

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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An “ex-gay” rally that promised to bring thousands of “ex-gays” to the Supreme Court Building turned out fewer than ten people. Among them was Richard Cohen, famous for his “cuddling on the couch” counseling with young male clients. “Grandpa” McIntyre drove his pick-up truck from Texas and claims *he’s* “the founder” of “the oldest” of all “ex-gay” groups, “Homosexuals Anonymous”. But Colin Cook founded HA. Gordon Seminary’s Richard Lovelace called Cook’s claiming-the-heterosexuality-of-Jesus approach “the silver bullet”. But Cook’s Seventh-day Adventist sponsors fired him for having sex with young men coming to him for the “ex-gay” experience. He then set up shop out west. Actually, the *earliest* church-sponsored “ex-gay” effort was Guy Charles’ “Liberation in Jesus Christ” in the mid-1970s. *Christianity Today* puffed his claims. But, his charismatic Episcopal sponsors fired him and closed “Liberation” because he was having sex with young men coming to him for the “ex-gay” experience. He then moved to Chicago and lived as an openly gay man until he died.

Christianity Today’s Leadership Journal is still pushing the double-talk of “change” for homosexual “identity”. In October, *LJ* gave 5-stars to Charlene Hios’ “Leaving My Lesbian Past” – ignoring the Exodus “ex-gay” network’s disbanding after many decades of false promises and “ex-gay” leaders’ sexual failings and firings. Exodus’ final president, Alan Chambers, joined other ex-“ex-gay” leaders in apologizing for all the harm that’s been done through the “ex-gay” claims.

“An End to Ex-Gay Ministry?” Mike McManus of VirtueOnLine refuses to think so. He asks: “Is it possible for a homosexual to become an ‘ex-gay’ ” and responds by shifting vocabulary the way “ex-gay” advocates have always done. Instead of dealing with the mass of evidence that “ex-gays” *same-sex attraction never*

changes, he asserts that, “it is possible for many gays and lesbians to leave their old life and become new creatures in Christ.” But such slippery double-talk is an unintended confession that so-called “reparative therapy” *doesn’t* work.

Gulielmo Marinaro replies to McManus by supplying a “random list of people who publicly testified that their sexual orientation had changed from homosexual to heterosexual, thus proving that for them, at least, sexual attraction is mutable.” He notes that, “These were the ‘stars’ of the ‘ex-gay’ movement, the ones who held themselves up, or were held up by others, as living proof that ‘Change is possible!’ All of them once ran ‘ex-gay’ ministries to help others to change, just as they allegedly had. All eventually admitted that their change of orientation was nothing but self-deception, and that none of the clients of their ministries ever changed either.” Marinaro’s list: “John Evans, Michael Bussee, Gary Cooper, Jim Kaspar, Frank Shears, Jeremy Marks, Raphaël Creemers, Günter Baum, Jeff Ford, Paul Martin, Sergio Viula, John Smid, Kurt Jacobowitz-Cain, Roger Grindstaff, Rick Notch, Mario Rodriguez, Guy Charles, John Paulk, Bruce Grimsley.” Many more names could have been added to this list of ex-“ex-gay” leaders.

Still, against all the evidence of this tragic history of failure as well as loss of Christian faith, McManus writes in habituated denial: “Exodus has died, but ministry to those with same-sex attraction will continue and largely be successful.”

Republican Governor Chris Christie has signed a law barring licensed therapists from trying to turn gay minors into heterosexuals. New Jersey now joins California in banning such spiritual abuse in the name of “reparative therapy”. Christie wrote: “The American Psychological Association has found that efforts to change sexual orientations can pose critical health

risks including, but not limited to, depression, substance abuse, social withdrawal, decreased self-esteem and suicidal thoughts. I believe that exposing children to these health risks without clear evidence of benefits that outweigh these serious risks is not appropriate.”

National Review editors denounced Christie for refusing “to honor a minor’s request for help in becoming heterosexual”, as though *NR* had never heard all the apologies from Exodus that, however much a gay minor might be *told* by church and parents that he *must become heterosexual*, the “therapy” does *not* do that.

Refusing to pay attention to the long and continuing history of apologies from ex-“ex-gay” leaders, including John Paulk who once led Focus on the Family’s “ex-gay” program, Focus’ Tom Minnery dismisses the new law as merely “politically correct”. But it’s Minnery’s attack that’s “politically correct” – in his Right-wing Focus world.

Justin Lee, founder of the Gay Christian Network, spoke at Calvin College. He noted the sad and familiar fact that, for young Americans, Christianity is *best* known for being antigay. “That’s a problem. That should not be what we’re known for.” He went on to say: “We’re going to have to agree to disagree and that doesn’t mean that one side thinks the other side’s view is just as valid.” He said that many have given up on churches because of church mistreatment, but others have gone deeper into Christian faith to cope with that. While the official position of Calvin and its Christian Reformed sponsors was recited by administrative spokespersons, Lee’s presentations were very well received.

Chimes, the Calvin College student newspaper, prints first-person accounts of some of Calvin’s LGBT students. Editor Ryan Struyk, a CRC minister’s son, led the project and included his own story. Years of isolation and fears of hostility from family

and church are painfully evident in these testimonies. Read them here. <http://www.calvin.edu/chimes/2013/11/14/listen-first-introduction-to-lgbt-feature/>

In 2007, Gordon College published a booklet of first-person accounts of some of that evangelical school's gay and lesbian students. A heterosexual student, Diana McLean, led the project and keyed the 2008 eastern EC retreat.

Amy Plantinga Pauw says, "Both theologically and practically, marriage has always been a work in progress for Christians." Addressing the 2013 Covenant Conference of Presbyterians, this Jonathan Edwards scholar and theological historian from a venerable Christian Reformed family of scholars explained: "There is no single, unchanging biblical view of marriage. This is clear as soon as we start reading the Bible." So, she said: "It's time that I give public support to my gay and lesbian sisters and brothers who believe in marriage enough that they are willing to enter into it without anything like the social approval, familial support, and financial incentives that I have mostly taken for granted in my own marriage."

Southern Baptist spokesman and theologian Russell Moore urges Christians to tone down their culture war rhetoric: "We are involved in the political process, but we must always be wary of being co-opted by it." He warns fellow evangelicals to stop being "mascots for any political faction [and urges a] winsome, kind and empathetic" response if the church hopes to reach the millennial generation.

"Instead of offering hope, many evangelicals have claimed the role of moral gatekeeper, judge and jury." Evangelical Free pastor John S. Dickerson makes this observation, adding: "If we continue in that posture, we will continue to invite opposition and obscure the 'good news' we are called to proclaim."

Says RZIM's Michael Ramsden: "The misunderstandings surrounding the central message of the gospel have led many to become increasingly antagonistic towards it." In the newsletter of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, he writes: "This exerts a pressure all of us feel to be vigilant in our manner as we seek to re-

spond to the struggles of others." He quotes from an email to RZIM: "I just wanted to thank all of you for what you did for [myself and my friend] last week. For the first time in her life, she was able to be around such a large group of Christians and feel safe. A big deal for a lesbian who has felt the cold hard iron and slanderous hand of many Christians previously. After the Tuesday night question answer panel she came up to me and said she thought the guns were going to come out aimed and ready to fire at homosexuals. Instead, nothing like that happened, and she expressed to me how safe she feels around us. The rest of her week was filled with the 'best case she ever heard for Christianity'."

The Southern Baptist Convention has ordered its military chaplains not to perform, attend or participate in any same sex wedding in any way. SBC chaplains "will not conduct or attend a wedding ceremony for any same-sex couple, bless such a union or perform counseling in support of such a union, assist or support paid contractors or volunteers leading same-sex relational events, nor offer any kind of relationship training or retreat, on or off of a military installation, that would give the appearance of accepting the homosexual lifestyle or sexual wrongdoing."

Research finds that Southern Baptists and *other evangelicals* still exceed all other religious groups in opposing *interracial* marriage – almost half a century after the Supreme Court ruled that laws against interracial marriage were unconstitutional.

The Archbishop of Canterbury says young people "don't want to hear about a faith that is homophobic." Addressing his fellow evangelicals in UK's Evangelical Alliance, he continued: "The vast majority of people under 35 think [resistance to same-sex marriage] is not just incomprehensible but plain wrong and wicked, and they assimilate it to racism and other horrors. ... We [Christians] have implicitly and even explicitly supported [homophobia] and that demands repentance."

Zambian Baptist Conrad Mbewe, hailed by antigay clergy as "The African Spurgeon", calls homosexuality "another bane of the West." His argument: "Men are insisting on being given the 'inalienable right' to have sex

with fellow men. For me, this defies basic logic. I mean, how? The anatomy itself suggests that it is not possible. But, again, it does not seem obvious to everyone. This question is made even more pertinent when entire Christian denominations in the West that once sent us missionaries are passing laws to ordain homosexual clergy. I mean, how?"

Dartmouth University's president says "commitment to inclusion" means rescinding an African bishop's appointment at the school. Though Bishop James Tengatenga has courageously stood against Malawi's repressive government, is a peacemaker on gay issues there and supports same-sex marriage here, PC Ivy elites, goaded by the campus NAACP, judged him insufficiently pro-LGBTQQ. Malawi gay activists know him as their friend and supporter, so Kapyra Kaoma calls Dartmouth's decision "a big blow, because it leaves African activists on the ground wondering if they can work with Westerners." Desmond Tutu denounces Dartmouth's folly, as does the school's gay-supportive religion department chair Randall Balmer, African LGBT Human Rights activist Victor Mukasa and others.

New York City's West Indian Day Parade lyrics urged the killing of gay men and lesbians. The annual event boomed hate while campaigning politicians gyrated to the beat, evidently oblivious to this blasted Jamaican Patois: "*Lick a shot inna a battyman head! Lick a shot inna a lesbian head! All sodomite dem fi dead, All lesbian dem fi dead.*" In Jamaica, such antigay violence is common – including murder.

New Mexico's Supreme Court rules that a photographer must provide services for a same-sex wedding no matter if that violates her conscience. Justice Richard Bosson lectured her: This is "the price of citizenship [in a] multicultural, pluralistic society". He told her that we all must "leave space for other Americans who believe something different." *National Review* editors point out the judge's unexamined prejudice: "It does not appear to have occurred to Justice Bosson that space for her beliefs is precisely what the photographer was after."

Meanwhile in Georgia, a three-judge panel has ruled in favor of a KKK Grand Wizard who'd brought suit against a baker for refusing to bake a cake for a KKK event.

Billy Glover, veteran of the '50s homophile movement, says this was just the sort of thing early leaders feared would be an unintended result of working for gay civil rights.

A California lawyer solicited help from Evangelicals Concerned in his legal action against a Christian website. "I am an attorney in California and my firm recently filed a class action lawsuit against the owners/operators of [Christian Mingle] for excluding gays and lesbians living in California from the services offered by their site. We believe that a successful resolution of this lawsuit will go a long way in increasing tolerance and hopefully combatting [*sic*] prejudice in the Christian community. I was hoping that we could post a message on your site about the lawsuit, so that any Gay Christians living in California who are potentially interested in being class members could contact us. Please let me know".

EC founder Ralph Blair replied: "I have been advocating for Evangelical Christian acceptance of same-sex relationship since 1962, but I do not believe that a lawsuit is the way to change minds. And, according to the Bill of Rights, folks are free to associate mutually with whom they wish and have a right to their own religious beliefs without fear of a lawsuit. I certainly do not agree with the view of same-sex couples that is held, apparently, by those who are responsible for ChristianMingle, but they certainly have a right to their opinion. It is ethically and psychologically problematic for anyone to violate his or her conscience."

Evangelicals Concerned commemorated 200th anniversaries of David Livingstone, Soren Kierkegaard, Robert Murray M'Cheyne and Jemima Luke at EC's annual Fall Festival at Ocean Grove in October. Along with his historical background and display of autograph letters, documents and other antiquities of the honorees, Ralph Blair gave three teachings on Jesus' parables of God's reign.

Past EC fall retreats have commemorated Calvin, Arminius, Jonathan Edwards, the Wesley brothers, John Newton, George MacDonald, George Matheson, William Holman Hunt, Louis Klopsch, Ira D. Sankey, Francis Thompson, William Booth, Carry A. Nation, Lottie Moon, Richard Wurmbrund, Helmut Thielicke, F. F. Bruce, Mahalia Jackson, Hannah Whitall

Smith, Bob Jones, Jr. and Francis Schaeffer and others, as well as the 400th year of the King James Bible's launch and centennial of *The Fundamentals*.

All EC worship service offerings are sent to other Christian organizations without regard to their position on gay issues. Recipients have included the Bowery Mission, New York Rescue Mission, The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, World Vision, Ocean Grove Camp Meeting, The Salvation Army, Voice of the Martyrs, etc. The 2013 offering went to Redeemer Presbyterian's Hope for New York Fund.

The 2014 EC Presidents Day Bible Study Weekend will be held February 15 – 17 at KirkrIDGE Lodge, in the eastern Pennsylvania mountains.

Baylor University theologian Roger E. Olson, in reviewing *The Evangelicals You Don't Know*, writes: "I've been teaching in evangelical Christian colleges, universities and seminaries for a long time (31 years) and virtually every one of any size has had gay groups. Sure, they were underground, but they have existed for a long time."

"I am gay and I teach at a CCCU institution." This is the first sentence in an open letter to presidents of schools in the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities. Founded in 1976, "The Year of the Evangelical", CCCU has 119 member institutions. *Inside HigherEd* published the letter anonymously, so as, in the writer's words, not to "place my job at risk, as you well know." The writer was "raised in a conservative Christian home [and] only recently have I accepted my sexual orientation, when I am already teaching at a CCCU institution. ... I am out to only one friend who teaches at my institution, although I think there are other allies. No CCCU institution is a safe place for gay and lesbian faculty." The writer says: "The courageous thing for me to do would be to come out. Gay students, knowing that I was sympathetic, have talked to me about their struggles with family and church. I would have liked to have been open about my own journey in these conversations, but was silent. It pains me to think that my silence contributes to homophobia."

Eastern Mennonite University is about to review its ban against faculty in same-sex partnership. President

Loren Swartzendruber announced a six-month "listening period". He said: "As a Christian university, it is our responsibility to engage in community discussion and discernment over issues that Mennonite congregations – indeed, almost all denominations in the United States today – are wrestling with." The "listening" begins in January and participants are asked to contribute without fear of adverse consequences.

Azusa Pacific University's unofficial gay/straight support group stands up publicly for a veteran systematic theology professor who's now transitioning from female to male. APU administrators have asked Adam Ackley to leave the evangelical school, saying his staying would be a "distraction" for students and negatively impact financial contributions. Ackley, once the chair of APU theology and philosophy, says he's gotten an "overwhelming amount of support" from students and colleagues, as well as on social media. He's a minister in the Church of the Brethren.

Pat Robertson said: "I don't think there's any sin associated with that." Responding to a question about a transsexual in a caller's workplace, he explained to *700 Club* viewers: "I think there are men who are in a woman's body. It's very rare. But it's true – or women that are in men's bodies – and they want a sex change." Putting up his hands, he told the questioner: "It's not for you to decide or to judge."

The news editor at *Charisma*, a Pentecostal periodical, was quick to object: With "people who have fallen into the snare of homosexuality or gender identity issues, [we] need to be careful, when speaking with compassion, not to endorse it ... especially at a time when immorality is displacing Christian values at such a rampant rate."

Yet, religious conservatives have tended to be less negative on transitioning in gender identity cases than on same-sex partnership since they've seen medical intervention for sex-change as *correcting* a disorder but see same-sex relationship as *indulging* a disorder.

"Who am I to judge a gay person?" Pope Francis asked reporters. "If they accept the Lord and have good will, who am I to judge them? They should not be marginalized ... they are our brothers." He was responding to questions while flying back to Rome

after celebrating Mass for 3 million in Rio de Janeiro. Fr. James Martin of *America* magazine explains: “One of Francis’ hallmarks is an emphasis on mercy. That mercy, of course, comes from Jesus.” Conservative columnist Peggy Noonan commented: “It has been called tolerant, but it wasn’t tolerant – it was loving.”

“Human self-understanding changes with time and, so also, human consciousness deepens.” Pope Francis said this in a long interview in which he reasoned: “Let us think of when slavery was accepted or the death penalty was allowed without any problem. So we grow in the understanding of the truth. Exegetes and theologians help the church to mature in her judgment. Even the other sciences and their development help the church in its growth in understanding. There are ecclesiastical rules and precepts that were once effective, but now they have lost value or meaning. The view of the church’s teaching as a monolith to defend without nuance or different understandings is wrong.” He granted: “The church has sometimes locked itself up in small-minded rules”. He illustrated: “A person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: ‘Tell me: when God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?’ We must always consider the *person*.”

Church historian Martin Marty explains: “In all his public speeches, in his long and revelatory interview, and through most of his acts, gestures, and spontaneous remarks, Francis wants his papacy, his bishops, and his Church to be focused on the Gospel, the ‘good news’ of God’s action in Jesus Christ.” Pat Buchanan fears: “His Holiness seeks to move the Catholic Church to a stance of non-belligerence, if not neutrality, in the culture war for the soul of the West”.

Satan is the source of “sodomy” and “the redefinition of marriage.” So said the Minneapolis/St. Paul Catholic Archbishop John C. Niendstedt at the Napa Institute assembly this summer. He told these Catholics: “The source of

these machinations is none other than the Father of Lies.” A video of his entire speech contained scans of a disengaged audience and the applause at the end was merely polite. Many did not applaud at all.

“Around half of the men in church say that pornography is a problem for them. And this number is on the rise for women as well.” Jim Denison, former pastor of Dallas’ Park Cities Baptist Church, cites the research and adds: “According to surveys, 80 percent of single Christians between the age of 18 and 29 have had sex outside of marriage. Divorce rates among Christians are almost identical to non-Christians.” Yet polls show that evangelicals are *best known* for crusading against same-sex *marriage*.

Southern churches are kicking out the Boy Scouts. This is due to the BSA welcome of boys who happen to be gay. The congregations – most with bygone roots in slavery, segregation and opposition to interracial marriage – include megachurches like Georgia’s Roswell Street Baptist and Alabama’s formerly Southern Presbyterian church and “Birthplace of the Presbyterian Church in America”. Complains a Tennessee PCA pastor: “The culture wants Christians to abandon their traditional faith.” Meanwhile, moderate and liberal churches are giving space to the ousted scouts.

“Trail Life USA” has been set up to substitute for the Boy Scouts. John Stemberger, founder, insists, “We’re not an anti-BSA organization”. But he says he must “continue to expose the real dangers and risks that the new [BSA] membership policy poses to boys”. Stemberger is head of Florida Family Policy Council, a Rightwing group that lists, as “Bad Bills”, “Equal Rights for Men & Women” (SB54/HB8001).

New Jersey, Illinois and Hawaii bring to 16 the number of states, plus the District of Columbia, where same-sex couples can marry legally. Gallup finds 52 percent of Americans would vote for a law making same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states while 43 percent say they’d vote against such a

law. Pew Research finds 50 percent of respondents favor allowing same-sex couples to marry while 43 percent are opposed.

“The process of ‘coming out’ has proved to be the most potent of all forms of egalitarian activism”, says conservative gay journalist Jonathan Rauch in his cover story, “A Gay Awakening”, in *American Review*. He traces the “miracle” of the cultural transition from 1995, when his father told him he’d be “nuts” to write in support of same-sex marriage, to 2013 when, he notes, Pew Research finds “a strong majority of Americans, on *both* sides of the issue, saying that gay marriage is inevitable.”

Pew finds that “87 percent report knowing someone who is gay or lesbian, and half have a close friend or family member who is gay”. Rauch observes: “It is hard to hate or fear people you know and like.” He says demographics play a role. Most Americans under 30 are in favor of marriage for gays and opponents are dying off. Yet, “support has increased impressively among every generational cohort.” He says people are now understanding that, “gay couples are fighting not to demean or defy bourgeois norms but to conform to them; that they are not just demanding rights but requesting responsibilities, to each other and their communities. ... In other words, centrist Americans who looked at gay marriage began to see a *conservative* cause. They saw not an attack on family values but an embrace of them.”

AND FINALLY:

A Fundamentalist preacher put a cast portrait of the “Modern Family” on his e-book’s cover to represent the *perfect* family. Doug Sehorne found the photograph on Google Images without realizing it was from the popular sitcom that features a same-sex couple. The antigay preacher says he’d never heard of that “wicked TV show.”