

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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John Paulk admits: “I do not believe that reparative therapy changes sexual orientation; in fact, it does great harm to many people.” This former head of Focus on the Family’s “ex-gay” program, former Exodus board president and 1998 *Newsweek* cover story (with his “ex-lesbian” wife) has, in April, issued an official apology for his part in all the deception and harm of the “ex-gay” movement. He admits that his same-sex orientation *never changed*. He acknowledges that the marriage that he and his “ex-lesbian” wife contracted “is in the process of ending.” They have three children.

“From the bottom of my heart I wish I could take back my words and actions that caused anger, depression, guilt and hopelessness.” He expresses concern that, “there are still accounts of my ‘ex-gay’ testimony out there being publicized by various groups, including two books that I wrote”, and says, “I discourage anyone from purchasing and selling these books or promoting my ‘ex-gay’ story.”

For decades, ex-‘ex-gay’ leaders have been apologizing for the harm they did in Jesus’ name. Where are any apologies from Rightwing preachers, media and counselors who pushed them into the ‘ex-gay’ hoax? Where are any apologies from co-conspirators at *Christianity Today*, *Charisma* and *World* magazines, the American Family Association, Focus on the Family and other agencies of deceit and cover-up? Even after he was found in a Washington gay bar in 2000, while in town for his Focus on the Family speaking engagement, Focus spokeswoman Julie Niels insisted that, “the reality is that John has 1,000% left homosexuality.”

Ralph Blair’s review of Paulk’s 1998 “ex-gay” book, *Not Afraid to Change: The Remarkable Story of How One Man Overcame Homosexuality*, can be read in *EC’s Review*, Fall 1998.

“Many hundreds of thousands or millions of youths will be led down a

path of death and destruction” if “reparative” therapy is curtailed by law. So says Fundamentalist lawyer Brad Dacus of the Pacific Justice Institute. He calls efforts to restrict “ex-gay” intervention “very diabolical.” He claims, “There’s overwhelming evidence that reparative therapy actually works”. But he bucks the disclaimers of former and even present-day leaders in the “ex-gay” movement as well as all the professional clinical conclusions of, among others, the American Psychiatric and American Psychological associations. Dacus insists: “Nicolosi and other famous psychiatrists [Nicolosi is *not* a psychiatrist] have treated this, thousands and thousands of patients, report a very high success rate.” Dacus assures that homosexuals “leave the lifestyle, get married to people, have children and enter heterosexual relationships.”

In “If Your Child Says He’s Gay”, the Pentecostal magazine, *Charisma* recommends “ex-gay” intervention. But a social worker admits that the “ex-gay” group “will be the first to tell you, it’s not an easy task. Even those who want to leave the lifestyle experience a strong pull to stay in it.” She warns that they “struggle with their impulses and regularly fight homosexual tendencies.”

Only about 40 percent of 18-29 year old unmarried evangelicals are celibate. The majority of unmarried evangelicals in this age range are or recently have been in sexual relationships. Yet, evangelicals teach that sex must be within marriage and all same-sex oriented persons must be *celibate throughout life* or marry a person of the *other gender*.

Coppertone doesn’t “last all day” and Kellogg’s Mini-Wheats don’t “improve” attentiveness! So, these companies have settled multimillion-dollar class action lawsuits over their

exaggerated claims.

“Reparative therapists” and “ex-gay” pushers promise *far more* than “all day protection” against homosexual attraction and *far more* than “improved” heterosexuality. Yet, the damage done from claims for “ex-gay” and “reparative” results is *far more* serious than the damage done from claims for sunscreen and cereal. Who were driven into orientation-discordant marriages that led to dysfunctional families and broken homes or to suicides over despair that sunscreen didn’t last all day or that sugar cereal didn’t improve attentiveness?

On his 18th birthday, Jonathan Allen’s parents kicked him out for being gay – a common reaction among Fundamentalists. They’ve not spoken in over two years. But Jonathan’s plight and his singing won the hearts of the judges and audience on June 11 on “America’s Got Talent”. Allen, 20, from Tennessee, loves his parents “with all my heart. I don’t know if they still love me.” Judge Howie Mandel told him: “Welcome home!”

“Mom, dad, I’m gay. And I still love Jesus. And nothing else changes.” Daniel Dobson, now 28 and a veteran of two tours of duty in Iraq, said this to his parents two years ago. After some stunned silence, his dad said: “We still love you. And nothing else changes.” Their response, says Daniel, was “absolutely huge. It almost felt like I was able to breathe again.” His dad, Ed Dobson, was a top executive with Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority and is now the retired pastor of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids. Daniel says he’s known he’s gay since he was 13 and long prayed for change that never came. It took him another 13 years to tell his parents. He worked through the biblical issues with his brother, Kent, senior pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, Michigan.

In May, Daniel Dobson spoke at a

public forum for Christian gay support in Grand Rapids. The forum included Calvin College professor Stephanie Sandberg and Jim Lucas, Calvin Seminary graduate and counselor to the local GLBT community. Lucas and Sandberg have been EC keynoters.

Rob Bell supports marriage for same-sex couples. Founder and former senior pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church, Bell says he's for "marriage, fidelity and love, whether it's a man and woman, a woman and a woman, a man and a man."

Jim Wallis supports marriage for same-sex couples. Founder of the evangelical Sojourners ministry in D.C., longtime political activist and a spiritual advisor to President Obama, Wallis says, in a HuffPost interview, that it's time for liberals and conservatives to join together in an effort of "re-covenanting marriage, reestablishing, renewing marriage" for *both* heterosexuals and homosexuals.

"To Attend or Not to Attend?" – a "gay wedding", that is. This is a question Peter Jones of truthXchange tackled recently. Jones replied: "As soon as Christians attend gay weddings as a matter of course, in the name of friendship and even 'love', we will have lost the public attempt to preserve creational marriage as society's norm."

Amy Grant says she's known about her gay fan base since she was 18. She notes that, on gay people, Christians have a choice: "You can either default to judgment or you can default to compassion." She says that a same-sex couple "honored" her by asking her to perform at their wedding but she had a scheduling problem. She adds: "Anytime somebody asks me to perform at a wedding, I say, 'I don't have a good track record.' A lot of weddings I've performed at, the marriages have ended poorly."

Pope Francis supported gay civil unions when he was cardinal in Buenos Aires. He offered the civil unions proposal as a compromise to the then inevitable – now achieved – legalization of gay marriage in Argentina. His bishops overruled his civil union support. Gay rights theologian Marcelo Marquez recalls his meetings with Car-

dinal Bergoglio: "He told me that homosexuals need to have recognized rights."

Rhode Island, Delaware and Minnesota have joined 9 other states, along with D.C., to legalize marriage for same-sex couples. John Piper, a former racial segregationist who has since adopted a black girl and is soon to retire from his megachurch pastorate in Minneapolis, tweets: "No, Minnesota, 'men committing shameless acts with men' (Romans 1:27) is not, nor ever will be, marriage. Only destruction." (Cf. *EC Review*, Winter 2010 for Piper's antigay interpretation of a local tornado) Roman Catholic bishop of Providence, RI Thomas Tobin, warns Catholics that they risk their relationship with God if they attend the weddings of same-sex friends or family members.

Shane Windmeyer and his Campus Pride were behind the boycott of Chick-fil-A. At the height of the protest, the fast-food chain's president, Dan Cathy, reached out to Windmeyer, initiating a conversation that led to an unlikely friendship. Windmeyer discloses that, after months of telephone conversations, e-mails, texts and face-to-face meetings, "I have come to know [Dan Cathy] and Chick-fil-A in ways that I would not have thought possible." He makes clear: "Never once did Dan or anyone from Chick-fil-A ask for Campus Pride to stop protesting Chick-fil-A. On the contrary, Dan listened intently to our concerns and the real-life accounts from youth about the negative impact that Chick-fil-A was having on campus climate and safety at colleges across the country... Dan sought first to understand, not to be understood. ... Dan expressed a sincere interest in my life, wanting to get to know me on a personal level. He wanted to know about where I grew up, my faith, my family, even my husband, Tommy. In return, I learned about his wife and kids and gained an appreciation for his devout belief in Jesus Christ and his commitment to being 'a follower of Christ' more than a 'Christian.' Dan expressed regret and genuine sadness when he heard of people being treated unkindly in the name of Chick-fil-a – but he offered no apologies for his genuine beliefs about marriage." Their friendship has not been well re-

ceived by many LGBT activists.

Cambridge evangelical New Testament scholar David Instone-Brewer, preached a sermon on homosexuality. After discussing Paul's critique of Roman hedonism, here's how this Tyndale House scholar concludes: "What does the Bible say to those for whom homosexual urges are 'natural'? I don't know the answer to this. That is, I'm not certain enough to be dogmatic. My personal answer is that the Bible says nothing against homosexual orientation. But it does forbid homosexual activity, so a homosexual should be celibate. But I realise that [celibacy] is a very difficult lifestyle, and I don't think I could live up to it. I feel like I'm in the crowd when they brought the adulteress to Jesus, to be stoned. Jesus said: Let him who has no sin cast the first stone, and they all walked away. I won't cast any stones at practicing homosexuals. I don't have the moral right and I'll be among the first to walk away - to leave the person alone with Jesus".

The Christian Reformed Church's Synod 2013 calls for study on how its 1973 stance on homosexuality as "disorder" and "sin" might be put in a more "loving way". It was also in 1973 that the American Psychiatric Association's DSM-II dropped the diagnostic label of "disorder" from homosexuality. But Synod has refused to revise its 40-year antigay stand. During debate, Elder Joseph Bowman, after 20 years in "reparative therapy" to no avail, said: "I stand before you as a 44-year-old, single, celibate and chaste yet openly gay man ... no longer willing to be silent." He was given a standing ovation.

New York Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan says: "We've got to do better to see that our defense of marriage is not reduced to an attack on gay people. And, I admit, we haven't been too good at that."

Scotland's Catholic Cardinal said same-sex marriage is, like slavery, a "violation of human rights". He's called same-sex marriage "madness [and a] grotesque subversion of a universally accepted human right [that would be] harmful to the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of those

involved.” He said it would “redefine reality” and that, “further aberrations [would follow and] society would be degenerating even further than it has already degenerated into immorality.” Then, allegations surfaced of his own sexual contact with some of his priests. He’s admitted misbehavior.

The American Academy of Pediatrics supports “families in all their diversity” as fit for rearing children. Contradicting the Religious Right, the AAP statement explains: “Scientific evidence affirms that children have similar developmental and emotional needs and receive similar parenting whether they are raised by parents of the same or different genders.” Pediatrician Ben Siegel chaired the committee that released the findings. He said its focus was “nurturing children. We want what’s best for children.”

Ekklesia think-tank’s Symon Hill, a self-described former homophobe, reflects upon news that the Church of England’s gay bishops must be celibate. He asks: “What’s celibate? Will a bishop with a same-sex partner be allowed to kiss him [or] hold his hand? ... Celibacy, like sex, is rarely defined.” Hill notes that, biblically, “celibacy (like marriage) is a gift from God. It is a calling. Some are called to it; others are not.” He observes: “What an insult to people with the gift of celibacy to present their calling as some sort of second-rate option for people treated as second-rate Christians. ... For queer Christians, it is another message telling us that we are not welcome as equals in the Church of Christ. For many lesbian, gay and bisexual people outside the Church, as well as others committed to equality, it is the latest announcement of Christian hostility to them, the latest factor on top of many others to deter them from Christianity.”

Southern megachurch preacher Harry Reeder III is upset over the Boy Scout’s integration of gay Scouts. So, as his Southern predecessors did at the start of racial integration of schools, this Birmingham preacher is urging churches to transfer their children into *alternative* programs. As in the era of racial segregation, Reeder rails against the new policy as an “historic deviation” and uses Bible verses to back him up. Reeder’s congregation derives from

a bygone era of racially segregated churches.

Southern Baptist leader Richard Land recently complained that what he called a gay “agenda is to have the homosexual lifestyle affirmed by society as healthy and normal ... and to have those who disagree with that, ostracized to the level of being Ku Klux Klan.”

The “Day of Silence” is a topic on Jim Denison’s blog. This annual national student event supports bullied gay and lesbian students. Once pastor of Dallas’ Park Cities Baptist Church, Denison advised students who support “the biblical view on homosexuality”, to stay home, walk-out or dialogue on that day. He joked that, “50 percent of high school seniors think Sodom and Gomorrah were married” but he left a similarly erroneous notion that they were some sort of wildly gay resorts.

Most readers agreed with him, though one wrote that, “dialog requires a crucial element that we seem to have forgotten – LISTENING! Give their silence a listening ear. Respect their pain.” Ralph Blair wrote: “Denison quotes Leighton Ford as being right when he quipped: ‘God loves us the way we are, but too much to leave us that way.’ Since, no matter how much gay people pray to be changed, try to change by getting heterosexually married or go through years of so-called ‘reparative’ therapy to change, nobody changes, even the ‘ex-gay’ leadership now admits this. Evidently, God leaves them the way they discovered themselves to be in this regard. But there are other changes that are taking place. More and more evangelical Christians are supporting for others what they want for themselves: strongly committed marriages that fit with the given sexual orientation of the pair – whether that’s a heterosexual couple or a homosexual couple. ... God, indeed, loves gay folks too much to leave them without a mate who is appropriate to their sexual orientation. Too bad, happily married preachers and other Christians don’t get this simple point of love”.

A gay Christian in Texas wrote to Blair expressing “gratitude and appreciation” for the post: “You encouraged me to continue to speak out for our dignity as gay Christians. I went to your website; very excited to encounter

such resource.”

Pat Buchanan worries over divisions on same-sex issues. He asks: “If one half of the nation sees the other as morally depraved, while the latter sees the former as saturated in bigotry, sexism and homophobia, how do we remain one united nation and one people?”

Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wisconsin) supports adoption of children by gay men and lesbians. The 2012 Republican VP candidate is not in favor of same-sex marriage.

Young gay men who have sex with other men are contracting HIV at an increasing rate. The CDC finds that between 2008 and 2010 their infection rate increased by 22 percent. Nearly two-thirds of all new HIV infections resulted from men having sex with other men. Young black men who have sex with men, account for more new HIV infections than any other subgroup. Researchers think that, with more effective treatment for AIDS, the young are less careful. But treatments will cost about half a million dollars over each patient’s lifetime. Annually, there are some 20 million new STD infections.

Two gay students at an all-boys Roman Catholic high school are welcome to attend the Junior Ball as a couple. In announcing the welcoming of the couple, McQuaid Jesuit High School president, Fr. Edward Salmon, cited Pope Francis: “I invite and encourage each and every one of us in the McQuaid family to ‘open up a horizon of hope, to let a ray of light break through heavy clouds’ following recent days of misinformation, fear, misunderstanding and even anger. ... With this decision I invite and encourage us all, as Pope Francis does, to exercise care, protection, goodness which calls for a certain tenderness ‘which is not a virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness.’” Salmon also cited the U. S. Bishops’ “Always Our Children”, in explaining his decision. Parental consensus was supportive.

“I’m not a gay bishop, I’m a bishop who happens to be a gay man.” So said the Rev. R. Guy Erwin upon his election as bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church’s Southern California Synod in May. He teaches religion at California Lutheran University.

Eastern Michigan University has settled a former student’s lawsuit. She’d been kicked out of the MA counseling program for asking that gay clients be referred to a gay-affirming counselor because she, as a Christian, could not, in good conscience, support a gay sexual relationship. The American Counseling Association and EMU administrators judged her position to be “judgmental”.

Grove City College psychologist Warren Throckmorton notes that there are “numerous pairings that would be problematic for both client and counselor. ... I think it is very important for the welfare of clients to allow referral when a counselor is bothered by what

seems like a moral dilemma.”

Similar problems arises in so-called “all comers” policies for campus group membership. In a Supreme Court case of a Christian group on a secular college campus, Justice Ginsburg, for the majority, insisted that there be no *Christian* basis for a *Christian* group’s membership. Dissenting, Justice Alito wrote that that message means there’s, “no freedom for expression that offends prevailing standards of political correctness in our country’s institutions of higher learning.”

American adults who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender range from 1.7 percent in North Dakota to 5.1 percent in Hawaii and 10 percent in DC. These findings are from a new Gallup study, the largest population-based survey ever conducted on measurement of these self-identifications. Most states are within 2 points of the national average of 3.4 percent. Some 206,000 adults were

surveyed.

AND FINALLY:

“Ex-gay” counselor Jerry Mungadze uses crayons to “heal” homosexuals. He spoke of his approach on Joni Lamb’s Daystar Television show. (Daystar carries Creflo Dollar, Robert Jeffress, John Hagee, Rod Parsley and other antigay preachers.)

Originally from Zimbabwe, now in Texas, Mungadze uses a self-styled “Right Brain Therapy” in which clients choose crayons to color a simple drawing of a human brain. He claims that homosexual healing occurs when the person changes the color of the crayon he uses. Christian psychologist Warren Throckmorton responds wryly: “Who needs brain scans when you have crayons?” While clinicians warn of public gullibility in even the best of legitimate neuroscience, an antigay church public buys into diagnosis by crayons.