

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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Longtime “ex-gay” leader John Smid says he’s never seen sexual orientation change through all his 22 years in the “ex-gay” movement. He’s written a book, *Ex’d Out*, about coming to this public acknowledgement. EC’s founder, psychotherapist Ralph Blair, endorses it: “However well-intended, the ‘ex-gay’ efforts of the past four decades were always as ill-conceived, ineffective and counterproductive as were all those bygone secular efforts at sexual orientation change. Now, after years of entrapment in and endorsement of ‘ex-gay’ promises, John Smid tells of the painful desperation and disillusionment that drove him deeper into the Good News of God’s grace and peace. Christians who continue to misunderstand and misadvise on gay issues need to take his hard-won testimony seriously.”

“Alan Astray?” This is *World* magazine’s follow-up on Alan Chambers, head of Exodus and *World’s* “Daniel of the Year” in 2011. He’s now blunt: *Homosexuals don’t change their orientation!* But *World*, playing to its Right-wing readers, twists that into a contradiction: “Chambers still believes that change is possible for homosexuals, but he says he’s realistic about the process: It’s usually a lifelong struggle.”

Chambers calls for *no further endorsement* of “reparative therapy”, so some groups are disaffiliating. Since he now allows that Christians can agree to disagree about gay issues, antigay preachers are calling for his resignation, claiming he’s ushering gays into hell.

“Homosexual practice, incest and bestiality [are] more outrageous than fornication or even adultery.” This is the opinion of Robert Gagnon at Pittsburgh Seminary. He justifies his judgment by what he calls the “grossly unnatural” nature of *homosexuality*. He

warns that, to allow same-sex Christian couples to believe they’re not going to lose their salvation by remaining together is to fail to warn them of their eternal damnation. He says this in contradiction to Reformed theology’s doctrine of grace and in spite of what, by Common Grace, is known about homosexuality from the most reliable research.

“I defy these homosexuals to bring forth a baby from that part of the anatomy which they concentrate on.” This is the latest quirk from irked and anatomy-obsessed Pat Robertson on his “700 Club” show. Apparently, he doesn’t realize that homosexual and heterosexual couples are about cherishing one another and not about certain body parts. He’s misinformed, too, about typical same-sex acts. Last year, he said he wouldn’t “put a guilt trip” on a heterosexual for divorcing a spouse with Alzheimer’s. So much for, loving “in sickness and in health until death do us part”.

In the world of the Bible, marriages were arranged between fathers – for sons at around 13 (first ejaculation) and for daughters at around 12 (menarche). Today in the U.S., the average age of first marriage is 28 for men and 26 for women. Such delay is not surprisingly accompanied by years of premarital sex even among evangelicals.

The National Association of Evangelicals is under attack for accepting a million dollar subsidy from the National Campaign for the Prevention of Teen and Unmarried Pregnancy that promotes contraceptives for the unmarried. Marvin Olasky, editor of *World* magazine, discusses this and cites some solutions, one of which is the youths “get married sooner than they had planned”. He cites Paul’s urging marriage as the solution to burning with lust and quotes the Talmud: “He who is 20 years of age and is not married spends all his days

in sin.” Yet, Olasky and NAE’s critics expect every *homosexual* to remain celibate for life.

Eve Tushnet, celibate lesbian Catholic writer, volunteers at a Washington, DC pro-life pregnancy center. She sees abstinence as appropriate focus for teenagers she counsels. But, as she writes in *The Weekly Standard*: “abstinence isn’t a life goal. It’s not a destination or a vocation.” She says: “You can tell a girl, in the evangelical cliché, that she’s ‘worth waiting for’, but to many of our clients, waiting for marriage feels about as useful as waiting for Godot.”

Malone University’s LGBT students seek “safe space”. This Christian school was founded by Friends in 1892 as Cleveland Bible College. When psychology major Sam Taylor distributed flyers on Safe Space for LGBT students, they were thrown away by Student Development officers. Since then, he’s been in conversations with Student Development VP Chris Abrams who says their looking to see “if there are ways within the evangelical Friends history of Malone University that we can better support the needs of the LGBT community.” Safe Space meets weekly on campus but it’s not an *official* campus group.

Safe Space’s Facebook page displays a handwritten letter a father wrote to his gay son, James – disowning him. Originally posted on an atheist website, the father’s letter states: “This is a difficult but necessary letter to write. I hope your telephone call was not to receive my blessing for the degrading of your lifestyle. I have fond memories of our times together, but that is all in the past. Don’t expect any future conversations with me. No conversations at all. I will not come to visit, nor do I want you in my house. You’ve made your choice though wrong it may be. God did not intend for this unnatural lifestyle. If you choose not to attend

my funeral, my friends and family will understand. Have a good birthday and good life. No present exchanges will be accepted. Goodbye. Dad.”

When the letter, now gone viral, was posted at Queerty.com, a reader said: “I really hate this kind of stuff. My conservative Christian, Republican, Baptist, Mason, Texan Father LOVES me! He tells me every chance he gets how proud he is of me, and how brave he thinks it is that I came out. In fact, recently he has started bothering me about finding a partner and settling down! It really hurts me when I see people who can’t see past their own pettiness and love the people in their lives. And tell [the guy whose dad wrote the letter] that if his dad doesn’t eventually come around, mine is available!”

Another wrote: “Thirty years ago, my father was struggling with my coming out. Thankfully, a friend of his said something to the effect of “well, you can choose... you either have a gay son or you have no son...” My father chose to embrace me (and my partner) and embark on his own path of learning and growing. It took him (and my mom) years to fully come around, but they did so and I’m proud of them. They, too, are Christians and generally moderate-conservative types. I guess I am lucky in this respect and my heart goes out to all the other LGBT people whose family walks away from them.”

Antigay policy leaves Shorter University short of faculty. After the new president and board of Southern Baptists’ Shorter University instituted a Fundamentalist turn to require all the staff’s signing a “personal lifestyle” statement against homosexuality and alcohol, most of the faculty resigned – some after decades of faithful service. The Fundamentalist takeover of SBC seminaries in the 1980s and early 1990s is now aimed at SBC colleges. In his letter of resignation, a biology professor may be hinting at the school’s new theme, “Transforming Lives Through Christ”, when he says that the new pledge “does more to turn away non-Christians from Christianity than seeing someone drinking a glass of wine at dinner or accepting those individuals who struggle with their sexuality (whether gay or straight).”

Does Georgetown University tolerate diversity of opinion? In July, that politically correct Catholic school expelled Jarrett Roby from its Community Scholars Program after he privately confided to a Resident Assistant that he was uncomfortable attending the GU mandatory LGBT sensitivity training. An outstanding graduate of an all black male charter school in Chicago, Roby was told he was “close-minded”. He was reported to the program directors. He was told that people “felt threatened”. So, he was expelled.

Gay blogger Azariah Southworth calls it “radical honesty” to out Christian author Jonathan Merritt whom he calls “a good man with great intentions”. He says Merritt “encourages conversation and relationship building over arguments and division.” He says he agrees with the approach Merritt takes in “his hope for a future where people like me and him, gay people, are no longer excluded but included in every aspect of society.” But he’s publicly announced that Merritt is gay. He says that, “exposing this truth of Jonathan’s sexual orientation is not an easy decision for me”. He adds, that, “*the nature and history of my relationship with Jonathan will not be disclosed. However, if evidence is required to back my claim it can be provided.*” Later, in an Internet “apology” to Merritt, Southworth disclosed *sexual details* of the relationship.

Southworth’s blog used to identify him as “evangelical”. He now identifies himself as “agnostic”.

Jonathan Merritt publicly admitted to “physical contact that went beyond the bounds of friendship” with Southworth. He added, though, that he continues to be committed to refraining from such behavior because he believes it’s wrong. He does not identify as “gay”.

In Merritt’s book, *A Faith of Our Own*, he’d written about Christians’ mistreatment of gay people: “Christians – myself included – have allowed our leaders to spew hatred at a community of people who are no more sinful and no less precious than the most pious. Is it any wonder that many churches have no out-of-the-closet gays attending but enough out-of-the-closet gluttons to fill up a dozen church buses?”

Sally Ride, physicist and first American woman astronaut in space, died in July. Her posthumous “outing” as lesbian – in her obituary – noted her 27-year same-sex partnership with her childhood friend, Tam O’Shaughnessy, an emerita professor at San Diego State University. Bear Ride says her sister “never hid her relationship with Tam, [and, their] very close friends, of course, knew.” She adds: “I hope it makes it easier for kids growing up gay that they know that another one of their heroes was like them.” Bear Ride, a Presbyterian minister, is active in her denomination’s LGBT work, More Light,

The United Church of Canada elects an openly gay moderator. Canada’s largest Protestant denomination, formed in a 1925 union of Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians, chose Gary Paterson after eight hours of voting in Ottawa. He will serve the denomination for three years.

Jack Schaap, the preacher at a 40,000-member Independent Fundamental Baptist church was fired for a sex affair with a 16-year-old girl in his congregation. Some say “A Polished Shaft”, his bizarre sermon at a 2004 Youth Conference, should have alerted his congregation. (YouTube 2-minute video)

Virulently antigay and against women-in-leadership, Schaap married the daughter of Hammond, Indiana’s First Baptist founder Jack Hyles and has led the congregation since 2001. He also was chancellor of the Hyles-founded Hyles-Anderson College.

Schaap preached absolute headship by husbands. In his wife’s book on marriage, she writes of her need to diligently prepare for her husband’s coming home each night after she’d taken care of their children all day: “Before my husband would come home, I would read books in private about romance; and I would get myself ready to be excited about romance.” She thanks him for “allowing” her to write a book.

Stephen Peters grew up in an Independent Fundamental Baptist church and graduated from both Pensacola Christian College and Liberty University before joining the Marine Corps. Now openly gay, he serves as the president of the American Military

Partner Association, “connecting, supporting, honoring and serving the partners and spouses of America’s LGBT servicemembers and veterans – our nation’s ‘silent heroes.’” Living state-side as a Marine veteran, Peters is married to an active duty Marine Corps officer deployed to Afghanistan. Peters’ HuffPost blog, “Adam and Eve: A Rational Argument Against Gay Marriage?”, was posted on August 3. He observes: “It’s quite revealing to study what the Bible really does and, more importantly, what it doesn’t say. It’s even more revealing when you actually use historical context to interpret it.”

When engaging the culture at large, what’s “the greatest challenge” for Christians? This question is posed by Jonathan Morrow in his book, *Thinking Christianly* (Zondervan). Jonalyn and Dale Fincher of Soulation.org reply that, to start with, it’s “the ‘Christian’ tendency to think of others as inferior to us, their pursuit of truth less earnest, and their experiences of love less authentic. This may surprise us, but think of our Christian subculture’s reputation for acting superior to others – the way we disdain homosexuals, promote the Founding Fathers as following our brand of Christianity, assume anybody with half a mind would believe the Bible we’re quoting at them.”

“A Call for Conversation from a Gay Christian: To My Fellow Christians ... To My LGBT Community” is a two-part blog by Richmond Schmidt who identifies himself as a peacemaker. At Huffington Post, he introduces folks he knows from one community to folks from the other, encouraging all to get to know who people really are rather than depending on preconceptions and caricatures.

The Coalition of African-American Pastors’ president, the Rev. William Owens, warns that President Obama’s support for same-sex marriage will cost him thousands of black Christians’ votes. Speaking at the National Press Club, the head of this 3,700-member pastors’ organization complains that black votes are taken for granted while what’s important to blacks – “education and incarceration rates” – are ignored.

Owens also spoke against the political efforts to force Chick-fil-A restaurants out of certain cities. “It’s a dis-

grace”, he said. “It’s the same thing that happened when I was marching for civil rights, when they didn’t want a black to come into a restaurant, they didn’t want us staying in their hotels. Now they’re saying, because we take a Christian position, they don’t want us in their cities.”

Chicago’s mayor Rahm Emanuel and mayors of San Francisco, Boston, Washington, DC and other cities ignored the First Amendment when they threatened to ban Chick-fil-A restaurants from their cities. Adam Schwartz, ACLU senior attorney for Illinois, called it “viewpoint discrimination” and George Washington University Law School professor Jonathan Turley said their approach raised “serious” Constitutional concerns.

“Oddly, none of these mayors disinvented any black churches from their cities. Yet,” as historian Victor Davis Hanson notes, many black pastors are “quite loud in their denunciation of gay marriage”. He adds: “Fundamentalist Islamic mosques routinely disparage homosexuals.” So, he poses the rhetorical question: “Is there something about white Christian males [i.e., Dan Cathy, president of Chick-fil-A] that makes their opposition to gay marriage different from that of their black or Muslim counterparts?”

“The Windy City hasn’t yet enacted gay marriage any more than has, say, Atlanta, Georgia, headquarters of Chick-fil-A”, *The New York Sun* editorialized (July 26). “It happens that we wouldn’t object to Mayor Emanuel expressing his differences with the Council of Torah Sages or the Archdiocese of Chicago or any other religious or secular institution that holds views identical, or similar, to those of the proprietor of Chick-fil-A. We have no objection to Mayor Emanuel trying to lead in the formation of a public opinion that he sees as more tolerant of same sex couples. But somewhere the liberal camp has veered far beyond liberality in respect of this issue — from protecting victims of bullying to becoming the bullies themselves.”

New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg gets it: “You can’t have a test for what the owner’s personal views are before you decide to give a permit to do something in the city.” A litmus

test on “religious beliefs” is not a city’s job, says Bloomberg, “and it’s not going to happen in New York City.”

But New York Democrat mayoral wannabe, openly lesbian City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, ignoring the First Amendment rights of Chick-fil-A’s owner, wrote a “Let me be clear” letter on speaker letterhead to John Sexton, president of New York University, landlord of the restaurant’s only franchise in New York City, calling on him to evict it. *The New York Post* pointed out: “That’s not something NYU can take lightly. It has serious business before the council – its massive expansion plan – and the ‘request’ could reasonably be seen as extortionate.” Prominent New York civil liberties lawyer Norman Siegel said: “Quinn was pandering.”

Gay rapper Antoine Dodson isn’t boycotting Chick-fil-A. As his YouTube video makes clear, the boycott isn’t going to stop him from enjoying the food he loves: “Chick-fil-A makes good meals and I eat there, you know what I’m saying, quite frequently, so no one is going to stop me from eating there. If I want to have a Chick-fil-A sandwich, guess what? I’m going to have a Chick-fil-A sandwich. I don’t care about one person’s opinion or how they feel. That’s the way they feel, that’s fine.”

Dodson became an overnight Internet sensation with his rap, “Bed Intruder Song”, against the attempted rape of his sister in 2010. Now, drinking from a Chick-fil-A cup, he goes on to thrill flamboyantly over the hot and crispy waffle fries at Chick-fil-A.

In a follow-up video, Dodson responds to angry gay activists who’ve attacked him for not supporting the boycott. He explains that he’s always treated very well by the hardworking employees at Chick-fil-A and that they’re the ones who really get hurt by a boycott. On August 1, he joined with the throngs of Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day folks and dined at his local outlet: “We all have our different beliefs and can still come together and still be friends and be cool. So I’m here to be in support of the employees, and I’m also coming to get that spicy chicken sandwich.”

Roseanne Barr tweeted: “Anyone who eats Shit-Fil-A deserves to get

the cancer that is sure to come from eating antibiotic filled tortured chickens 4Christ.” In Tucson, a bully ordered nothing but a free water at a Chick-fil-A drive-through window so he could harass the employee, telling her he didn't know how she could live with herself and work for such a “hate” group. She responded with grace. He videotaped his attack and proudly posted it on YouTube. For his unprofessional stunt, he was fired as CFO at Vante, a medical device manufacturer. At Chick-fil-A outlets across the country, and particularly in the South, customers used Appreciation Day to vent vile diatribe against “all the queers”, sharing their bigotry even with (unrecognized) gay and lesbian employees.

The Chick-fil-A gay “kiss-in” protest lays an egg. In contrast to the hundreds of thousands of First Amendment supporters as well as some antigay bigots who flocked to Chick-fil-A restaurants on Appreciation Day, the anti-Chick-fil-A protest two days later produced only a scattering of participants. News media had spiked the upcoming event but, when so few protesters showed up, most media said nothing. Chick-fil-A gave free water and sweet tea to the few gay people who did show up to protest.

“I don't like your politics!” That is what the angry activist said before shooting an unarmed guard at Family Research Council's office in Washington on August 15. Floyd Lee Corkins II, 28, the activist, was wrestled to the floor. Police were called and found 50 rounds of ammunition in his bag. Corkins was a volunteer at a local LGBT center.

FRC and other conservative groups are labeled “hate groups” by the Southern Poverty Law Center. LGBT activist groups call Chick-fil-A's Dan

Cathy, Kirk Cameron and other Christians “hateful” for saying the Bible is antigay. Some see that malicious stereotyping contributes to violence against conservatives. Dana Millbank says in *The Washington Post* that both sides have used “reckless” rhetoric and that SPLC “should stop listing a mainstream Christian advocacy group alongside neo-Nazis and Klansmen.” *The Daily Beast's* David Sessions agreed that unwarranted use of the “hate” term is wrong. But others defended SPLC, including evangelical pacifist Aaron Taylor.

The Presidential contenders agree on gay Boy Scouts! President Obama has joined Mitt Romney in saying that being gay should not *disqualify* a boy from membership in the Scouts. Romney, a former Boy Scouts of American national board member, had voiced his support of *gay* Scouts back in 1994 – 18 years ago and he maintains that position. President Obama now agrees with him.

Elton John praised George W. Bush and other conservatives in his address at the 2012 International AIDS Conference. John said: “We've seen George W. Bush and conservative American politicians pledge tens of billions to save the lives of Africans with HIV. Think of all the love. Think of where we'd be without it, nowhere, that's where. We'd be nowhere at all. Thanks to all this compassion, thanks to all this love, more than 8 million people are on treatment. Thanks to people who have chosen to care and to act, we can see an end to this epidemic on the horizon.”

On his personal experience in meeting President Bush, John tells ABC News: “I found him charming, I found him well informed and I found him determined to do something about the

AIDS situation so I changed my opinion of him. And his wife was astonishingly kind to us as well. So ... I learned a lesson.”

“It's gayface! They're a gay version of 'Amos 'n' Andy'.” That's the Stonewall Veterans Association complaint over what the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation celebrates as all the LGBT characters on TV while it warns that the word “homosexual” may offend. The SVA is referring to what *New York Post* columnist Andrea Peyser calls “characters so stereotypically fey ... so flamboyant, fabulous and creepy Liberace wants his rhinestones back.”

AND FINALLY:

“The Phallus” is a class at Occidental College. Students learn of “the signification of the phallus, the relation of the phallus to masculinity, femininity, genital organs and the fetish, the whiteness of the phallus, and the lesbian phallus.” University of Michigan offers a course called, “Rednecks, Queers, and Country Music”, dealing with “redneck bigotry”, “rural queers” and social theory. Family Forum calls University of Louisiana's new sociology minor in LGBT Studies, “a degree in immorality [and] aberrant behavior”. It's also a degree that, after four expensive years, limits career potential to asking: “Will you have fries with that order?”

Identity studies is analyzed by openly gay literary critic Bruce Bawer in his new book, *The Victims' Revolution: The Rise of Identity Studies and the Closing of the Liberal Mind*. Worse than the curriculum's ideological bias, bloated rhetoric and a posture of “antinormative” when it's really “mind-numbingly conformist”, Bawer argues that it's simply bad education.

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