

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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EC's 2020 weekend retreats are announced. Over Presidents Day Weekend, February 15-17 (Saturday afternoon through Monday lunch) we'll be at the Kirkridge Farmhouse for our 33rd Winter Bible Study Weekend. On the weekend of June 5-7 (Friday evening through Sunday lunch) we'll be on top of the mountain, at Kirkridge's Lodge for our 80th EC Summer connEction – our 40th Summer connEction up there. Our guest keynoters will be Jerushah and Kyle Duford. Jerushah, a granddaughter of Billy Graham, is a noted speaker and author, having compiled and edited *Thank You, Billy Graham*, with two of her five brothers. She's currently pursuing her Master's degree in Clinical Psychology. Kyle is a former marketing executive for Dr. Martens, and is a noted speaker in industry at events like ShopTalk and MarTech. He runs an advertising and branding agency – The Brand Leader – in their hometown of Greenville, SC, where they live with their children. Over the Columbus Day Weekend, October 9-11, (Friday evening through Sunday lunch) we'll meet again at Ocean Grove for our 18th Fall Festival, with three lectures, a museum and Sunday worship. Check www.ECinc.org for registration info.

Justin Lee, evangelical gay advocate, was an invited speaker at Baylor University in September. He spoke to a full house of 500 eager listeners. Lee grew up as Southern Baptist and, for two days on this Southern Baptist campus, he shared his coming out story and how the church can continue to learn to be more welcoming and affirming. Baylor's School of Social Work sponsored his visit. Interested folks can keep up with Justin's helpful blog, videos and books at www.geekyjustin.com.

Roger Olson, a Truett Seminary professor at Baylor [see EC's *Review* for Winter 2020] questions *how really evangelical* "evangelicals" are who

"welcome and affirm" gays and lesbians and same-sex marriage. What Lee said at Baylor should answer Olson's doubt.

Antigay Southern Baptist blogger Jim Denison mentions Paul's noting those with "itching ears". (II Tim 4:3) He says, "itching ears [people] pack the pulpits of their churches with preachers who would tell them only what they desired to hear". He detects this in "welcoming and affirming" churches, but fails to note it in *all* congregations. Doesn't he see this in his own church, his own blog? The Southern Baptist Convention formed to pack pulpits with preachers who pushed SBC's allegedly "biblical" positions on *slavery* and *segregation* over against those they claimed were "biblically unfaithful", i.e., the Baptists up North.

He gripes and brags that, "only 32 percent of non-evangelical Americans have 'warm feelings' toward white evangelical Christians, the group most identified for its opposition to same-sex marriage." But, the *deepest* reason for non-evangelical Americans' dislike of evangelicals is not about same-sex marriage. It's about *Jesus' evangel, itself*.

Wayne Grudem has changed his mind about divorce in cases of abuse. Speaking at an Evangelical Theological Society meeting, this Calvinist complementarian said that it was his *personal awareness* of Christian wives who've stayed married through decades of their husbands' sexual abuse and severe humiliation, that convinced him that his long-held view on the Bible's allegedly *disallowing* divorce in such cases was incorrect.

Such a revision of views resembles that of those who've changed their minds about the "clobber" verses allegedly condemning all expressions of homosexuality. Knowing those who are homosexually-oriented helps one better relate to what they face through life.

Long ago, Jesus' Golden Rule brought all such matters *even closer to home* when he commanded us to extrapolate from *how we wish to be treated*, to *how we should treat others*. Very simple! Yet 20 years ago, Grudem warned of "a slippery slope from gender egalitarianism to accepting homosexuality". As more evangelicals become aware of real folks of same-sex orientation, they can *rise, Golden Rule-wise*, to relate to them better.

Cartoonist Howard Cruse has died at 75. Son of a preacher, he grew up in Springville, Alabama. His cartoons were first published in *The Baptist Student*. In the 1980s, his popular gay comic strip, "Wendel", was featured in *The Advocate*. Earlier, he'd created a humorously poignant editorial cartoon for the first issue of our *Homosexual Counseling Journal* (January 1974). But some *H CJ* subscribers deemed cartoons unprofessional in a mental health journal, so, the editorial cartoon was discontinued.

America's main conservative Presbyterian denomination, the PCA, rebukes *celibate* gay and lesbian folks for honestly describing themselves as "gay" or "lesbian".

The PCA periodical's *byFaith* editor, in a fundraising letter, writes: "I wish we could give a copy of *byFaith* to every 'none' we know." Sadly, he fails to realize that, a big reason many identify as "nones" is that, churches in which they were reared, e.g., the PCA, are so rigidly antigay and don't try to understand their same-sex oriented friends and family members – even when they're *committed to celibacy*. Giving copies of *byFaith* to "nones" would but reinforce their isolation and resolve to remain "nones".

"Why do many Christians talk more about the effects of homosexuality than the effects of single-parent homes?" Antigay *World* magazine's

Marvin Olasky put this question to Patrick Henry College government professor, Stephen Baskerville, who replied: “The most destructive trend in our society is raising children without fathers, yet it’s being promoted as a good thing. ... The consequences of single-parent homes and unwed child-bearing are much more severe than the problems caused by homosexuality. Most of our domestic budget goes to solving problems created by the fatherless.”

How many Americans identify as L, G, B or T? Roughly, some 15 to 26 million? Gallup finds, in a random sample of 340,604, that 4.5% of American adults identified somewhere along the LGBT spectrum. Among millennials, it was 8.1%.

There’s no “gay gene”. This is the conclusion of the largest study that’s looked into finding a “gay gene”. According to the MIT/Harvard study, homosexuality is “a normal part of variation in our species.” Genetics seems to account for some 8 to 25 percent of same-sex behavior when thousands of tiny variations across the whole genome are taken into account.

Half a century ago, the best conclusion on etiology was a confluence of factors in both heredity and environment. That is still a reasonable summation.

The Boy Scouts of America faces serious financial problems – to some extent, traced to the welcoming of gay youth in 2013 and welcoming of gay scout leaders in 2015. But apart from gay issues, there continues to be a decline in the general public’s interest in what Boy Scouts has offered for generations.

With increasing costs of liability insurance in the aftermath of sex abuse claims against the BSA, cost overruns on property development, and other expenses, the BSA has even considered bankruptcy protection. It recently filed a mortgage on its 220 square-miles of wilderness wonder, the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, founded in 1938.

In 2019, over 3,500 child predators were arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This is an 18 percent increase over 2018. So, the international program,

‘Operation Predator’, started by the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) division of ICE, has increased its efforts against these sex predators who target children.

“In caving to the bullying of a minority of radical activists, Chick-fil-A has only affirmed that their destructive tactics work.” Kay Coles James, longtime black leader in the government and private sectors, makes this observation in *The Washington Times*. Having served on the national boards of both The Salvation Army and The Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she writes: “I never witnessed – nor would I have tolerated – any type of prejudice or bigotry toward gay people.” She notes that The Salvation Army is the largest provider of poverty relief to the LGBT community in the nation.”

Chick-fil-A’s funding of the LGBT-supportive Covenant House ministry, founded by a gay Catholic priest, should refute any accusation that the company is homophobic.

“Shame, shame on you, @ChickfilA. You are the 3rd most successful fast food franchise in the US. You had no reason to capitulate. But you did. Yes, shame on the progressive bullies too – yet the greater shame is yours, Chick-fil-A, you cowards.”

This rant was tweeted by Rod Dreher, noted for his *Benedict Option*. It was his fierce reaction to the chicken chain’s announcement that it would no longer donate to The Salvation Army and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, organizations the LGBTQ+ lobbies erroneously label, along with Chick-fil-A, itself, as homophobic.

Dreher granted: “I can well imagine that its corporate leadership just wanted to be done with all the hassle, and stick with selling grub, like all other fast food chains. Who can blame them? Chick-fil-A didn’t invite these years of disgusting, lying smears, but it handled them with grace, and kept on standing by its principles. People who patronized Chick-fil-A knew that the allegations were baseless, and that hating Chick-fil-A was a left-wing cult thing to do.”

Ben Shapiro said: “Chick-Fil-A has survived and thrived because they served everyone AND refused to cater to the cancel culture. Now they’ve caved at the behest of the censorious

Left. This is a terrible move.” *The New York Post* headlined: “Chick-fil-A chickens out” and noted that, “profits soared in the seven years since it was targeted over its boss’ comments ... sales reportedly rose 12 percent, not because chicken lovers are homophobic but because no one likes a bully telling you what to believe.” *The Post* warns: “Cowardice is a lose-lose proposition.”

Editorial cartoonist Michael Ramirez’ opinion was presented in his drawing of two black and white spotted Chick-fil-A cows painting a billboard with this message: “Be A Chikin, Abandon the Salvation Army”. Gary Varvel, another editorial cartoonist, depicted the Chick-fil-A cow using its hindleg to knock over a Salvation Army kettle beside a shocked Santa.

Franklin Graham tweeted: “I picked up the phone and called Dan Cathy. Dan was very clear that they have not bowed down to anyone’s demands, including the LGBTQ community. They will continue to support whoever they want to support. They haven’t changed who they are or what they believe. Chick-fil-A remains committed to Christian values. Dan Cathy assured me that this isn’t going to change. I hope all those who jumped to the wrong conclusion about them read this.”

The U.S. Supreme Court has heard oral arguments in two more LGBT cases. At issue is whether the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination against LGBT folks. More than 20 states plus D.C. have passed LGBT job protection laws. During oral arguments, Chief Justice John Roberts noted that many of these provisions “include an exemption for religious organizations”. He wondered if the Court would be granting similar protections by ruling in the plaintiffs’ favor.

May adoptive parents be allowed to hold views against same-sex marriage? The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has proposed ending a policy that discriminates against those who are looking to adopt children but do not believe in same-sex marriage. Regulations adopted by the Obama administration bar organizations that believe marriage should be between a man and a woman from federal child-welfare programs. The new

rule would allow ministries to place children for adoption without violating religious convictions – in line with the 1st Amendment’s religious freedom, i.e., neither an “establishment of religion” nor “prohibiting the free exercise thereof”.

Pew Research finds that married couples are more satisfied than cohabiting couples. Understandably, the married are more likely than the merely cohabiting to trust the partner to be faithful, to act in the couple’s best interest, to tell the truth, and to handle money responsibly. They are more satisfied with the way the partner parents, how household chores are shared, how they communicate, and are more satisfied with their sex life. Consistently, married couples reported higher satisfaction than did the merely cohabiting couples. One may reasonably conclude that these findings simply reveal what *real commitment* is really all about. Yet, many happily married Christians still oppose *same-sex marriage*, failing to *support others as they, themselves, value being supported*.

A female-to-male transgender complains in a long op-ed in *Vice* that, as a lesbian, it was easier to get a date. But now, “as a trans guy, the majority [of women] don’t seem to know what to make of me, so they run away. I’ve played around with the big reveal and I know the two are linked. It’s hard not to see a connection when you arrange a second date, drop the T bomb and then she cancels in the next breath [and it’s happened] over and over and over. Before dates, during dates, after dates, it didn’t matter.”

This, of course, should not surprise anybody! Heterosexuals want dates with people who are *actually* of the *other* sex. Same-sex attracted people want dates with people who are *actually* of the *same* sex. Transgender folks must face the inevitable fact that, they’re very unlikely to have a satisfying, intimate, sexual/romantic relationship after transitioning and after presenting as such to individuals who had not suspecting.

No wonder they’re depressed and lonely and so often kill themselves, especially after all the transitioning. As with holding oneself hostage to *any* fantasy, it can’t, it won’t, and it doesn’t

materialize as one merely *fantasized* it would.

This *Vice* writer tries to self-console over all these rejections, and so, concluded, quite reasonably: “By telling them that one thing about me, their reaction tells me everything I need to know about them.” That’s true! And it should be taken to mean that all of these women who refused to date a “trans guy”, speak for far more women than themselves.

UK’s 1989 Stonewall founder, Simon Fanshawe OBE, says that Stonewall is now undermining lesbians’ rights and putting women and girls at risk by “unthinkingly” supporting trans rights without their having to live in their chosen gender for two years. “Stonewall has confused legal and biological questions with social identity and when you do that”, Fanshawe says, “you start to make bad law.”

A Dallas mother insists her 7-year old son, James, is a girl, so she dresses him in girls’ clothes and calls him, “Luna”. His dad objects. The parents are bitterly divorced. A jury ruled *against* joint custody and *for* full control by the mother, a pediatrician, who bills her practice as, “Modern Parenting” with the motto, “Take charge of your child’s mental and moral development.” But the judge overruled it, and joint custody remains.

If James is chemically castrated, he’ll be sterile for life. So, Texas’ Attorney General has called for Family and Protective Services to investigate reports that the mother “intends to administer puberty blockers soon.”

Writing of this case at *First Things*, Ramona Tausz notes the dad’s “Save James” T-shirt that displays a Proverb: “Speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves.” (Prov 30:8) Tausz suggests “the slightly more urgent admonition from Jude: ‘Save others by snatching them out of the fire.’” (Jude 1:23)

More than 6,300 adults have died from reactions to a drug that is used as a puberty blocker for transgender children, according to U.S. Food & Drug Administration data. Between 2012 and June 30, 2019, the FDA documented 40,764 adverse reactions suffered by patients who took Leuprolide Acetate (Lupron), a hormone blocker.

More than 25,500 reactions between 2014 and 2019 were deemed “serious” while 6,370 died.”

The transactivist group, TransOhio, has quit participating in Ohio’s Columbus Stonewall, complaining that Stonewall “has an obligation to support and protect the most vulnerable among us. Stonewall has failed to live up to that duty for far too long.”

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a Catholic hospital faces liability for not performing a hysterectomy for a female-to-male transgender person – even if the hospital refers the patient to a non-Catholic facility in the same network. This patient did obtain the hysterectomy three days later but, nonetheless, brought a lawsuit against the Catholics. The Department of Health and Human Services clarifies that, in terms of federal anti-discrimination law, *sex* does not include “gender identity” – a distinction the trans community, itself, underscores.

“Another Blow Against Integration” is reported by John Leo in *Minding the Campus*. The University of Nevada “discourages socially mixing different groups by providing separate dorms for separate identity groups ... Howell Town for black students, Stonewall Suites for LGBT students, Tonopah housing community for women only, the Health Living floor for those who still like tofu and kale.” Leo adds, with a wink, there’s “the Study Intensive Hall for those who plan on graduating”.

This nationwide PC trend aims to prevent “offended feelings” in the presence of “other tribes”. So, *reinforcement* of prejudice continues, without allowing people to get to know that those of other “tribes” may, indeed, resemble oneself more than one realizes.

“Woke History: Formula for National Demise: A truly repressive and unjust regime in Russia or China doesn’t even have to collude with America’s progressive educators to undermine its greatest enemy.” So says *The Wall Street Journal* on a report noting that, “High-school students in California learn how to carry out a campaign for social justice and then pay it forward by passing their social-

justice message along to middle-school students. Social-justice words embedded in the minds of impressionable students include: oppression, toxic masculinity, heteronormativity”, etc.

But former President Barack Obama remarks: “The idea of purity and you’re never compromised and you’re always politically woke and all that stuff, you should get over that, quickly. The world is messy. There are ambiguities. People who do really good stuff have flaws. People who you are fighting may love their kids and share certain things with you.”

He went on to say that public shaming on social media isn’t “activism” and he pushed against the notion that, “‘If I tweet or hashtag about how you didn’t do something right or used the wrong word or verb, then I can sit back and feel pretty good about myself, because, man, you see how woke I was. I called you out?’ That’s not activism!”

His comments are reminiscent of his good advice in 2016, when, in addressing Rutgers University graduates, he recalled the school’s forced cancellation of a speech by Condoleezza Rice: “Don’t feel like you got to shut your ears off because you’re too fragile and somebody might offend your sensibilities.”

In 1997, Josh Harris, at 21, wrote a book called, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* – about his saving sex for marriage. He then pastored a mega-church. He later left his marriage. More recently he’s announced that he no longer considers himself a Christian: “If you’re not living according to the teaching of the Bible, and you’re living in unrepentant sin, then you have to be put out of the church. I excommunicated myself.”

Julie Roys, who’s written for *Christianity Today* and *World* magazine, blogs about Harris’ having, “posted numerous pictures of himself at a gay pride parade, prompting questions about whether something other than existential angst had prompted the best-selling Christian author to kiss his marriage and faith goodbye.”

The “ex-gay” movement’s Exodus International’s former VP, Randy Thomas, has spoken out at a press conference in support of Florida lawmakers’ filing two bills to stop counselors from doing discredited “conversion therapy” on anyone under 18.

Exodus closed down in 2013 with apologies for all the harm the fraudulent movement did. More than a dozen states have enacted laws prohibiting licensed therapists from attempting to change a minor’s sexual orientation. Why? Because it can’t be done!

“Some prominent Christians are trying to resurrect ex-gay Christianity”, reports Christian journalist Jonathan Merritt in *The Washington Post*. He warns: “beneath the cosmetic tweaks sits the same message that has damaged many lives over many decades: ‘If you’re a Christian with same-sex attractions, change is both possible and necessary.’”

Merritt interviews *newer* peddlers of this hoax, but they dance around specifics, they mince words, and fail to give straight answers. Rosaria Champagne Butterfield left a lesbian relationship and is now the wife of a male pastor. Jackie Hill Perry says, “lesbian [was] an identity that I used to walk in and choose, but now I don’t.” These testimonies show a fluidity of sexual attraction in women that isn’t found in men.

Chirlane McCray, Mayor Bill de Blasio’s wife, says, “When I came to New York City, long ago back in 1977, I identified as a lesbian”, and she did so, very publicly. But she’s not joined those who push “ex-gay” promises and those who do push such, don’t point to her. Matt Moore used to find dates on the gay dating app, Grindr., but now he’s engaged to be married to the antigay preacher John Piper’s daughter, Tabitha. At *Christian Post*, Moore pushes against Merritt’s take, saying that he and other “ex-gays” have “renounced our former ways”. Still, he, too, doesn’t claim to be *now*, *heterosexually-oriented*. Likewise, a mega-church promotes its folks “who once identified as LGBTQ+”, as it’s put, but here, too, no *orientation* change is mentioned.

Avoiding claims of “sexual orientation” change in these *newer* “ex-gay” claims is at least a bit less dishonest, on the surface, than the misleading claims of yesteryears, but folks can still want to read into the newer claims, whatever they’re looking for.

A lesbian Episcopal priest calls abortionists “modern-day saints”. She’s the new president and CEO of the National Abortion Federation.

AND FINALLY

A Greek Orthodox prelate on Cyprus, “the Happy Isle” to the ancients, is accused of hate speech after claiming that homosexuality could be passed on when pregnant women had anal intercourse. He claims, too, that gay men are recognizable by a “particular odor”.