of the hazardous results of the ERA. In the 1980s, when Surgeon General C. Everett Koop tried to introduce AIDS education into the public school curricula, Schlafly warned that that would be like "the teaching of safe sodomy".

On September 27, 1992, she was on NBC's "Meet the Press". Host Tim Russert asked her about her son, John, then 41, who'd acknowledged his being gay after he was "outed" by a gay publication. John, also an attorney, acknowledged that he often attended gay Republican events and gay film festivals. Russert asked her if her son's being gay had changed her attitude on homosexuality. She indicated it had not, saying that she'd "always been sensitive" to homosexuals. Asked if she'd know of her son's homosexuality before this recent news, she said that they'd never before talked about it, but, she confided, "I just knew a long time ago."

Gav Apostolic Pentecostals hold to the theology of Oneness Pentecostalism and vet support same-sex marriage - unlike the majority of Oneness Pentecostals such as the Rowan County, Kentucky clerk, Kim Davis, famous for her refusal to sign any same-sex marriage licenses. The Oneness or "Jesus Only" movement is "non-Trinitarian" in that it teaches that all the fullness of God resided in the incarnate Jesus, i.e., God is numerically one without a plurality of persons. There are several networks of gayaffirming Pentecostals across America and in other parts of the world.

Exodus International long time president, Alan Chambers, who closed down the "ex-gay" network as a failed effort in 2013, marched in the 2016 Capital Pride Parade. The next day, he preached two sermons at Washington's National Cathedral. Chambers says that, by closing Exodus, he and his former colleagues apologized for the damage the movement did. They now support marriage for same-sex couples. "There are a lot of amazing relationships out there", he said. "God can bless those relationships as much as he can bless heterosexual relationships."

World magazine had celebrated Alan Chambers as its "Daniel of the Year" at year's end, 2011. That was just over a year *before* Exodus closed down with apologies for its 37 years of "ex-gay" fraud and the harm done to those who'd bought into the "ex-gay" movement's false claims.

But the Religious Right's World enterprise is still trying to push the misleading "ex-gay" promises in an interview that editor Marvin Olasky did recently with Rosaria Butterfield. In his setup, he refers to "her movement from lesbianism ... to Christian believer and pastor's wife." (The ellipsis drops his parenthetical note of Butterfield's former "professorship in women's studies".) But, in the World interview itself, she pointedly explains: "A hospitable church for people who are struggling with unwanted homosexual desires is one where we're not pretending to be all cleaned up." She bluntly says that, "we don't have complete deliverance."

World magazine's Marvin Olasky, decries what he disparages as, "the LGBT campaign to damage the nuclear family". But, to cite a more perceptive observation from Christian writer Wendell Berry: "So-called traditional marriage [is] for sure suffering a statistical failure, but this is not the result of a homosexual plot."

Clearly, far more damage to the nuclear family is suggested, for example, in a survey of self-identified *Christian men*, conducted by the evangelical polling group, Barna. It finds that 55 percent of these men view porn at least monthly and 35 percent of the married Christian men have had extramarital sexual affairs. Among Christian men, 18 to 30 years old, 77 percent view porn at least monthly and 36 percent view it every day. Among the 31 to 49 year old Christian men, 64 percent view porn at least monthly.

Some 20 percent of adults have been divorced at least once, with distress, as well as some relieving of stress, for the children in those broken families. Glenn T. Stanton, Focus on the Family's director of global family formation studies, states that, "while the 40-50 percent projected rate of divorce risk is true and reliable, there are important personal characteristics that put everyone at different levels of risk".

"By destroying the institution of marriage, the 'gay rights' LBGQTI movement made possible the extension of similar 'legal rights'." According to this alarm coming from the Religious Right's Charisma News, the alleged extension of legal rights will one day cover pedophilia, polygamy, incest, bestiality, necrophilia, etc. Charisma's writer asks mockingly: "Why is having The sex with dead people wrong? corpse doesn't care. It's dead. It doesn't hurt the corpse; it doesn't even know what's happening."

In proudly progressive Canada, sex acts with animals are now, indeed, legal – provided there's no penetration. This is the result of a recent 7-1 Supreme Court ruling. Rosalie Abella was the lone dissenter. She objected: "Acts with animals that have a sexual purpose are inherently exploitative whether or not penetration occurs." The activist lobby, Animal Justice, is pushing for passage of a bill that would protect animals from such sexual exploitation

The antigay head of the Family Research Council, Tony Perkins, lost his Louisiana house to what he called, floods "of near biblical proportions". In the past, however, this Religious Right activist against marriage for same-sex couples has declared that such devastating floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters were actually the signs of God's displeasure over legalization of marriage for same-sex couples.

Meanwhile, Al Gore claims that those Louisiana floods were due to global warning, or, as it's now called, without warming, "climate change". Someone remarks in reply: "Seems that any natural catastrophe is useful for one's confirmation bias – until it's not." Marco Rubio tells evangelicals they should "abandon a spirit of judgment" against their LGBT neighbors. Addressing a conference hosted by the Rediscovering God in America Renewal Project in Orlando, he said he still believes that marriage should be between one man and one woman, but he observed that there are couples "in same-sex relationships whose love for one another is real, and who feel angry and humiliated that the law did not recognize their relationship as a marriage".

Rubio said: "To love our neighbors, we must recognize that many have experienced sometimes severe condemnation and judgment from some Christians. They have heard some say that the reason God will bring condemnation on America is because of them. As if somehow, God was willing to put up with adultery and gluttony, and greed and pride, but now, this is the last straw."

"If any of us, myself included, in any way, have ever made anyone feel that Christianity wants nothing to do with them, then I believe deeply that we have failed deeply to represent our Lord Jesus Christ who time and again went out of his way to reach out to the marginalized and to the forgotten of his time."

"I am a Gay Conservative, And I Think It's Time You Met Me." This headline was on *The Huffington Post* this June. It's from Chad Felix Greene who says that, besides being conservative, he's, "HIV+ [and] a rape survivor. I am Jewish and I've written and illustrated children's books." One of these books is, 8 *Things You Can Do to Make God Smile Everyday!* (Reared as a Southern Baptist, he's since converted to Judaism.)

He says: "The conservatives, Christians and Republicans, I spend my days with, standing side-by-side with, and fighting for our mutual goals with, are remarkably kind and generous people. They do not deserve to be labeled as 'bigots' or accused of causing tragedy with 'hate' simply for disagreeing with currently popular liberal views or policies."

Greene notes: "I used to be on the left and I used to be extremely liberal and I found myself drawn to the right because of my belief in liberty over coercion to preferred results." He quotes *The Conservatarian* Manifesto, that in the U.S., "to be on the right ultimately means to be fundamentally focused on liberty." He's at ReasonablyGay.com.

Former 2-year missionaries of the LDS have a blog. They explain that, "after years of intense prayer and study (LDS approved resources only), we decided we don't believe anymore." Still, in order to better prepare other young men to serve on LDS missions, they've written a list of "10 Things every pre-missionary should know". One of these tips is this: "You'll probably have a gay companion. Before you say eww, try to understand the position he's in. By deciding to be a Mormon and go on a mission he's giving up his chance at a loving relationship with someone he's physically attracted to... forever! You, on the other hand, get to enjoy sex one day. Not only that, but he has to completely hide the fact that he's gay. Any hint of homosexuality and he'll be completely ostracized by other missionaries. His mission and life in the church is going to be a whole lot tougher than yours so if you know of a gay missionary, instead of telling people and harassing him, try to be understanding."

The Islamic State continues to film its gruesome executions of young men accused of "sodomy". Released by ISIS media and *Al Jazirah*, the videos typically show not only the deaths by decapitation, gun fire or from being thrown off tall buildings, but include scenes of the assembled crowds of Muslim men and boys who are thus warned not to engage in homosexual acts, all of which are forbidden by Allah.

This summer, veteran LGBT periodical, *The Advocate*, reported on some of these atrocities but observed today's Western narrative that ISIS perverts what is really "a peace loving religion". At this point, *The Advocate's* Internet version links readers to *Relevant* and an interview with former Muslim, Nabeel Qureshi, a physician who is now an evangelical Christian and apologetics speaker.

Qureshi is asked if Islam is a religion of peace. He replies: "Although the vast majority of Muslims might be peaceful people, when you say 'Islam is a religion of peace', you're talking about the system or the religion from its inception. Apart from the first 13 vears that Muhammad claimed to be a prophet, you don't really have any history of Islam that was devoid of violence. The moment Muhammad was able to start fighting he started launching battles at a rate of nine battles a vear until he died. And then after he died, Muslims conquered one-third of the known world – from the shores of the Atlantic to India. So from the very beginning of Islamic history, violence has been quite present. So what do we mean when we say Islam is a religion of peace? The only way that could possibly mean something true is if we say Islam somehow brings peace to a person, but that's not the way the slogan is being used."

"There is no room in Indonesia for the proliferation of the LGBT movement." This is the antigay view of the nation's president. Violent anti-LGBT attacks are dramatically increasing across Indonesia. The country's largest Muslim group, Nahdlatul Ulama, denigrates all homosexuals as "perverted and a desecration of human dignity".

This summer, *Time* magazine reported that, in Indonesia, with "the world's biggest Muslim population" and priding itself on "its tolerant brand of Islam", the LBGT community is the country's *most hated* community. Human Rights Watch has published a new 56-page report documenting "the alarming rise" in anti-LGBT rhetoric and violence.

"Why We Hate You and Why We Fight You" is the title of a summer article in *Dabiq*, the glossy magazine of Islamic State. Referencing ISIS' hatred of America's separation of religion and state, the article says that you, America, "desire to rob Allah of his right to be obeyed and you wish to usurp that right for yourselves. 'Legislation is not but for Allah' (Yusuf 40)".

"Your secular liberalism has led you to tolerate and even support 'gay rights', to allow alcohol, drugs, fornication, gambling, and usury to become widespread, and to encourage the people to mock those who denounce these filthy sins and vices. As such, we wage war against you to stop you from spreading your disbelief and debauchery – your secularism and nationalism, your perverted liberal values, your Christianity and atheism – and all the depravity and corruption they entail. You've made it your mission to 'liberate' Muslim societies; we've made it our mission to fight off your influence and protect mankind from your misguided concepts and your deviant way of life."

"As the body counts and rape counts in Europe rack up, gays and others on Islam's kill-list will realize that in a world of Muslim migration, conservative immigration policies are actually the most progressive. Meanwhile, the claims of self-proclaimed leftists to champion the rights of women and minorities will ring increasingly hollow". This is the opinion of gay Catholic libertarian and journalist, Milo Yiannopoulos.

Says another observer: "Dhimmis on the PC Left don't realize they're already living under Sharia." And while they fret over "Islamophobia" and micro-aggressions, researchers at MIT and the London School of Economics estimate that the probability of at least one nuclear or bioterrorist attack is 34 percent by 2025 and 76 percent by 2050.

Omar Sarwar, a Muslim and gay activist, challenges the politically correct notion of the source of Islamic homophobia. Writing in Religion Dispatches, and with a degree in religion from Columbia, he tackles the European Homophobia Thesis (EHT) that, "Pre-modern Islamic civilization was relatively accepting of various forms of same-sex attraction and love" and that Islamic homophobia today is "almost entirely a vestige of British colonialism and conservative Victorian mores". Sarwar calls EHT "precarious". He argues that, "although EHT might explain the infiltration of law and official politics in colonized Muslim societies, it doesn't explain precisely how colonial homophobia transformed the everyday cultures of ordinary Muslims." He cites well-known antigay interpretations of the Qur'an that predate Western colonialism by many centuries.

In his article, Sarwar does not specifically deal with the antigay texts in the Qur'an and Hadith, e.g., "For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women; ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds. ... And we rained down on them a shower of brimstone", "Will ye commit abominations such as no creatures ever did before you?"; "Of all the creatures in the world, will ye approach males, and leave those whom Allah has created for you?"; "Whoever you find doing the action of the people of Loot, execute the one who does it and the one to whom it is done"; "If a man who is not married is seized committing sodomy, he will be stoned to death"; "whoever is found conducting himself in the manner of the people of Lut, kill the doer and the receiver", etc.

"As An Openly Gay Muslim, I'm Terrified of The Muslim Community." Shawn Ahmed opens up to readers at The Huffington Post, July 14, 2016, about the Muslim hateful response to his condemning of the Orlando mass murders. One tweet said, "I'm sad you weren't in the club in Orlando. Another: "I'll be among those to stone you to death" and another tweeted, "Please prepare for hell". Ahmed said: "I know firsthand that hatred of LGBTQ people runs rampant within the Muslim community. Muslims cannot claim that Islam is the Religion of Peace if it is the Religion of Homophobia." He says that the "homophobia leads LGBTQ Muslims to hate themselves. This self-hate leads many to take their own lives." He points out that, "In the muslim community, few people are brave enough to come out so most Muslims see LGBTQ issues as a distant "Western" problem. It's easy to hate in the abstract."

"What it's like to be Gav and Oatari" was printed anonymously in the Doha News in August. The writer, "Majid Al-Qatari", (not his real name) is a young gay man in Qatar. "In Qatar, people who are gay can hide behind a veneer of extreme homophobic culture. ... Even those who are not very devout, practicing Muslims, believe that someone like me has decided to be the way I am – they think this is not the way I have been born." They call homosexuals, "God's cursed people" and they claim that, "homosexuality is a Western invention". He laments: "It is very jarring living here, it is traumatizing to see that you are the cause of your parents' anguish, that you are shaming your family. It is a constant onslaught, and it is killing me."

African churches will never accept same-sex marriage according to Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, the former Nigerian Anglican Archbishop of Kaduna and now Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, a worldwide body of Anglicans in more than 165 countries. He says that African churches "are already progressives" because they reject liberal Western values. They live in "accordance with the will of God in the kingdom of God, which is the real future for humanity that measures all human progress." Idowu-Feron calls on the African church to "set the pace for the Anglican Communion" and denounce the marriage of homosexuals.

A prayer to Allah was the "first order of business" at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA, meeting in Portland, Oregon, after a Muslim terrorist, in the name of Allah, committing mass murders inside a gay nightclub in Orlando. Wajdi Said led the prayer from the Fatihah or "Opening" of the Qur'an, asking Allah to "lead us on the straight path - the path of all the prophets: Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad". But Muhammad, of course, is not a prophet in the Presbyterian faith and the "Jesus" that Said invoked is not God Incarnate. According to Islam, Jesus did not die on the cross and he did not rise from the dead.

The General Assembly's delegates elected *co-moderators* for the *first time* in PCUSA history. *Both are women*. The denomination plans to "divest completely from male leadership" over the next century. The GA voted to begin removing men from all leadership positions. "We've been invested in the religious-patriarchal-industrial complex for way too long," says one of these newly elected moderators. "We will slowly wean ourselves off men in power and plan to be all-female led by the 272nd General Assembly in 2116" – assuming the rapidly dwindling denomination still exists in 2116.

The PCUSA has been losing men and women for decades. Meanwhile, 18 prominent PCUSA churches are presently following other PCUSA congregations in working toward alignment with denominations of *conservative* Presbyterians.

Anti-Israeli pro-Palestinian protests cancel a black transgender-rights activist's speech at Brown University. Janet Mock's scheduled talk at the campus Hillel was called off after Leftists engaged in accusations of "pinkwashing" - what Israel's enemies call Israel's pro-LGBT policies that make it the only safe nation for LGBT folks in the Middle East. Mock's appearance was to have been a part of Hillel's yearlong series on LGBT issues. This attack is yet another example of the many occasions when, as one observer notes, "accusations that all events organized by Jewish groups, even those with no Israel-related stances or affiliations, are part of some nefarious Israeli propaganda machine [that] echo familiar tropes of anti-Semitism."

Only 39 percent of surveyed churchgoers recalled their clergy speaking about homosexuality – just one percentage point below the figure for those who recalled clergy speaking about religious liberty. These Pew Poll findings were released in August. Over 4,000 people were questioned after having attended worship services within the past few months. Only 29 percent recalled hearing about abortion, only 22 percent heard something on the environment and only 18 percent heard anything on economic inequality. It was found that these figures held up across a wide theological spectrum.

Openly gay Olympic diver Tom Daley "was seduced into sodomy by an older man, not very long after the untimely death of his beloved father." So says Stephen Green, a Rightwing activist and the Pentecostal leader of Britain's *Christian Voice*. He brags: "You don't need a degree in psychology to work out what's going on there" and adds, "Becoming gay might or might not be a choice. Staying gay definitely is." He also thinks that Daley's "turning gay" resulted in his missing the Gold and having to settle for a Bronze.

AND FINALLY:

"When it comes to targets for congenitally offended social-justice warriors, no one is safe - not even the everlovable, super-unoffensive and hilarious Ellen DeGeneres." Thus, a New York Post editorial responds to the harshly confused backlash to the comedian's having tweeted another of her famously Photoshopped pictures – this one showing her riding on the back of multi-Gold Medalist Usain Bolt with the caption, "This is how I'm running errands from now on." Bolt, himself, got a big kick out of her humor and retreated it. But "the Twittervers's racism-is-everywhere crowd" unloaded with PC vitriol, e.g., "Delete this racist garbage", "Ellen must learn how real her white privilege is #boycottellen #blacklivesmatter". DeGeneres came out as a lesbian in 1997 and has never given any indication to doubt her progressive sensibilities.