

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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The 2017 Evangelicals Concerned calendar includes our 30th Presidents Day Winter Weekend Bible Study, our 75th ConnEction and our 15th Fall Preaching Festival.

The Presidents Day Weekend Bible study will be February 18-20 at The Turning Point at Kirkridge Retreat in the mountains of eastern Pennsylvania.

ConnEction2017 will be June 2-4 at The Nelson Lodge atop the mountain at Kirkridge. Todd Komarnicki, film producer and *Sully* screenwriter, will keynote, as will actress Jane Bradbury, who'll read from Amy Carmichael's devotionals. Ralph Blair will also speak.

The Fall Preaching Festival, in grateful celebration of the Luther 500th, will be October 6-8 at Ocean Grove on the Jersey Shore.

Gay marriage and an Islamist's mass murder in an Orlando gay club ranked 9th and 10th among lifetime events that Americans say impacted them most. This Pew Research found that Al-Qaeda's 9/11 slaughter was the event that *most* impacted Americans' lives.

Christian country superstar Carrie Underwood has voiced wholehearted support of marriage for same-sex couples. In January, she gave an impromptu performance at *Passion 2017*, a major 3-day evangelical event where over 55,000 members of the collegiate generation packed the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. Afterwards, she tweeted: "What an incredible night! Thanks for letting me be a small part of it!"

But Wesley Wildmon, a heterosexually married grandson of the founder of the Religious Right's American Family Association, wasted no time in sending out his open letter publicly protesting her presence on stage. AFA's 27-year-old Director of Outreach blasted the evangelical organizers of *Passion 2017* for permitting the appearance of one

who supports "those who practice homosexuality".

Jen and Brandon Hatmaker are two more evangelicals who support marriage for same-sex couples. Co-stars of a popular real-life family series on HGTV, they've now learned how very quickly there can be a costly backlash to such empathy and support.

Jen's public comments came in response to a question from Religious News Service's Jonathan Merritt, an evangelical who is same-sex attracted though committed to celibacy. He asked if she supported marriage for same-sex couples and she replied: "I would never wish anything less for my gay friends". She explained, "Just like the rest of us, [they] need marriage support". Her husband then defended the position on Facebook. Ever since, bookstores, e.g., Southern Baptist LifeWay Stores, have refused to carry her books.

Christianity Today's Kate Shellnutt notes that Jen's position is consistent with her overall approach, though applying it to *same-sex* issues was too much for many other evangelicals to accept. Shellnutt says: "Jen is very sensitive to the outsider ... she is so passionate about including others: cultural outsiders, the homeless, racial minorities, people who have been hurt by the church". She adds that Hatmaker's recent comments only "clarify and update what she's said previously."

"Wow! So refreshing!" That's how the Hillsong church movement's global director, pastor and songwriter, Joel Houston, responded to the Hatmakers' compassion for gay folk. As a son of the founders of Hillsong's worldwide evangelical network, he's drawn flak for his supportive response. Currently in Manhattan, planting Hillsong NYC, he says: "What I found refreshing was her honesty particularly enacting a gospel of love over hate/fear." But some people are now saying that Houston

"rejects truth" and they're calling for boycotts of Hillsong's worship services and music.

Two more Southern Baptist churches announce support for gay Christians. Austin's First Baptist welcomes gays into "the full life of our community" and most of the members of Dallas' Wilshire Baptist voted "to open weddings, baby dedications, ordination, and leadership positions" to gays.

Southern Baptist blogger Jim Denison does not approve of this, so once again, he pushes back. He says that gay-affirming folks "claim that people in the biblical era did not know of monogamous, loving same-sex commitment or marriage, so that the numerous biblical prohibitions against same-sex relations are irrelevant to such relationships". But here, he's changing the subject. He shifts the focus from what's known today as egalitarian "monogamous, loving same-sex commitment or marriage" between two homosexually-oriented persons to the ancient era's patriarchal systems of abusive same-sex acts, e.g., in the rape of same-sex slaves, prisoners of war, pre-pubertal boys and sojourners (as at Sodom), and the same-sex acts in pagan temple rites, etc. These "were common in the ancient world." But classical scholars point out that in those old cultures, it would have been a total contradiction of patriarchy, utter contempt and abuse, for one man to use another man, if his equal, as he'd use a mere piece of property, as he'd use, e.g., a woman, a wife, a concubine or a slave.

Christian colleges that employ faculty members who are in a same-sex marriage can keep their membership in the evangelical Council of Christian Colleges & Universities. But, such schools will not be allowed to vote.

CCCU has been an evangelical higher education association for four dec-

ades. Last year, a controversy erupted when two CCCU schools, Oklahoma Wesleyan and Union College in Tennessee, opted to leave after CCCU failed to punish two CCCU schools, Goshen and Eastern Mennonite, for allegedly “violating Christian teaching on sexual ethics” by employing same-sex married faculty.

Shirley Hoogstra, CCCU’s president and formerly a vice-president at Calvin College, is a leader of “Fairness for All”, an effort toward more sensitivity around concerns of both LGBT and Christian communities. Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, is also involved in this approach for compromise between religious liberty and sexual orientation equality. Predictably, antigay Southern Baptists such as Al Mohler and Russell Moore are pushing back against “Fairness for All”.

Christianity Today’s Mark Galli endorses a Southern Baptist’s post against marriage for same-sex couples, though with one caveat. Galli also expresses satisfaction that, “Despite sensational headlines announcing that this evangelical or that now believes in gay marriage, evangelicals overall are holding steady on sexual ethics.”

His caveat regarding the antigay post, is that, as Galli puts it, the *basic* “belief is not in marriage as such, but in what’s called theological anthropology, that is, the biblical doctrine of what it means to be a human being.” He tries to ground antigay positions in systematic theology, warning: “Get that wrong, and sexual ethics go astray.”

But Galli fails to consider a most important *perspective* on systematic theology as such. It’s well expressed by Alister McGrath, Oxford systematic theologian, historian, molecular biophysicist and eminent evangelical Christian apologist: “Theology is just another discipline, not an eternal theological truth. It is natural and to be expected, that it will be revised over and over again by each generation.” And so it has been – repeatedly.

Church history illustrates and supports McGrath’s observation. Isn’t, “Reformed and ever reforming”, the motto of all Reformed theology? Each reformation begins in what most folks at the time think is heresy. But as the wise and orthodox Calvinist scholar-

statesman, Abraham Kuyper, recognized: “History shows, almost on every page, that very often, the minority was right.” Yet it can take years for “traditionalists” to catch up.

Christians in just the past 200 years had a notion of “biblical” theological anthropology for rationalizing support for slavery and opposition to abolition, interracial marriage, black civil rights during Jim Crow, women’s voting rights, etc. And those who were “holding steady”, as Galli would have it, took pride in *their* day’s “stand for the Bible”. Yet, all *blessed* reformations and revisions have always expressed the Golden Rule over self-righteous, self-serving traditions, no matter how entrenched they’d been.

Nowadays, descendants of earlier “orthodoxies” look back in sad embarrassment and repentance, as well as with thanksgiving, for the revisions eventually accomplished, often at great personal cost to the reformers, for the sake of more truly Christian discipleship.

“I struggled to know how much of the truth to tell and how to tell it. There was a sense in which I was telling family secrets, stories that we pass at family reunions that we would prefer to hide to maintain our family’s reputation.”

This is the frankly acknowledged struggle of Sean Michael Lucas, church historian and pastor of Hattiesburg, Mississippi’s First Presbyterian Church, now a congregation of the conservative Presbyterian Church in America. He also teaches at Reformed Seminary in Jackson and has authored a history of the PCA, written from his personal experience and after over a decade of diligent research. Lucas reflects on his findings in a recent issue of the PCA periodical, *byFaith*.

His first book was on Robert L. Dabney who, as Lucas says, “looms large in our story”. As a major 19th-century Southern Presbyterian theologian, Dabney “biblically” supported slavery and said that abolitionists would answer for *their abolitionism* on Judgment Day.

Lucas observes that PCA’s “origin stories have profoundly shaped our decisions”. This recently was yet again in evidence when leaders of the PCA disputed long and hard over whether or not and how to confess their forebears’

racism during the years of the South’s struggle over Civil Rights. But, he admits: “It simply is not possible to tell our [PCA] story without showing how race shaped our founding generations’ reactions and intertwined with their religious commitments.”

In 2006, he noted that, “since 2000, mainline Presbyterian ministers have been able to ‘bless’ same-sex unions”. Yet the PCA’s current “biblical” arguments *against* marriage for *same-sex* couples resemble those earlier “biblical” arguments *against interracial* marriage in the days of the PCA’s Southern forebears and founding fathers. Ten years ago, Lucas endorsed “ex-gay” solutions. But they’ve proven to be such utter failures and have caused much damage. With sensitivity, he writes that the church must “tone down our rhetoric and demonstrate the kindness of God”.

Some are now predicting, with contextual wisdom, that, on gay issues, another history of a similarly painful story of a *culture-bound* church will have to be written in the PCA’s future.

“Today in the social climate, these men are maligned because they had certain views of their time with respect to slavery and things like that.” So says Joseph Pipa, the president of a newer South’s conservative Presbyterian seminary, as he tries to soften the *racism* of old authors he’s now promoting through reprints of their works by the Banner of Truth Trust. He proclaims Robert L. Dabney as, “by far the best [and] most exegetical” of these recommended authors. Yet, in 1867, *after* the Civil War, Dabney penned in self-pity: “Our people are now oppressed with present sufferings and a prospective destiny more cruel and disastrous than has been visited on any civilized people of modern ages. [But,] let the arrogant and successful wrongdoers flout our defence [sic] with disdain: we will meet them with it again, when it will be heard; in the day of their calamity, in the pages of impartial history and in the Day of Judgment.”

As if the Golden Rule wasn’t in Dabney’s Bible, Pipa seems to *explain away* his 356-page “exegetical” argument in *defense of slavery* and *attack on abolitionists* as merely the sentiments of “a man of his time [who] was unfortunately bitter during reconstruction.” Are antigay men in today’s PCA

merely men of *their* time, bitter during *another* reconstruction? Do their Bibles not contain the Golden Rule?

Evangelical historian Mark Noll honestly observed that, back in the early and mid-19th-century, slavery conflicts “pushed theologians down the roads on which they were already traveling rather than compelling them to go in new, creative directions.” Noll perceptively noted: “In particular, those who saw in Scripture a sanction for slavery were both more insistent on pointing to the passages that seemed so transparently to support their position and more confident in decrying the wanton disregard for divine revelation that seemed so willfully to dismiss biblical truths.” Noll noted that abolitionists had a more challenging task in that they had to appeal to the “broad sweep of Scripture”, to general themes of love and justice. Today’s controversy resembles the earlier conflict, for once again, those armed with allegedly antigay “proof texts” downplay or even reject appeals to the “broad sweep of Scripture”, to its general themes of love and justice.

The Presbyterian Church in America votes to form a committee to take up the issue of women in church leadership. Forty years ago, one of the reasons the PCA founders left the old Southern Presbyterian Church was that denomination’s support for women in church leadership. Now, a PCA committee has been asked to further study the biblical basis and theology of ordination and of the office of deacon. Meanwhile, PCA churches are asked to promote women’s participation “in appropriate ministries.”

But opponents of any PCA change on this matter say that, “what is being overlooked ... is that the ‘biblical basis, theology, history, nature, and authority of ordination, the biblical nature and function of the office of deacon, and the ordination or commissioning of deacons/deaconesses’ [already] is settled.” But, in asserting it’s “settled”, they’re *not* referring to Paul’s words at Galatians 3:28, “There is now, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, *nor is there male and female, for you are all one* in Christ Jesus.”

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship told its staff to resign if they disagreed with its anti-gay views. Greg

Jao, vice-president of this evangelical campus ministry, says: “We’re providing a clear, consistent message and pointing people to Scripture in a clear, consistent way”. Yet, increasingly, evangelical Bible scholars *reject* IVCF’s present view on this issue. Jao claims IVCF’s position has not changed in its 75-year history.

In 1964, Ralph Blair was on IVCF staff at Penn. He supported gay couples and voiced this view when he gave a talk at Yale. This was reported to the IVCF headquarters executives, newly led by an economic geographer. Though not told to resign right away, he was informed he’d not be reappointed for the next year. His area director, former head of New Zealand IVCF, suggested he move into the Y ministry. But after he finished his year at Penn, the American Baptists hired him to be the ABC chaplain at Penn State.

In 1974, a Bible publisher in the UK brought out the first edition of *Who Walk Alone* by Margaret Evening, an evangelical campus chaplain in the UK. On “love – with the same sex”, she wrote: “Surely we are all meant to enjoy our sexuality, whether we are heterosexual or homosexual. All too often homosexuality is thought of as a blight, a disease, something that needs to be hidden from all but those few who can share at a deep level.” Evening invited same-sex couples to ask themselves: “To what extent is this a relationship of mature love (as opposed to immature infatuation)”, does it promote “emotional growth” or is it merely “*self-indulgence*”, does it deepen relationship with God and does it “help both of us to become more fully human?” Her compassionate conclusion: “If homosexual friends can, with real honesty, answer these questions to their entire satisfaction and peace of mind, then they have nothing to fear.”

That same year, IVCF published a second edition of Evening’s book. IVP deleted her compassionate words of support for same-sex couples but, otherwise, the book was intact.

For over 40 years, IVCF students and former staff have participated in EC, including in leadership. Biblical scholar Steve Hayner was IVCF’s national president from 1988 to 2001. According to *Christianity Today*’s report of his death in 2015, he was “one of the baby-boomer generation’s most influential evangelical leaders”. He was also a

good friend of EC. When he moved to the IVCF national presidency from his post as a vice-president at the Free Methodists’ Seattle Pacific University, he personally asked Blair to update his mailing address for the EC quarterly *Record and Review*. He often reminded us of his deep appreciation for EC, “since there are so many who are struggling to understand what it means to live under God’s grace in a world which so often condemns or dictates.” His academic schedule repeatedly hindered his keynoting for EC. Shortly before his terminal diagnosis, he promised: “One of these years this is going to work out, but unfortunately I already have an engagement for [that] weekend. I’m sorry. I continue to follow the work of EC with great interest and appreciate the newsletters. Joyfully, Steve”.

Jack Chick has died at 92. Fundamentalist artist, writer and publisher, he was famous for his Chick tracts. Perhaps his most notorious was “The Gay Blade”, first published in 1972, revised in 1984, and no longer stocked except by “custom order”. Four tracts on Sodom, child abuse, AIDS and ex-gay deliverance now replace that first antigay tract.

The original tract had a cover in lavender with a black silhouette of a limp-wristed man in bellbottoms, surrounded by little Greek lambdas, an early symbol of gay rights. It featured creepy depictions of gay predators and scenes from “Satan’s shadowy world of homosexuality ... the agony of rejection, the despair of unsatisfied longing – desiring – endless lusting and remorse, crying that gay is good – their tragic lives prove that there isn’t anything gay about being ‘gay’.” The tract did admit that, “ALL of us are guilty of some kind of sin”. Homosexuals were called to “surrender” to Jesus and “become a new creature”. To some, this may have implied a sort of “ex-gay” deliverance.

Chick had become a Christian through hearing the Gospel on Charles E. Fuller’s radio program, *The Old Fashioned Revival Hour*. Ironically, Fuller Seminary professors were among the very first supporters of the gay affirming ministry of Evangelicals Concerned back in those 1970s.

Dallas’ Watermark Church has expelled a gay member who no longer

agrees with this megachurch's antigay position and its "ex-gay" approach. After years of prayer and attempts at sexual orientation change, Jason Thomas now accepts his given sexual orientation as a part of who he is: an evangelical Christian who happens to be gay.

Spiritually vague, self-styled "progressives" at other Dallas area churches recommend that he join their churches. One such member invites him to partake of its vision: "A world that works for everyone and a life that works for me." She says: "We are Radically Inclusive and Spiritually Progressive. The Sr. Minister and the Associate Minister are both gay women who are engaged to be married. This philosophy honors all paths." A member of another church, self-described at its website as "a progressive and autonomous Baptist church valuing the freedom to minister alongside other groups, both Christian and non-Christian", says: "We are an affirming and as we like to say, radically inclusive congregation that has become the spiritual home to dozens of LGBT people just like Jason who have been shunned by other churches".

These responses evidence bewilderment as to why anyone would join Watermark in the first place and why any gay person would want to be there. That a gay person might value gospel teaching, apart from the church's misunderstandings of homosexuality, escapes them.

Dallas Theological Seminary alum Jim Rayburn, founder of Young Life, and DTS student Caleb Kaltenbach's personal story, "Raised by Gay Parents", are featured in the Fall issue of the DTS magazine. As Paul Harvey used to say: "Here's the rest of the story."

After being exposed to legalistic Christians in the organized church scene for many years, Jim Rayburn's widow struck up friendships with several gay people that seemed a breath of fresh air for her and a positive experience for them as well. In 2014, their son, Jim Rayburn III, was a guest keynoter for Evangelicals Concerned. Back in 1975, Jim Rayburn's brother and Jim III's uncle – Bob Rayburn – was the first evangelical leader to affirm the founding of Evangelicals Concerned. He, too, was a DTS graduate

and was the founding president of the PCA's Covenant College and Seminary.

In "A Final Word" Kaltenbach sums up his story of having been raised by three gay parents and his coming to Christ in his book, *Messy Grace*. "I'm still thinking through these issues and striving to make sure my opinions are grounded in Scripture. Anyway, I didn't write this book to tell you what to think. I wrote this book to share my heart with you and hopefully help you think at a deeper level about this issue. It is not all black and white. ... There's tension for people on both sides of this issue. ... I'm still journeying with my parents, and our relationships are not easy ones. ... But I believe God has their hearts. ... Do they believe in Jesus? Yes. Are they Christian? Yes. ... Do they believe exactly as I do on every theological issue? No. ... Is God with them on the path they are walking? Yes. How do all of these things go together? I don't know. It's messy. ... I want to leave you with one of my favorite verses, which should guide our ministry and theology on this issue. It's John 13:35: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, *if you love one another.*"

Dallas Theological Seminary has launched a required course on sexual abuse issues in churches. This major evangelical seminary, with over 2,000 students, is the very first seminary in the country to do so. "It's not a fringe issue for an elective. It's a top priority for setting the church apart as a place of safety and security, and protecting the next generation of leaders", says administrator Mark Yarbrough. What will be covered include "legal issues as well as the protocols that ministries need to implement to protect our children from the terrible things that can happen".

Research shows that the single greatest litigation risk to churches involves allegations of child sexual abuse.

"Child marriage is more common in the southern United States." This is a headline from Pew Research. But in the fine print, it's found that the rates of "child marriage" are higher in New York than in South Carolina, higher in Connecticut than in Mississippi, higher in California than in Georgia, higher in D.C. than in Alabama and higher in

Nevada than in Tennessee. Where are "child marriage" rates the *lowest*? Throughout Middle America!

Pedophilia is the ultimate aim of the "gay agenda", according to a *Dallas Morning News* report on a sermon given by a Right-wing preacher/activist. In his guest sermon to a Texas congregation, Rick Scarborough declaimed: "Adams and Madison and these guys would've never allowed a court to tell 'em, 'Hey, you know what, to heck with God. We're gonna let men who have sex with men get married and let them adopt children. And since they can't have babies, they can just adopt yours and recruit them into the movement.'" Prior to the Supreme Court's ruling in support of marriage for same-sex couples, Scarborough bragged that he was willing to be *burned to death* for his stand against the "gay agenda". He later had to clarify that he hadn't meant to be taken literally.

Families of four victims of the Islamist who murdered 49 and wounded 53 others inside an Orlando gay nightclub are suing Facebook, Google and Twitter. Their filing notes that, in the past three years, ISIS has recruited 30,000 followers via the Internet.

The Advocate, a longtime national LGBT periodical, urges: "Don't Give in to Christianophobia!" Of course, the periodical *didn't* urge *that*. Rather, it urged: "Don't Give in to Islamophobia!" This came within hours of the mass murders in Orlando. *Advocate* readers immediately pushed back against their publication's politically correct appeal. The first comment was short and blunt: "There is no other way, and no nicer way to say it. You are an IDIOT." The next was a fuller argument: "What planet are you people on? Deadly homophobia is deeply embedded in the theological DNA of Islam. A cursory read of Islamic texts should be enough to scare anyone. And it shows in Muslim social attitudes. Recent research by the respected Pew Foundation found that a majority of Muslims in a majority of Muslim-majority countries, agreed with the death penalty for gay people based on *Sharia* law. It seems the Orlando shooter may have been secretly gay and motivated by internalized homophobia. But make no

mistake. The source of that homophobia is Islam. Many people in the LGBTIQ community have long entertained the idea of a gay/Muslim alliance against hate. That fantasy should be abandoned. It is never a good idea to hook up with people who want you dead.” Another *Advocate* reader said: “All Muslims cannot be blamed for this crime, of course, but huge majorities of Muslims worldwide find being gay as morally unacceptable” and again cited liberal Pew Research.

In radical contrast to all of the LGBTIQ efforts to counter Islamophobia, Google finds *no* LGBTIQ effort to counter Christianophobia.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, says: “It’s time to stop saying ISIL has ‘nothing to do with Islam’.” He warns that claims that the atrocities of the Islamic State have “nothing to do with Islam” obstruct efforts to understand and combat the deadly extremism. He calls on religious leaders to “stand up and take responsibility” in the matter, reasoning that we have to understand the terrorists’ motivation if we hope to combat their ideology effectively.

A major Islamic scholar says he rejects the killing of gays if a person kills them without the official authority of an Islamic state. But, in his video, Shaykh Hamza Sodagar is smiling through his listing of five ways to murder gay men and lesbians. He says: “One - the easiest one maybe - chop their head off, that’s the easiest. Second - burn them to death. Third - throw ‘em off a cliff. Fourth - tear down a wall on them so they die under that. Fifth - a combination of the above.” His video has gone viral. Born in America, he lives in Iran, but he gave a recent series of ten guest lectures in London.

Islamic countries that impose the death penalty for any and all consensual same-sex acts include Brunei, Iran, Mauritania, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen and, in some of the states within Nigeria and Somalia.

Many other countries criminalize consensual same-sex acts, though without mandatory death sentences. The laws frequently reflect Islamic prohibitions. In Africa, such criminalizing countries are: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros,

Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In Asia, these countries are: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, India, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Oman, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syria, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and the Gaza Strip under the Palestinian Authority. In Latin America, they are: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago. In the Pacific Islands, they are: Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands.

“Can Islam Accommodate Homosexual Acts?” This is the title of a post at *Muslim Matters*, an Internet site. It argues against Islamic revisionism on homosexuality. It targets the writings of Scott Kugle, a gay Sufi. As a mystical or “inner path” Muslim, Kugle attempts to make the case for a pro-gay Islam. He admits, “I was frankly afraid of doing it” and explains that, as “a Muslim convert in Islamic communities in North America, [they’re] by and large not open to acknowledging homosexual women and men in their midst.”

According to *Muslim Matters*: “It should be clear by now that the revisionist reading of the Qur’an Kugle offers in an attempt to accommodate same-sex behavior as religiously permissible in Islam, has fallen well short of its stated objective. The Lot narratives in the Qur’an are simply too clear and their meanings too obvious for this brand of hermeneutic adventurism to be anything other than a non-starter. In Islamic Law, matters such as the categorical prohibition of homosexual behavior constitute what scholars have termed matters “known by necessity to be part and parcel of the faith.”

LGBT and Feminist activists sided with a violent mob of male Islamists that tried to shut down a Humanist-sponsored talk by an atheist ex-Muslim woman at the University of London’s Godsmiths’ College. The school’s Feminist and LGBT societies cursed at

her and chanted: “Islamophobia!” They declared “solidarity” with the Islamists despite the Islamists’ vehement opposition to gays’ and women’s rights and their calling Israelis “pigs”. With rationalization, the LGBT/Feminist coalition claimed: “We find that personal and social harm enacted in the name of ‘free speech’ is foul, and detrimental to the wellbeing of students and staff on campus”.

“In the eyes of Castro and his revolutionary comrade Che Guervara – who frequently referred to gay men as *maricones*, ‘faggots’ – homosexuality was inherently counterrevolutionary, a bourgeois decadence”. Jamie Kirchick points this out in the progressives’ *Daily Beast*. About the Left’s whitewashing of Fidel Castro, he says: “To a traditional Latin American machismo that viewed gayness pejoratively, they married an ideological fixation treating it as politically undesirable.” Kirchick takes note of Castro’s gay concentration camps and prisons where gays were treated like “beasts” even after the camps were closed. He states: “Amid the fawning encomia released upon his long-overdue death at the age of 90, it should never be forgotten that he was also an oppressor, torturer, and murderer of gay people.” Kirchick notes that in the early 1960s, in contrast to what they’re doing today, gay rights groups such as The Mattachine Society held protests against Castro outside UN headquarters and The White House.

But at the news of Castro’s death, the Green Party’s Jill Stein tweeted, “Fidel Castro was a symbol for social justice”, British Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn called Castro “a champion of social justice” and the UN Secretary-General lauded the dictator as “a strong voice for social justice.”

Men in the South who have sex with men are at highest risk for HIV infection. U. S. cities with highest rates are Columbia SC and Jackson, MS. Of the top 25 cities with the highest HIV prevalence among such men, 21 are in the South. These epidemiological findings are based in Emory University’s School of Public Health research. The antigay culture in the South forces secretiveness that can foster naive risk-taking with strangers.

The American Council on Science and Health notes that drugs now allow HIV+ people to have unprotected sex without passing the virus on to uninfected partners. But, those who count on meds in case they seroconvert fail to consider that the meds can run \$1,000 per pill. This reduced fear of AIDS and failure to use condoms are factors in the rising rates of other STDs among younger people, especially among “men who have sex with men and persons of color”, according to New York’s deputy commissioner of Mental Hygiene.

“Laws that include gender identity raise a number of red flags for their unintended consequences for women”, says a prominent feminist and pro-abortion activist and a former NOW board member, Kathleen Sloan. She says that laws that allow access to public restrooms and changing areas “based only on a subjective belief that one is a woman, effectively allow men to claim a gender identity and enter women’s spaces at any time. This is a problem for females”. As other feminists have expressed, she’s concerned that “gender identity” public policies result in a “loss of safe, sex-segregated spaces” and she explains: “The fact that men are generally physically stronger and larger than women, have more upper-body strength, ... makes women physically vulnerable to men.”

Tammy Bruce is a self-identified “gay, pro-choice, gun-owning, pro-death penalty, Tea Party Independent” who has campaigned for Democrats, e.g., Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein, Hillary Clinton as well as for Republicans, e.g., Ronald Reagan and Bushes 41 and 43, hosts her own nationally syndicated radio program and is a Fox News political commentator. She is one of a number of lesbian feminist voices to publicly question transgender identity. She denounces the “social engineering” of elementary schools that push transgender lessons at kindergarteners and first through third grade children.

On November 9th, *The New York Times* frankly explained Trump’s victory: “The results amounted to a repudiation, not only of Mrs. Clinton, but of President Obama.”

But the *Huffington Post* fueled fears, warning that the “assault on LGBTQ equality is already underway”. *New York* magazine tried to foretell the “future of LGBT rights under President Trump [and said] it’s not pretty.” Back in 1971, when the gay affirming Homosexual Community Counseling Center tried to advertise in *New York* magazine, the chic glossy refused the ads.

Walter Olson, a senior fellow at the conservative think tank, Cato Institute, is pushing back against the panic over Trump, assuring alarmed gays that “Trump won’t roll back gay rights.” He cited Trump’s acceptance speech in August, when the Republican delegates loudly applauded his pledge to “do everything in my power to protect our LGBTQ citizens from violence and oppression”. Trump then went off script to thank these applauding delegates: “I have to say, as a Republican, it is so nice to hear you cheering for what I just said. Thank you.”

Still, many New York psychotherapists, including Ralph Blair, quickly heard from gays who’d bought into the talk of fear and were anxious and angry as they tried to cope with their shock and disorientation over the election returns.

Blair didn’t recommend therapy puppets, play-dough or the coloring books that were being provided at America’s universities. Instead, he pointed out that, politically, people on both the Left and the Right tend to live inside ideological echo chambers. So, there’s unpreparedness for the predictable shock when neither that voter nor any of his or her friends voted for the winner, just as there is shock when the voter and all of his or her friends voted for the loser.

The first voters to suffer disillusionment and panic are those whose candidate lost, for they’d pinned their sense of welfare and safety on that candidate’s winning. Then, as in all such anxiety, they try to get on top of it with hostility. But putting faith in unmixed fantasies about how things “must go” or “must not go”, it’s impossible to avoid the unintended but predictable consequences of disappointment, frustration and fear.

Clinton voters hold themselves hostage to their *imagined* Clinton administration (what they’ll now never know in real time) and so they’re *disappointed*, both *immediately* and for so long as

they hold themselves hostage to those daydreams. And though Trump voters are immediately *pleased* as they hold themselves hostage to *their imagined* Trump administration, they’ll be disappointed later on when an actual Trump administration won’t, and can’t, meet unreasonable expectations of *their* daydreams. Trump voters will *experience* their version of an *actual* administration as it unfolds and, inevitably, it will not live up to *their imagined* Trump administration – as, of course, fantasies never do.

Hostility, shown first by disappointed Clinton voters and later by disappointed Trump voters, is vented to try to get on top of disappointment, anxiety and frustration, so long as one stays stuck in his or her daydreams of otherwise scenarios. On the other hand, a pleasant surprise may be available for anyone who wakes up to the predictable *mixed bag* of any actual situation and this will be the experience of some who voted for Clinton, provided they realize that no mere fantasy to which they may continue to hold is credible.

Such, of course, is the case as well in disappointment over not getting into one’s fantasy college or fantasy job, not getting the fantasy “guy or girl who got away”, etc. Having then no opportunity to actually ever experience the inevitably mixed bag of any actual school, job, guy or girl, one nonetheless tends to regret rather than realize that what one is supposedly “missing” never would have come to pass in the real, mixed world.

So, both Clinton’s and Trump’s voters must identify, challenge and change what they’d set themselves up to believe before the election and what they’re telling themselves now. But that is going to be more difficult than it needs to be if they refuse to break free from their fantasy-reinforcing echo chambers of confirmation bias that prevent wider and more critical thinking – whether on social media, among friends, in classrooms, or wherever.

As liberal *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof warns: “Do we really want to caricature half of Americans, some of whom voted for President Obama twice, as racist bigots? Maybe if we knew more Trump voters we’d be less inclined to stereotype them.” Yet, research shows that nearly a quarter of Democrats and a tenth of Republicans admit to having “blocked, unfriended,

or stopped following someone on social media after the election because of their political posts.” The intolerant, huddled in echo chambers of supposedly “safe space”, refusing to get better acquainted with folks and sources of diverse opinion will continue to fail to come to terms with the *mixed* nature of reality.

AND FINALLY:

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual Resource Center at the University of California, in order to clear up confusion, is passing out “LGBTQIA Ally Tips” so that we “don’t assume all trans people identify as ‘men’ or ‘women’”. Many trans people and genderqueer people identify as both, neither, or something altogether different.” These “Tips” are said to be necessary since people don’t realize that “sex & gender are *assigned* to individuals at birth, rather than being *innate, binary*

or *immutable*.” Meanwhile, a Princeton University directive bans the use of “man” and “woman” in all official communications so as not to offend anyone.

In order to “generate an inclusive and welcoming environment”, the University of Kansas staff and students now get to choose to wear identity buttons: “She/Her/Hers” or “He/Him/His” or “They/Them/Theirs”. It’s part of a “You Belong Here” campaign.

Dartmouth offers a course called, “Hand to Mouth: Writing, Eating, and the Construction of Gender”. The focus is on “food as an intersection of production, consumption and signification, and at how different cultural traditions regulate gender by infusing food with socially determined codes.”

Meanwhile, up at Oregon’s Reed College, a lesbian film director who’d made a pioneering pro-“transsexual” film was invited to speak there. But the student protesters shouted her down

and wouldn’t let her speak. They objected to her being white and not “transgendered”. Calling her a “cis white bitch”, they cursed her and her “transphobia” up one side and down the other – if that doesn’t sound too unforgivably *binary*.

Berkeley university student Pablo Gomez, Jr. is that city’s first murder suspect of 2017, in the killing of one woman and the brutal slashing of another. When the press referred to Gomez as “he”, a comrade complained that Gomez prefers to be called, “they”. The pronoun was duly corrected. “They” is “queer”, pro-Palestine, #BlackLivesMatter and a “climate warrior” in “Chicanx/Latinx Studies”.

And Swarthmore now offers a course called “Queering God”. It “seeks to stretch the limits of gendering and sexing the divine”.