

**Romans 1-7 For You** by Timothy Keller (The Good Book Company, 2014) 201 pp; “5 Ways to Debate Same-sex Marriage” by Jim Denison, *Denison Forum*, February 28, 2014; “Polarizing President” by Joel Belz; “For Better, For Worse” by Joel Belz; “From Gay to Joyous” by Marvin Olasky, *World*, February 8, 2014; “Pattern of Deception” by Joel Belz and “Milestone Melodies” by Marvin Olasky, *World*, May 31, 2014.

Yale’s Wayne Meeks’ work on Paul’s world advises *knowing* the *social history* “then and there [and warns not to] ‘explain’ [their beliefs, thoughts and actions] by some supposedly universal laws of social behavior.” Keller blunders badly here. He projects 21<sup>st</sup> century gay romance into an ancient power-structured world of sex abuse, saying: “As a cultured and traveled Roman citizen, Paul would have been very familiar with long-term, stable, loving relationships between same-sex couples.” No! Keller’s scenario would have been *meaningless* 200, let alone 2,000, years ago. His agenda-driven fantasy flies in the face of what Brown University classics scholar and *Christianity Today* contributor Sarah Ruden explains of Paul’s world: “There were no gay households; there were in fact no gay institutions or gay culture at all”. As “cultured and traveled” as Paul surely was, he wasn’t aware of what wasn’t there. Besides, *romantic love*, as C. S. Lewis explained, emerged in the Middle Ages. Keller’s “gay” concoction contaminates his commentary.

J. Gresham Machen, founder of the seminary where Keller studied and taught, said: To know about Christianity, “the fair and logical thing is to learn [it], not from its opponents, but from those who themselves are Christians. [That] would be the only fair method”. So, why turn to antigay preachers to know about homosexuality? Why not listen to gays tell of their needs for sexual intimacy – as deeply felt as the sexual needs of heterosexuals?

Denison bills himself as “a subject matter expert on cultural and contemporary issues”. A Southern Baptist, he, too, *smuggles* homosexual orientation and gay marriage into the Bible. He begins by citing votes of the majority of Southerners, a tactic that won’t work when the majority votes the other way – as polls are trending. He denies that same-sex marriage debates are like interracial marriage debates saying: “The Bible nowhere forbids interracial marriage.” Well, his Southern Baptist forebears had *their* Bible verses against interracial marriage just as *he* has *his* against gay marriage. Lastly he sets up an informal fallacy of scary marriages to minors, polygamy and incest – forgetting the Bible’s brides who *were* minors, the Bible’s *polygamous* heroes and those who *married* their sisters.

He demands forbidding marriage to all gays who wish to marry, though citing Peter (I Peter 3:15) he advises “gentleness and respect”. But, Peter *rebuked* Christian “meddlers”! (4:15) What’s up with Christians who prize *their* marriages, while robbing *same-sex* couples of the *same* joy? How does this selfishness *live* out the Golden Rule before those who, as Denison is aware, “will know we follow Jesus not by our logic but by our love”?

At the end of 2011, in spite of decades of failed “ex-gay” promises, *World’s* cover declared Alan Chambers of Exodus its “Daniel of the Year”. Within days, Chambers again apologized for all the harm done by the “ex-gay” movement and, in June 2013, presided over the shutdown of Exodus. But Belz’ *World* still pushes “ex-gay” claims.

“Dishonesty”, Belz complains, “has characterized the current presidency.” And, it’s been “purposeful, brazen, calculated, pervasive, and pernicious [and] corrodes the whole process of ... discourse and debate.” Well, for over a quarter century, dishonesty has colored *World’s* coverage of homosexuality, “ex-gay” claims

and same-sex marriage. And *it’s* been “purposeful, brazen, calculated, pervasive, and pernicious [corroding] the whole process of discourse and debate”. With Obama in mind, Belz says other “serial liar” executives would’ve been “sent packing”. Yet Belz and his *World* stay put.

“Nobody likes being lied to”, Belz says, but “that’s what’s been happening, in spades, to American society at large over the last few years.” His examples: “the marketing of the Affordable Care Act, the explanations of what happened to the embassy at Benghazi, and the selective IRS attacks on conservative organizations.” He calls it all, “as deliberate a record of falsification as is possible to imagine.” But Belz misses examples of dishonesty closer to home, e.g., years of “marketing” quack “ex-gay” cures, missing “explanations of what happened” to all the victims of “ex-gay” pushers and “selective attacks” on organizations offering effective support to gay folk.

Flannery O’Connor knew that, “Conviction without experience makes for harshness.” Does Olasky know that? He introduces Christopher Yuan by using the *past* tense, saying Yuan “was a homosexual and a drug dealer”. Yuan admits he “was supplying drugs to dealers in over a dozen states” (for which he went to prison) *but Yuan does not claim he’s no longer gay*. Olasky presses him on why his book is described as “*A Gay Son’s Journey to God* rather than *A Gay Son’s Journey Out of Homosexuality?*” Yuan replies that the aim was “not simply a story about a gay son, but a story about God.” Moreover, as Yuan asserts in *Christianity Today*, Christians have “failed by giving the impression that orientation change and reparative therapy is the solution... If our goal is making people straight, then we are practicing a false gospel.” Does Olasky think that gays face merely a matter of what to do with genitalia? Does he still not understand that the issue is about *who* gay people *are* in their daily longing for closest sexual intimacy?

Yuan went to Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College where *today’s gay issues get confused with Bible accounts* of rape, pagan rites and a Holiness Code’s aim at growing a population while forbidding abuse of fellow Israelites as women. So it is no surprise that Yuan’s hermeneutic is inadequate for his situation. It’s no wonder he found “nothing in Scripture that blessed a gay relationship”.

Olasky’s *personal experience* in meeting *his* sexual intimacy needs in a happy marriage should teach him to appreciate O’Connor’s insight on a harshness that fails to learn to deal empathically with the sexual intimacy needs of others. Joining Keller, Denison, Belz and others who express gratitude and happiness over *their* marriages to persons of *their* choice, he says *he’s* celebrating 38 years of marriage, “humming [a line from an old Beach Boys’ hit], ‘God only knows what I’d be without you’.” On *his* marriage, he adds: “we still need each other and will still feed each other”. Well, gay couples, too, “still need each other” and they, too, “still feed each other” – in sickness and health – whether or not Olasky, Dennison, Keller or Belz understand or approve.

