

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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Welcome to 2021 and the 500th Anniversary of Luther's testimony before his papal accusers. Luther concluded by affirming: "I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything."

EC's October 2020 keynote, "*The Meaning of Words & the Word of All Meaning*" can be read at www.ECinc.org.

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott passed away at 88 in September. She'd chaired EC's earliest Advisory Board and, in 1980, she was the first keynote at an EC ConnECtion. A Milton scholar, she taught at Bob Jones University, Shelton College and Nyack College before her long tenure at William Paterson University in New Jersey.

She was a stylistic consultant for the NIV Bible under the general editor, Edwin H. Palmer, Westminster Seminary professor and she advised the National Council of Churches' Inclusive Language Lectionary Committee. The best known of her books was, *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor*, written in 1978 with Letha Dawson Scanzoni. Virginia was predeceased by her spouse, Suzannah.

Tom Howard passed away at 87 in October. Author of *Christ the Tiger* and other works, he was born into a leading evangelical family. His father was the editor of *The Sunday School Times* and his sister, Elizabeth, was a missionary to the Ecuadorian Huaorani. In 1956, her husband and four other missionaries were killed by Huaorani tribesmen who later converted to Christ.

Tom had led the English Department at Gordon College until 1985 when he was fired for becoming a Roman Catholic. Since his Gordon days, he was a good friend of EC's founder, to whom he wrote out of his own experience with controversy: "I hope your ministry

is going well. ...You've got a sensitive task on your hands! God bless, Tom".

Walter Hooper, 89, died from Covid-19 on December 7. A gay North Carolinian, he met C. S. Lewis a few months before Lewis died and later, he advocated for and edited Lewis' many manuscripts, even rescuing some from a bon fire Lewis' brother set while "housekeeping". Hooper helped keep Lewis' books in print for over half a century.

Jeremy Marks has married his partner, Paolo Cafiero. Roy Clements spoke words of inspiring love at the wedding ceremony. Jeremy's ex-wife, Bren, with her new husband, attended the wedding. Jeremy and Roy have both keynoted EC weekends.

Back in 1988, Jeremy founded the British ex-gay ministry, Courage, and he married Bren. But, as the Exodus International's representatives for Europe, Jeremy and Bren came to realize that, 12 years of dismal results in "ex-gay" advocacy led to nobody's "healing". So, Courage then refocused to fully support same-sex partnership.

Ex-"ex-gay" leaders have asked Kentucky to ban so-called "conversion therapy". They include Exodus co-founder Michael Bussee as well as Alan Chambers, Exodus' final president, who led in its closing in 2013 after its 37-year-hoax of "Proclaiming Freedom from Homosexuality". Chambers affirms that *nobody's sexual orientation ever changed to heterosexuality* at Exodus, and that, the term, "ex-gay", was merely a *label* that people were given for just coming to Exodus. Other ex-"ex-gay" leaders who, once again, renounce the fraud include: John Paulk, who led Focus on the Family's "ex-gay" effort; Tanner Austin Mobley, director of Ban Conversion Therapy in Kentucky; Jeremy Marks, John J. Smid, Anthony Bishop, Bill Prickett, Bradford Allen Reubendale,

McKrae Game, Cat Chapman, David Foreman, Darlene Bogle, Yvette Cantu Schneider, Wendy VanderWal Gritter, Don Brown, David Matheson, Jeff Coe, Jim Marjoram, Kim Brett, Paul Martin, Randy Thomas, Tim Rymel, Roy A. Blankenship, and Wenn Lawson.

"The violence, looting and mayhem that America has witnessed for many months has many roots in academia, where faculty teach immature and historically illiterate students all sorts of nonsense that contradicts commonsense and principles of liberty. Chief among these is a push to attack *free speech* in the form of prohibitions against so-called 'hate speech' and 'microaggressions', e.g., the wisdom that, 'There is only one race, the human race.' " These words, written in October, were among the last from Walter E. Williams, the noted black economist and a former radical, reared in poverty by his single mother. Williams died, at 84, on December 1.

New York City's gun violence in 2020 matched the combined numbers for 2018 and 2019. Shootings came with calls to *defund* police and allowing suspects to remain *free* without bail. The NYPD has disbanded its Street Crimes Unit due to the cutbacks.

With Seattle's highest murder rate in three decades, it defunded its police, while the mayor of Portland promises to "push back harder" against Antifa, admitting: "My good faith efforts at de-escalation have been met with ongoing violence, and even scorn."

Trump lost re-election, even with the highest percentage of non-white voters for a Republican presidential candidate in 60 years, though, said Biden, *these* folks, "ain't black". Then, in December, Trump won Gallup's 74th Poll of America's "Most Admired Man in the World". Trump receiving three times more votes than president-elect Biden.

“Real Time” host, Bill Maher objected to an MSNBC guest’s calling Trump voters, “racists” and “Middle East terrorists”. Citing *The New York Times*, Maher noted Trump’s high support from black voters. Calling for post-election peace, he said: “No President can unite us. We must unite ourselves. Let’s skip the Civil War”. In a closing monologue, he quipped: “Let’s all stop seeing each other as ‘deplorable’.”

“Tolerance for opposing views is now in short supply”, as Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito told a recent audience. He lamented the fact that so many recent law school graduates, for example, are chastised, harassed, or face retaliation for views not aligned with “law school orthodoxy”. He noted: “In certain quarters, religious liberty has fast become a disfavored right. For many today, religious liberty is not a cherished freedom. It’s often just an excuse for bigotry, and it can’t be tolerated even when there’s no evidence that anybody has been harmed.” As Alito sees it: “The question we face is whether our society will be inclusive enough to tolerate people with unpopular religious beliefs.” He’s concerned that religion is fast becoming a “second class” right.

After Twitter banned Donald Trump for life, many of his supporters left that platform for the conservative-friendly social media site Parler. Then, Google suspended Parler from its app store, and Apple threatened to do the same. Amazon cut the site off from its web hosting service. Parler CEO John Matze says he “won’t cave to politically motivated companies and those authoritarians who hate free speech.”

Is all of this legal? Tech companies do not have the same constitutional duty to protect free speech as the government, though lawsuits in the future likely will test the limits of the companies’ freedom. States and the federal government have sued Google and Facebook for building internet monopolies. During his presidency, Trump pushed to change the law so courts could hold Big Tech liable for the content it does or does not allow.

Alan Dershowitz says Facebook and Twitter should lose their exemptions under the Communications Decency

Act for banning Trump in early January. “Two thirty [230] basically exempts Twitter and other social media from being held responsible for their content and the content others put on because they’re supposed to be just a platform where anything goes on,” said the prominent legal scholar. “But once they become a publisher, once they decide, ‘No, we don’t like this ... we like this other,’ they lose their exemption under Section 230, and I think there will be Congressional action to limit Section 230 to actual platforms.”

“The Plural Individual” is a bright essay against “woke” worldviews and “identity politics” by a young scientist, biotech CEO, a Hindu son of immigrants, born in Ohio, a husband, a father, and, as he says: “I am all those things at once and a great deal more.” Read it at: www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2020/11/16/the-pluralism-within/

When Doctrine Divides the People of God is a new book on an old problem. Evangelical theologian, Rhyne R. Putman, at New Orleans Theological Seminary, tackles his topic by well noting: “We read imperfectly, we read differently, we reason differently, we feel differently and we have different biases.” In conclusion, he foresees, “the hope of a future conscious and embodied life after death on a new earth where everyone recognizes God’s rule and where evil and suffering have been permanently vanquished (I Cor. 15:28) where schisms are no more, and where the knowledge of God is unshackled from its present impediments (I Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2)”. His “confident anticipation [is] tethered to the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth”.

Putman reminds us: “The frailty of human interpretation should give us pause from interpretive pride and theological arrogance”. Thus, “Because we are recipients of God’s grace, we should extend the same courtesy to those with whom we disagree. Love and patience should characterize our interpretive disagreements as imperfect readers of the Bible.” He cites John Frame’s wise patience for tolerance, “that each believer is subject to growth in his understanding.” And all such patience, of course, applies to those on both sides of disagreements.

Referencing Bible verses used against folks of same-sex orientation, (I Cor. 6:9; cf. Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:24-27), Putman knows that, “it’s important to acknowledge, as [Millard J.] Erickson does, that even biblical texts quoted directly in doctrinal formulations need to be interpreted and placed in their proper historical context.”

Pope Francis said: “Homosexuals have a right to be a part of the family”. These words, says Raymond Cardinal Burke, “cause wonderment and error regarding the Church’s teaching among people of good will. ... They impose upon pastors of souls the duty of conscience to make fitting and necessary clarifications.” Thomas Tobin, the Bishop of Providence, says that the Pope “clearly contradicts what has been the long-standing teaching of the Church about same-sex unions. The Church cannot support the acceptance of objectively immoral relationships.” Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas called the Pope’s comments, “confusing and very dangerous”. Adding to the confusion, Sean Cardinal O’Malley of Boston opined in a seeming *non sequitur*, that, “Endorsement of civil unions is not an endorsement of homosexual activity.”

By the first week in November, the Vatican said that Pope Francis’ comment was taken out of context and it did not signal a change in Church doctrine on homosexuals or support for same-sex marriage.

Pew finds that, 76% of American Catholics say homosexuality should be accepted. In contrast, 45% of Catholics in Poland and 6% of Nigerian Catholics agree with that view.

Over a million demonstrators across France showed their support for freedom of expression and for Samuel Paty, after this history teacher, in a class discussion on freedom of expression, showed a cartoon of Muhammad. He’d excused any who didn’t want to see it. But then he was decapitated outside the school by Abdullah Anxorov, 18, an Islamist refugee, who was, then, shot dead by police. The Education Minister and several French cabinet members at demonstrations, clarified: “A teacher is perfectly entitled to show the cartoons.”

The University of Chicago has received the *highest* score in College Free Speech Rankings. Liberal and Conservative college students agreed that the administration at the University of Chicago supports free inquiry and tolerates a wide range of opinions. DePauw University, in Indiana, got the *lowest* score and had the *highest* percentage of students who self-censored (71%). DePauw was the lowest-rated school by Conservative students and the fourth lowest-rated by Liberal students. In overall rankings, the University of Texas at Austin ranked only slightly above DePauw and was rated poorly by both Liberal and Conservative students.

Haskell Indian Nations University's president threatened its student editor with discipline for bringing "unwanted attention" to HINU. *The Indian Leader's* student-editor, Jared Nally, had interviewed police and government officials about a campus incident. The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education assessed this "directive" of the Federally-supported, Kansas-based, HINU president as being incompatible with journalistic practices.

Nally agrees: "When our university challenges the free speech of students, they are silencing a whole generation of Native voices." *The Indian Leader* is the oldest Native American student newspaper and, this year, it won 11 awards from the Native American Journalists Association, including 1st place for general excellence.

The English Department at Cornell University has changed its name. Henceforth, it will be called: "The Department of Literatures in English". *The Cornell Daily Sun* says "the decision to demand such a change was spurred by this summer's resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement". The departmental chair explains: "This is in keeping with the university's call to have us really rethink our everyday practices around racism."

Michigan State University Provost, Teresa Woodruff, announced the excluding of two words, "foreign" and "alien", from MSU's vocabulary. At an MSU assembly, she decreed: "We will eliminate from our collective lexicon the words 'alien' and 'foreign.' Instead, we've adopted non-pejorative terms that describe geography." She *claimed* she's *excluding*

these two words to "create a more *inclusive* environment."

"It seems that the woke world uses Orwell's 1984 as an instruction manual, as it changes word uses and meanings by the day", notes Michael Rectenwald, author of *Beyond Woke* and, until 2019, an NYU liberal arts professor. "Now the phrase 'sexual preference' is out – despite its use by a leading LGBTQ magazine [*The Advocate*] only weeks ago". Writing at [RT.com](https://www.rt.com), Rectenwald observes: "The list of words and phrases deemed verboten by woke totalitarians has grown, seemingly overnight. We're now told that 'sexual preference' belongs in the dustbin of history."

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) who, in the 2017 hearings for Amy Coney Barrett's judicial post for the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, famously fretted about the nominee's Catholic faith: "*The dogma lives loudly within you.* And that's of concern". In 2020's hearings for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court, Feinstein had already asked Barrett if she would roll back LGBT citizens' protections on the Supreme Court. Barrett already had responded that she had "never discriminated on the basis of sexual preference and would not discriminate on the basis of sexual preference."

Rectenwald notes Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) scolded Barrett for her use of the term, "*sexual preference*", in response to Feinstein's latest query "of concern". Rectenwald: "Hirono claimed that '*anti-LGBTQ* activists employ the phrase to *suggest that sexual orientation is a choice*', when in reality it's '*a key part of a person's identity*'." Barrett was, thus, accused of using "code", in "*offensive*" degrading of LGBTQ+ people.

Rectenwald observes: "Within hours, Merriam-Webster's dictionary labeled the use of 'preference' as '*offensive*' when referring to a person's sexual orientation."

He notes: "Among those unsurprised by the announcement of this particular piece of linguistic censorship must be Douglas Murray, the author of *The Madness of Crowds*. As Murray argues in chapters titled 'Gay,' 'Women,' 'Race' and 'Trans', identities that were once unacceptable have become undeniable, and allowable views on matters of identity and sexual orientation have become the only allowable views – no matter how these views contradict one another. Sexual orientation is inherent,

but race is 'socially constructed', for example. One can choose one's gender but cannot have a 'sexual preference' for another." Murray, who is, himself, *openly gay*, writes at length about how "those who once faced intolerance have since become the intolerant, and those once censored have become the most vigorous censors."

Re-evaluations of a study in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* that had claimed improved mental health results from transgender surgery, have now found many serious errors in that study. The re-evaluations conclude that *no such improvement was demonstrated*. The *American Journal of Psychiatry* has now issued this significant correction: "The results demonstrated no advantage of surgery in relation to subsequent mood or anxiety disorder-related health care visits or prescriptions or hospitalizations following suicide attempts."

A trans-activist, "Zinnia Jones", says children should be legally able to consent to the administration of puberty blockers since they already de-facto consent to what she calls the "permanent and irreversible changes" that come naturally through puberty.

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) has introduced protective Title IX legislation to bar federal funds for unfair athletic competition between *biological* girls (XX) and *transgender* girls (XY). "The Protect Women's Sports Act" has met with hostile LGBTQ+ backlash against the leveling of the playing field. Gabbard says, "It's mind-boggling how quickly people attack those whose positions are based in science and common sense."

The UK's popular "Little Baby Bum's" animated Johnny now has *two* dads. In response to jingles of, "Johnny, Johnny", he used to ask, "Yes, papa?" Now *two* dads call out, "Johnny, Johnny", and he asks, "Yes, papas?"

Pew Research finds that a third of evangelical Christians favor legal marriage for same-sex couples. Since the founding of Evangelicals Concerned in 1975 – and from the earliest '60s, EC's founder and allies have fully affirmed same-sex couples. All 114 evangelical keynoters for forty years of EC conferences have affirmed this. Yet, as late as 1996, Congress passed the *anti-gay* Defense of Marriage

Act, signed into law by President Bill Clinton. President Obama didn't support *same-sex marriage* until 2012, 37 years after the founding of Evangelicals Concerned.

Justin Lee founded Gay Christian Network in 2001 and he now hosts his Nuance Ministry at GeekyJustin.com. He interviews his dad on one of the programs. Their affectionately good-natured conversation and family reflections clearly quashes the old psychoanalytic nonsense about homosexuality's being caused by a very bad father-son relationship! The video should be instructive for other Christian parents in dealing with *their* same-sex attracted children.

Lee's growing up gay as a Southern Baptist and his own Bible study as a gay teen, led to his early blogging for mutual support with other isolated gay teens in the 1990s.

"Sometimes I wonder if I'll have gay children", blogs pastor John Pavlovitz. He loves his children and prays for them, but "not for them to be made 'normal'. I've lived long enough to know that if my children are gay, that *is* their normal. Above all, I'll pray to God that my children won't allow the unGodly treatment they might receive from some of His misguided children, to keep them from pursuing Him."

He knows that: "If I have gay children, most likely, I *have* gay children. If my kids are *going* to be gay, well they pretty much already *are*. God has already created them and wired them, and placed the seed of who they are within them. Psalm 139 says that, He 'stitched them together in their mother's womb'. The incredibly intricate stuff that makes them uniquely them; once-in-History souls, has already been uploaded into their very cells. ... They are today, simply a younger version of who they *will* be; and today they're pretty darn great."

Pavlovitz knows that many of his readers "may be offended by all of this", but, he says, "this isn't about you. You're not the one I waited on breathlessly for nine months. You're not the one I wept with joy for when you were born. You're not the one I bathed, and fed, and rocked to sleep through a hundred intimate, midnight snuggle sessions. You're not the one I taught to

ride a bike, and whose scraped knee I kissed, and whose tiny, trembling hand I held, while getting stitches. You're not the one whose head I love to smell, and whose face lights-up when I come home at night, and whose laughter is like music to my weary soul. You're not the one who gives my days meaning and purpose, and who I adore more than I ever thought I could adore anything. And you're not the one who I'll hopefully be with, when I take my last precious breaths on this planet; gratefully looking back on a lifetime of shared treasures, and resting in the knowledge that I loved you well."

PFLAG, a parents' support group founded by Jeanne Manford in 1973, after Morty, her gay son, came out as gay, alerted supporters to Parlovitz' blog. Jeanne was on the Advisory Board of our Homosexual Community Counseling Center, founded by EC's founder, in 1972. She wrote our booklet for parents in our *Otherwise Monograph* series. It was a *very personal* message to parents, not like our academic critiques of etiology, treatment theories, and psychometric data, etc., so we asked her to write it out in her own handwriting and that's how it was published, for the encouragement of parents.

Devin Bryant had attended Covenant Christian Academy in Texas since his pre-kindergarten days. He's been a straight-A student with awards for track. He came out as gay on his birthday a year ago. Four days before starting his senior year, in a seniors' tradition of painting their parking spots with some personal touch, he wanted to include the word "gay" on *his* spot. Friends and some staff already knew he was gay. But he was told he could not put "gay" on his parking spot. He agreed. "I just wanted to graduate, really". He thought it was settled.

However, as soon as the new headmaster got wind of it, he *expelled* Devin and told Devin's mother that, as headmaster, he was simply "doing what Jesus Christ would want me to do", for Devin had "chosen the devil's ways". Devin's mother didn't buy the headmaster's line. Devin's now happily enrolled in another school.

Later, with his supportive mother sitting right behind him, Devin told NBC/DFW viewers: "I guess it was just shock and then, later on in the day,

it was sadness". He says he wants to start a conversation for other kids like him. "I know there are other kids out there that feel the same way I do or are like me. It would benefit them for a conversation to start and for somebody to say something about it. I like life being 'out' rather than life being closeted." In loving concern for other kids, Devin says: "I see this newfound sense of rejection through the administration, which kind of makes me link that sense of rejection to Christ himself. I'm just scared about the queer students in the school who might not necessarily be in a place spiritually where they could take that kind of rejection."

Devin's mother says: "I'm praying for the administration to discover true Christianity, and I must find it in my heart to forgive them for what they did to Devin."

Covenant Christian Academy was founded in 1979 by the conservative Presbyterian Church in America. That's ironic, since the PCA's Covenant College and Seminary was founded by Robert G. Rayburn, its first president, who, in 1975, was the first evangelical leader to wholeheartedly support the founding of Evangelicals Concerned for affirming the *integration of same-sex partnership and biblically evangelical faith*. Bob's nephew, son of Jim Rayburn, founder of the Young Life ministry, was an EC keynoter in 2014.

AND FINALLY:

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Rules Chair Jim McGovern (D-MA) have introduced new House rules and references to eliminate *gendered* language such as "mother", "father", "daughter", "son", "aunt", "uncle", "niece", "nephew", "he" and "she", to be replaced by "parent", "child", "parent's sibling", "parent's sibling's child", "they", etc.

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO), a United Methodist minister, in giving the invocation at the first session of the 117th Congress, prayed for "peace in our families, peace across this land, and, dare I ask, O Lord, peace even in this chamber". He appealed to the "monotheistic God", the Hindu deity, "Brahma", and the "god known by many different names and many different faiths". He then ended his prayer: "Amen and A-woman."