

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

Spring 2021

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

The 2021 ConnEction of Evangelicals Concerned, the 41st in the East and the 81st of our ConnEctions across the country, will again be virtual, given the need to observe social distancing. The three keynotes by our two guests and EC's founder, can be read online, in June, at www.ecinc.org. Stay tuned.

Our 2021 guest keynoters are Gayla R. Postma, the recently retired news editor of *The Banner* of the Christian Reformed Church and Anthony Venn-Brown, OAM, once an Australian Assembly of God evangelist, formerly in the Aussie "ex-gay" movement.

Folks usually are aware of their own same-sex orientation before family members know of it. So, others in the family may be caught unprepared for a relative's "coming out". Whether one is among the LGBTQ+ folks or is one of the others in that person's family, knowing that others experience the same as one's own situation can be helpful.

Given that *homophobia* is not uncommon in conservative Christian families, both the LGBT or Q+ folks and the heterosexuals in such families can be better prepared to understand one another if they know others, or know of others, in similar situations so that none in the family has to deal with this on merely one's own, alone. It can be quite useful to know that here are *others in other families, like me, like them* – on either side.

Research on "coming out" interactions in such families finds that "theistic mediation", i.e., *listening and identifying with what each has in common with the other*, yields better results than "theistic triangulation", i.e. confrontational one-upmanship. As time passes, even some families who had plenty of hot conflict, were somewhat able to fairly recover.

For Christians with LGBT or Q+ siblings, children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, in-laws, et al., it's helpful to know that there are/were, such relatives in other families, even in the families of *well-known Christian leaders*.

Among publicly known Christians with LGBTQ+ folks in *their* families are: Ed Dobson, Charles C. Ryrie, Oral Roberts, Roberta Roberts Potts, Chuck Swindoll, Tim Keller, Lyle Schaller, Tim & Beverly LaHaye, Phyllis Schlafly, James Merritt, Walter & Ginny Hearn, Lloyd John Ogilvie, John Ortberg, Jr., George Verwer, Carl McIntire, C. T. McIntire, Philip Yancey, Sherwood Lingenfelter, Linda & Rob Robertson, Chip & Nancy Miller, Charlie & Martha Shedd, Roger & Debra Talley, Jim Rayburn, Dick Eastman, David Gushee, Brian McLaren, Stan Mitchell, Barbara Johnson, Brad Harper, James V. Brownson, Luke Timothy Johnson, Velma and D. D. Davis, Robert Mark Porter, Ford Porter, Judah Swilley, Samuel T. Logan, Jr., V. Raymond Edman, Newt Gingrich, Dick & Lynne Cheney, Norman J. Kansfield, Mel White, Ron Sider, Lucille Sider Dayton, Kathy Lee Gifford, Caleb Kaltenbach, Anne Rice, et al. You're not the only one!

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lashes out at Turkey's LGBT movement. He accused it of "vandalism" during student protests. Many student protestors at Bogazici University in Istanbul were arrested for mixing Islam's holiest site with LGBT rainbow flags. Said Erdogan: "We will carry our young people to the future, not as the LGBT youth, but as the youth that existed in our nation's glorious past."

The 12 Worst Countries for Extreme Persecution of Christians, compiled

by The World Watch List for 2021 are, in order of the severity of the persecution: North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Eritrea, Yemen, Iran, Nigeria, India, Iraq, Syria.

"These abuses echo anti-LGBT+ medical treatments by the Nazis", according to *The Jerusalem Post*, about Islamic "treatments" for homosexuality. The paper goes on to state: "The UN Special Rapporteur for the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, wrote that he is 'concerned at reports that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children were subjected to electric shocks and the administration of hormones and strong psychoactive medications. These practices amount to torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and violate the State's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.' "

Abomination is a play based on real life experiences at JONAH (Jews Offering New Alternatives to Homosexuality). A 2015 New Jersey court decision ruled that the JONAH "ex-gay" therapy program constituted consumer fraud. The play centers on the struggles of three young gay Jewish men dealing with a strict religious upbringing and a less-than-understanding family and community. Recently, *Abomination* was performed as a virtual reading in Washington, DC.

A Nigerian Roman Catholic priest's doctoral dissertation is on the clash between Church counseling for gays and professional counseling codes against "conversion therapy" (CT).

He concludes: "Catholic counselors who are well-informed on the teachings of the Catholic Church on gay men and

lesbian women can navigate the dissonance between the Catholic Church and counseling ethical guidelines on same-sex orientation while working with gay men and lesbian women clients. While researchers have also provided suggestions and strategies of reconciling values conflicts for counselors, personal interpretations of religious beliefs and the ACA Code of Ethics fundamentally drives counselor's ethical or unethical therapeutic relationship with gay men and lesbian women clients. Effective reconciliation of the dissonance between the Catholic Church and the counseling ethical guidelines resides with the counselor. Thus, it would behoove Catholic counselors to always be aware of their dual identity as Catholics and professional counselors and to acknowledge their personal obligation to discover commonality between the two organizations which will bridge the gap that generates unethical behavior towards gay men and lesbian clients."

An International Petition to ban "conversion therapy" (CT) is being signed around the world. Signatories include Archbishops, Bishops and Deans, Rabbis (both Reform and Orthodox) and Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh leaders, many liberal Protestants, and a few "interfaith" people, agnostics, atheists, a Pentecostal, a Charismatic, a "Christian pagan" and a "none".

Newly revealed 2018 data on conversion therapy for sexual reorientation in New Zealand has come to light. It involves the government's health ministry and Green MP Julie Anne Genter when, it was decided, "Due to the current protections that are in place, and the need to balance the rights of people with preventing harm, it is not recommended that a legislative ban of conversion therapy would be the most effective way to reduce the harm it causes." It was also argued that such a ban "could be inconsistent" with the 1990 New Zealand Bill of Rights Act.

Maryland's House of Delegates voted to ban "conversion therapy" (CT) in 2018 after hearing its youngest member tell a story. It was in her

very last sentence that Meagan Simonaire revealed that *she* was the girl the story. A graduate of Bob Jones University, she spoke of her family's having had to deal with her coming out as bisexual and of their urging CT. She doesn't doubt her family's love, though her father, a State Senator, voted *for* CT. She'd been elected as a Republican but did not seek re-election. She's now a cosmetic tattoo artist working with burn patients.

Megachurch preacher and bestselling evangelical author Max Lucado was the guest preacher for one of the Washington's National Cathedral virtual services in February. He spoke on the Holy Spirit. America's first openly gay Episcopal bishop, Vicky Gene Robinson, was the celebrant. In his opening remarks, the Cathedral's Dean, Randy Marshall Hollerith, said of Lucado: "I have found many of his writings to be spiritually nourishing. Max and I differ on many issues, but I know him to be a person of goodwill and deep faith." Hollerith noted that there are folks who objected to Lucado's being invited to preach at the Cathedral and he alluded to the wider divisiveness that the country is facing. Lucado had written against same-sex marriage back in 2004. (Of course, even 4 years later, in 2008, Obama still refused to back same-sex marriage.)

After the service, DC's Episcopal Bishop, Mariann Budde, offered her apology "for my part in the pain caused today" for the LGBTQ community. She said she continued to be the target of angry emails and phone messages from the outraged over Max Lucado.

CBN News reported: "In the aftermath of the attacks on Lucado, he issued an apology to the National Cathedral congregation and LGBT community." He says: "In 2004, I preached a sermon on the topic of same-sex marriage. I now see that, in that sermon, I was disrespectful. I was hurtful. I wounded people in ways that were devastating. I should have done better. It grieves me that my words have hurt or been used to hurt the LGBTQ community. I apologize to you and I ask forgiveness of Christ."

Lucado goes on to say, "Faithful people may disagree about what the Bible says about homosexuality, but we agree that God's holy Word must never be used as a weapon to wound others. To be clear, I believe in the traditional biblical understanding of marriage, but I also believe in a God of unbounded grace and love. LGBTQ individuals and LGBTQ families must be respected and treated with love. They are beloved children of God because, they are made in the image and likeness of God."

Lucado went on: "Over centuries, the church has harmed LGBTQ people and their families, just as the church has harmed people on issues of race, gender, divorce, addiction, and so many other things. We must do better to serve and love one another.

He said, "I share the Cathedral's commitment to building bridges and learning how to listen -- to really listen -- to those with whom we disagree. That work is difficult, it is hard, it is messy, and it can be uncomfortable. But we need it now more than ever."

"In principle, a conservative Christian or Orthodox Jew should be able to express their religious opposition to same-sex behaviour without instantly being seen as promoting violence against homosexual persons", says the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Williams. "Ultimately, better conversation and interaction online should be fostered not by recourse to law (except in the worst cases), but by the long hard work of finding more in common. I take great personal offence when prominent secularists tell me what, an idiot I am for believing what I believe. I prefer they be less ignorant and abusive about it."

A Baptist Church in Kennesaw, Georgia recently lost 30% of members and is now on notice by the Southern Baptist Convention for accepting LGBTQ people into membership. Rev. Jim Conrad, pastor for 27 years at Towne View Baptist Church says, "I think it's unfortunate. When a young man said, in my office, that he and his partner and their three boys were relocating to the area on a career move and he asked me for the

first time in my ministry as a pastor 'would my family be welcome in your church;' I had to pause because I had never been asked that question before. I said 'yes.' You never tell someone 'no, you're not welcome.'"

Says Brockton Bates, "I think the stance the church is taking is an appropriate one. It's a faithful one, and welcoming myself and my partner here it has just been wonderful." Says Conrad: "These are folks who love Jesus and they want to serve Jesus. They just happen to be gay or lesbian or transgender and we want them to know there's a place here where we'll love Jesus and we'll serve Jesus together. We wish the folks at the SBC well; we hold no ill will towards them, but we're ready to move and see what God's future for our church is going to be."

St. Matthews Baptist Church has been kicked out of the Southern Baptist Convention, originally founded to retain slavery and racial segregation. This Louisville, Kentucky congregation is said to have violated SBC standards by hiring a staff member who identifies along the LGBTQ+ spectrum. The chairperson of the St. Matthews Administrative Council says that the SMBC's "longstanding policy has been: "a belief in Jesus as personal Savior is the sole criterion for membership in our Church."

Students and faculty at the evangelical Seattle Pacific University rally in support of a gay instructor who was refused a full-time position because he's not heterosexual. Jéaux Rinedahl, an instructor in the nursing department, had sought a promotion.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last year that the 1964 Civil Rights Act protects gay, lesbian and transgender people from workplace discrimination.

Leah Duff, an SPU student in music therapy, identifies as queer and is helping to organize the SPU protest. "It's just disheartening, so a lot of us are just really angry, and this is a great way to show it." She said dozens of students and faculty and staff support the message of equality. "God is not homophobic," she said, "God loves everyone, loves all, loves me. Loves you.

God loves everybody and to see the way SPU is not delivering on that message is extremely disappointing."

Dr. Patrick McDonald, an SPU philosophy professor, says Rinedahl's treatment was "outrageous," but he said, he's come to expect it. "For a long time, I've been frustrated with that. There's been attempts to change it, and I've been having conversations with many students for many years to change that part of our culture."

Milligan University students and alumni are pushing the administration to stop discriminating against LGBTQ folks at Milligan. It's in response to a gay professor's being forced to resign or renounce homosexuality. He resigned. Milligan, a Christian college in Tennessee, is linked with non-denominational Christian churches for restoration of New Testament Christianity.

The push back asks the administration to commit to non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and asks the administration to make diversity training mandatory. The complaint asks: "What example of Christian values are you setting? Regardless of your own personal beliefs regarding same-sex relationships, as a Christian there is no other value more paramount to practice than love. We do not believe that discriminating against a person based on their sexual orientation aligns with how, through his teachings and actions, Jesus invited us to love everyone unconditionally."

Milligan's president, Bill Greer, says the school already modified student handbook policies, to ensure that LGBTQ students are safe from *bullying and harassment*. Greer explained that Milligan does not prevent LGBTQ students from enrolling, but that does not mean acceptance of their sexual orientation. "We remain committed to our interpretation of scripture and the protection of religious freedom that is provided by the First Amendment of the Constitution."

A Gordon College teacher who opposed the school's policies on sexuality that she says hurt LGBT students and faculty, was denied promotion to full professor. This decision ran coun-

ter to recommendations of her department and the faculty senate. Margaret DeWeese-Boyd also says the administration punished her more harshly than male professors who had taken similar stands. She has sued. The college counters by arguing that Gordon's faculty are not covered by anti-discrimination protections in federal employment law because Gordon's professors are "ministers". Gordon's president, Michael Lindsay, claims: "When I interview a faculty member, I will liken joining Gordon College to joining a religious order."

FIRE, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, has published its 2021 list of the worst colleges for free speech. They are: University of Tennessee, St. John's University (Queens, NY), Collin College, Haskell Indian Nations University, NYU, Duquesne University, Frostburg State, Northwestern University in Qatar, University of Illinois, and Fordham. Three schools have received FIRE's Lifetime Censorship Award: DePaul University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Syracuse University.

"The Absolute Worst Campuses for LGBTQ Youth", according to Campus Pride's Index includes over 150 colleges, universities and graduate schools. In alphabetical order, they run from Abilene Christian University and American Indian College through Moody Bible Institute and Nyack College to Yeshiva University and Zaytuna College.

The dating site, eHarmony, with 2 million messages a week, began offering same-sex matches in 2019. It has now launched its first commercial, featuring a female couple in their kitchen. Says a voiceover: "Being honest with each other". "Saying yes to great ideas. eHarmony – here for real love."

Launched in 2000 by Neil Clark Warren, eHarmony differed from other dating sites. Instead of members plowing through hundreds of profiles, it paired them based on a lengthy compatibility test. Warren, a clinical psychologist at Fuller Seminary, wisely notes: "The

selection you make of a marriage partner may well have more to do with the quality of your marriage than everything you do after getting married”.

“Caught between God and gayness, he suffered intense emotional and psychological turmoil”. This is how the veteran UK LGBT rights campaigner, Peter Tatchell, recalls his friend, Justin Fashanu, the world’s first openly gay professional footballer and an evangelical Christian. He committed suicide by hanging, at age 37 in 1998. Tatchell recently wrote about him on the 30th anniversary of Fashanu’s “coming out” as gay. Sadly, Fashanu was blasted by coaches, other footballers, many in the public, fellow blacks, and fellow evangelicals.

Almost half of LGBTQ adults in the US are “religious”, according to a recent report from the UCLA Law School’s Williams Institute. “Of nearly 16,000 respondents polled in the Gallup Daily Tracking Survey, 47 percent were either moderately or highly religious. Those who were older, Black or lived in the South were the most likely to be religious. This resembles statistics in the general American religion scene.

“The Lord works in weird ways, my friend.” This is what Grace Semler Baldridge says about having the No. 1 Christian album on *iTunes*. Her album is *Preacher’s Kid* and it’s her very frank *testimony* of “coming out as a queer person” from her Christian perspective. The album is full of biblical references reflecting her ongoing experience. Semler, the name by which she’s best known, is on what Christians have long called, a *pilgrimage*, even if it’s one of the newest and very public. Interesting autobiographical footage (20 minutes) can be viewed at https://www.huffpost.com/entry/semler-queer-christian-music-industry_n_60243370c5b61e9c458dffbc

A girl in the 2nd grade at a Christian school in Owasso, Oklahoma was expelled for telling a classmate on the playground that she had a crush on

her. The next day, her 5-year-old brother also was expelled. Both children interpreted what had been done to them as meaning that God no longer loved them. But it didn’t take long for the good local folks of Owasso to organize a drive-by parade to cheer these kids, and for people across the country to contact them to say that God loves them, and so do they.

“There are more religiously identified anti-LGBTQ sources cited than religiously identified pro-LGBTQ sources”, in media coverage in the United States. This is the conclusion of a study from the Center for American Progress, dealing with recent media coverage in selected national and local media. The CAP calls on the media to do a better job “to make sure that religious communities’ voices are accurately represented.”

Data was collected from The Associated Press, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post* and from 10 local publications (*The Denver Post*, *Tampa Bay Times*, *Orlando Sentinel*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Detroit News*, *The Kansas City Star*, *The Charlotte Observer*, *The Tennessean*, *The Houston Chronicle*, and *The Dallas Morning News*) published from April 2019 to June 2020.

The CAP assessment states: “Anti-LGBTQ Christians are *not* the majority: Diversify representation”. Journalists “must make an intentional effort to consult more diverse perspectives when writing stories regarding the issues at the religion-LGBTQ rights intersection. While the provocative comments of famous white evangelical religious leaders and well-resourced anti-LGBTQ advocacy organizations may be the most accessible, polling data of religious Americans on LGBTQ issues make clear that these loud voices are not representative of everyday Americans.”

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education has launched a new Faculty Legal Defense Fund for free legal representation to public college faculty whose academic freedom is under attack. This will aug-

ment FIRE’s overall services. The fund will feature a 24/7 telephone hotline for faculty in need of immediate assistance.

Academic rights continue to be attacked in this era of political correctness. The rights include, e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of association, due process, legal equality, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience — essential qualities of liberty.

Alleged same-sex harassment by a co-founder of The Lincoln Project, a lobby of anti-Trump Republicans, is said to have been well-known before the accusations became public in January. The group, it’s claimed, never took any action against this co-founder. The group denies the charge. *Real Clear Politics* says the controversy is hurting the never-Trump establishment.

To the “woke”, it’s now “chestfeeding”, not “breastfeeding!” This is the politically correct term in UK hospitals – aimed at appeasing politically correctness when it comes to transgender etiquette. Also, the word, “mother”, must now be canceled and replaced with “birthing parent”. Even transgender folks object to this nonsense. One said: “This isn’t what the majority of trans-people ask for and it hinders our rights, not helps us.”

Trans activist protesters call on New York City’s Heritage of Pride (HOP) to hand over control of NYC’s Pride Festivities to Black and Brown transgenders. This demand was mixed by HOP leaders, citing the demand-makers’ “history of antagonistic behavior” toward HOP and noting that last year’s virtual Pride featured a Black lesbian singing the National Anthem, the grand marshal gave up that role to Black Lives Matter, and a Puerto Rican trans woman and a Chinese LGBTQ rights advocate were featured.

Abigail Shrier wrote *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters* to call attention to the alarming trend of, “rapid onset gender dysphoria”. She describes the phenomenon in which, suddenly, and in unison, several young *girls* in a peer

group start to *self-diagnose* and self-identify as *boys*, following another girl's recently doing so.

Not surprisingly, Shrier has been targeted by the cancel culture for her daring to raise legitimate questions about this phenomenon. She is labeled "hateful" and "transphobic", even though she presents her information accurately and evenhandedly. Major book retailers have quickly reacted and now block the sale of her book to satisfy the "woke".

Grace Lavery, a transgender Berkeley trans/feminist studies / Victorian lit teacher, whose "queer"-identified spouse's father is a well-known evangelical minister, has sent out this social media call: "I DO encourage followers to steal Abigail Shrier's book and burn it on a pyre", adding, "Plz be sure you

use a safe pyre and that you have an extinguisher to hand. Be safe, when you are burning books". That post got many *negative* rejoinders suggesting, quite reliably, that books are burned because their arguments can't be logically explained away.

California's Assembly looks into a bill requiring department stores' children's departments to have a "gender-neutral" section so as not to "judge" gender non-conforming children. Introduced by Evan Low (D-Campbell), it would be applied to *the way these items were displayed* in stores with 500 or more employees.

Hasbro announced that "Mr. Potato Head" will become, merely, "Potato Head". This was received with public

pushback and mockery. In defense, a Hasbro executive said: "Culture has evolved. Kids want to be able to represent their own experiences." "Kids or HR?", replied the mockers. Jon Stewart taunted: "First they came for Mr. Potato Head...and I said nothing ..."

AND FINALLY
Scotland's oldest public museum has now created the position of 'Curator of Discomfort' to take the museum out of its "institutional comfort zone" and confront historical and modern-day "white supremacy". The museum was founded at the University of Glasgow in 1807.