

For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8

RECORD

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The Keynotes of EC's ConnEction 2021 can be read on our ECinc.org website at

<https://ecinc.org/connection-2021/>

They are "Homosexuality & the Christian Reformed Church" by Gayla R. Postma, and "Loving Others in the Energy of God's Loving Us" by Ralph Blair. They're easiest to read in the PDF versions.

Hendrik "Henk" Hart, the first Senior Member at Toronto's Institute for Christian Studies, has been called Home. He keynoted EC's ConnEction at Kirkridge in 1994. His themes in research included the relationships between faith and reason, as well as matters of Christian justice. His work is quoted in your editor's 2021 summer keynote.

Thirty LGBTQ+ current and former students at evangelical colleges have filed suit against the U.S. Department of Education, arguing that the religious exemption to a federal law prohibiting sex-based discrimination at educational institutions be declared unconstitutional in how it's being applied to them. Their 26 schools are not defendants in this suit but they include, among others, Azusa Pacific, Baylor, Bob Jones, Brigham Young, Cedarville, Dordt, Eastern, Fuller, Grace, Indiana Wesleyan, Liberty, Messiah, Nyack, Oklahoma Baptist, Seattle Pacific, and Westmont.

Hundreds of Seattle Pacific University students and faculty protest the Christian school's discrimination against a gay professor. "We're coming together to share our anger, sadness, hurt, frustration, and exhaustion," a speaker told a cheering crowd. The prof's attorney says SPU did a recent survey with students and staff on the policies, and "the community overwhelmingly urged the university to change" its position. But, SPU's

board of trustees voted to keep the "human sexuality" position.

The College of the Ozarks tried to evade the Biden Administration's forcing the Christian school to open women's dorms and showers to biological men who identify as women. But District Court Judge Roseann Ketchmark denied a temporary restraining order of protection while its federal court case is pending.

Calvin University's student body president comes out as this Christian Reformed Church school's "first LGBTQ student body president". Claire Murashima didn't *run* for the office *as openly* LGBTQ, because, she says, "I wanted to lead with what I'd do as president and, later, when I was doing those things and people had already built up respect for me and knew me, I would *come out*. I don't regret that."

Response from students, faculty and administrators has been mixed – from fully supportive to students who set up a table "out of concern for the salvation of Calvin students being misled by LGBTQ-affirming professors". Others did a sit-in of support.

Western Washington University drama students demand "trigger warnings" to handle their "feelings" if a planned dramatic production of Jean-Paul Sartre's play, "No Exit", is allowed to go ahead. The panicked students fear that the 1944 play by an atheist existentialist, "holds problematic themes" of lesbians, and it would be "mentally taxing" for them, "especially after all the diversity training, we've been doing."

Brandeis University's "Oppressive Language List" of words and terms that should not be used on campus, includes. "Prostitute" should be, "person who engages in sex work"; "homeless" should be "person experiencing housing insecurity"; "addict" should be

"person with a substance use disorder"; "she/he" should be "they"; "you guys" should be "y'all" or "people"; "committed suicide" should be "died by suicide", etc. Even popular woke lingo, e.g., "trigger warning", must now be replaced with the softer, "content note".

Baylor University's GAU "Gay Prom" was held in April, though this Southern Baptist school has not chartered the group. There were 150 attendees at "Gay Prom". Local businesses provided the catering. An organizer explained: "The main reason we threw this event was because a lot of our members couldn't go to their prom, or they couldn't bring the person they wanted, or they couldn't wear what they wanted to wear. We wanted to give people a chance for them to be themselves." He added: "I shouldn't have to choose my religion over my sexuality. We want to grow in our Christian faith."

"Will Christian colleges survive?"

This is an intentionally alarming rally cry from R. Albert Mohler, President of the Southern Baptists' flagship seminary, in his essay in a recent issue of *Kentucky Today*. He asks: "Will colleges and universities that hold to historical biblical definitions of gender and sexuality and marriage be forced into the academic wilderness?" He's upset over inclusion of *sexual* minority students' rights and *same-sex* marriage.

Does Mohler forget that, in 2018, he *decried* what had been the Southern Baptists' proudly preached "historical biblical definitions" of what *he* came to view as, "the horrifying realities of American slavery, Jim Crow segregation, racism, and even the avowal of white racial supremacy", and, he should have added, the SBC's forbidding of *interracial marriage*. Yet, today, he throws the same sort of fervor into "our convictions" against, *same-sex* marriage, et al. Does he forget that the *founding* of the Southern Baptists

as a *separating* denomination from northern Baptists was a diehard effort to preserve racist segregation defended with “prooftexts” as misleadingly picked out of the Bible as are his “prooftexts” against those he’s so enraged against these days?

Half of Southern Baptists in Gallup's 2013-2021 sample say that same-sex relations between consenting adults should be legal. It’s below the 71% among non-Southern Baptists. Over one-third of Southern Baptists support legal marriage of same-sex couples, but that’s still much lower than among non-Southern Baptists.

Las Vegas Raiders defensive end Carl Nassib comes out as gay. Sports columnist Tony Paul, in *The Detroit News*, hails Nassib’s historic announcement, the first active NFL player in history to come out as gay, as a great gift to so many kids who do know they’re gay, but are still afraid to “come out”. Paul notes: “Lots of gay kids watch sports, and every time an athlete, amateur, collegiate or professional, publicly comes out, you best believe they notice. And there’s a damn good chance the revelation will, in some way, small or more likely big, positively impact those gay kids — gay kids, again, far more likely to contemplate suicide, because they feel they’re not right, or, worse, that they’re all alone.”

Outrage was unleashed against Leslie Stahl for her sensitive 60 Minutes segment on rarely noted stories of the detransitioners who regret their having had hormone replacement and radical surgery to change their gender of birth. A common theme in what the detransitioners told Stahl is how easily and swiftly their requests for gender interventions were granted, even as very young teens. They say that the professionals (e.g., surgeons, mental health people, as well as trans advocates) *rushed* them into *life altering bodies*. Many viewers appreciated that *60 Minutes* was brave in airing these interviews but many LGBTQ+ advocates *shamed* and *slammed* Stahl for the segment.

Fifty college athletes who identify as transgender are urging NCAA leadership to remove championship

events from all states that ban trans athletes. Tennessee, Alabama and Arkansas now have passed laws requiring student-athletes to compete in sports according to their *birth sex*. Similar legislation has passed in Idaho, Montana, Mississippi, and West Virginia. Florida, Oklahoma, Ohio and Kentucky, are considering such legislation against *biological males* competing against *biological females*.

A New Zealand weightlifter who is a biological male but identifies as a woman, qualifies for the Tokyo Olympics. Laurel Hubbard competed in *men's* weightlifting competitions before transitioning as a woman in 2013. After transitioning, Hubbard has won women’s *silver* and *gold* medals against weightlifters who are biologically women.

Belgian weightlifter Anne Vanbeltinghen says the Hubbard case is, “unfair and like a bad joke”. Due to “male muscle mass and stamina, and other biological elements that distinguish biological men from women”, as a *New York Post* and *Jewish Daily Forward* columnist, Bethany Mandel, points out, this whole affair is unfair”.

Caitlyn Jenner plans on running for governor of California as a trans woman and a Republican. She supports state bills to prohibit *trans girls* competing against *cisgender girls* in sports, saying it’s a simple matter of *fairness*. As Bruce, Jenner won the Gold Medal in the decathlon at the 1976 Olympics and knows a thing or two – *and even ten* – about the rigor of competitive sports.

“Don’t just play mum!”, says columnist Kyle Smith, regarding children who tell their parents, “I was born the wrong gender.” Citing celebrity Padma Lakshmi’s advice: “If you can’t accept your child for who they’re telling you they are, then you have no business being a parent.” However, Smith refutes, “Why is this one unlikely statement, that above all other unlikely statements made by children, something we should assume to be true?” He wryly adds, “Being a parent is mainly about saying, ‘no’.”

Fewer American adults now support transgender people for military service. The Gallup Poll finds that,

whereas 71% of US adults supported transgender people for military service in 2019, the figure is down to 66% today.

Steve Kelley, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s editorial cartoonist depicts a very woke elementary school teacher telling her class: “It’s important to learn about gender identity in school, so I’d like to know everyone’s preferred pronoun.” A little kid raises his hand high and asks, “What’s a pronoun?”

For equality training, UK’s Charity Stonewall tells employers to swap “mother” with “parent who has given birth”. The Ministry of Justice has now shifted to non-gendered language and all references to “father” and “mother” have been removed.

Gallup finds that 70 percent of Americans back LGBTQ marriage. It was only 27 percent in 1996 when Gallup first tracked these data. It had reached 60 percent in 2015 when the Supreme Court declared legal equality for same-sex marriage in the USA.

Burkina Faso is one of several African nations repeatedly targeted for terrorism and Christian persecution. Christians are fleeing increasingly murderous Jihadists. Over a million victims are now displaced in this West African nation in what the UN Refugee Agency calls, “the world’s fastest-growing humanitarian and protection crisis.” Christians are specifically targeted in all these attacks by these terrorist groups of Boko Haram, Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), and al-Qaeda.

1,470 Nigerian Christians mere murdered and over 2,200 were abducted by jihadists in the first four months of 2021. Despite the Nigerian government’s self-serving claim that the violence is due to “herder-farmer clashes” and has *no religious* motives, extensive investigations by neutral agencies conclude otherwise.

Uganda’s Parliament passed the Sexual Offenses Bill to criminalize same-sex relationships, with 5 years in jail for anyone guilty of same-sex acts. Isaac Lubulwa, one of the administrators, said that such laws are *long*

overdue. "Banning homosexuals should have happened in Uganda a century ago. *This is Africa!*", he shouted.

Milo Yiannopoulos, at 36, "comes out" as "ex-gay" while admitting it's "a silly expression". Good looking, but campy, the Alt-Right celebrity referred to Donald Trump as "Daddy". But he's now in a stage of *abstinence*. He brags that he uses the term, "ex-gay", to "troll his critics." He tells reporters he's planning to launch a reparative therapy clinic "to help other people go through the same journey that I'm on myself."

Claiming he "only leaned heavily into [being gay] in public because it drove liberals crazy to see a handsome, charismatic, intelligent gay man riotously celebrating conservative principles". Yiannopoulos (*nee* Hanrahan, from UK) admits: "When I used to kid that I only became gay to torment my mother, I wasn't entirely joking."

He threw his \$150,000 engagement ring into the ocean and "demoted" his husband to "housemate", though he surmises his "ex-husband" might not be pleased. But, he says, "It helps that I can still just about afford to keep him in Givenchy and a new Porsche every year. Could be worse for him, I guess." They were married in Hawaii in 2017.

Yiannopoulos rationalizes: "The church teaches that if a marriage turns out to have been entered into in error, that the couple should live together as brother and sister. 'Brothers' is the perfect description for what we have become and while I won't say he's thrilled, he understands." However, he's describing a *common* phenomenon in *same-sex and heterosexual* marriages – a waning of formerly intense erotic excitement when *family-arity (familiarity)* via a kind of "incest taboo", spooks what had been experienced as "hot sex".

Colorado baker Jack Phillips is yet again being sued for not baking a cake to celebrate what he sees as against his faith. He's been sued before, all the way to the Supreme Court, where he won. Now it's about an order for a *transgender* celebration and a dictated design for pink on the inside and blue on the outside.

His attorney, from the Alliance Defending Freedom, says: "Jack is being targeted for his religious beliefs." She defended him in his previous case and says, "His opponents are weaponizing the law to punish and destroy him be-

cause he won't create expression that violates his Christian faith."

Can he at least fire a *bisexual*? This is the *least* a businessman says he asks of a Texas federal judge in order to skirt the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Bostock*. He'd prefer to be allowed to fire the full sweep of LGBTQQ+ folks. His proposed class action suit is against the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on the basis of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the Constitution's First Amendment.

Marvel Comics has unveiled a *gay* Captain America. His "coming out", is for the June 2021 issue, to celebrate LGBTQQ+ Pride month.

Ernest Angley, the flamboyant antigay television faith healer, has died at 99. This Ohio megachurch preacher, who'd have turned 100 in August, had mannerisms that were mocked by Robin Williams and other comedians. His work was called a "cult". Though railing against homosexuality in his preaching, he was accused of personally examining the genitals of male parishioners before and after surgeries for forced vasectomies. His former assistant pastor filed a lawsuit claiming that Angley sexually abused him for nine years. Angley and the church countersued for defamation, and an out-of-court settlement was reached in 2020 for an undisclosed amount.

The New York Times calls the Pope and the President, "the two most high-profile Roman Catholics in the world." Ryan T. Anderson of the Ethics and Public Policy Center notes what he and others see to be the *disturbing difference* between the two Catholics: "One compares abortion to 'hiring a hit man to solve a problem'," and "the other supports taxpayer funding of abortion. There is no room for compromise when it comes to basic human rights. One is an orthodox Catholic, the other is an orthodox liberal."

A Wisconsin Children's Court judge, who had headed up an LGBTQ organization that fundraised for "Drag Queen Story Hour", was arrested on "tentative" charges of possession of child pornography, according to the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*. A 44-page search warrant by a DCI special agent said investigators found him using the name "dommasterbb," to upload

27 videos and images containing child pornography.

NYC's Department of Education gives kids, ages 3 to 7, "Drag Queen Story Hour" by remote learning with "Lil Miss Hot Mess" who reads from her picture book, "The Hips on the Drag Queen Go Swish, Swish, Swish". It's a production of PBS's WNET. Nine "fabulous queens" are featured, including "Jaelyn Jill", "Ella Menopipi" and "Cinderfella". Says a DOE spokesperson, in defense, "Drag is a celebration of self-expression!"

A "Jesus Loves Me" face mask is forbidden by Mississippi's Simpson County School District. An elementary school, as online metadata reveal, *retroactively* banned "religious expression" on face masks *after* ordering a 3rd-grader to remove her "Jesus Loves Me" face mask. Meanwhile, masks expressing all sorts of other beliefs and opinions are allowed. A Federal lawsuit has been filed against the school district, board of education and officials on grounds that the policy violates the US Constitution.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said U.S. diplomats may fly LGBTQ rainbow flags for "Pride season", in the "Gay Month" of June. He advised avoidance of flying that rainbow flag if doing so would create backlash, yet the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See in Rome did display the rainbow flag.

Seyi Omooba was dropped from a Leicester UK stage production of *The Color Purple* for what she wrote on Facebook eight years ago. She'd said: "I do not believe homosexuality is right." She was recently due to play the lead character, Celie, who is sometimes depicted as a lesbian. Omooba did not know that her role would be celebrating a lesbian, as it is in the book by Alice Walker but as it's not presented in the story's film adaptation by Steven Spielberg. She may have to pay more than £300,000 in legal costs after losing a tribunal's verdict.

The Finnish General Prosecutor charges a former Interior Minister with hate crime against homosexuals for her social media posts, a booklet and her statements on a talk show. Päivi Räsänen, who is also a medical doctor, says she rejects the charges about what she's expressed. She says what she said is from the Bible.

Among the charges against her, after a 2-year investigation, is her criticizing the Finnish Lutheran Church (of which she's a member) for its part in 2019 LGBT Pride festivals.

Michael Ramirez, popular political cartoonist, takes another jab at self-contradictory woke rhetoric. He depicts a woke protester advocating: "Divide People by Gender", "Divide People by Race", "Divide People by Sexuality", "Divide People by Age", "Divide People by Geography", at which point a lone woman holds high an American flag and says, "We are All Americans". The protester rebukes her: "You are so divisive!"

"Listings that promote or glorify hatred, violence, or discrimination aren't allowed" on eBay, boasts eBay, with woke-filled pride. So, it's banned the sale of six books by the allegedly "hate-filled", "Old School liberal", "Dr. Seuss". Why? Because, "eBay does not allow items that promote or glorify racial, sexual or religious intolerance, or promote organizations that hold such views." The "Old School liberal, Dr. Seuss"?

What about books by Adolf Hitler, Karl Marx, David Duke, George Lincoln Rockwell, Louis Farrakhan, Al Sharpton, *et al*? In these "woke" days, many detect that there's a very peculiar pecking order on "hate" and odd priorities about what "offends".

"Even a simple product rebranding announcement can spark a ridiculous culture war between clashing political factions, fandoms, and hot-headed Twitter users", notes Dani Di Placido at *Forbes*. He says the new CIA recruitment campaign, "to boost diversity at the agency, is being accused of both weaponizing progressive language, and catering to the 'woke masses', seemingly confirming the worst fears of the right and left". It features a Latina intelligence officer who identifies as, "a cisgender millennial who has been diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder". As she "strides, in slow-motion, through the corridors of power and oppression, she admits to once having suffered from 'imposter syndrome'." Di Placido says: "The advert plays like razor-sharp parody, funnier than any *SNL* skit, a cynical blend of progressive buzzwords that the creators of *South Park* would likely compose as a throwaway gag".

Americans identifying within the LGBTQ range have increased in number. In 2012 the percentage was 3.5%, by 2017 it was 4.5%, and in 2021 it is 5.6% of the population. The figures from Gallup Polling reflect the increase in acceptance of this minority range.

The Gay City News' 2021 LGBTQ Community Survey, collecting data after a decade of surveys, asks participants to identify themselves by marking "all that apply to you" from 17 listed options under each of two categories, (1) "Gender or Gender Identity" and (2) "Sexual Orientation". The choices listed under the 1st category: "woman, man, cisgender, trans woman, trans man, transgender, intersex, non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid, agender, two spirit, gender non-conforming, questioning, something else (please specify), prefer not to answer." The choices listed under the 2nd category: "lesbian, gay woman, gay man, bisexual, biromantic, bi+, pansexual, panromantic, demisexual, demiromantic, same gender loving, asexual, queer, questioning, straight or heterosexual, something else (please specify), prefer not to answer."

New York City Gay Pride now bans police from all Pride events through 2025.

"The idea of officers being excluded is disheartening and runs counter to our shared values of inclusion and tolerance," said Detective Sophia Mason. "That said, we'll still be there to ensure traffic safety and good order during this huge, complex event."

The gay officers group said it was disheartened after the "shameful" decision by Pride organizers. The Gay Officers Action League (GOAL) said the Pride decision was "an abrupt about-face in order to placate some of the activists in our community."

Olympics athletes won't be allowed "Black Lives Matter" apparel during opening ceremonies for the Tokyo Olympic games, according to new rules of the International Olympics Committee. No political demonstrations will be allowed on the field of play. IOC officials confirm that the rules ban any use of Black Lives Matter imagery, logos, apparel, slogans, and activism. The IOC says its prohibitions on athlete activism came after a poll

found that the majority of the 3,500 athletes polled favored the ban.

A Lutheran pastor in California has become the first transgender bishop in any major American denomination. Rev. Megan Rohrer, who grew up in South Dakota, has been pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in San Francisco, and is now bishop for the denomination's Sierra Pacific Synod of 36,000 members in 180 congregations.

Seattle's June 26th "BLACK AND BROWN QUEER TRANS EVENT" charged whites reparation fees of up to \$50."

One response on line cracked: "I can still go free because I am a beautiful black female lesbian trapped in a straight white man's body, right?" Others responded: "If this commission works from tax payer funds, then the folks complaining can file a civil rights violation complaint with US DOJ, on record."; "The city of Seattle can't solve its crime, drug or homeless problem but give them credit, they are all over discriminating against white people at a pride event."; "Look at the nerve of these people. They discriminate against everybody else, but if someone dares not to bake these foofos a cake, they take it to the Supreme Court!" "Slavery ended in 1865. Since then there has been welfare, government aid programs, housing, childcare, affirmative action, college grants, etc., etc. Enough already. You aren't owed anything more than any other Citizen of the US in 2021. I was never a slave owner; you were never a slave." And, seconding that remark is this remark: "This black man couldn't agree more."

AND FINALLY:

Isaac Simmons (Ms. Penny Cost, in her drag queen identity) is a candidate for ministry in the United Methodist Church. Simmons, who is gay, works at Hope United Methodist Church in Bloomington, Illinois, while studying business management and religious studies at Illinois Wesleyan. "Ms. Penny" occasionally leads in prayer in Hope Church's Sunday services, as she did recently, beginning her public prayer with these words: "In the name of God the Mother, the Father, and the trans-identifying person of color."