

“You are all One in Christ Jesus”

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile,
neither slave nor free,
nor is there male and female,
for you are all one, in Christ Jesus.”
~ Paul, the Apostle, to Galatians, 3:28

Paul’s *crucial synopsis* to Galatians sums up *his rebuttal* of his own former rejection of Jesus and *his past hostility against Jesus’ followers*. Affirming Christ’s *centrality* over all divisively irrelevant matters of ethnicity, nationality, social status, gender and all other identities, he calls them to attend to their new gifts of grounding in Christ and in nothing except Christ. Undoubtedly *grieving over his former opposition to Christ and Christians*, but now, *devoted to his Savior*, he knew he must rebuke these *deluded* Galatians who, as *newborn* Christians, were so foolishly and so futilely *backsliding* into *their own former self-righteous legalism*.

Paul writes in *lament, not judgment*. *Painfully* recalling his own self-righteousness, he asks: “Oh, you *foolish* Galatians, *who has bewitched you?* Did you receive God’s Spirit by works of the Law, or by believing what you heard of Christ Jesus? *The Good News* was brought to you, and you then *received it eagerly, with gratitude*. But now, you’re *discarding this Good News of God’s Grace*. *What’s gotten into you?*” (Gal 3:1f)

These Galatians’ *twisting* of Christian faith would *not* be the *last* of all such *bewitching distortions* of Christian faith. *True* Christian faith has been *betrayed repeatedly*, in *many* ways, but *always, by a selfish self-centeredness*, throughout all of these centuries since.

Providentially and mercifully, The Truth has been *repeatedly restored* by God’s Own graceful interventions through many *reformations, revivals*, and re-awakenings rooted in *faithful biblical* theology for *seriously compassionate discipleship through faith in Christ*.

Paul was in deep pain, recalling how terribly *he, himself*, had so wrongfully *misjudged* Jesus before his astonishingly life-changing encounter with the Risen and Ascended Christ, high above him, up there over that road into Damascus, where Paul was bent on waging still more of his self-righteous vengeance against Christ and Christ’s followers.

Paul was now familiar with what Jesus said about *judging others*, as reported by Luke: “*Don’t judge, and you won’t be judged. Don’t condemn, and you won’t be condemned. Forgive, and you’ll be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you in good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, and poured into your lap. By whatever measure you use with another, it will be measured to you, too.*” (Luke 6:37f)

Paul realized that these Galatians’ backsliding was no *minor* matter, not a mere speck of dust in their eyes, as Jesus cautioned in matters of *judging* others. Paul’s experience of *his* transformation in Christ showed him that the Galatians’ *problem* was much bigger, just as *his* had been, for *him*. As Jesus illustrated such a reality: “Can the blind lead the

blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? The student is not above the teacher, but all who are *fully* trained, will become *like* their teacher.” As Jesus had asked: “Why do you spy on a speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye, while paying no attention to that big plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take that speck out of your eye,’ when you fail to see the big plank in your own eye? *You hypocrite!* First, take that big plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” (Matthew 7:1ff) This wise assessment of all such self-righteous judgementalism has been so, throughout all of the centuries since Jesus said it was so.

Paul wrote of *his freedom in Christ* in his first letter to Corinthians: “Although I am free and *belong* to *no one*, I have *made* myself a *slave* to *all*, to *win* as many as possible. To the Jews I became *like* a Jew, to *win* the Jews. To those under the law I became *like* one under the law (though I myself am *not* under the law), to *win* those who *are* under the law. To those *not having the law*, I became *like* one *not having the law* (though I am not free from God’s law, but am under Christ’s law), to *win* those not having the law. To the weak, I *became* weak, to *win* the weak. I have become *all* things to *all* people so that by *all* means I might save some. I do all of this for the sake of the Good News, that I may *share* in its blessings.” (I Cor 9:19-23) Thus, to be willingly flexible, to *identify* with *all others empathically*, *prepares us* to be *supportive* of *them* in all of *their own* needs.

Well, two-thousand years after Paul “became *all* things” for the *good* of *all the others*, another Paul -- the late Paul King Jewett – a Fuller Seminary theologian – so willingly *stretched himself* to become *acquainted* with us in Evangelicals Concerned. Although *he*, himself, was *not* homosexual, he became an *early friend* of EC, echoing 1st-Century Paul’s disappointment and denouncing of self-righteous 1st-Century Jews against early Christians, and following that Apostle’s lead for compassionate pushback against *self-righteously homophobic* 20th-Century Christians’ *perverting* the graciously *God-given* truth of *righteousness by faith in Christ alone*.

This 20th-Century Paul was deeply disappointed and disturbed over all of the *hateful Fundamentalists’* and *Evangelicals’ uninformed, ignorant, and selfish attacks* on their *same-sex-oriented* brothers and sisters, as if Christ’s *Good News* was no longer God’s truly gracious gift of *grace and peace through Christ’s singular sacrifice for all*, and as if *one’s unintended, internally discovered sexual orientation* to somebody of one’s own gender, is that person’s own *malicious fault* and *rebelliously sinful choice*, severing him or her from our Savior’s *sacrificially redemptive gift* in His self-sacrificing crucifixion and His consequently victorious resurrection.

No one’s sexual orientation is by one’s choice, whether *heterosexual* or *homosexual*. *Sexual orientation* is *discovered and experienced inside oneself* from mid-childhood and early adolescence, and it continues in *that direction* as a lifelong part of one’s *inner core sense of being one’s sexual self*. It *doesn’t change directions*, within homosexuals or within heterosexuals. It’s a *given*, without a need to be *forgiven*. These facts can help heterosexuals to better *empathize* with homosexuals and help homosexuals *not blame* themselves for not being heterosexuals. It’s this *inner discovery* in heterosexuals and in homosexuals that facilitates those of each orientation to *relate* to the other’s *inner core’s experience*. Yet, heterosexuals don’t, and *can’t experience* a homosexual’s *victimhood*.

These matters-of-fact are *no-brainers*. No one *chooses* one's *sexual orientation* and no one can or does *change* it. Who in a *hatefully homophobic* society would *choose* to be a "*homo*"? Yet, self-righteous fault-finders abuse their *gay scapegoats* to "prove" that, *they*, the *antigay*, are *not* "the perverts". Thankfully, some Fundamentalists and more Evangelicals have been learning that a *homosexual orientation* is as *involuntarily felt in homosexuals* as a *heterosexual orientation* is *involuntarily felt in heterosexuals*. The difference, though, is this: *discovery* of one's own *heterosexuality* has been *socially taken for granted for innumerable generations*, but discovery of one's own same-sex orientation, has been, until very recently, a difficult burden for which one was *shamed* and *shunned* as embarrassingly *degenerate*, even as *illegal*, and *eternally condemned*.

All the *utter failures* of decades of homophobic "ex-gay" propaganda display our fallen humanity's *sinful habit of twisting facts* for the sake of *self-righteous* agendas over all of the *others*, "*them*", the "lost", no matter the cost paid by *victims of self-righteous plots*.

It's long past time for these *facts* to register as *facts-of-life* for all of us. It's very clearly apparent in each one's *experienced* frame of reference. Heterosexuals defensively fail to identify with what *all* have in common, projecting "others" as "perverts". But *our very own involuntary* experience *informs* us all that *sexual orientation is entirely involuntary*.

Sadly, all who *refuse* to admit such *facts of life*, try to take "credit" for *their unchosen heterosexual orientation*, and thus, they *disregard* "The Golden Rule". So "*proud they're heterosexual*", by no credit to them, they cruelly refuse to make room for "fags and fruits and fairies", *all those foul "others"*.

Still, these heterosexuals squat inside *their own obsessive lust traps*, tripping up over their "*straight*" sins as they spin them, while tagging far more serious sex *sinning* onto *whomever* else, blaming "*them*" instead of confessing *their own heterosexual faults, fantasies, and failures*. Such a selfish scheme solidifies *heterosexual sin* as what's "normal", *queers' sin* as what's *not*. But distracting "excuses" belie their' alibies.

This scheme never works, for it's done so uneasily, with a scapegoater's disquieting sense of one's sin, while refusing to learn that, *true relief* from one's own guilt, is found nowhere but in *admitting* it, in *honest repentance*, and in one's *unearned regeneration* by God's grace for our *consequent reparation* to others, inspired by all that was done *to pay for our sins* by Jesus' *substitutionary atonement* on Calvary's cruelest cross.

So, and refreshingly so, in nearly our half-century of EC's ministry, founded in 1975, we've had empathizing, empowering support from *evangelical* leaders who, whether *heterosexual or homosexual themselves*, identified with our *same-sex* attracted folks by loving us *as our Lord called us all to do* when he was asked what *we should do for each other*. As Jesus said: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. And love your neighbor as yourself. No commandment is greater than these.*" (Mark 12:30ff) This *double duty* is *our daily duty* through all of life.

Robert G. Rayburn, the founding President of Covenant College and Seminary, was our very first advocate for Evangelicals Concerned, at EC's founding in 1975, a year after the founding of Rayburn's new evangelical Presbyterian denomination. Soon, EC was endorsed by Ray McAfee, Paul King Jewett, Lewis B. Smedes, Charlie Shedd, David G. Myers, Clark Pinnock, Bob Wennberg, Lester Kuyper, Nicholas Wolterstorff,

Mel White, Don Dayton, Wally Howard, Fisher Humphreys, Tony Campolo, Val Clear, Steve Hayner, Mark Olson, John F. Alexander, Chuck Smith, Jr., Gerald T. Sheppard, Philip Yancey, Hendrik Hart, Randall Balmer, Harry R. Boer, Jim Rayburn III, David Augsburg, Craig Detweiler, Tom Howard, Ken Medema, Tom Key, Marten Woudstra, Joel Kauffmann, Vernon Grounds, Walt Hearn, John W. Landon, Roy Clements, Doug Leblanc, Kirk Talley, Justin Lee, Nelson Gonzales, Daniel Dobson, D. D. Davis & Velma Blair Davis, Eugenia Price, Rosalind Rinker, Letha Dawson Scanzoni, Jan Evans, Doris Akers, Phyllis Hart, June S. Hagan, Kathryn Lindscoog, Peggy Campolo, Pat Burgin, Margaret Evening, Jerusha Duford, Cynthia Clawson, Linda Robertson, Jane R. Dickie, Caroline J. Simon, Virginia West Davidson, Nancy Hardesty, Amy Plantinga Pauw, Marchiene Rienstra, Marsha & Cynthia Pino-Stevens, Mary V. Borhek, Jeanne Hanson and so many others, through all of their very many ways of encouragement for our EC's half-century of ministry thus far.

If you don't know who some of these historic supporters were or are, Google and wiki can tell you. Search for them, too, in terms of their relations with EC, at www.ECinc.org.

Sojourning through our era's religious conflicts over homosexuality may help us *relate* to whatever were the Galatians' *legalistic perversions* of Christ's Good News which Paul was so pastorally aiming to correct. Christian history is cluttered with various versions of legalism's multiple perversions. All of those earliest distractions and detours away from the Good News required patient obedience to Christ's call for us all to relate to how easy it is, in our continuing *self-righteousness*, to fail to put into good practice, our truest calling to be faithful to Christ Jesus, and to do it by truly loving others as we already do love ourselves, however we all may do *our own* "self-loving" in so foolishly *selfish ways*.

The more we know *ourselves* and *our own wayward ways through all of our stages of immaturity and maturation* into ministries in Christ, the more we can readily identify with those who *don't understand us*, or can't *stand* to even try to understand us. So, let's all stand up for the welfare of all, while *identifying others'* versions of us, and we'll all get closer to understanding one another while making our main aim to more faithfully follow Jesus', with our Lord's leading, in our loving each other as He loves us, day in, day out.

As each one's *salvation* from sin is *by a Divinely inspired and willing turn by faith to Christ*, and as Jesus' Golden Rule *reminds* and *enables*, we must all *love* and *relate* to *one another's given* circumstances that are each one's own *human equivalents* of *all of our given* circumstances, no matter how they may *be*, or *seem* to be *different* in so many ways, from what we deal with in our own life's everyday experience of others,

It's true, too, of everyone's given *sexual orientation*, and everyone's own experience of his or her *given gender, race, national origin, health, IQ, talents* and all other *givens* that we find throughout our lifetime on Earth, preludes to Life together in the nearer Presence of our Lord and Savior, at Home with God, our Creator and Father, forever.

Paul's *rebuke of self-righteous* rejection of the Gospel Way of Life for a *self-inflated, fault-finding* way of life over "others", "them", and by *our* attempts to *earn* God's grace for "us", needs to be repeatedly noted. It needs repeating, in *each and every* era of *humanity's habituated, self-centered* fixations on our own *self-consuming* agendas of "*self-righteousness*" in our projected *fault finding over others' givens*, while we try to hide *our* faults beneath our distracting focus on *others' alleged* faults. But this way

never works. It's *self-defeating* and destructive of *others*. Paul called it "*bewitched*". It's *bewitched* by its self-defeating, suicidal self-righteously self-centered against God, our Creator, Christ, our Savior and against all whom we're called to love as we love us.

It's all the fallout from all *our own* falls into the overall Fall of humanity, in all *our own self-centric sins* of *our self-serving boasting* and *self-serving blaming* of others in whom we, so *uncomfortably*, yet *self-recognizably*, try to *spit out* as *spitting images of us*.

Homophobia is just *one* example of human scapegoating to *try* to see some "others" as "*worse*" than we are. Instead, let's find those who are *worse off* than we, and try to help them out. Being sinfully motivated to *find* the *worst* in "them", helps no one.

With sanity, our motivation to justify *us*, should stop us in all of our efforts to *disparage them* instead of *discerning ourselves*. Indeed, we pick out our victims to blame because they resemble our versions of what we blame in ourselves. Psychologically, it's called *defensive projection*, and it's worth our noting, challenging and changing this defense by moving to a more useful recognition of our faults, and correcting ourselves accordingly.

There's always reason for *revising* our *self-centered contempt* of others, for *our own reformation* and *revival* back to Paul's *truly* Good News of *unmerited grace by Christ's substitutionary atonement* for us all. We're *all* sinners; and *we're all* of this *together*.

Paul reminded these drifting Galatian grifters, and he reminds *us*, that it's all *in Christ Jesus, by faith*, that we're children of God. Thus, it's this that ultimately so truly matters. As he summed it up for them and for us: "*There's neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, you're Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.*" (Gal 3:26ff) So, *all that truly matters now, and at the last, is Christ and His loving sacrifice for us all*. In counting on God's incomprehensible Love and Grace, we find all else to be, ultimately, utterly, so very irrelevant, no matter opinions of selfishly self-centered manipulators of those they don't like and even detest. Paul's summation at Galatians 3:28 revises all scheming assumptions and all significance of ecclesiastically dictated "requirements" that fall so far short of the everlasting relevance of "belonging to Christ" by God's eternal and entirely unimaginable Providence, Love and Grace.

As Paul asked those Galatians, his question comes to us in our gracelessly revising generation: "*What's gotten into you?*" Well, *it's us, it's our sinfully selfish self-centered ego that's gotten into us*. We're *stuck in ourselves*. This is what *distracts* us all, being *so selfishly, so self-righteously, so self-destructively self-centered*. But, by God's grace, we don't need to be stuck *with us as we have been or are*. We're *privileged to be yoked with Jesus*, right beside Him, throughout our lives, today and from here on. (Matt 11:30)

In that letter to Galatians, *and now, to us*, today, Paul *prioritizes relationships in and with Christ Jesus, our Savior and Lord*, as *the singularly significant identity and eternal reality over all else*. Paul recognizes our relationship in Christ as *above and beyond* all other *identities*, whether social, psychological, economic, inherited or learned, whether as Hebrews or Gentiles, by social or civic status, by genetic or anatomical gendering, by a given sexual orientation to females or to males, whether enslaved or not – *whatever!*

Paul's point was as revolutionary in *his* day and with *his* contemporaries, as what we, in EC, experience of Jesus in *our* day and say *now*, about *our discovered same-sex orientation* and *status in society*. Still, our *underlying identity is in Christ* and that's what

totally supersedes all meanings of distracting, judgmental assumptions by critics or by allies or by ourselves. Indeed, our identity in Christ, our Divine gift of redemption by God's Grace, is in our life in Him today and for Life with Him throughout all of Eternity.

We can no more really wrap our minds around all the daily assumptions and social-psychological experiences of earlier folks than they'd have been able to wrap their own minds around all of our daily assumptions and social-psychological experiences.

But, as Paul told them, and as he still tells us, there's nothing that's *more significantly relevant, available and necessary* to them or to us, than a daily *relationship* to Christ and reliance on Christ's Good News of salvation in and by *faith in Him, alone*. This addresses and supersedes any and all significance of *every otherwise identity* that they or we had or have in daily life, then or now. No wonder Paul put it as he did to the Galatians and to us. It's the most overwhelming understanding ever uttered on human identity.

And yet, remarkably, it was no *exaggeration*, it was not an *overstatement*, it was not *hyperbole* and it wasn't mere *hype* for *hope* in God. It was, it is, and it will always be *the very truest Good News ever given*, for it's based in the great historical fact that, the God of the universe, came into this sinful world, in flesh and blood, in Christ Jesus, to live for us, and to die for us, and to rise again, *on our behalf*, to *save* us from all our sins and a final death, to gift us with Life forever, with God, our Creator and Redeemer, by Jesus' self-sacrificial righteousness at Calvary. God's Truth, God's Love, counters and cancels every competition, no matter how it's postured in piety, politics, popularity, *etc.* This is what Paul was encapsulating in his overwhelming statement to these Galatians (3:28). It revised every theological statement of faith that would ever be written in contradiction.

True relationship with God is not based on nationality, race, status, genes, gender, *et al.*, so commonly "significant" in terms of mere *human* priorities and emphasis. "There's neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, *for you are all one, in Christ Jesus.*" Humanity's relationship with God is fundamentally all about a right relationship to Christ Jesus.

Some fifteen centuries after Paul, a brilliant German scholar and reformer, Martin Luther, boldly and articulately, exposed the many flagrant *contortions* of his own era's "bewitching" of Christ's Good News. He called for returning *to the truly biblical roots* of Christ's redemptive Good News, based in his expounding upon Paul's pivotal letters, including his letter to Galatians, reasoning that Paul's illustrations could be *extended*. In Luther's phrasing: "There's neither preacher nor hearer, neither teacher nor scholar, neither master nor servant", *et al.* Luther aimed to get Christians back to the *true* Good News of the Gospel of *salvation by God's Grace alone, by faith in Christ alone*. So, as Luther put the problem so realistically: "If the days of the Law be not over, no flesh shall be saved." Wondrously, Luther's aim was shared by other reform-minded theologians of the day, including John Calvin at Geneva, Huldrych Zwingli at Zurich, Jan Hus in Bohemia, John Wycliffe in England, and John Knox up in Scotland. Christianity would no longer be captive to the perversions of many generations of Rome's dictatorially sociopolitical monopoly over its abridgement and fancified version of Christianity.

That all of these insightfully biblical and courageous men of God, in that very same era, were all called and dedicated, in the same way, to rescue and free Christian faith from *unbiblical errors* into which it had been derailed by a fake Latin's *hocus-pocus* of

clutter that corrupted Rome's monopolistic city/state, is an amazingly wonderful miracle of God, far beyond any merely human anticipation, achievement or mortal explanations.

Nowadays, we might well *add*, to Luther's own extensions of Paul's list under God's grace, that "there's neither Baptist nor Presbyterian, neither Republican nor Democrat, neither New Yorker nor Nebraskan, neither Nigerian nor German, neither famous nor unknown, neither poorly nor highly educated, neither straight nor gay, etc., for *in Christ, we're one!* Christ is, Himself, our Foundation for faith throughout our lives and beyond.

Luther also noted: "There is much disparity among the people in this world, but there is *no* disparity before God, 'For *all* have *sinned* and *all* come short of the glory of God'", as Paul had well perceived, so realistically, by God's grace. (Rom 3:23) To overcome all of our false teachings and excuses, there's the glorious Good News in Christ, when God came to us *in flesh and blood*, was crucified for *our* sins, and arose from the grave and ascended into the heavens, and will be coming back for us, having truly overthrown all of our futile efforts at our woefully competitive *self-righteousness*. Our salvation from sin, in its entirety and eternally, is God's Own Gift to us in Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Thanks be to God, from eternity past through eternity to come, for He, indeed, is our Loving Creator and our Self-giving Savior! And it's His Good News that all need to hear and welcomingly receive, believe, to go on into lives of grateful service to God in our love shown to one another, whether that other be friend or foe.

But, so *sadly*, humanity's sinful *self-righteousness*, in all ecclesiastical systems, has so repeatedly altered and trashed this historic Good News of biblical revelation. And it's been done, and still is done, to fit the latest fads of all *self-righteous* versions of passing "truths". But *still*, God's revealed Truth is available through all truly biblical and faithful custodians of His Truth. As John wrote so reassuringly in his helpfully recalling of truth: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that, whosoever trusts in Him, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life." (John 3:16) God's Love *draws us to Him* and *keeps us with Him*, forevermore. It's all brought together in Christ Jesus.

This everlasting Truth of God's Love has been welcomed, not only by brilliant Bible expositors but by utterly dependent little kids. As Jesus said: "Let the little children come to me. Don't hinder them, for The Kingdom of Heaven is made for such as these." (Matt 19:14) We're *all* as *needy* as little kids, no matter how we *try to grow up*.

So, no wonder Clare Herbert Woolston was inspired to write his, "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world, red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight, Jesus loves the little children of the world." And no wonder, too, that it was gratefully set to music by Woolston's friend, George F. Root. They were blessed to live before being contaminated by all the woke propaganda of PC, BLM, DEI, *et al.* that would have *censored* their own gracefully honoring of *all racial identities equally* and would have required some noting of *special* privileges on behalf of *woke prejudices*.

The Truth – whether given exposition by biblical scholars or sung by little kids – rightly deals with life's daily challenges, at whatever stage of life, childhood, middle age or old age. So, we're all in need of facing all of life's experiences, with Jesus there beside us.

Yet, so very long before we were the very tiniest of little kids there in our own mother's womb, according to one way of estimating various points in each of our longer lineages into own mother's womb, know that, "the probability of a specific sperm's meeting a

specific egg such that, that specific ancestor would be created and then *contribute* to our being born one day, sometime in the future, can be calculated to be, one in 400 quadrillion. Then, accounting for 150,000 generations by raising 400 quadrillion to the 150,000th power, that's a ten followed by 2,640,000 zeroes." This is *one* way to see God's Omniscient Providence over all of our arrivals into this world, *when* we did, *as* we did, so that *we, ourselves*, are privileged to be *alive, here, today* by God's Providence. He knew *we, ourselves*, would be coming *as we did* and *as we are*, eons before we ever realized *we'd arrived*. He has always *known us, ourselves*, and He *loves us*, beyond all of our own ability to even begin to *imagine* it, let alone to be grateful for it.

Put another way, as Jesus did, asking rhetorically, "Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without The Father's care. Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So, don't be afraid; you are worth far more than many sparrows." (Matt 10:26ff). And if you missed the reference to your Creator in Jesus' note about our hairs being numbered, Jesus was referencing God, the Father.

Well, a few years more than half a century ago, I was at Penn State University, doing my research for my doctoral dissertation, examining and analyzing the varied theories on the etiology of homosexuality and typical approaches for treatment of homosexuals that were offered in those days, as it was commonly perceived to be a *mental disorder*. Theories of Freud and others were typical, although they seriously lacked any rigorous research, and so, too, were all of the theories and alternative proposals for any alleged "treatment" or "cure" of homosexuality.

After my extensive study of this mid-20th Century research and my critical examination and evaluation of the evidence, my concluding assessments, presented in my doctoral dissertation, were that this era's common assumptions and typical conclusions were not demonstratively reliable on either homosexuality's etiology or on what was offered as a "treatment" for reducing a homosexual attraction, or a "cure" for it, which, at that time, in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, ranked homosexuality as a *mental disorder*. But, the more I looked into and examined all of this research, the more flaws I found in the researchers' assumptions, approaches, reasonings and conclusions.

Carlfred B. Broderick, the editor of *The Journal of Marriage and the Family*, was on my doctoral committee, and he assessed my "survey on the etiology of homosexuality, to be the best in existence." Broderick was a frequent guest of Johnny Carson, taking note of the latest psychological and sociological research. In 1972, upon my founding of The Homosexual Community Counseling Center in New York City, noted Mayo Clinic physician, Walter C. Alvarez, drew attention to this in his syndicated newspaper column, *Medically Speaking*, and even included the HCCC's phone number. Again, in 1974, in another of his columns, Alvarez noted what he called my "splendid survey of the etiology of homosexuality".

Two years after I did my dissertation, the American Psychiatric Association revised its homosexuality entry in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Still, it was not until 1987 that the *DSM dropped* homosexuality as a mental disorder.

Frontiers in Endocrinology notes a "mini-puberty of the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis during the neonatal period, resulting in high gonadotropin and sex steroid levels,

and it occurs mainly in the first 3 to 6 months of life for both sexes. Rise in the levels of these hormones allows for maturation of sexual organs. In boys, the peak testosterone level is associated with penile and testicular growth and the proliferation of gonadic cells, while, in girls, the estradiol levels stimulate breast tissue, but exhibit considerable fluctuations that probably reflect the cycles of maturation and atrophy of the ovarian follicles. Mini-puberty allows for the development of genital organs and creates the basis for future fertility, but further studies are yet necessary to understand its exact role, mainly in girls.” So, early on, we all *are*, boys or girls, within our mothers’ wombs.

“At about 12 weeks of gestation, the external structures start to differentiate. In males, the genital tubercle elongates and becomes the penis. The external folds fuse at the midline and become the scrotum. By 4 months, the male genitalia are mostly formed. In females, the genital tubercle elongates only slightly, forming the clitoris, and the surrounding folds become the labia. Most of the female reproductive structures are correctly positioned by 14 weeks. At this point, a doctor can usually tell if the baby is a boy or a girl by using an ultrasound.”

Yet, as Paul was inspired by our Creator to write, in *theological* terms, from a Christian viewpoint, as we’ve read: “There *is no male and female*, for you are *all one* in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:28) How’s that for getting to *the most primary priorities* for best *Christian* perspectives! In other words, we’re dealing here with the *priorities* and *relativities* of the *fundamental theological significance*, while still noting the two genders.

In this inspired *theological* perspective, the *true* relationship to Christ is *independent* of one’s being a male or a female. And, as with gender, it’s also the case with our *racial* or *national identities* such as Jewish or Gentile, and with our *social standing* as to whether we’re, e.g., *free* or *enslaved*, etc., as Paul explicates. (Gal 3:28) This is truly important.

In terms that are of particular interest to EC readers, whether friends or foes, our own *sexual orientation*, in the views of 21st-Century biologists’ study of “relationship between biology and sexual orientation”, it’s still a matter of “ongoing research”. And it’s all still *complicated*. However, studies find that *identical* twins are much more likely to share the same *sexual orientation* than do *non-identical* twins. This supports a *genes* theory of sexual orientation. Also, there’s statistical evidence that *later* sons are more likely to be homosexual than *earlier* sons, although this was not the case within my own family of siblings.

Among EC’s annual keynoters, we’ve had a few parents with more than one gay son. One such parent, making the point that gays run the gamut on likability, wise-cracked, “Some of them are fine folks and some, you can’t stand. And I’ve got one of each!”

So, what *about* “gay genes”? Nobel Laureate, Francis Collins, who led the National Genome Project, responds to “ex-gay” advocates who, he said, “juxtapose my words in a way that suggests a somewhat different conclusion than I intended”. Collins is a quite serious Christian and the author of *The Language of God*. He clarifies: “It troubles me greatly to learn that anything I have written [with reference to homosexuality] would cause anguish.” Speaking as a genealogist, he affirms: “The evidence we have at present strongly supports the proposition that there are hereditary factors in male

homosexuality – the observation that an identical twin of a male homosexual has approximately a 20% likelihood of also being gay points to this conclusion”.

Indeed, in my own psychotherapy practice of a bit over half a century, I’ve repeatedly had gay male clients with gay brothers and a few gay clients who’ve had *more* than one gay sibling. But, as Collins explains, “other factors besides DNA must be involved”. He notes that, “that certainly doesn’t imply, however, that those other undefined factors are inherently alterable.” Granting that, “no one has yet identified any actual gene that contributes to the hereditary component” and that, whatever genes are involved represent predispositions, not predeterminations”, Collins predicts: “It is likely that such genes will be found in the next few years.”

Still, the various theories include a complexity of interplay of genetic, hormonal, and environmental influences, although environmental influences are weak, particularly for males, and the notion that same-sex orientation is just a matter of one’s *choice* is the least credible for clearly common-sense reasons. Who *chooses* homosexuality for oneself as it’s still not yet fully approved by so many. Yet, late 20th Century’s society did permit far more homosexually-oriented men to “come out of the closet” than in previous generations. That, of course, doesn’t indicate an increase in homosexuals, just that it was now safer for more to “come out”.

Paul assured Galatians and assures us today, that, as Christians, “*we are all one in Christ Jesus*”. What *he meant* is that the gift of our being “in Christ” is the very most basic, most significant, identity we can have been given.

However, in our everyday lives in this world of religious infighting, and considering all of the internal disputes even between Evangelicals – not to mention all of the religious conflicts across the spectrum of Protestantism, let alone between Catholics and Protestants, between Evangelicals and Fundamentalists, without noting those “Independent Fundamentalist Separatists” and all the many stripes of Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, *et al.*, we’re not so very evidently, “all one”. And, as we actually *live our self-righteous lives*, we *aren’t* one at peace and in fellowship, although we’re all one at so often opposing one another.

But that’s not what Paul meant, though he was certainly familiar with all the bickering between brethren, as has been observed all throughout the history of Christianity.

Yet, what Paul had in mind in his saying that “*we are all one in Christ Jesus*” was *precisely that*: “In Him, in His Loving Sacrifice for us, *we are all one!* And it’s *that* which should be our focus, leading us away from all contentiousness, embraced in his Eternal Love. But, of course, in so many ways, there’s always been rivalry between those who call themselves “Christians”, a continuing lingering of humanity’s self-righteous bent. In Christ, we’re nonetheless called to faith in Him, assured He’ll bring us Home.