

“A Question about Evangelical Churches that are ‘Welcoming and Affirming’ ” by Roger E. Olson, *Evangelical Patheos*, November 7, 2019; “14 Years After Becoming Transgender, Teacher Says, ‘It Was A Mistake’ ” by Walt Heyer, *The Federalist*, February 5, 2019.

“A Baylor seminary professor raises “a question” – really, more a *conclusion* – while he calls *his* position, an “evangelical Christian perspective very broadly defined”. Roger Olson says he’s told that, “there are truly, authentically evangelical churches that are also ‘welcoming and affirming’ in the sense of embracing same-sex marriage and openly gay and lesbian people as church leaders”. Citing MCC [started in 1968], he thinks that, the “welcoming and affirming” *aren’t evangelical*. He grants: “In the beginning (and I know this for a fact from personal experience) the Metropolitan Community Churches were theologically and spiritually evangelical. But,” he says, “over the years that has not (in my opinion) remained the case.” He’s right about many, maybe most, MCCs today.

However, he fails to take note of any affirming *evangelicals*. In 1962, in grad school and in IVCF at USC, I wasn’t rebuked in IVCF for my affirming gay partnership, even by our faculty advisor, a devoutly evangelical professor. After graduation, and on IVCF staff at Penn, I was openly affirming. Eventually, I was told I’d not be *reappointed* due to my pro-gay views, but I wasn’t fired on the spot. After Penn, I moved to Penn State to work for a year in religious affairs and I stayed on to do my doctoral dissertation on homosexuality. In 1969, as Director of Counseling at CUNY’s City Tech, I voiced my views and even hired a transwoman as my secretary, though she soon quit – depressed.

In 1971, I started the Homosexual Community Counseling Center (HCCC). In 1972, I published my monograph of evangelical affirmation on homosexuality. In 1975, I founded Evangelicals Concerned (EC) and have edited EC’s quarterlies ever since. EC’s website is full of support for gay and lesbian evangelical Christians.

In 1988, The Evangelical Network (TEN) was formed. In 2001, Justin Lee began his 16-years of faithful evangelical leadership in his Gay Christian Network (GCN) and he continues his evangelical mission and ministry through his Nuance Ministries.

From the start, EC had support from major evangelical leaders, e.g., Bob Rayburn, the founding president of Covenant Seminary, Marten Woudstra, the OT chair for the NIV, authors Genie Price and Roz Rinker. For more than four decades so far, more than 100 evangelical leaders have keynoted EC conferences and no keynoter has been repeated at the *same regional* conference so that critics can’t say *we only recycle a few evangelicals*. They’ve included Fisher Humphreys, Charlie Shedd, Chip and Nancy Miller, Cynthia Clawson, Kay Lindscoog, Walt Hearn, Lewis Smedes, Jim Rayburn III, Roz Rinker, Nick Wolterstorff, Wally Howard, Chuck Smith, Jr., Henk Hart, Ken Medema, Marsha Stevens, John Alexander, Mark Olson, Roy Clements, Nancy Hardesty, Tom Key, Dave Myers and many others, from Fuller, Calvin, Messiah, Hope, Anderson, Samford, Trinity (Deerfield), et al., and from *Christianity Today*.

Heresy, of course, *can* creep into *any* group, even into a supposedly sound, but slavery and segregation sanctioning Baptist Church – and from the start. In 2011, an unrelenting interfaith incoherency infected an EC affiliate. I withdrew my support. It fell apart.

Walt Heyer’s essay can bring to mind the fact that, in the Stone Age, bone holes were cut into skulls to get rid of troubling spirits. This became passé when it didn’t work and made matters worse. Once upon another time or two, leeches and lobotomies were the “fixes” of the day. These “remedies”, too, were found to fail. Then, homosexuals were “fixed” by electroconvulsive treatments, hypnosis, endless psychoanalysis, “ex-gay” or “reparative therapy”. But all these “fixes” of the “woke” of those eras failed.

We’re told by the “woke” of our day that, puberty blockers, injections of opposite sex hormones, breast binding, reconstructive and cosmetic surgery and posturing in clothing of the opposite sex, fixes distress and depression over one’s troubling notions of being “trapped in the wrong body”. Young children are being influenced to think that their unhappiness can be cured by transitioning into their fantasy’s gender.

Yet now, after half a century of such intrusions, depression, gender dissatisfaction, predictably unmet fantasies, loneliness, despair and suicide – *after* transitioning – are all too common among those who’re caught between thoughts and hopes over *who* they *are*.

Heyer has written several books on transgender problems. At 42, he transitioned from male to female, living for 8 years as “Laura”. Finally, he and his wife started a website, SexChangeRegret.com, for all the others who are likewise distressed by post-op regret.

In this article, he presents testimony from a school teacher, Herb McCaffrey, who, at 41, transitioned to female and kept on teaching, for a time, as, “Ms. McCaffrey”. But, McCaffrey, too, became disillusioned and regretted his transition. Heyer notes that, *many* of even the very *popular* transgendered, wind up in disillusionment and regret, e.g., Renee Richards, as revealed in a 2007 *New York Times* article, “The Lady Regrets”.

Heyer has consulted with Charles Ihlenfeld who, over several years in the 1960s, was a young endocrinologist working with sexologist Harry Benjamin and hundreds of their trans patients. In 1971, he was on our HCCC executive committee and an associate editor of our *Homosexual Counseling Journal*. When he realized that their trans patients were *seriously depressed*, even *after* all medical interventions, he became a psychiatrist.

Heyer learned from him that, “80 percent of the patients who want to change their sex shouldn’t do it because, ‘There is too much unhappiness among people who have had the surgery. Too many of them end as suicides.’” As with any unreasonable expectations for happiness based in fantasy, what but, devastating disappointment should be expected?

HCCC’s Board included, e.g., Wardell Pomeroy (Kinsey Institute), Virginia Johnson (Masters & Johnson), feminist Kate Millett, gay activists Craig Rodwell and Barbara Gittings, MCC’s Troy Perry, and Zelda Suplee, director of the transsexual foundation funded by trans tycoon Reed Erickson, who ended his life as a drug addict in exile.

