

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

Spring 2013

Newsletter of EVANGELICALS CONCERNED, INC., 311 East 72nd Street, New York, New York, 10021

**The 100<sup>th</sup> person to keynote an EC summer retreat will be Shari Johnson.** She's the author of *Above All Things: The Journey of an Evangelical Christian Mother & Her Gay Daughter*. Johnson is president of P-FLAG in Odessa, Texas. The 101<sup>st</sup> person to be an EC keynoter will be Jared Porter of the Bob Jones University GLBT alumni group. His BJU degrees are in church music and drama production. He's the great grandson of Fundamentalist evangelist Ford Porter. EC founder Ralph Blair will also keynote.

ConnECTION2013, EC's 71<sup>st</sup>, will take place at the Lodge at Kirkridge, the Appalachian mountaintop site of EC's eastern summer retreats since 1980. Dates are May 31 – June 2.

**EC held our 26th annual winter Bible study weekend in February.** EC folk gathered around the Kirkridge lodge's roaring fireplace and studied Paul's letter to the Philippians.

**EC's 2013 Preaching Festival at Ocean Grove, NJ will be October 11 – 13.** The event will honor bicentennials of Robert Murray M'Cheyne, Soren Kierkegaard, David Livingstone and Jemima Luke. Ralph Blair will give the annual history lecture as well as three sermons during Ocean Grove's Harvest Festival weekend.

**John F. Alexander's posthumous *Being Church* was published in late 2012.** In his review, sociologist Tony Campolo calls Alexander "one of the unsung heroes in the modern Christian world. His un-

derstanding of Christianity as a counter-cultural movement is profound." Ron Sider, founder of Evangelicals for Social Action says the book is, "Superb. Disturbing. Challenging. Radical because it is biblical."

A graduate of Oxford, one-time Wheaton College teacher, co-founder of *the other side* magazine and longtime civil rights and peace activist, Alexander was involved with the Church of the Sojourners in San Francisco when he died in 2001.

In *Being Church*, he writes of the 1980s: "I eventually found progressive Christians' rights orientation (by then *my* rights orientation) to lack depth. Their litany of who was violating their rights and the rights of others grew boring and had a stunningly different tenor from Jesus' teaching."

After keynoting EC conferences in 1985 and 1986, he wrote to Ralph Blair to say: "I want you to know that my time at both the EC conferences I've been to has been important to me. I'm not sure why it has been so important to me, and the truth is that it surprises me a little." He guessed it had to do with having had "little contact with gays" but went on to say that, "something more important has happened to me at both conferences. It is partly you; I was very pleased by both your presentations – your call to a broader faith than gay-is-OK is vital. Certainly you have every reason in the world to be obsessed by gayness to the exclusion of everything else, but you have refused to let that happen. Thank you." Blair's keynote addresses at those two summer con-

ferences were his, "Faithing and Self-Esteem" and "Jesus Who?"

**Jeanne Manford, 92, has died.** Mother of the late gay activist, Morty Manford, she started Parents of Gays (now P-FLAG) in 1972. An advisory board member of the Homosexual Community Counseling Center founded by Ralph Blair in 1971, she wrote "A Mother's Letter" for parents of gays for the *Homosexual Counseling Journal* (January, 1975). Unlike all other articles in the quarterly, hers was printed in her own *handwriting* – to accent the *personal* point to parents.

**"Dear Evangelicals, Let's Stop Burying Our Heads in the Sand on 'Ex-Gay' Ministries."** This is the heading on a *HuffPost* piece by Justin Lee, founder of 20,000-member Gay Christian Network. Noting yet another "ex-gay" clergy-counselor's arrest for sex with his minor counselees, Lee warns: "So let me say this as a fellow evangelical: Brothers and sisters, whether you support or oppose same-sex relationships, one fact is undeniable. No ministry can turn same-sex attracted people into opposite-sex attracted people. It simply doesn't happen. You can call folks 'gay,' 'ex-gay,' 'struggling' or 'tempted,' but that simple fact remains. We can bury our collective heads in the sand, but that only exposes our loved ones to abuses like this one and misunderstandings from their own churches and families. That is not the way of Jesus. If we're going to be worthy to call ourselves Christians, we need to face the realities of people's lives head-on and then determine a reasonable and

compassionate response. We can't do that when we're blinding ourselves."

**John Paulk's Facebook's favorite websites** include Queer Aperture Photography, Under U4 Men, Captain America and Prince Harry. The former Exodus board chair and former head of Focus on the Family's "ex-gay" efforts, Paulk posts his current status: "I am on a hard journey right now, I want [Anne] to know how much she has always meant to me and that no matter where things pan out ... I always will love you." A *Newsweek* cover in 1998 featured Paulk and his "ex-lesbian" wife, Anne, as models of "ex-gay" success. (Ralph Blair's review of Paulk's book is in *EC's Review*, Fall, 1998.)

In 2000, Paulk was caught and photographed at a D.C. gay bar during his "ex-gay" speaking tour for Focus on the Family. Three years later he left Focus, grew his hair long and bleached, and opened a high-end catering business in Portland. Reportedly, he's in the "gay scene" there, while Anne is now on the board of newly formed Restored Hope, set up in reaction to Exodus' shift away from "ex-gay" *change* claims.

**Pittsburgh Seminary's Robert Gagnon joins Restored Hope against what he calls "the homosexualist agenda"**. He says homosexual practice is a mechanical misfit that can't "reunite" God's image in linked-genders marriage. But Bible scholars, behavioral scientists and clinicians note Gagnon's poor grasp of exegesis, hermeneutics and psychosexuality as well as his wishful thinking on "ex-gay" outcomes.

Veteran "ex-gay"-activist Frank Worthen keynoted Restored Hope's launch. Yet, he has long admitted: "At no time has [his own "ex-gay" group] stridently proclaimed a new-found cure for homosexuality." He's complained: "The Christian

world doesn't want to hear that. All they want to hear, [is what they've] already answered for us and will not listen to anything that we have to say. Their ears are closed, for they fear qualifications. Anything that will modify the answer is bad news and counterproductive to their cause." And, he's warned: "When the sun [comes out] and the clothes [come] off, ["ex-gays" have] a full blown problem." Even "during the winter months," the "ex-gays" have only "a measure of victory" and he's confessed that, "one of the most difficult battles ex-gay men and women face is working through attractions we often have to members of the same sex." He's urged "ex-gays" to "cut down the number of times you are seeing the person [to whom you're homosexually attracted]. Using the telephone rather than visiting." He's recommended that, for friendship, "ex-gays" seek out "the physically unattractive".

**UK evangelical leader Steve Chalke endorses committed, same-sex relationship.** According to sociologist Tony Campolo: "The significance of what Steve – a Baptist Minister – has done cannot be overstated." Chalke writes: "When we refuse to make room for gay people to live in loving, stable relationships, we consign them to lives of loneliness, secrecy and fear. It's one thing to be critical of a promiscuous lifestyle, but shouldn't the Church consider nurturing positive models for permanent and monogamous homosexual relationships?" He grants: "Some will think that I have strayed from scripture, that I am no longer an evangelical. I have formed my view, however, not out of any disregard for the Bible's authority, but by way of grappling with it and, through prayerful reflection, seeking to take it seriously."

Antigay clergy, including the mocking, sodomy-obsessed, Bayly brothers, were quick to denounce Chalke. Evangelical Alliance's

Steve Clifford said: "The danger we all face – and I fear Steve has succumbed to – is that we produce 'a god' in our own likeness or in the likeness of the culture in which we find ourselves." But, as another evangelical says, Clifford and EA are guilty of producing a "god" in the likeness of *their* subculture.

Chalke is but one of the latest of evangelical leaders to support same-sex couples. In the past four decades, they include Bob Rayburn, Genie Price, Joyce Blackburn, Ros Rinker, Lew Smedes, Nancy Hardesty, Peggy Campolo, Kay Lindskoog, Reta Finger, Letha Scanzoni, Dave Myers, Marten Woudstra, Harry Boer, Val Clear, Paul Jewett, Nick Wolterstorff, Ken Medema, Stan Rock, Don Dayton, Doug Miller, Randy Balmer, Roy Clements, Phyllis Hart, Cynthia Clawson, Kathy Olsen, Fisher Humphreys, Walt Hearn, Wally Howard, Charlie Shedd, Ray McAfee, Clark Barshinger, Bob Wennberg, Chuck Smith, Jr., Jack Rogers, Misty Irons, Jared Byas and many more.

**"I do not believe the Bible prohibits same sex marriage.** This is well-trod ground by many biblical scholars", says Tony Jones, adjunct professor at Fuller Seminary. Jones explains: "Marriage changes. What is considered 'marriage' has evolved over time and across societies. Even the Bible reflects that evolution. This is an inescapable fact. This word, 'marriage', is a placeholder for a variety of meanings, emotions, and ideals, but it's not a *static* entity."

**"We must have no truck with any form of homophobia, in any part of the church."** Justin Welby, Bishop of Durham, said this in his first press conference following the announcement of his being chosen as new Archbishop of Canterbury. He supports the Church of England's opposition to gay marriage, but noted: "I know I need to listen very attentively to the LGBT com-

munities, and examine my own thinking prayerfully and carefully.” Formerly a London businessman, Welby is a committed evangelical.

**Republican Senator Rob Portman of Ohio now supports same-sex marriage.** He says it was his son’s coming out to the family that changed his mind. Portman explains that he wants his son “to have the same opportunities that his brother and sister would have – to have a relationship like Jane and I have had for over 26 years.” Democratic gay activist David Mixner responds: “There is no more revolutionary act for an LGBT person than to come out and change the minds of all those who love you.”

**“Marriage Equality is a Conservative Cause”** according to Jon Huntsman in *The American Conservative*. Republican, former Utah Governor, former US Ambassador to China, businessman and Mormon, he says: “I’ve been married for 29 years. My marriage has been the greatest joy of my life. There is nothing conservative about denying other Americans the ability to forge that same relationship with the person they love.”

**“Quite literally, the opposition to gay marriage is dying. It’s old people.”** So said *Washington Post* conservative columnist George Will on ABC’s *This Week*.

**A gay-supportive panel at the 2013 Conservative Political Action Conference packed a conference room while an antigay panel drew only a few.** CPAC organizers excluded GOProud from this year’s event.

**The anti-same-sex marriage movement is suffering financially.** ProtectMarriage.com, had a two million dollar deficit in its legal fund at the end of 2011 – the third year in a row that expenses exceeded donations. Yet, 2011 tax returns

of the National Organization for Marriage show that its president was paid over \$500,000. In response to publication of the tax return, he tweeted: “I bring home less than 1/2 that.”

**Why do religious people want the government involved in marriage?** Mormon and libertarian talk show host Glenn Beck posed this in conversation with atheist magician Penn Jillette. Beck: “Let me take the pro-gay marriage people and the religious people. I believe that there is a connecting dot there that nobody is looking at, and that’s the Constitution. ... The question is not whether gay people should be married or not, the question is why is the government involved in our marriage?” Jillette agreed.

**“Evangelicals prepare to sue Jewish state for right to marry”**, headlines *Christianity Today*. “Hundreds of Israeli evangelical couples have traveled out of the country in order to get married because the Jewish government does not officially recognize their faith. Church leaders are escalating efforts to change that.” The director of Nazareth Baptist School complains that, in terms of marriage, divorce and education, “not being recognized leads to practical problems.” The pragmatic concern is like that of same-sex couples denied legal marriage through politico-religious clout of conservative Christians.

**Loneliness is unhealthy.** An Ohio State University College of Medicine study indicates that lonely persons experience more reactivation of latent viruses than do those in satisfying relationship. The finding was presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology by OSU Institute for Behavioral Medicine Research postdoctoral fellow Lisa Jaremka. She also noted that the lonely are more likely to produce inflammato-

ry compounds in response to stress, a significant factor in heart disease and other chronic disorders. But life-long loneliness is, in effect, what many conservative religionists try to force on same-sex oriented persons, insisting that they must remain celibate or enter an orientation-discordant marriage.

**“Faith was First” for Van Cliburn**, as *The Baptist Standard* headlined upon the pianist’s death. *Christianity Today* cites a close friend’s saying: “People of this generation do not understand that Van did as much as anybody to thaw the Cold War – and he did that carrying Christ in his heart.” Cliburn, 78, was a member of Broadway Baptist in Ft. Worth. In 2009, the Southern Baptist Convention dropped that congregation because of its support of gay members. Say pastor Brent Beasley: “Van was shy and reserved. ... When in town on Sundays, he slipped in usually as we got started [in worship] and sat in the back and slipped out when it was over. And he’d always stop on his way out and give me a big hug and say, ‘Wonderful, wonderful.’” Cliburn is survived by his longtime companion, Tom Smith.

**Jim Nabors marries longtime companion, Stan Cadwallader.** Best known as “Gomer Pyle”, Nabors is a devout Christian who’s recorded sacred albums and, for years, sang the National Anthem at the Indianapolis 500. Nabors, 82, and Cadwallader, 64, have long lived in Hawaii but were wed in Seattle. Says Nabors: “I’m very happy that I’ve had a partner of 38 years and I feel very blessed.” A native of Sylacauga, Alabama, he says he’s known he was gay since childhood. He was “out” to co-workers in his television days, but says he’s “not a debater” and won’t become an activist at his age.

**Evangelical gay students, alumni, faculty and friends are organizing**

**for support at their schools.** Functioning as official or unofficial, groups are at Wheaton, Westmont, Biola, Bob Jones, Harding, Messiah, Gordon, Goshen, Cedarville, Hope, George Fox, Patrick Henry, North Park, Samford, Seattle Pacific, Point Loma, Pepperdine, Southern Wesleyan and Eastern as well as at Fuller Seminary, site of a week's LGBT Film Festival in early March. Biola's Queer Underground website features a moving testimony from alumna Linda Robertson. Failing to accept her son Ryan's being gay, she now realizes that her pushing him into efforts to become "ex-gay" was a tragic mistake.

**A Patrick Henry College alumna – one of many gay and lesbian youth reared in families and churches that are hostile to gays – says:** "I have lost my faith in the Christian God, and I'm now agnostic. Christianity, for me, is closely associated with the fear and shame I experienced as a child and young adult."

**"May the Fetus I Save Be Gay".** That's a bumper sticker of Secularist Pro-Life – a group of atheists, agnostics and secular humanists. Says SPL's Kristine Kruszelnicki "I'm pro-life for the same reason I'm an atheist: I trust science and believe in critical thinking." Harvard Med School's Micheline M. Mathews-Ross puts the scientific point: "It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception." Her words are on the website of Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians. PLAGAL has long participated in the annual March for Life in Washington.

That atheists, secularists, liberals, feminists, gays and lesbians can be pro-life shocks many. But Feminist pioneers Susan B. Anthony and

Elizabeth Cady Stanton were anti-abortion, as was atheist Christopher Hitchens. He wrote in *The Nation*: "Anyone who has ever seen a sonogram or has spent even an hour with a textbook on embryology knows that emotions are not the deciding factor." Ken Kesey, leftist author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, was pro-life. Jack Nicholson, Nick Cannon, Justin Bieber, Steve Jobs, Andrea Bocelli, Tim Tebow and others are pro-life because their mothers were urged to abort them and chose not to do it.

**Tim Tebow cancelled his speaking engagement at Dallas' First Baptist Church.** The Heisman and NFL quarterback, an outspoken Christian witness, said via Twitter that, though he'd been "looking forward to sharing a message of hope and Christ's unconditional love ... due to new information ... I have decided to cancel." He promised his 2 million followers: "I will continue to use the platform God has blessed me with to bring Faith, Hope and Love to all those needing a brighter day." Tebow's scheduled appearance had been met with concern because of First Baptist's Robert Jeffress' virulent antigay tirades, e.g.: "If a person will sink that low [homosexuality] there's no telling what sins he'll commit." *Dallas Observer's* Eric Nicholson says: "Jeffress has made a career of saying flagrantly offensive things, then basking in the outrage he gins up."

**Gay Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson told NPR: "The death threats were plentiful, almost daily, for a couple of years. ... I would be lying if I said that wasn't an extra burden."** In announcing his plans to retire early, he noted that death threats "have been a constant strain [and] I would be less than honest if I didn't say that they

have certainly added a burden and anxiety to my episcopate." Still, as he told the *Los Angeles Times*: "If death threats were going to scare me off, I would have left in the first year of being bishop when they were coming at me all the time."

But Robinson's oft-repeated claims are being challenged. The Concord New Hampshire Police Department notes reports of five threats over five years and State Police have no record of *any* death threats against him. Ann Hall, archivist for New Hampshire's Episcopal Diocese, says there was "no special security" at Diocesan House and adds: "I don't think there were any indications that the office was in danger."

Asked by RECORD to respond to the allegations, Robinson wrote: "I have no need or desire to respond."

**Southern Gospel singer Kenny Bishop** is the new conference coordinator for The Evangelical Network, an LGBT-affirming association of ministries.

## **AND FINALLY:**

**UK speech police went too far.** An Oxford student asked a mounted officer, "Excuse me, but do you realize your horse is gay?" This chap was jailed and fined the equivalent of \$126. When a 16-year-old, in front of a bobby, addressed a Labrador with a friendly, "woof!", he was fined the equivalent of \$315. These punishments were for uttering illegal "antigay hate" speech – even though "woof" is actually gay slang meant as a complement. Saner Brits prevailed as the House of Lords has now tweaked the Public Order speech code.