

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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**On November 6, voters in Maine, Maryland and Washington legalized same-sex marriage and Minnesotans voted down a constitutional amendment that would have banned same-sex marriage.** Six states (New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, Iowa and New York as well as D.C.) had already legalized same-sex marriage. Thirty-two states have voted to restrict legal marriage to heterosexual couples only.

**“I Still Stand as an Evangelical for Gay Marriage”, Jared Byas says.** Yet, “I get it,” he tells his fellow evangelicals who lobby and vote against the legalization of same-sex marriage. “You aren’t out to oppress anyone, hate anyone.” Still: “My faith requires that I stand up for equality and with people who do not enjoy the same rights that I do.” This heterosexual young man, married and dad to three, writes: “I know it’s hard to grasp, but this matter has nothing to do with whether or not homosexuality is a sin.” He points out that, “there are lots of things that Christians consider ‘sinful’ that they do not legislate against.” Moreover: “Paul seems to make it very clear that Christians have absolutely no place to judge the behavior of non-Christians.” (I Cor 5:12) Byas laments that “evangelicals are very good at making sure people who are not Christians know that they are ‘breaking the rules’ of Christianity. And as such, we have gained the reputation for being judgmental, a moniker well-deserved for the most part.”

A graduate of Westminster Seminary, Byas teaches philosophy at Grand Canyon University. With biblical scholar Peter Enns, he’s co-authored *Genesis for Normal People*. Another of his essays, “The Gay Checklist” is at [www.jbyas.com](http://www.jbyas.com).

**“I’m an evangelical Christian. And I think same-sex marriage should be legal”, says Sarah Bessey.** She is a heterosexual young woman, married and mom to three. “Most of us evangelicals in Canada, regardless of per-

sonal beliefs about homosexuality, can admit that since same-sex marriage has been legalized in Canada, our society has not gone to hell in a hand basket, nor has traditional marriage, or our families been under attack.” When Christians argue against same-sex marriage, “we miss an opportunity to love those that are different than us, to express love to those that we even disagree with strongly.” And, she says, we’ve “forgotten that it is not just an issue. It’s about people.” Her website is [www.SarahBessey.com](http://www.SarahBessey.com). Her book, *Jesus Feminist: Life on the Other Side of our Church’s Gender Debates*, is due in 2013.

**Brian McLaren, a leader in the Emergent Church movement, recently led a Christian commitment ceremony for his son’s same-sex marriage.** McLaren, a *Christianity Today* book award winner, is a progressive evangelical author and speaker.

**“Any accurate reading of the Bible should make it clear that gay rights goes against the plain truth of the word of God.”** That’s how a minister began his testimony at a Springfield, Missouri public hearing on a proposed gay rights law in August. Phil Snider went on in this way for a few minutes. Then he asserted that, the “right of segregation is clearly established by the Holy Scriptures, both by precept and example.” People attending the hearing looked a bit confused. He, too, pretended to be confused. Then, his real motivation became clear: “I’m sorry, I brought the wrong notes with me this evening. I borrowed my argument from the wrong century. It turns out, what I have been reading to you this whole time are direct quotes from white preachers in the 1950s and the 1960s, all in support of racial segregation. All I have done is simply take out the phrase ‘racial integration’ and substituted it with the phrase ‘gay rights.’” Snider pastors a Disciples of Christ congregation. The video has gone viral on YouTube.

**A home-schooled heterosexual Tennessee Christian spent a year pretending to be gay.** Liberty University alum Timothy Kurek was told by a friend that her family had kicked her out for being a lesbian. Kurek was convicted that his own negative reaction to homosexuality was too close to that of her rejecting family’s. He decided he needed to be able to better *empathize* with the everyday hurt and fear that LGBT folks experience in homophobic families, churches and society. So, for a year, he pretended to family and friends that he was gay. Only an aunt and two pals knew the truth. To avoid unwanted sexual advances, he recruited a new gay friend to pretend to be his boyfriend. Many of his Christian friends dropped him cold. But: “I found gay Christians more devout than me!” The trailer for Kurek’s book, *The Cross in the Closet*, is on YouTube.

**“Homosexual behavior is a sin according to the Holy Scriptures”.** That’s the 2012 declaration of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. “Therefore any person, congregation, or assembly which advocates homosexual behavior or provides leadership for a service of same-sex marriage or a similar celebration has committed a disciplinable offense.” However, not all in RCA leadership take this line. As the RCA General Secretary for 17 years (until 2011) says: “To put all the focus on the issue of same-sex relationships simply draws us away from the real challenge. To pretend that people who are engaged in covenanted same-sex relationships are somehow destroying heterosexual marriage is utter nonsense. The people who are destroying heterosexual marriage are heterosexuals.” (Wesley Granberg-Michaelson)

In 1983, Ralph Blair spoke on “Hope’s Gays and Gays’ Hopes” to a campus-wide assembly at the RCA’s Hope College in Holland, Michigan. The theology faculty responders did not

disagree with the substance of his address.

The RCA has 170,000 members in a thousand congregations in the U.S. and Canada.

**Social psychologist David G. Myers cites C. S. Lewis' Screwtape for some sober self-reflection.** Writing on "The Church's Future in a Gay-Supportive Age", Myers quotes this senior devil's advice to his apprentice, Wormwood, on how to distract Christians from what really matters: "The game is to have them all running about with fire extinguishers whenever there is a flood."

Myers, an ordained elder in the Reformed Church in America and a professor at Hope College, grants that popular opinion "should not decide ethics". But, he points out that, "as neuroscience and psychological science document the natural basis for sexual orientation, as people become educated regarding these findings, as more and more gays and lesbians become known to loving family and friends, and as generational turnover rolls in like an ocean tide, it's pretty clear where things are headed."

Myers' essay is in the August/September 2012 *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought*.

**Over six thousand churches in the U.S. are listed as "welcoming gay friendly" at [www.gaychurch.org](http://www.gaychurch.org)** – including 750 in California, 13 in Mississippi and 9 in Alaska. The list includes the mainly LGBT congregations of Metropolitan Community Church. Almost all the other congregations are in mainline denominations – including the RCA. Predictably, "gay friendly" churches tend to be in theologically more liberal denominations. Affirming congregations in more conservative denominations tend to be much less conservative than their denominations. A few small evangelical groups are on the list.

Same-sex oriented evangelicals tend to get no home-church help to integrate their faith and sexuality since antigay churches recoil at homosexuality and most gay-affirming churches, operating within a restrictive "inclusiveness", recoil at evangelical faith. As it's put by one young man who's not affirmed at his evangelical church: "I sometimes feel flickers of anger at the evangelical church [for] I'm now isolated without any genuine community support. I understand that people are simply at different stages in their ability to truly

understand all the complexities and that it is not an oxymoron to be both gay and evangelical. The only option seems to be to avoid church and study my Bible alone, but that doesn't work either." Says another, a gay-partnered evangelical Christian who's tried both the LGBT-welcoming Presbyterian Church (USA) and the LGBT-non-affirming Presbyterian Church in America and chooses to worship at a PCA congregation: "To me, the 'C' [Christian] is more important than the 'G' [gay]."

**The percentage of Black churchgoers who say their pastors mention homosexuality "often or sometimes" is 47 percent.** Among Hispanic churchgoers, it's 43 percent. These data are from the nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute.

**Are pastors preaching to the choir on social issues?** Not necessarily, according to a new study from Calvin College's Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics. Fifty-four percent of mainline pastors and 23 percent of evangelical pastors say they're more liberal than their congregations. Twelve percent of mainline pastors and 27 percent of evangelical pastors say they're more conservative than their congregations.

**London Telegraph blogger, Tom Chivers, defends a man he calls "one of my least favourite people in the world"** – former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey. Commenting on "a minor storm on the web this morning", he cites what sparked the controversy – Carey's quote: "Let us remember the Jews in Nazi Germany. What started against them was when they started to be called names. And that was the first stage towards that totalitarian state. We have to resist them. We treasure democracy. We treasure our Christian inheritance and we want to debate this in a fair way." Chivers explains that, "That's not the whole quote". Carey had *rejected* the "suggestions that the true 'bigots' were those who advocated gay marriage". Chivers: "Lord Carey, to his credit – and I really, really hate giving Lord Carey credit, because most of the things he says make my skin crawl and/or my toes curl – is rejecting the opportunity to paint his opponents as bigots; he is warning against hurling abusive terms around, including by his own side. In fact, taking the analogy

he draws at face value, the 'Jews' are advocates of gay marriage, and the 'Nazis' are opponents who call them 'the true bigots'. He is calling for polite debate. We should be encouraging this, not decrying him. ... He's not doing what he's being accused of doing. In fact he's trying ... to encourage civility. Now's not the time to shout him down."

**Christianity Today's editors criticize Family Research Council's blaming Southern Poverty Law Center** for a shooting at FRC's Washington office. Tony Perkins, head of FRC, linked the gunman's action to SPLC's labeling FRC a "hate group". CT's editors: "We believe most of the FRC's positions, policy statements, and goals are on target. But we have major reservations about FRC's methods for public engagement. Too often, its leaders traffic in flatly untrue statements." The CT editors mention several examples of this, but FRC's false statements about homosexuality are ignored. "Certainly the SPLC deserves to have its falsehoods rebutted. But the FRC erred in eagerly claiming, so soon after the attack, that the SPLC had given the gunman 'a license to shoot'." The alleged shooter was a volunteer at a local LGBT center. The editors conclude: "Conservative Christians, so often the target of malicious guilt-by-association tactics, should be ashamed to employ these tactics themselves."

**Christianity Today has rejected an ad that asks: "Do you have a child who is gay or lesbian? Do you fully embrace that child just as they are? Christ does."** The ad is from Faith in America, an LGBT-affirming religious organization. The ad urges: "Let's End the Harm from the Misuse of Religious Teaching." FIA notes that the September issue of *Christianity Today* ran a full-page ad for the antigay lobby, Alliance Defending Freedom.

In its November 5, 1976 issue, *Christianity Today* ran an Evangelicals Concerned ad. As soon as editor Harold Lindsell realized that EC was *gay-supportive*, CT refused to repeat the ad and EC's payment was refunded.

**California's Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law a bill that bars mental health providers from "engaging in sexual orientation change efforts" with minors.** Noting the mental health professions' warnings of the ineffectiveness and damage done by such

“change” attempts, Brown said these approaches would now be consigned “to the dustbin of quackery”. Practitioners of “reparative therapy” angrily registered their intent to fight to overturn the law. Yet, Alan Chambers, president of the “ex-gay” movement’s major organization, Exodus, admits that he’s never seen any evidence of “cure”. Promise of such change is, he says, “an unrealistic and unhealthy expectation that can cause a lot of damage.” Ex-“ex-gay” leaders agree with him.

For alternatives to the discredited “reparative” programs, readers are referred to Ralph Blair’s lecture at the American Psychiatric Association’s 2012 convention. Read it at [www.ECinc.org](http://www.ECinc.org). Also pertinent as an alternative to “ex-gay” approaches is the side-by-side coexistence of “Side A” (same-sex relationship) and “Side B” (celibacy) in Justin Lee’s Gay Christian Network at [www.GayChristian.net](http://www.GayChristian.net).

In further discussion at the APA convention, Blair expressed his reservations about the California *legislative* route against “reparative therapy”, arguing that what’s more relevant is a clearer public presentation of the facts, fallacies, failures and dangers of “reparative therapy”. Psychiatrist Jack Drescher, past Chair of the American Psychiatric Association’s Committee on GLB Issues expresses a similar concern: “Passing legislation to prevent a questionable practice seems a rather heavy-handed and inefficient way to reduce these practices among licensed professionals (like using a hammer when you would be better served by using more delicate surgical instruments).” Psychologist Warren Throckmorton, an evangelical, adds that “reparative therapy” advocates have “really been on the ropes in recent years but I am concerned that they are getting a boost from the recent efforts to ban reparative therapy. If the courts find the ban is unconstitutional, then they will probably gain an undeserved public relations benefit”.

**The former editor of Pentecostalism’s *Charisma* magazine attacks California’s new law against “reparative therapy” for minors.** J. Lee Grady: “I have prayed for many people who struggle with homosexual feelings.” He claims his praying now “makes me a criminal if the person I prayed for was under 18.” A *Washington Post* headline didn’t do anything to

caution against such misstatement: “Calif. bans ‘praying away the gay’.”

Grady says he’s “prayed for many guys ... who were haunted by unwanted gay desires because they were sexually abused as children or teens. I have also prayed for women who developed sexual feelings for women after being abused by men.” But no scientific research confirms Grady’s hunch that *same-sex abuse* causes victims to desire same-sex acts and *heterosexual abuse* causes victims to recoil from heterosexual acts. Grady also thinks that, “boys develop same-sex feelings because they lack a father figure.” While black preachers rightly decry the very widespread absence of black fathers in the rearing of their sons, there’s no evidence that this absence turns these many boys gay.

Grady’s book, *10 Lies the Church Tells Women*, calls on churches “to end abuse and gender discrimination” practiced by misapplying Bible verses about women. Some suggest Grady makes similar misuse of Bible verses he misapplies to homosexuals.

“Exploding the irony meter” is what psychologist Warren Throckmorton says the “reparative” therapy group, NARTH, is doing. The Grove City College professor cites the blurb on Paul Copan’s keynote for this November’s convention of the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality. Throckmorton notes the irony. The title of the keynote by the Palm Beach Atlantic University ethics professor is “Truth, Freedom, and Social Constructions: Why Truth-Seeking Ought To Guide Scientific Research”. The blurb states: “Without an understanding of key philosophical and ethical concepts for doing research – including ‘truth’, ‘tolerance’, ‘social constructionism’, and ‘freedom’ – one’s research is likely to become skewed and prove to be both unscientific, and propagandistic. The researcher ought to have freedom to investigate and publish one’s research in the interests of truth – that is, what corresponds to reality”.

However, as Throckmorton accurately points out, “NARTH’s website is full of propaganda and information that does not correspond to reality. They publish a journal they call peer reviewed but is rather reviewed by members and leaders of the organization. They call for more research on their practices but then do next to none. They refer to mainstream research but

often bend it to say something which cannot be said based on the research paradigm”.

**John Piper claims it doesn’t matter “whether there are genetic roots of same-sex attraction and whether the attraction can be changed”.** What matters, says the popular Baptist preacher, is that the Bible condemns all same-sex relationship.

Still, he opposes those who “reject the possibility of change”, citing early claims by Stanton Jones and Mark Yarhouse. But, in his later book, *Homosexuality and the Christian*, Yarhouse urges we “move away” from discussing “whether orientation can change.” See *EC Review*, Spring 2011.

And, as noted in the *EC Record*, Fall 2011, Yarhouse and his Regent University psychology colleagues find that, even after an average of 16 years in mixed-orientation marriage, the same-sex oriented spouse is still *same-sex* oriented. They report no shift toward heterosexual attraction on the part of the same-sex oriented spouse, even though there’s some participation in sex acts within the marriage. When asked about frequency of sexual relations within these marriages, *same-sex* oriented spouses reported a figure twice as high as that reported by their *heterosexual* spouses. The findings, involving 106 husbands and 161 wives, were published in *Edification*, an evangelical journal of the Society for Christian Psychology.

**“Same-Sex Marriage Is Compatible With a Serious Reading of the Bible”.** This is the title of an essay that ChristianToday.com (NB: not *Christianity Today*) asked Ralph Blair to write for a recent series. He notes that, “Lacking courage on gay issues today, antigay and pro-gay preachers tickle ears with what their congregations, denominations and boards expect, and woe to their careers if they should not comply”. The essay is at [ECinc.org](http://ECinc.org) or can be Googled.

**Greg Laurie: “It doesn’t say honor your mother and mother as in two women married, or honor your father and your father”.** Laurie’s congregation applauded his swipe during his sermon on the 5th Commandment. He proclaimed: “Anyone who says they found a way biblically to justify a homosexual relationship is simply ignoring what the Scripture plainly teaches.” Laurie called same-sex marriage evi-

dence of Satan's hateful war on God's definition of the family. Ironically, Laurie became a Christian through the witness of Lonnie Frisbee, a gay "Jesus Freak".

**"To all you queers. Go back to your holes and wait for GOD. Hell awaits you pervert. Good luck singing there."** A Fundamentalist posted this on Facebook after he'd discovered that his daughter had joined the University of Texas Queer Chorus. The chorus president had inadvertently posted the names of two new chorus members whose fathers didn't know they're gay. The other father refused to speak to his gay son for weeks after he found out.

When the LGBT paper, *The Dallas Voice*, picked up this story, originally in *The Wall Street Journal*, one *Voice* reader wrote to one of the outed students: "God bless you Taylor! Jesus loves you for who you are! I pray the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of your father to help him know you are whole in Christ. Jesus' gift is for all us who-soevers! Christ be strength and guidance for you!" Another reader commented on *that* comment: "Finally, a sane Christian. Although I am an Agnostic, this brings me GREAT joy."

**Ted Haggard says the government should allow "life partners" of the same gender to be married legally.** The outed and ousted leader of the National Association of Evangelicals points out: "The state's role is to protect people equally." Still, he says: "God intends marriage to be between a man and a woman."

**Moody Bible Institute gay alum recalls his student days at MBI.** "On a

personal note, this school is actually quite gay. Huh? The most anti-gay school in the country is gay? I didn't deal with my sexuality fully till I graduated, but since I am now dating another Moody alumni (he was even an RA) we have become like the underground railroad for current gay Moody students. I thought I was the only one when I was there – man, was I wrong. Like I said before, your Moody experience can be anything you want it to be, as long as you don't talk about it and keep your non-Moody-like activity far away from campus. If you want to be true to yourself and are the type of person who places a priority on transparency and honesty, then do not come to Moody. You will be miserable and you will not finish."

Some MBI alumni responses: "There are plenty of closet cases at Moody. In fact, I'd argue that there are probably more than in non-religious schools, since so many gay xtians attempt to use bible knowledge and service as a kind of 'cure'." Another: "I was at MBI from 83 – 86. I was extremely anti-gay. I'm straight but the hatred in my heart for gay brothers and sisters is no more. I accept them as full and equal members of the body of Christ. Moody was both a wonderful and a terrible experience for me." And another: "I am a 1995 Moody grad and am currently an out lesbian with a partner, and 3 adopted kids. We attend a fabulous Christian church that values both the gospel and social values, and actually does something about it. Would love to chat with you sometime!" These recollections are at [www.Studentsreview.com](http://www.Studentsreview.com).

***Seventh-Gay Adventist: A Film about Faith on the Margins*** is a feature-

length documentary that follows three gay and lesbian Seventh-day Adventists as they endeavor to integrate their Christian faith and their same-sex orientation. One spent five years in an "ex-gay" ministry and another was fired from his SDA pastorate for being gay. The film is the work of a heterosexual SDA couple. The film's trailer is online at Vimeo.

**Minneapolis Roman Catholic Archbishop John C. Nienstedt warns a mother to stop affirming her gay son's acceptance of his homosexuality.** Responding to her letter, he wrote: "Your eternal salvation may well depend upon a conversation [*sic*] of heart on this topic." Apparently, he meant *conversion* of heart.

#### **AND FINALLY:**

**"Mix It Up at Lunch Day"** is said to encourage school kids to get to know kids they don't already know. Over two thousand schools participate in this 11-year annual effort. But the Religious Right's American Family Association calls it "a project to bully-push their gay agenda" and AFA urges parents to keep their children home on that day. Some schools cancelled their school's participation.

Here's AFA Director of Issues Analysis Bryan Fischer's analysis: "It's interesting to me they're doing this on October 30, the day before Halloween. What this program is, it's like poisoned Halloween candy. Somebody takes a candy bar, injects it with cyanide, the label looks fine, it looks innocuous, it looks fine, it's not until you internalize it that you realize how toxic it is."