

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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EC's 16th Annual Preaching Festival in Ocean Grove, NJ will be on Columbus Day Weekend, October 5-7, 2018. Registration begins at 4 PM on Friday, October 5th at Grove Hall. Dinner is at 6 PM at The Starving Artist. The weekend concludes after lunch on Sunday, October 7th. The cost is \$200 and covers living accommodations, all meals and the rental of Thornley Chapel. For reservations: registrar@ecinc.org

This year's centennial honorees are Gardner C. Taylor, Billy Graham, and Aleksandre Solzhenitsyn, each born in 1918. Along with biographical reflections, we'll examine their autographed letters, signed books and other mementoes, including Solzhenitsyn's signed 1978 Vermont vehicle registration card. There will also be three preaching sessions on biblical themes that were reflected throughout their lives of Christian witness.

The Supreme Court's Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission decision very explicitly noted the excessive "religious hostility" of Colorado's Civil Rights Commission against the Christian baker, Jack Phillips. So, it decided the case in Phillips' favor. Yet, this same Civil Rights Commission is continuing its obvious "religious hostility" against Phillips. On July 20, it filed a *new* complaint against him. This one is about his declining to design a custom cake that's been explicitly ordered to be pink on the inside and blue on the outside to celebrate a "gender transition".

According to the Alliance Defending Freedom, "The state of Colorado is ignoring the message of the U.S. Supreme Court by continuing to single out Jack for punishment and to exhibit hostility toward his religious beliefs. Even though Jack serves all customers and simply declines to create custom cakes that express messages or celebrate events in violation of his deeply

held beliefs, the government is intent on destroying him—something the Supreme Court has already told it not to do".

So, the ADF filed a federal lawsuit against Colorado's Civil Rights commissioners and the governor, accusing the state of persecuting Phillips. It seeks punitive damages.

Ever since the Supreme Court's decision in Phillips' favor, mean-spirited orders have been coming to him for cakes made of marijuana, cakes with X-rated messages, and cakes with Satanic religious symbols, including an order for a three-tiered cake with Satan licking a working 9-inch dildo.

Political columnist and out lesbian, Tammy Bruce, critiques these continuing attacks against Jack Phillips.

She notes, in *The Washington Times*: "Liberals and gay activists remain obsessed with forcing Christians to bake their cakes. And the answer, in the name of individual, religious and even gay civil rights, must still be no." This former executive of NOW, states: "If you doubt the intensity of the left's fixation on punishing people of faith, I submit to you Colorado's so-called Civil Rights Commission. Despite the fact that Masterpiece Cakeshop won a 7-2 U.S. Supreme Court victory condemning the state for punishing Jack Phillips for his religious beliefs, they're going after him again. This time, the set-up involves a request for a variety of cakes that would violate his religious belief, including a cake celebrating a gender transition."

Earlier, in her London *Guardian* column, Bruce observed: "As a gay woman who spent most of her adult life pushing the cart for liberal causes with liberal friends in a liberal city, I found that sexism, racism and homophobia are staples in the liberal world. The huge irony is, liberals spend every ounce of energy promoting the notion that they are the banner carriers of individualism and personal freedom, yet

the hammer comes down on anyone who dares not to conform to, or who dissents even in part, from the liberal agenda."

Jimmy Kimmel uses homophobic and transphobic taunts to trash Jack Phillips. Kimmel mocks: "This is a guy who spends all day, every day, meticulously designing flowers out of icing – his whole life is gay, okay?" Kimmel amps up his mean-spirited sarcasm for more laughs: "I don't know if he's worried the wrong cake might bring that to life or what, because *ha ha you might be gay*. ... This is Jack Phillips, the totally straight cake baker – you would think that someone who looks like the Reba McEntire version of Colonel Sanders would be more sympathetic to gender identity issues."

Conservative columnist John Nolte recalls that, "Back in June, Phillips told *The Today Show*, that he would never design a cake that 'would disparage anyone who identifies as LGBT'." Nolte then notes: "Kimmel, however, is more than willing to disparage those who identify as LGBT – and is doing so on network television by using their identity as an insult. ... Leftists like Kimmel are now so blinded by ideology they are not only no longer standing up for artistic freedom, they are revealing a latent homophobia to express their seething anti-Christian bigotry."

A federal judge has awarded \$1 in nominal damages and \$127,248 for legal fees that an antigay religious Fundamentalist incurred in a lawsuit with the city of Syracuse.

It was determined that his First and Fourteenth Amendment rights were violated at LGBT Pride events in 2014 and 2015. The judge ruled he was illegally restricted from talking in a public space. City attorneys have approved the payments.

Justin Lee has written a new book, *Talking Across the Divide: How to*

Communicate with People You Disagree with and Maybe Even Change the World.

From his years of experience in speaking with those who weren't always on the same page, he shares specific strategies to facilitate conversations that help us rethink and understand each other better, no matter the subject matter. He discusses five major barriers that get in the way: ego protection, team loyalty, misinformation, comfort, and worldview protection. And, he discusses "how modern social media has made it easier for us to retreat into our own 'bubbles' and lose any connection with the people who disagree with us, thus insulating us from their criticisms and allowing both us and them to live in unhealthy echo chambers that nurture extremism and polarization."

His new book, published by Penguin Random House, may be ordered online through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Walmart, et al. Justin's website is www.geekyjustin.com.

"We may be strange bedfellows, but it's rare that people can just park whatever their political persuasions and ideology may be and try to help people in trouble, and that's what happened here." That's Bill Horan, president of Operation Blessing, founded in 1978 by Pat Robertson, speaking of his teaming up with the Left-wing Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers. She's married to a woman rabbi. Says Weingarten, agreeing with Horan: "If you meet people where they are, and if you work on a values proposition – that, in America, we care about families and we care about their health and safety – then you can work with all sorts of strange bedfellows." They were both speaking of their joint charity work in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico.

"As Christians we don't begin to throw a tantrum over what has been brought into law today, but we become that much more loving." This was the posted comment of Jaelene Hinkle, a champion women's soccer player and a devout Christian, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in support of same-sex marriage. She, herself, didn't agree with the ruling.

Now, in an effort to put together the best soccer team, the U.S. Women's National Team coach, Jill Ellis, a lesbian married to another lesbian, has put Hinkle on the roster for the Tournament of Nations. Hinkle tweeted: "God is good! Honored. Excited. Ready."

But, knee-jerk reaction to news of Hinkle's inclusion was summed up by the headline of *Slate's* Christina Cauterucci's anti-Christian attack against her: "Kick Her Off!"

"When elites speak of tribalism, we tend to think we're somehow above it. After all, we have educated minds that have developed the intellectual muscles to resist coarser loyalties, have we not?" That's Andrew Sullivan – public intellectual, Roman Catholic and gay advocate – writing on, "Kanye West and the Question of Freedom" in *New York Magazine*. Sullivan says: "We like to think we can see complexity and nuance rather than wallowing in coarse Manichean ideas, articulated by demagogues, that divide the world into 'us' and 'the other'. It's the unthinking masses who do that. Not us. Unlike them, we are aware of the dangers of this temptation, alert to its irrationality. We resist it. Except, quite often, we don't."

Evangelicals, Mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics who counsel celibacy for fellow Christians who are same-sex attracted held their first Revoice Conference at the conservative PCA's Memorial Presbyterian Church in St. Louis in July.

In the wake of the disastrous "ex-gay" movement, with all its false promises of sexual orientation "change", evangelicals who cannot see their way clear to support same-sex couples (Side A) are calling for same-sex attracted folks to be *celibate*, a view known as Side B. Revoice is a new Side B movement. Among the speakers at the Revoice event were Ron Belgau, Eve Tushnet, Nate Collins, Ray Low, Grant Hartley and Wesley Hill.

But to vehemently antigay heterosexuals such as Peter Jones, Revoice is a "sliding into heresy". Jones and his cohorts can't abide any same-sex oriented Christians' even calling themselves "celibate gay Christians" or identifying as "queer", even if they are fully committed to living *celibate* lives for the rest of their lives. Jones, in sync

with other rabidly antigay preachers such as Tim Bayly and his colleagues, also insist that even "effeminacy" is condemned in the Bible and they recoil at anything that they perceive is, in the least bit, "effeminate" in any man.

Greg Johnson, pastor of the host PCA church, got a lot of flack for even letting Revoice folks use that PCA facility. He grants: "We must be prepared for a massive splintering in the ranks of orthodox Christianity over the powerful issue of sexuality."

Indeed, since news of the Revoice event first appeared, naysayers have launched their loud objections. Still, even Denny Burk, the Southern Baptist leader behind the antigay "Nashville Statement", says that, though he didn't attend the Revoice Conference, he reviewed tapes and, "I was moved by the fact that so many of the presenters seemed to have experienced a great deal of pain in their lives. I noticed on social media that some attendees were expressing thankfulness just to be around other people who have been through the same struggles they have been through. There were many expressions of sadness from the podium about churches that have not treated them well. This made me grieve."

Since Revoice was held at a church of the conservative Presbyterian Church in America and a faculty member at the PCA's nearby Covenant Seminary was presenting a talk on Leviticus at Revoice, the seminary's president, Mark Dalby, thought he had to issue a disclaimer to explain what didn't need to be explained, namely, that this faculty member's presentation was totally consistent with PCA's official antigay position from Leviticus, and reiterating that, "Our faculty firmly believes that God's intent for sexuality, laid down in creation and reaffirmed by our Lord, is that it be expressed in marriage between a man and a woman." That, of course, is the very same position that Revoice already takes. But the antigay uproar was, again, more about use of self-identity expressions such as "gay Christian". So, on this, Dalby stated unequivocally: "To say, 'I am a Christian who struggles with "x" kind of ongoing temptation to certain kinds of sin,' is part of the testimony of one's sanctification but is not the foundation of who we are in Christ." Revoice speakers, however, were *not claiming* that being a "lesbian or a gay

Christian” was “the foundation of who we are in Christ”. But, given their own personal experiences of the discrimination aimed against them *precisely* because of their sexual orientation, and because of their *continuing awareness* of their everyday same-sex attraction, it isn’t strange to include such an inescapable sense of that personal identity. Indeed, it’s been observed that, for heterosexuals, not to be more realistically sensitive to all of the homophobia in churches is a huge pastoral failing.

In 1975, EC’s founder was in Kansas City to keynote the *Homosexual Counseling Journal’s* all-day workshop for people in the mental health professions. Covenant faculty members attended, including Robert G. Rayburn, Covenant Seminary’s founding president. They said they found the workshop useful and Rayburn suggested that the EC ministry that Blair was then planning be publicly launched during the next convention of the National Association of Evangelicals. And, this is what was done.

From EC’s founding – as it was true with Justin Lee’s later founding of GCN – EC not only supported same-sex couples in loving, monogamous relationship, but also supported same-sex oriented folks who, because of conscience, didn’t see their way clear to be in a same-sex relationship. It’s not spiritually wise or psychologically healthy to violate one’s conscience – whatever its basis in truth or falsehood. But, it is possible, through a deeper study of Scripture and by prayer as well as by experience and friendship with other devout Christians, to gain understanding that allows for honest revision of what one was taught to believe. Christians change their minds about various issues over time – just as all people do. This has gone on throughout Christian history. It’s what happened in even the very earliest churches on controversial issues that were worked through, e.g., on full inclusion of Gentiles, on dietary freedoms, circumcision, female apostles, etc.

The conservative Presbyterian Church in America’s “First Biblical Examination of The Gospel and Race” is just now being published in 2018. The PCA was formed in 1973 by the merging of some conservative churches with congregations of the Old South’s Presbyterian Church, US, that

was once, with “biblical” rationalizations, a defender of racial segregation and an opponent of interracial marriage.

It was in 2016 that the PCA finally acknowledged and repented of “past failures to love brothers and sisters from minority cultures”. But nowadays, it’s mistreating another “minority”, the same-sex oriented, with a similar lack of love and an appeal to disputed Bible verses. It’s been noted that it may take another several decades for these antigay Presbyterians to get around to revising their views and apologizing for them. But, by then, as before, so many of the victims and victimizers will have died.

The United Methodist bishops have endorsed a plan for LGBT ordinations and same-sex marriages to be left up to local pastors and regional bodies. It’s explained that, “The Council’s prayerful deliberation reflected the diversity of the global denomination on the matter of homosexuality and many other matters.”

“What we don’t have at MCC-dominated Other Sheep: academic and religious freedom.” This is a July 9th headline on a Twitter posting from Stephen Parelli, the original executive director of the pro-LGBT organization, Other Sheep. The group’s leftist MCC board has summarily ousted him for expressing his personal appreciation for President Trump. Parelli and his husband, Jose Ortiz, have been the leaders in the work of Other Sheep’s international ministry for the past 13 years.

Gretta Vosper is an atheist and she’s also an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada. Some might be puzzled about this combination, but she proudly declares that the UCC is “progressive” enough to include some who believe in God as well as “people who have no belief in God whatsoever”. She labels this, “progressive faith”. She’s really no different in this matter than many others in an ever dwindling mainline Protestantism.

She’s been in the U.S. advocating for “The Promise of Progressive Christianity”. She objects to what she disdains as “brittle definitions that Christians have long held”. But a critic notes that, in doing this, she seems to be oblivious

to her own “brittle definition” of “Christianity”. Progressives proudly support unreservedly dogmatic and evermore demanding “brittle definitions” of the ever-elongating LGBTQIATS+ agenda.

Another liberal Episcopal church has closed its doors for lack of a congregation. It’s been in decline since the mid-60s. But the pro-gay Episcopal Church is being accused of hypocrisy for even considering sale of the building on New Orleans’ Canal Street to a big, vehemently anti-gay Fundamentalist congregation that pushes “ex-gay” claims. The Episcopal Church authorities have not been quick to respond to these worries.

The Southern Poverty Law Center was founded in 1971. As an Alabama prosecutor back then, today’s Attorney General Jeff Sessions worked closely with the SPLC against the KKK. But, in more recent years, the SPLC has repeatedly and falsely labeled, as “hate groups” or “hate speech”, those with whom the SPLC simply *disagrees* – especially conservative individuals and groups such as the Alliance Defending Freedom. Yet, ADL legal efforts have *prevailed* in the US Supreme Court 9 times in the past 7 years. The Attorney General is calling for a review of the Justice Department’s partnering with the SPLC.

“Jaws were left flung open, tears hung precariously in people’s eyes and a deafening silence took over the theatre.” This was the reaction of a Sydney, Australia audience at the end of “The Rolling Stone”, a play about Uganda’s mistreatment of homosexuals. It centered on a man who was lynched, though he’d been misidentified as homosexual. Uganda’s gay and lesbian citizens live in constant and deadly danger. Same-sex acts are illegal and, repeatedly, the identities of alleged homosexuals (names, addresses, photos) are published with religion-based calls to “hang them”.

“How can foreigners force us to accommodate homosexuality? We are not like them and will never practice such a satanic act.” Ghana’s General Superintendent of The Assemblies of God, Paul Frimpong Manso was, here, reacting to UK Prime Minister Theresa

May's urging Africa's leaders to accommodate homosexuality. He vowed to give "my last drop of blood" to *oppose* homosexuality.

For decades, hundreds of Roman Catholic priests in Pennsylvania sexually abused more than 1,000 children. That's according to a 900-page grand jury report released in August. "Priests were raping little boys and girls while those who were responsible for doing something about it did nothing. They hid it all." The report names 301 abusive priests, though the grand jury received files on more than 400. Most victims were boys. The abuse ranged from groping and masturbation to anal, oral, and vaginal rape. The 18-month probe investigated the dioceses of Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Allentown, Scranton, Erie and Greensburg. Over half of the Catholics in the state live in these six dioceses.

According to the report, "The pattern was abuse, deny and cover-up. It served a legal purpose that church officials manipulated for their advantage." Church officials routinely used language like "horseplay" to downplay concerns brought forward by victims or their families. "Several diocesan administrators, including the bishops, often dissuaded victims from reporting abuse to police, pressured law enforcement to terminate or avoid an investigation or conducted their own deficient, biased investigation without reporting crimes against children to the proper authorities," according to the report.

"A molesting club with an opening prayer." That's what Comedy Central's Trevor Noah dubbed the Catholic Church. Ben Shapiro reported that Noah's "diatribe followed the horrifying news that a bevy of Pennsylvania archdiocese had covered up child molestation for decades."

Shapiro, a devout Orthodox Jew, Harvard Law-trained and skilled debater, explained that, according to Hofstra University research for the U.S. Department of Education, "The physical sexual abuse of students in schools is likely more than 100 times the abuse by priests." Among other studies, he cites a survey from the American Association of University Women that found that "one in ten students from 8th to 11th grades said they had been subjected to

sexual comments, pornography, peeping, or sexual contact from a teacher or school employee. That would mean that 4.5 million students from K-12 have suffered sexual abuse by an educator".

Shapiro says: "The scandal inside the Catholic Church is absolutely shocking – and the public consequences should be dire. But for Noah to label the Catholic Church in a way he would no other institution betrays hatred for the underlying institution itself."

Delaware has become the 15th state to restrict mental health professionals' use of so-called "conversion" or "ex-gay therapy". The states of Washington, Maryland, New Hampshire and Hawaii have also passed such legislation this year. Antigay religionists are upset with these legislative decisions, claiming that the restrictions violate freedom of religion, but more and more evangelical Christians, who once were in favor of "ex-gay" efforts, now realize that the "ex-gay" promises were based on wishful thinking, fraud and uninformed readings of scripture. And some "ex-gay" leaders sexually abused those who came to them for the "ex-gay" experience.

In 2013, after 37 years of failures, Exodus, the largest network of "ex-gay" efforts for changing a person's sexual orientation, closed down with apologies for its "reparative" promises and false claims of success. Not only were the promises and claims baseless, but, they led to depression, suicides and loss of Christian faith on the part of those who were misled.

Abdel Wahab Taib, 29, shouted "Allah Akbar" ("God is greater!") as he rushed at policemen while he was wielding a knife near Barcelona. He was shot dead. His ex-wife says he had feared the shame and disgrace when the local Muslim community found out about his homosexuality. According to prosecutors, "his intent was to kill or die trying", in his effort to please Allah by *jihād* and gain forgiveness for his homosexuality.

Most racial and ethnic groups in America favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally. Between 2013 and 2017, there's been a double-digit increase in support for same-sex marriage among Americans

who are white (53 percent vs. 63 percent), black (41 percent vs. 52 percent), and Hispanic (51 percent vs. 61 percent). Today, 39 percent of black Americans, 30 percent of white Americans, and 26 percent of Hispanic Americans *oppose* same-sex marriage. These are findings of the Public Religion Research Institute.

A Wake Forest charter school has changed the term "promotion" to "harassment" in revising its handbook. The old version said that, "promotion, affirmation or discussion of behaviors associated with the terms, 'sexual orientation' or 'gender identity,' including homosexuality, bisexuality and transgenderism, are expressly prohibited". The new version says that, "harassment on the basis of affirmation or discussion of behaviors associated with the terms, 'sexual orientation' or 'gender identity,' including homosexuality, bisexuality or transgenderism, are expressly prohibited." Franklin Academy explains that this change was made to correct a misunderstanding.

Professors of "Ethnic, Cultural, Gender, and Group Studies" are paid \$12,000 more than the average professor across all disciplines and institutions. They're paid nearly \$16,000 more than the average math professor across all institutions, and more than the average biology and biomedical professor, average professor of engineering technologies, and physical sciences. They're paid on average, \$105,656 across all institutions while math and statistics professors are paid on average, \$89,691 across all institutions. Yet Gender and Ethnic Studies are far less based in rigorous and replicated research.

Austin's University of Texas counseling staff urged UT's male students to wear nail polish and makeup to promote a sensitivity to "gender fluidity" against traditional masculine roles. Male students were told to renounce their conventional gender objectives, e.g., aiming at "success" and "act[ing] like a man". But after word of this so-called "MasculinUT" retraining program was leaked beyond the campus, it was dropped.

Two biological boys, competing as transgender girls in the girls' races,

came in 1st and 2nd in the Connecticut High School Open track and field championships in June. When asked about the two girls who were knocked out of the finals by the two biological boys and the two girls who finished seventh and eighth in the finals and were thus denied a chance to compete in these New England championships, the executive director of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference mustered this replied: "We do feel for them. Fully agree it doesn't feel good. The optic isn't good. But we really do

have to look at the bigger issues that speak to civil rights."

Drunk and wearing a woman's nightgown, a man was refused admission to a shelter for battered women and victims of sex trafficking. He claimed he identified as a woman. The director of this Alaskan Christian shelter for abused women gave him cab fare to go to another facility. He then registered a complaint to the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission. It has now filed suit against this Christian women's shelter for its not letting the man sleep overnight in the same room

where all of the women sleep. The Christian shelter's lawyer is also being sued.

AND FINALLY:

"For the purposes of this guide, we'll refer to the vagina as the 'front hole' instead of solely using the medical term 'vagina'. This is gender-inclusive language that's considerate of the fact that some trans people don't identify with the labels the medical community attaches to their genitals." The new *LGBTQIA Safe Sex Guide* explains this.