

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

Fall 2022

Newsletter of EVANGELICALS CONCERNED, INC., 311 East 72nd Street, New York, New York, 10021

We in EC have fond memories of our visits to Ocean Grove on the Jersey shore – weekends of worship at our autumn EC retreats in Thornley Chapel, built in 1889, and summer Choir Festivals in The Great Auditorium, constructed in 1894. The inside covers of Ocean Grove’s hymnal, have a sweeping color photo of EC folks up in the packed balcony at one of those great summer Choir Festivals. Good memories, all!

Ocean Grove is full of authentic Victoriana, as it’s built on the camp grounds of these 19th-Century Methodist Camp Meetings. While we in EC identify with the Gospel faith of those early Methodists’ Camp Meetings, it’s the Victorian *architecture*, another kind of “camp”, if you will, that appeals to the very many gay residents who’ve now moved into Ocean Grove. Their rainbow flags fly from their porches all across the town.

But, sadly, there’s been lots of tension between these two constituencies, revealing historic antagonism that Jesus predicted. This latest hostility links to the rebuilding of the great pier, destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. Since the Camp Meeting owns all of the land of Ocean Grove, it spent over a million dollars on the new 500-foot pier stretching out into the Atlantic. It’s free to all for relaxing strolls above the breakers by day and under the starry sky by night. But it’s denounced as “toxic” by anti-Christian townfolk. See, it’s in the shape of a cross, so they’re angrily upsetting themselves over that fact.

It’s not surprising. Jesus predicted such hostility. He explained to his first followers: “When the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you *belonged* to this world, it would love you as its own. As it is, however, you *don’t* belong to this world. I have chosen you out of this world. That’s why this world hates you.” (John 15:18f)

In 1980, Woody Allen’s “Stardust Memories” was filmed in Ocean Grove. The Great Auditorium served as *his* “Stardust Hotel”. So, for filming, its tower’s huge cross that shines its light far out to sea, was temporarily removed. In doing this, it was damaged. So, Allen paid for its replacement. Old-timers call it, “Woody Allen’s Cross”. If angry townfolk reject Jesus’ explanation of their hatred of the new pier, maybe Woody Allen’s gesture can coach them to be a bit more *pragmatic*, maybe even a bit more *curious*.

“Some words, like strategic castles, are worth defending, and evangelical is among them”, says Michael Gerson, identified as “an evangelical voice in the public square”. But, as he admits, “the term is notoriously difficult to define.” He says that it does “certainly encompasses a ‘born-again’ religious experience, a commitment to the authority of the Bible, and an emphasis on the redemptive power of Jesus Christ.”

Nonetheless, as he says, scholars with a firm “commitment to the authority of the Bible, and an emphasis on the redemptive power of Jesus Christ” do disagree on the proper biblical interpretation of “homosexuality” – among any number of other matters that divide Christian theologians, denominations, etc. And, his description is accurate.

Yet, Gerson is now under attack by *The Gospel Coalition* for being untrue to the Bible and for misunderstanding the *TGC’s* misunderstanding of homosexuality. Ridiculously, *TGC* footnotes Lady Gaga to backup in its bungled reading of current *etiology research*. Unfortunately, Gerson and *TGC* fail to grasp the best *hermeneutical* approach to what Paul had in mind, that today, unfortunately, gets conflated with what we understand as homosexual orientation and what Paul knew only as pagan religious rites and as brutal assaults and

mistreatment of slaves and conquered enemies in warfare.

Frederick Buechner, the popular author and ordained minister, has died at age 96. As a wisely talented writer, he’s compared to both Jonathan Edwards and C. S. Lewis.

While EC readers may be familiar with some of his works, they may not know that he said: “One of the many ways that we are attracted to each other is sexually. ... Whether it is our own gender or the other that we are chiefly attracted to seems a secondary matter. ... To say that morally, spiritually, humanly, homosexuality is always bad seems as absurd as to say that in the same terms, heterosexuality is always good, or the other way ‘round. It is not the object of our sexuality that determines its value but the inner nature of our sexuality. If (a) it is as raw as the coupling of animals, at its worst it de-means us and at its best still leaves our deepest hunger for each other unsatisfied. If (b) it involves some measure of kindness, understanding, and affection as well as desire, it can become an expression of human love in its fullness and can thus help to complete us as humans.” He noted that, “Here and there, the Bible condemns homosexuality in the sense of (a), just as under the headings of adultery and fornication it also condemns heterosexuality in the sense of (a). On the subject of homosexuality in the sense of (b), it is as silent as it is on the subject of sexuality generally in the sense of (b). The great commandment is that we are to love one another-responsibly, faithfully, joyfully-and presumably the biblical view is implied in that.” This wisdom is found in his *Whistling in the Dark* and in his *Beyond Words*.

Ordained as a mainline Presbyterian, Buechner had never identified himself as an “evangelical”. But after teaching for a time at Wheaton College, where he mingled with evangelical faculty and students daily, he remarked with

amazement, that it was “like finding something which, only when I tasted it, I realized I had been starving for years.”

“With my wife Rebecca.” That’s how the antigay Rev. Peter Jones begins his invited essay to defend the antigay Presbyterian Church in America’s Overture 15. He writes of this in his *TruthXchange* (August 22). No doubt, he loves his wife and values their relationship, yet ironically, he refuses to *extrapolate* from this need and experience into the same involuntary need in homosexuals. His essay is aimed *against* homosexuals’ having a loving life-partner of their own. Indeed, he and the PCA object to these folks even *identifying* themselves as “homosexual”, even while committed to lifelong celibacy.

The PCA’s Overture 15 rules that: *“Men who describe themselves as homosexual, even those who describe themselves as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy by refraining from homosexual conduct, are disqualified from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America.”* So, even their *honesty* and *sacrifice* disqualify them! How totally out-of-touch these virtue-signaling, self-righteous heterosexuals can be!

What about PCA’s heterosexual pastors, faithfully married to one woman, and yet still finding themselves involuntarily drawn to other women? Are they, also, thus disqualified from ordination for their mere *awareness* of an unavoidable attraction to other women?

Jones attacks one of these gay men, a former atheist, who’s now a clearly devout PCA pastor who honestly acknowledges his involuntary same-sex attraction while being *honestly committed to celibacy*. He doesn’t yield to what he, himself, calls his “sexual brokenness”. And yet, Jones and other selfishly married PCA preachers look down on these *honestly celibate gay* Christians who admit continually involuntary attractions. Jones heartlessly attacks these who commit to celibacy as “celebrating depraved forms of pagan living.” How is it that they, as Jones puts it, “celebrate” by *abstaining* from their involuntary orientation? The PCA seems utterly unable to face its fractured and fractioning rationalizing. It would help if the PCA would learn to *empathize* by following *Jesus’ call* to

“love others *as* we love ourselves”? But this would contradict PCA *policy*.

“When addressing matters such as the LGBTQ movement”, Carl Trueman, an Orthodox Presbyterian pastor, explains: “I do so in a manner that does not compromise the truth, but also acknowledges the pain of the people and the families for whom this is not an abstract problem but a very real, personal issue.” His honest insight is lightyears beyond Jones’ blindness. But how much of a *help* does it give to the same-sex *oriented*? Besides, right after Trueman’s poignant point, *World’s* interviewer (August 27) quickly *changes* the subject: “What avocation(s) do you enjoy?” Without missing a beat, he says: “My greatest joy is spending time with my wife and my family.” So, again, in Truman’s empathic view, against Jones’ state of denial, we’re reminded of the Divine importance of the most intimate interpersonal relations with one’s “helpmate” or “helper”, one’s *ezer* (Gen 2:18), for the gendered mate that matches one’s *orientation*.

“Queer ducks, gay alpacas, and the new gender orthodoxy” subtitles Right-wing *World’s* Executive Editor Lynn Vincent’s column in the same issue (August 27). As she puts it: “Even the animal kingdom is being pressed into service to advance the new gender orthodoxy – a development that should be a scary canary in a surrealistic coal mine.” She’s alarmed by *The Washington Post’s* reporting: “Queer animals are everywhere. Science is finally catching on.” She shrugs, “the libertarian in me says, Who [sic] cares?” Yet, she complains without a bit of a shrug, calling it, “indoctrination”!

Actually, the fact that animals of the same-sex engage sexually has been observed and noted for centuries. But it’s quite an irrational leap to read *human* motivations and *human* experience into whatever we might perceive or project into *sub-human* species.

Recent research on self-esteem and the decision to remain single distinguish between involuntary singlehood, i.e. those who’d rather be in an intimate relationship, and those who deliberately choose not to be in such a relationship. It was found that, in men, self-esteem

was a significant predictor, with higher scores correlating with higher probability of being in a relationship, or single *by choice*, rather than being *involuntarily* single. No such link between self-esteem and marital status was found for women.

Desirability traits for relationship include “intelligence, good character, appearance, social status, and resource acquisition potential.” In general, though, self-ratings of desirability did not predict marital status. Still, for men, the main factor is “good looks”. Other studies have replicated this finding in men, whether they’re straight or gay. Males are sexually attracted *visually*. That’s why visual porn is marketed for men, not women.

The University of Pennsylvania’s nominating its big XY transwoman swimmer for the NCAA “Woman of the Year” Award sinks Penn’s reputation to the bottom of the pool. Penn’s swimmer alums have accused Penn’s leaders of having “permanently tarnished” the school’s noble name in making female swimmers compete against a *biological male*. Even so, Penn’s transgender woman swimmer, Lia Thomas, failed to win that award.

High and Middle Schools have created “gender-affirming closets”, hidden from parents of allegedly “transgender” students. These closets are designed to “socially transition” minors *without* their parent’s knowledge by providing students with clothes that they change into to match their “gender identity” during school hours. Chest binders, artificial penises called “packers”, and makeup are also provided. Schools across the country are falling into line with these supposedly woke provisions, *in utter ignorance* of the 20th Century’s *faulty assumptions* and *tragic history* for what was, back then, called “transsexualism”.

The Bible Baptist Academy of DeQuincy, Louisiana, has kicked a kindergarten student out of school because her adoptive parents are lesbians. This school’s administrators did it, they say, because they’re “committed to living in accordance with the teachings of Scripture.” They seem to forget that Louisianans, also claiming to be “committed to living in accordance with the teachings of Scripture”,

used to insist on, excluding *black* children from *whites-only* schools. All their *alleged* Bible “proof texts”, once distorted to push the *racism*, are still there in the Bible, but they’re no longer read to mean what was maliciously read into them in those former decades of racism.

The same honesty should guide a more biblically accurate reading and understanding of homosexuality these days. Diligent biblical study has shown that the supposedly “antigay proof texts” are misapplied to what is, now, understood as same-sex orientation between peers – not the ancient mistreatment of slaves or conquered soldiers. But this scholarship and the nature of same-sex orientation is still very poorly understood by Southern Baptists and by others throughout the homophobic religious world.

Seattle Pacific University students and faculty have protested SPU’s Board over its discriminatory policy against those who are in a same-sex relationship. The college, founded by Free Methodists at the end of the 19th-Century, is highly rated, and has been named by *US News & World Report* as a “Best National University” for the past 6 years.

Twelve counter-protesters, dressed as guardian angels, lined up against antigay protesters at back-to-school events for Brigham Young University students this fall.

A gay Anglican priest resigned as chaplain to the Church of England General Synod after complaints over his pro-Pride homily at a Synod’s worship service. Complaints were made to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. However, this priest, Andrew Hammond, remains as chaplain of St John’s College, Cambridge.

“Freedom March” claims it’s “a diverse group of Jesus followers who have been delivered from LGBTQ identities.” Notice: *Delivered* from *identities*? That’s *not* the same old claim of the outdated and discredited “ex-gay” movement that promised gays and lesbians could be “cured” of *same-sex attraction itself* and become *heterosexuals*.

Today, for these antigay promoters, promising a *change* of “identity” is

what they offer. “Identity” is what one simply *calls oneself*. This is more evidence that what used to be promised through all of those decades of false promises of *orientation change* never worked and never works. Perhaps antigay heterosexuals won’t notice this seemingly *subtle* but actually *big difference* between these two claims. Yet, the “Freedom March” still speaks of “transformation” – so very easily confused with the old claims, but then, if pressed, there’s always their “out” through the *new term*, “identities”. It’s about how we *present* ourselves. So, it’s no wonder that *Breaking Christian News* headlined *so enthusiastically*: “There Is Hope: Former LGBT Individuals Celebrate Deliverance through Christ during DC Freedom March.” But this is a false report of “deliverance”. It is neither *straightforward* nor *honest*. For all practical purposes, it’s *untrue*.

Whatever happened to Jesus’ clear, straightforward instruction, “Just let your ‘Yes’ be *yes* and your ‘No’ be *no* -- anything else you say comes from the Evil One.” (Matt 5:37)

The CDC’s National Survey of Family Growth finds that a third of evangelical girls (ages 15-17) admit to having had sexual intercourse, while 22% of evangelical boys of the same age admit this. By ages 23 to 32, 83% of single evangelical males and females have had sexual intercourse.

The NSFG finds that 70% of *female* evangelicals, ages 15 to 17 and 63% of those, 18 to 22, refuse to say that gay sex is *immoral*. Among *male* evangelicals of these two age ranges, those who refuse to say that gay sex is *immoral* are 45 to 50%. Unsurprisingly, in general, homosexuality is a more *sensitive* topic among males than among females.

Monkeypox infections are spreading among gay men, most of whom are too young to recall, personally, the terror era of AIDS. New York City is ground zero for most of the monkeypox cases in the US.

A Christian Academy in Kentucky assigned its students to write anti-LGBTQ+ letters for homework. They were to try to “persuade” a hypothetical gay friend that such an identity was against “God’s design.” They

were told to do so “lovingly and compassionately” and to use the Bible and “logical arguments” to persuade the recipient that “homosexuality will not bring satisfaction.” Undoubtedly, and sadly, there were closeted same-sex strugglers among the students given this assignment.

The Gallup Poll finds Americans’ belief in God is at its lowest in 78 years. Still, the vast majority (81%) of U.S. adults believes in God, but the total is down by six percentage points from 2017. Between 1944 and 2011, more than 90% of Americans said they believed in God. Through the 1960s, 98% said they believed in God. But in 2011, that total had fallen to 92%. Between 2013-17, belief in God fell to 87%. Belief in God has fallen lately, among Liberals (to 62%), young adults (to 68%), Democrats (to 72%).

Conservatives and married adults essentially showed no change in the survey results, though most other key subgroups experienced at least a modest decline, according to Gallup. Political conservatives (94%) and Republicans (92%) expressed the highest levels of belief in God.

The National Education Association (NEA) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) join with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) to declare that children are “never” too young for a sex change because “age and maturity ... should never be a basis for denying ... a transition.” But, contrary to their advocacy, they do note that young minds are “much more flexible in their thinking.” The document is called, *Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools*.

Pew Research finds evidence that the transgender narrative is backfiring. Based on interviews with 10,188 U.S. adults in May 2022, it was found that 60% of Americans think gender is determined by sexual observations at the child’s birth. That is an *increase* from 56% in June 2021 and 54% in September 2017.

Hundreds of thousands of tax dollars are spent for drag queen shows for New York City’s public elementary school children – and the parents are furious. Funding for this is from the

New York State's Council on the Arts, New York City's Departments of Education, Cultural Affairs, Youth and Community Development and even, oddly, from The Department of Transportation.

Demi, a transgender woman prisoner was transferred out of a women-only prison in New Jersey after impregnating two inmates at this women-only prison. Demi, 27, is serving a 30-year sentence for manslaughter. As the only transwoman in the new facility, Demi requests strip-searches by *female* officers, but these requests are denied. Demi is complaining incoherently: "They have violated my right to be safe and free from sexual harassment!"

Today's "woke" are pressuring Israeli anthropologists to cease and desist their disrespect in "assigning gender" to ancient human remains. These activists insist that today's anthropologists cannot possibly know what gender these ancient individuals may have chosen as their personal "identity".

LGBT activists in the US overwhelmingly support Palestine over Israel and so, they champion all of the BDS efforts to Boycott, Divest and Sanction Israel.

Documentary filmmaker Ami Horowitz confirmed such prejudice in his man-on-the-street interviews with gay men and lesbians in San Francisco. Then, off he went to the West Bank and to Israel, and found *very different* opinions. In the West Bank, the Palestinians' views expressed vitriolic violence against all homosexuals. But in Israel, which stands alone in the Middle East as *pro-LGBT*, he found none of that animosity. He thinks Leftists in America have bought into the pro-Palestinian *woke* line against Israel and the ignorantly *virtue-signal* their empathy for their "fellow-oppressed". It's really about *the New Left's own historically illiterate antisemitism*.

In a previous stunt, Horowitz did a video in which he pretended to support ISIS by waving an ISIS flag on the campus at UC Berkeley. Students gave him thumbs-up. Then, later, he paraded around waving the Israeli flag and students cursed him and made obscene gestures – again, *making his point* about Leftist students.

Amazon blocks LGBT searches in the United Arab Emirates after the UAE warned of penalties if Amazon continued to assist in such internet searches. Homosexuality is a crime in Islamic countries and, in the UAE, the punishments for homosexuality include floggings and other forms of torture, castration, life sentences in prison and execution.

Muslims for Progressive Values designates eight "inclusive communities" in the U.S. There are even a few *openly gay* Muslim clerics. Imam Daiyiee Abdullah, is one of them. American Muslims who say that homosexuality *should* be accepted has doubled in the past ten years, to 52%, and is much higher among Millennials. Still, for many LGBT Muslims, coming out to their families and religious communities can be an *actually life-threatening* decision.

A Norwegian professor of contemporary philosophy says child predators should be *destigmatized*. Ole Martin Moen, at Oslo Metropolitan University, claims it's quite common for adults to be sexually attracted to children. He *defends* them so long as the child is not "harmed". He disapproves of penetrative adult-child behavior. He claims it's unfair and unjust for society to *condemn pedophiles*, and that instead, society should respect them for their ability to refrain from having sexual contact with children. Still, he insists that *everyone* is a pedophile. Moen, 37, identifies himself as "queer".

Yeshiva University administrators are seeking to block a campus Pride Alliance and they've petitioned the Supreme Court to allow the blocking of this YU Pride Alliance from being granted official recognition at this Orthodox university. Yeshiva argues that the group goes contrary to the university's Torah values. A New York State Court had already ordered Yeshiva to recognize the LGBTQ student group and debating goes on.

New York University lists its "bias response line" phone number on the back of each NYU student's ID card. Such is today's typical "coddling culture" on America's college campuses. Alex Morey, a lawyer for the Founda-

tion for Individual Rights and Expression comments in his response to this challenge to America's free speech rights: "Students think they ought to be reporting fellow students or faculty to administrators simply for expressing a controversial opinion."

This nonsense, however, is not only about a threat to free speech. It exposes a fundamental inability on the part of college students – not to mention an inability on the part of college administrators – to distinguish between another's opinion and one's own "desperate" need to be "right". Those who "are offended" *offend themselves* by buying into the "offensive" statement or because they want to *control* others' opinions through *ensorship*. So, how good an education are NYU students getting under such duress?

The Bible in a Year with Fr. Mike Schmitz is a very popular Apple religion podcast and, at times, it's been No. 1 of all on Apple's platform. In a recent interview, Fr. Mike was asked: "Do I have it right that you have a gay brother?" Fr. Mike replied: "I do. That's part of the story." "**Do you guys have these kinds of conversations?**" Fr. Mike replies: "I hesitate. I've become more convinced that he gets to tell his story as opposed to me telling his story for him. But we trust each other, and we've been able to have, I think, good heart-to-heart conversations – even if at the end of the conversation we're not on the same page. There is that sense of, 'what do I want?' I might want a lot of things, but one thing I want is him to know that, at the end of the day, I love you. I respect you. What more can I offer?"

Later, Father Mike is asked: "**Do your answers ever change?**" "I would say that probably the way I articulate certain things has changed. I don't want to impose any belief or way of life on anyone. I only propose. So just being comfortable in the tension, being comfortable is maybe no resolution at the end of this conversation, but hopefully we can leave with me knowing you a little better so I can care about you more.

"Hopefully you know that I care about you and that it's not just Father Mike that cares about you, but whatever's going on in your life, God cares about you. Actually, hearing that and receiving it – God cares about you – is

huge. So, with some of these hot-button issues, if I haven't changed your mind, that's fine. But if you can now have this thing you hold onto, which is true — that God cares about you — then that's a win."

The Supreme Court declines to review the case of Seattle's Union Gospel Mission's not hiring a bisexual lawyer who applied for a job. A lower court let the case go forward, but the high court says it won't intervene. Justices Alito and Thomas agreed with the

decision not to hear the case but said that "the day may soon come" when the court needs to confront the issue the case presents. The Union Gospel provides food and shelter to the homeless and offers addiction recovery, job placement and legal services.

AND FINALLY

Bill Maher, on the matter of NYC's 2022 Pride March, notes the total absence of *gay men* as Grand Marshalls. He gibes that now: "Gay is practically CIS and CIS is practically Mormon. ...

A boy who thinks he's a girl maybe is just gay — or whatever 'Frazier' was, noting that being a girl doesn't mean you have to act like a Kardashian. Kids do have phases. If they know at age 8 what they wanted to be, the world would be filled with cowboys and princesses. ... At fashionable parties in LA, it's not uncommon for parents to be talking about their trans kids. What are the odds of that happening in Youngstown, Ohio?"