

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

Summer 2017

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

2017 is another milestone year for Evangelicals Concerned. In early June we held our 75th summer Con-nECtion retreat, our Diamond Jubilee (considering all of EC's summer retreats in the East, Midwest and West, since 1980). Besides another keynote from EC's founder, we heard a keynote from *Sully* screenwriter Todd Komarnicki and excerpts from the inspiring words of the missionary, Amy Carmichael, read and commented upon by Jane Bradbury. Longtime conferees agreed it was one of the very best EC retreats ever.

In February, we held our 30th Annual Presidents Day Weekend Bible Study up in the mountains along the Appalachian Trail. We studied the Book of Proverbs and heard a lecture on philanthropist D. D. Davis in this, the 100th year of his birth. We watched a video of Ravi Zacharias' 1983 address at Billy Graham's Amsterdam conference for itinerate evangelists. Later that year, Davis met Zacharias in Ohio and financed RZIM's founding.

Over the upcoming Columbus Day weekend, October 6-8, 2017, EC will again meet at Ocean Grove on the Jersey shore for our Fall Festival – our 15th. We'll commemorate the 500th Anniversary of Luther's Reformation for a return to Scripture, Grace and Faith.

Walter R. Hearn, biochemist, veteran leader in the evangelical American Scientific Affiliation, poet, and a 2005 keynoter for Evangelicals Concerned, has passed away. In his long scientific career, he taught in the medical schools at Yale and Baylor as well as at Iowa State University and, later in life, he was the professor of Christianity and science at New College, Berkeley. He was also the author of *Being a Christian in Science* (InterVarsity Press). His wife, Ginny Hearn, a long-time leader in the Evangelical Women's Caucus, survives him.

Of the over 100 EC keynoters since 1980, seventeen of these sisters and brothers, including Walt, have passed on into the nearer presence of the Lord: John F. Alexander, Mary V. Borhek, R. Maurice Boyd, Val Clear, Gary Cooper, Virginia West Davidson, Nancy A. Hardesty, Walden Howard, Kay Lindskoog, Mildred Pearson, Howard L. Rice, Rosalind Rinker, Charlie Shedd, Gerald T. Sheppard, Lewis B. Smedes and James Tinney.

Frank Worthen, long time "ex-gay" leader, has died. He was 87. His father died when Frank was just 13. Then, as he's said, his pastor, who was gay, "mentored" him into "the homosexuality lifestyle". From age 19, and for some 25 years, he was actively involved in the promiscuous gay scene in San Francisco. He recalled it as depressing. In his mid-40s, although financially successful, he was otherwise empty and was ready to kill himself. A young Christian employee took him to church, reconnecting him with his childhood faith in God. He then met some gay men who'd started an "ex-gay" ministry. One of these was John Evans, "Ted" in the "ex-gay" book, *The Third Sex*. Evans soon left that group and became one of the first folks in Evangelicals Concerned in the west.

At 55, Frank met Anita. She and Frank married. They then become leaders in Exodus, the "ex-gay" network. They worked with founders of Melodyland's EXIT ministry and other "ex-gay" leaders who'd later all leave the "ex-gay" movement with apologies for all of the harm their false promises had caused to so many.

John Paulk is one of the best known of the former "ex-gay" activists, having chaired Exodus and the "ex-gay" efforts at Focus on the Family. Upon hearing of Worthen's death, Paulk graciously posted this heartfelt tribute on Facebook: "I will never forget getting off the bus in 1987 on my journey from Ohio to California and Frank wrapping

me in his arms. ... No matter my journey, he always loved me unconditionally. May the Lord give your soul and heart rest, my dear Frank."

Reparative therapist Joseph Nicolosi has died. He'd pushed the notion that boys who "detach" from distant or disappointing fathers seek father substitutes in other males and sexualize these relationships. In 2012, Nicolosi told *The New York Times*: "I don't believe that anybody is really gay. I believe that all people are heterosexual but that some have a homosexual problem and some of these people attempt to resolve their conflict by adopting a sociopolitical label called 'gay'." Psychological and psychiatric professions rejected Nicolosi's ideas but he persisted in practicing his allegedly "reparative" therapy.

LGBT communities also rejected his approach. But Stephen Parelli, one of his former "ex-gay" clients who now leads "Other Sheep", an LGBT activist ministry, writes: "My own father passed away in January of this year – just two months ago – and I felt nothing. Nicolosi, the scorn of the LGBT movement in the area of counseling and psychology, has died and I deeply feel his parting as a call to pause and remember and be thankful. He was the dearest friend I had in the years I suffered the most as a closeted gay man."

Parelli says that Nicolosi told him that he needed "to turn 180 degrees away from your father and run from him as fast as you can." At the time, Parelli was married to a woman. Nicolosi, says Parelli, "wondrously affirmed my need for male-human appropriate touch and told me that for days and nights at a time I could lay in the arms of Jose (my lover and husband now of 20 years). And I did just that, week after week, with my therapist's approval. I was at the time a pastor and a married man, and with my wife's consent, based on my therapist's counsel, I would spend Friday nights in

Brooklyn at Jose's apartment, crying and talking and just drinking in male human non-sexual touch, wrapped in his arms in his bed, long into Saturday afternoon. I would return to Sparta [NJ] Saturday evening and preach on Sunday in the Baptist church where I was the pastor. All of this under the watchful care of Joseph Nicolosi."

When Parelli was worried that Jose was losing interest in him, he reports that Nicolosi correctly assured him that Jose's "actions indicated his immense interest in me." Parelli says that, along with interpreting his dreams, Nicolosi taught him the "idea that my father-hunger was made evident by the fact that I am physically attracted to the male chest. He discussed with me how American Natives indicate different body parts as emblematic of certain human needs".

Two days before Nicolosi died, evangelical psychologist Warren Throckmorton wrote yet another critique of Nicolosi's work. After pointing out the reversing of the meanings of "dependent" and "independent" variables in Nicolosi's research, Throckmorton noted that Nicolosi's "study isn't a true experiment since there is no control group" and he noted as well that he'd never accepted Northwestern University's Michael Bailey's offer to conduct brain scans of his clients to test their automatic responses to erotic cues. Throckmorton noted, too, that, Nicolosi's claim that Diana Fosha's Accelerated Experiential-Dynamic therapy "makes 'ex-gay' change more effective" by the "resolving [of] alleged disruptions of attachment to the same-sex parent", is denied by Fosha herself. She said that all reparative therapy folks are "misguided at best, and dangerous at worst."

Boy Erased is a film adaptation of a Fundamentalist's son's memoir of his being forced into the now defunct "ex-gay" conversion program, Love in Action. At 16, Garrard Conley was outed as gay in his rural Arkansas community. His father said there was no option but to get fixed at an "ex-gay" program. Of course, Conley, as with all others who went through the "ex-gay" programs, never became "ex-gay". Scriptwriter, Joel Edgerton, will direct and perform in the film. Conley now teaches in New York City and speaks of his experience at Love in

Action at various venues around the country.

Connecticut and Nevada are the latest states to ban so-called "reparative therapy". The discredited effort against same-sex attraction is illegal in Vermont, Ohio, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, New Mexico, California, Oregon and DC, too.

A mistrial has been declared in the case of church leaders accused of trying to "beat homosexual demons" out of one of the members. A North Carolina judge held an elderly juror in contempt for bringing unspecified material into court. The leader of the Word of Faith Fellowship in Spindale, a town of around 4,000, is the first of five who are charged with kidnapping and assault three years ago. The trial process must now start over. The defendants are alleged to have surrounded a now 23 year-old man as he was leaving a prayer meeting. Around twenty church members are then said to have "slapped, punched and choked" him for two hours, to cast out his "homosexual demons".

The Los Angeles Times reports: "The church has scores of strict rules to control congregants' lives, including whether they can marry or have children. Failure to comply often triggers a humiliating rebuke from the pulpit or, worse, physical punishment, according to numerous former members interviewed by the AP. Members can't watch television, go to the movies, read newspapers or eat in restaurants that play music or serve alcohol. If church leaders believe a congregant has sexual or dirty thoughts, they can be accused of being 'unclean' and be punished, the former members said.""

A Pentecostal mom attends her gay son's church. "Why?" he managed to ask her. He's now Anglican but grew up in her Pentecostal church, First Church of the Open Bible in Montego Bay. He says with a broad smile of gratitude, "her answer was typically mom." She told him "that she came with me to church to help anyone there who may be struggling with my sexuality. She thinks that if such persons see me with my mother they will realize that I am 'not that bad after all'. Mom is humanizing me through her quiet

presence. Some gays have loving families after all."

A recent graduate of Cornerstone University is now publicly acknowledging that he's gay. At this Fundamentalist school, Deon Fox says he endured many "homophobic messages" while keeping his same-sex orientation a secret. He was a champion member and captain of the CU track and field team. He now wants friends and former classmates to realize that he's "the same person I was yesterday and last time we spoke. The only difference is that you will now know one element that I was too fearful to bring forward before: I am gay. Please understand that holding a secret so small for so long can grow into something large. Being gay doesn't define me, it's just an aspect of me, the me you've known and grown to love." He adds, empathically, "I've experienced the fear of being different. So I understand how you may feel."

"Nearly a year after Pulse, I am still learning the cost of ignorance, the benefits of a second chance and the depths of grace." This is the observation of Joel C. Hunter, a national evangelical leader and the senior pastor of Northland Church, a congregation of some 20,000 just north of Orlando, the scene of America's worst mass shooting.

In a recent essay for Religious News Service, Hunter recalls that, right after the Pulse nightclub shooting, "I was probably not alone in asking, 'Who did this and why?' But the question was not merely for information" as he confesses, "it was for exemption from the responsibility of human (and religious) hate. I wanted to blame terrorists, or at least bigots, and assign the act to a crazy person. But Jesus had taught me, 'Before you point out the speck in someone else's eye, note the log in your own.' Unfortunately, this was more than a speck. And it has proved to be more than a log."

Hunter understands that, "Differences in the interpretation of scripture, detached from personal relationship, can grow into distrust, then into division and possibly into destruction." He realizes, "I was brokenhearted not because I had so many relationships in the LGBTQ community, but because I had so few. ... When religious rejection

happens because we have no understanding or relationships, it can be even more malicious because we think we are defending morality and faith.”

The Alabama Baptist Convention’s Board of Missions met behind closed doors in May and set up an ad hoc committee to meet with Samford University officials about official recognition of the campus group, Samford Together. It’s described by the group itself as “a forum for students who want to discuss topics relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. In an open-minded and accepting environment, students will find community and opportunities to study an array of ideas and opinions on these subjects.”

The head of the Alabama Baptist Convention, along with another executive, issued a joint statement in April stating that formal recognition of this group that’s now operating under *provisional* status “would have serious implications for the relationship” between Alabama’s 3,200-congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention and “the university founded by Baptists in 1841”.

However, these officials failed to note that the Baptists who founded both the school and the SBC defended slavery and racial segregation as clearly based in the Bible. Now their descendants declare without hesitation: “Alabama Baptists have been consistently clear in affirming the Bible’s clear teachings on matters related to gender, sexuality and marriage.” So, they affirm: “We have every right and reason to expect our ministry partners and historic Alabama Baptist institutions to do the same.”

A major Southern Baptist theologian, Fisher Humphreys, now Professor Emeritus at Samford’s Beeson Divinity School, was a keynoter for an Evangelicals Concerned conference in 2010, as was the Samford student group’s faculty advisor in 2015.

The Christian & Missionary Alliance included two sessions on “Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues” at its national conference in Columbus, Ohio in June. Two to three hundred conferees attended the first session’s standing room only event and about half that number attended the second. A video was shown of the experience of an Evangelical Covenant

congregation that was thrown out of that denomination after announcing its intention to add LGBT folks for full-participation in congregational life. Small group discussions were held following the video. A two-page handout summary of “traditional” and “emerging culture” views was distributed. According to an attendee, the “emerging culture” section presented “a purely humanistic point of view”.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses will be watching *Remember Lot’s Wife*, a 90-minute video, at the 2017 convention. The video includes an antigay reading allegedly based in the Bible, as signaled by the film’s title. Jehovah’s Witnesses are hostile to higher education and so, refuse qualified Bible scholars’ explanations that the attempted rape scene at Lot’s door was not about homosexuality as such but was an example of the sexual abuse to which ancient “outsiders” were subjected for subjugation.

To evangelical Christians, the Jehovah’s Witnesses has always been seen as a cult. Of the New World Bible published by their Watchtower Society, Calvin Seminary scholar Anthony Hoekema said, it “is by no means an objective rendering ... but is a biased translation in which many of the peculiar teachings of the Watchtower Society are smuggled into the Bible itself.”

“It’s not good to watch ... but this will be good for our kids.” An Indonesian Muslim was talking about one of the latest public lashings of gay men that draw more than a thousand spectators to the Syuhada mosque plaza in the capital city of Indonesia’s Aceh province known as “Mecca’s veranda”. This time they’d come to watch and jeer as a young gay male couple, a 23 year-old and a 20 year-old, were each lashed over 80 times by three masked floggers as *Sharia* punishment for homosexuality. This day was the culmination of their two months in prison. The ceremony began with the singing of a Qur’anic hymn about Allah’s creating “man and woman”.

In reporting these brutal lashings, *Salon*, the Left-wing web magazine, blamed “The Right-wing”.

Meanwhile, in another Muslim-majority country, Bangladesh, where homosexual acts are, of course, illegal, Zahangir Hossain Matobbar, com-

mander of Bangladesh’s Rapid Action Battalion, reports still more antigay raids and arrests of suspected homosexuals.

The first attempt at a gay-affirming magazine in Bangladesh fell apart in 2016 when the founder, Xulhaz Mannan, a USAID official, was hacked to death by Muslims.

In Iran today, homosexuality is punishable by death and executions are frequent. The penalty in other Islamic countries such as Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia and Syria is imprisonment – up to 10 years. In Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen and Mauritania, sodomy is punishable by death, though there have been no reported executions for several years. Such a lack of reports can be due to the fact that Islamic governments often deny that there *are* even *any gay Muslims*, and homosexuality’s said to be a “Western deviance”.

Still, vigilantes throughout the Arab world do harass, torture and murder gay men, even when they suspect that merely *effeminate* men are gay. And, of course, ISIS, following its literalist fundamentalist reading of the Qur’an, throws homosexuals to their deaths from the tops of tall buildings and stones them to death if they happen to survive the fall.

Chechnya Muslims have set up a concentration camp to contain and punish gays. “Gay men are being tortured with electric shocks and beaten to death,” according to London’s *Daily Mail*. Alexander Artemyev of Amnesty International in Russia confirms the reports. Tanya Lokshina, from Human Rights Watch in Moscow, says: “For several weeks now, a brutal campaign against LGBT people has been sweeping through Chechnya. These days, very few people in Chechnya dare speak to human rights monitors or journalists even anonymously because the climate of fear is overwhelming and people have been largely intimidated into silence. There is danger not only of persecution by the authorities but also from “honor killings” by their Muslim families.

Malaysia’s health ministry is sponsoring a contest to prevent “gender identity disorder”. Submissions of video clips should show the conse-

quences of choices one makes if dealing with same-sex and transgender temptations. Prevention, self-control and the seeking of help should be addressed. Other matters covered in the contest include cybersex and sexual reproductive health.

The Queer Clergy Caucus of the United Methodist Church is protesting the UMC's highest court's decision to rebuke three of its regions for allowing openly gay and lesbian clergy and a married lesbian bishop to serve. This 13-million-member mainline denomination is divided over the issue of gay and lesbian clergy.

Marriage for heterosexual couples only and affirmation of faithful same-sex couples. This was an Anglican bishops' committee's recommendation for the Church of England. It was defeated. Anglican pastor Sam Allberry works with other same-sex attracted people who, like himself, are committed to celibacy. Christians who violate their conscience would, of course, be committing sin, (James 4:17) and psychologically, violation of one's conscience is unhealthy.

Allberry reports that LGBT activists "bully" him for his support of celibacy. The Church of England's LGBT lobby opposed the bishops' report since it failed to support *marriage* for *same-sex* couples. Allberry, of course, voted to *adopt* the report.

Two in five evangelical pastors know of a church member's experience of domestic violence in the past three years. If a member filed for divorce over violence, 56 percent of these pastors say they would believe the claim and 68 percent would investigate it. Half of the evangelical churches have a specific plan to help the victims. The figures, compiled by LifeWay, surveyed 1,000 pastors. Yet, their antigay sermons far exceed their sermons against domestic violence in evangelical marriages.

The worldwide web's most popular porn site has some 75 million visitors each day. The pornography industry pulls in more than \$100 billion dollars a year. That's more than Apple, Google, Netflix, Microsoft, eBay, and Yahoo *combined*. In North and South America, the most popular category

among women is "lesbians" though, of course, plenty of women search for men, most often in DC, Mississippi and Georgia and least often in Vermont, Utah and Maine.

According to "The Porn Phenomenon", a study done jointly by the evangelical groups, Barna Research and Josh McDowell Ministry, teens and young adults rank *not recycling* as more immoral than *watching porn* (56 percent to 32 percent).

Christian Counseling Today, an evangelical journal for members of the mental health professions, recently published cover articles on "Pornography and Parenting", "When Puberty and Pornography Collide", "Pornography and the Brain", "Recovery from Pornography Addiction", "Internet Filters and Blockers" and "Texting, Sexting, and Webcams ... Oh My! The Evolution of Self-pornography". As the Chair of Behavioral Health at Liberty University's College of Osteopathic Medicine notes in one of these articles, MRI scans show that pornography viewing changes the brain over time, not only chemically, but anatomically, resulting in cerebral dysfunction or hypofrontal syndromes." She says, "Put simply, these syndromes damage the braking systems of the brain."

As Ralph Blair has counseled for years, repetitiously prompted orgasms linked in one's brain to one's hiding oneself within an assumed assurance of non-rejection over one's body dissatisfaction, associated patterns of self-indulgence, ever-changing novelty, and the reinforcement that sex is "dirty" and doesn't fit within "the family", a sort of "incest taboo", makes it more and more difficult to sustain an ongoing and vibrant sexual relationship within a lovingly intimate marriage. Such is the case for both heterosexual and same-sex couples.

Churches in Maine raised money on Father's Day, June the 17th, to combat equality of marriage for same-sex couples. Ironically, June the 12th marks the 50th anniversary of *Loving v Virginia*, the U. S. Supreme Court's historic decision that overturned the laws in 16 states that still, in 1967, prohibited *interracial* marriage.

Roman Catholic churches did not participate in the fundraising for this

November's antigay ballot issue in Maine. They focused on teaching about the sanctity of heterosexual marriage.

Contrary to a trend that continues among some evangelicals, a Dallas Seminary professor is saying: "For evangelicalism to be healthy, it needs to be decoupled from politics." This evangelical professor, Timothy J. Baselin, thinks there should be an end to culture warring for evangelicals. He explains, "Evangelicals can lean left on certain issues and lean right on certain issues. The political questions are fundamentally different questions than evangelicalism asks."

Jonathan Merritt, a celibate Christian gay journalist, writes: "Today's Christians are returning to the Bible and glimpsing Jesus with fresh eyes and uncovering a faith that transcends the culture wars. They want a faith that isn't just politically active, but one that transforms life. They believe we can call a truce in the culture wars while remaining faithful to Christ. In fact, they believe faithfulness requires such a ceasefire."

British voters chose 45 self-identified LGBTQ candidates in the recent election for Parliament. That's 7 percent of the 650 members. Among these 45 members, 19 are from the Conservative Party, 19 are from the Labour Party and seven are from the Scottish Nationalist Party. There were 159 LGBTQ candidates running in the elections.

"Gays for Trump" float is banned from the Charlotte Pride parade. "It was going to be a patriotic float with American flags and a few 'Make America Great Again' flags", along with "a couple of drag queens in 'Make America Great Again' dresses", according to the spokesperson for the Trump float. He explained that there's a diversity of opinion among LGBT folks. But the Pride officials ruled against that, inexplicably explaining: "In the past, we have made similar decisions to decline participation from other organizations espousing anti-LGBTQ religious or public policy stances" and then added that Charlotte Pride wants a world where "LGBTQ people are affirmed, respected and included in the full social and civic life of

their local communities, free from fear of any discrimination, rejection, and prejudice.” The “Gays for Trump” spokesperson responds: “For a group of people to claim to want tolerance, acceptance, and give it to every single person you can imagine to give it to, for them to sit back and judge me for exercising my right as an American to choose my leader without judgment is hypocritical”.

Christian printer prevails in long court battle for free speech and religious liberty. Trouble began after the Kentucky printer refused to print t-shirts promoting a gay pride event. After the local County Human Rights Commission accused him of discriminating against the Gay and Lesbian Services Organization, he was forced to bring an original action in Fayette Circuit Court. The case was resolved when, in the words of Chief Judge Joy A. Kramer, “Nothing in the fairness ordinance prohibits [the printer], a private business, from engaging in viewpoint or message censorship. Thus, although the menu of services [he] provides to the public is accordingly limited, and censors certain points of view, it is the same limited menu [he] offers to every customer and is not, therefore, prohibited by the fairness ordinance.”

Meanwhile, many others are being discriminated against, losing their businesses and going into debt with mounting legal fees due to their effort to live according to their conscience on matters of promoting homosexuality. These victims include bakers, florists, bed & breakfast hosts, etc., who have been happily serving LGBT customers, some of those who’ve now brought lawsuits against them, but who believe that they cannot in good conscience participate in facilitating a same-sex wedding ceremony.

Accuracy in Academia takes note of outdated, even self-refuting, but still rehearsed propaganda: “According to a glossary drafted by the University of California, Davis’ LGBTQIA Resource Center, racism is ‘the systematic subordination of marginalized racial groups who have relatively little social power in the United States, by members of the agent/dominant/privileged racial group who have relatively more social power.’ The list of marginalized groups is extensive, encompassing ‘Indigenous/Native American, Black, Chicano, Asian, Pacific Islander, and non-white Latinx folks, non-white Middle Eastern folks, etc.’, whereas the only ‘dominant/privileged racial group’ mentioned, and hence the only group

capable of exercising racism under the definition, is ‘white’.”

Princeton University’s Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding, dedicated to addressing “race, class, privilege, and culture at Princeton and beyond”, held a “Latinx graduation ceremony” in June. The term combines males, females and those who don’t identify as either.

AND FINALLY

The British Medical Association says the term, “pregnant people”, should replace “expectant mothers”. The BMA also says “assigned” sex should replace the use of “biological” sex at birth.

The Toronto Star’s Emma Teitel writes that “Mother’s Day” should be changed to “Guardian’s Day”, because any “gendered holidays” are “exclusionary” and, as such, “painful” for “non-binary parents who don’t identify with a single gender”.

Meanwhile, according to Social Security, since Bruce Jenner became Caitlyn Jenner, the name “Caitlyn” and three variations of it have fallen out of use more than any other baby name. And “Donald” fell 45 spots last year, to 488th place, while “Hillary” fell out of the top 1,000 in 2009 and hasn’t returned.