

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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EC's 2022 summer ConnEction guest keynoters will be Claire Murashima, Calvin University Student Body President, and David Holkeboer, Calvin College grad (Class of '78) and longtime NYC/ECer. EC founder, Ralph Blair, will also keynote. In 2022, as in 2020 and 2021, due to Covid, we won't be meeting *in person*. In June, all 3 keynotes for 2022's ConnEction will be posted to be read on EC's website, [ECinc.org](http://ECinc.org).

**The 3 presentations from EC's Fall Festival of 2021 can be read at [ECinc.org](http://ECinc.org).** They're easier to read by clicking onto the PDF format of each talk at [ECinc.org](http://ECinc.org).

**Growth at Christian colleges far outpaces the overall trend in private nonprofit schools.** In a *Detroit Free Press* review of federal data, total enrollment at 950 nonprofit four-year colleges across the country, those under 5,000 students, *fell* by about 10% from 2010 to 2020. "The increase is rooted in a deeply held belief among many religious conservatives that their faith isn't welcome on most college campuses. ... In a landscape of small colleges searching for a distinctive draw ... these most conservative schools have developed that sturdy religious niche -- one that used to include just about every private college or university in the country. ... Colleges that are more conservative and have stuck with founding principles guide students to specific questions — and answers — about life and religion."

The *Free Press* notes that, in Holland, Michigan, "the quintessential small Midwest private college town, ... Hope College sits right where it sat in the mid-1800s when it was founded ... for the Reformed Church in America ... that came from the Netherlands in the 1600s, largely to New York, before pushing westward. ... The same pattern

was repeated over and over as America grew."

**Hope College announces its new policy of nondiscrimination**, in all the College's programs and activities, including employment, admissions, and access to educational opportunities. Hope was founded in partnership with the Reformed Church in America.

According to the statement, "Hope College affirms the dignity of all persons as made in the image of God. Hope College is committed to being a welcoming, vibrant and caring academic community where academic excellence and the pursuit of knowledge are strengthened by our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and grounded in the historic Christian faith, where the full humanity of all may flourish in an environment in which there is room for different perspectives that bring people together. It is the policy of Hope College not to discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, familial status, genetic information, height, national origin, race, religion (except in the event of a bona fide occupational qualification), sex (including gender expression, gender identity, pregnancy, sexual orientation), theological perspectives (e.g., conservative, progressive, traditional), veteran status, weight or any other legally protected attribute, status or characteristic."

It goes on to say: "Our commitment to an equitable and inclusive place of learning, living, and working together, and to prevent discrimination and harassment, is the responsibility of all members of the Hope community. This policy covers nondiscrimination in all the College's programs and activities, including employment, admissions, and access to educational opportunities."

**Calvin University, founded in 1876 as Calvin College and Seminary, is just a half-hour's drive from Hope College.** Calvin was founded by an-

other, somewhat more conservative, group of Reformed Christians, also with a Dutch heritage.

A Calvin student, Claire Murashima, says she'd always thought of running for student body president, so, she launched her campaign in April, 2020, and was elected in May. She came out as lesbian in an op-ed in the student paper this past October and has been well received. "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," she explained. "I don't regret that."

**Christianity Today reports on sex among the never-married.** "Since 2008, among never-married individuals under age 35 who attend religious services more than monthly, the rate of sexlessness has risen from about 20% to nearly 60% in 2021. Among their less-religious peers, sexlessness has risen from around 10% in 2008 to 20% in 2021."

**The UK's University of Leicester now offers online "toolkit" guides for students and staff who want to make money in "sex work", i.e., prostitution that's legal.** Students are told they can legally strip, sex chat on phone lines, sell their used underwear online for a customer's sexual gratification, do "butler in the buff" and do "sugaring", i.e., be a paid companion for a "sugar daddy", etc.

**More parents in Birmingham, UK, are pulling their children out of schools that teach support of LGBT relationships.** They're now homeschooling them or placing them in private schools. Almost 400 children, as of last count, have been withdrawn. More than 2,000 children are being homeschooled.

**In 2021, Dallas Theological Seminary posted this Marriage & Sexuality**

**Policy:** “DTS students, faculty, administration, and staff must affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist the temptations of same-sex sexual attractions and refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct, which are evidences of the whole-world groaning under sin and are outside of God’s designed order for human flourishing and His Glory.” DTS, an evangelical school, was founded in 1924.

Both Jim Rayburn, founder of Young Life, and his brother, Bob Rayburn, founder of the Presbyterian Church in America’s Covenant College and Seminary, graduated from DTS. In 1975, Bob Rayburn was the first evangelical leader to endorse the founding of Evangelicals Concerned. Jim Rayburn III, Bob’s nephew and son of Young Life’s founder, keynoted EC’s 2014 ConnECTION retreat.

As Blair mentions in one of his EC’s 2021 Fall Festival presentations, “an old DTS friend, referring to other DTS alumni, informs me that our EC material is, as he puts it, from his own personal awareness, ‘read in many closets across the country’”. Even much younger DTS grads have been encouraged by EC’s material and connect with us from time to time in their pastoral work with gay Christians.

**Anita Bryant was a big antigay celebrity in the 1970s.** Now, Sarah Green, a granddaughter of this former beauty queen and former Florida orange juice spokesperson, and daughter of Anita’s son with her ex-husband, Bob Green, has come out as *lesbian*. Anita is not pleased with her granddaughter’s coming-out. It *could* serve as an overdue wake-up call to *empathy*, but, it’s not.

She told her granddaughter that, “homosexuality is a delusion invented by the devil.” Sarah says, “It’s very hard to argue with someone who thinks that an integral part of your identity is just an evil delusion.”

Despite the tension between them, Sarah says she doesn’t hate Bryant but “feels sorry for her.” She plans a wedding with her fiancée and is debating whether or not to invite Bryant. Sarah’s dad, Robert Green Jr., Anita’s son with ex-husband, Bob Green, shared that he is the one who told Bryant that Sarah is engaged to a *woman*.

In 1980, Anita filed for divorce, a scandal in the Christian circles where she’d been revered. In an open letter, Bob Green begged her to reconcile: “Let us both put aside all other earthly considerations and reunite in Christian love.” But it was to no avail.

This “coming out” is but one of the latest examples of the fact that LGBTQ *family members* are likely closer relatives than most evangelical Christians realize or want to know, or admit. Families with LGBTQ close relatives include Oral Roberts, Richard Roberts, Ed Dobson, Jim Rayburn, James Merritt, David Gushee, Philip Yancey, Tim LaHaye, Beverly La Haye, Charlie and Martha Shedd, Chuck Swindoll, Charles C. Ryrie, Lloyd John Ogilvie, John Ortberg, Jr., James Merritt, Ford Porter, V. Raymond Edman, Phyllis Schlafly, Walt and Ginny Hearn, William Edgar, Lyle Schaller, Mel White, Sherwood Lingenfelter, T. D. Jakes, Billy James Hargis II, Robert and Debra Talley, Velma and D. D. Davis, George Verwer, Samuel T. Logan, Jr., Carl McIntire, C. T. McIntire, Tim Keller, et al.

**Log Cabin Republicans held their annual “Spirit of Lincoln Gala” at Mar-a-Lago** in Palm Beach where former President Trump and First Lady, Melania Trump, hosted 600 influential LGBTQ folks and straight allies. This event again shows that the Left’s stereotype of Trump as “antigay” is *false*. Richard Grenell, Trump’s Ambassador to Germany and the first openly gay Cabinet official, and an Evangel University graduate, spoke at the event as did the Republican National Committee Chairwoman, Ronna McDaniel. She announced the RNC Pride Coalition, an effort with Log Cabin Republicans, to mobilize LGBTQ communities for the 2022 midterm elections.

**The Wall Street Journal exposes TikTok’s dark side aimed at kids.** This Chinese-owned video-sharing app steers little kids from puppies, and steers teens from dancing 12-year-olds, into ever increasingly explicit outbursts, e.g., swearing and abrupt body movements *ala* Tourette Syndrome, drugs, and sexual images. When the material is viewed for merely a few seconds, the algorithms lure viewers into ever worse content, including

KinkTok with torture, and a platform favored by sex traffickers. Grazie Poso Chrisie, a physician and mother of 5, and Senior Fellow at The Catholic Association is warning of TikTok’s damage to children.

**Texas law now disallows biological male athletes to compete against biological female athletes.** This is seen by *women* as a *win* against *unfair* competition between women and the biological males who transitioned genders. LBGTQQ lobbies call this biology-based legislation “harmful”.

Still, *biological facts* about differences in overall physical strength of men over women refute trans demands and confirm the views of those who support *women* athletes, as does Caitlyn Jenner, formerly, Bruce Jenner, 1976’s Olympic decathlon gold-winner.

**Vladimir Putin says transgender rights are “a crime against humanity.”** Putin has close ties to Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, who is behind an anti-LGBTQ crackdown in that semi-autonomous Russian republic.

**Mikolaj Mileke, a writer and broadcaster in Poland,** writes novels and is a radio host. But, Bloomberg reports, when “he’s spotted in his hometown, he’s seen as a menace rather than a celebrity.” “Milcke”, a pseudonym he adopted at the start of his career to protect his parents, says: “The worst is that people started believing that they need to not only protect themselves from gays at schools, but also at home.”

Poland has become one of the continent’s most socially regressive countries. Mileke’s being gay, makes him, “an enemy of the state” as the government “weaponizes homophobia for political gain”.

**Violations of democracy by Hungary’s Prime Minister caused “an explosion of anger** in Europe against the anti-LGBTQ law approved by Hungary’s parliament under Viktor Orban. At the European Union summit, “no topic garnered more attention, or more fury, than the new law.” It’s reported that Orban was “berated with uncommonly emotional intensity.” Leaders across the EU lambasted the self-described proponent of “illiberal democracy”. It

was all done “in starkly personal terms -- tears were even reportedly shed – a sign that this issue resonates in ways that surpass the many other subjects over which Hungary and its EU partners have been at odds.”

**Pew Research finds governmental restrictions on religion all around the world.** The Middle East-North Africa had the highest *share* of countries (55%, or 11 out of 20 countries in the region) with bans on religion-related groups in 2019. Asia and the Pacific – the study’s largest region, with 50 nations – had the greatest *number* of countries with bans (17 out of 50 countries, or 34% of the region). Sub-Saharan Africa had 8 countries with bans (17% of the 48 states), Europe had 3 (7% of the region’s 45 countries) and the Americas had two nations with such bans (6% of the region’s 35 countries).

**An ultra-Orthodox rabbi** is urging his followers not to get a Covid-19 vaccination because, he says, it could “make them gay”. The Israeli media say Rabbi Daniel Asor, with many followers online, claims that inoculation enforcement is part of a global, “malicious government” and it’s trying to set up, “A new world order”.

**The World Health Organization uses the Greek alphabet to name coronavirus strains but it skipped the letters Xi and Nu to name the new variant, Omicron.** China’s leader’s name is *Xi*, and *nu* can be confused with “new”. Also, *nu* is the most prevalent Yiddish word, for a sigh, a frown, a grin, a grunt, or a sneer.

The WHO is trying to avoid “causing offence to any cultural, social, national, regional, professional or ethnic groups” as was done in years past when diseases were named for the geography of first diagnoses, as in “The Spanish Flu” and “West Nile Virus”.

**Father James Martin SJ, a prominent Jesuit priest, is openly gay and advocates for LGBTQ Catholics.** He’s the editor-at-large of *America*, the Jesuits’ magazine. In a recent CBS interview, he said, “I think that if you had suddenly all the gay priests in the United States come out, I think the Church would be forced to look at the

question of homosexuality in a very different light.”

When asked, “How many gay priests do you think there are?”, Martin replied: “I’m guessing, maybe 40%. Who knows? If it was, I wouldn’t be surprised. If it was 80%, I wouldn’t be surprised.”

**“The Archdiocese is choosing to activate its morality clause to terminate your employment.”** This was the suddenly disturbing message via email. After three decades as music director at her Roman Catholic parish, this was the message that Terry Gonda got from the Detroit Archdiocese. The reason? She’s been married to a *woman* for 10 years. She says that her relationship was never a secret, either with her family, friends, the church or the pastor. But, evidently, someone made a big stink and she was fired. It was a tremendous blow. “It’s a shot to the head from headquarters,” she said. “The dehumanization of this is just not right ... My heart just hurts because I have an outpouring of love for them. I love them. I believe that they believe they’re doing the right thing – they’re trying to protect the church.” She says that, “Moving on, I’ve got God”.

Through guidance from pastors at St. John Fisher Chapel, a progressive college parish at Oakland University in Auburn Hills, she’s been supported. She says they take “a Pope Francis approach of not judging but seeing our hearts.” But, she says, she’s angry and heartbroken. “But in my soul, something is happening. There are signs. God is in this ... God is preparing us for what’s in store. There must be a better way.”

**The Association of Catholic Priests is accusing some Irish bishops and archbishops** “who fail to live up to their responsibility as bishops, which is to be shepherds to their priests as well as to their people.” Some bishops, e.g., “if they ‘lose a battle’ with a priest, will later vindictively ensure that they ‘win the war’.” Some men are “being forced out of the priesthood, on the basis of a bishop’s decision that it is ‘the ‘best thing’ for them.” Some bishops “comment disparagingly on their personal appearance and active ministry and who, as a result, have their confidence undermined and their pastoral effectiveness diminished.” Gay priests

are “being refused permission to work in parishes while in other dioceses they are treated as equal and valued members of the priesthood.” The ACP notes that Pope Francis had said, that “human dignity is the same for all human beings: when I trample on the dignity of another, I am trampling on my own.”

**Fundamentalist Christians, more than other Americans, see LGBTQ advances as a zero-sum game,** eroding religious liberty for Christians. Five interrelated studies looked into how zero-sum beliefs influence such views. The bottom line: Christians, but especially fundamentalist Christians, interpret each LGBTQ gain is at the expense of Christians. The data show an almost exact perception of offsetting gains and losses.

**“Even though Christians and sexual minorities** are overlapping groups (the majority of LGBT individuals identify as Christian), many Christians don’t accept their identification. Instead, they think that social advances for sexual and gender minorities are harmful to Christians”.

American attitudes toward LGBTQ inclusion and support for same-sex marriage have been changing so rapidly that some researchers say that this is the fastest social change ever recorded in modern history, including among many Christians.

Behind all the angst over LGBTQ inclusion lies the reality of declining national influence for Christians and Christian culture in America. Even though a majority of Americans claim Christianity as their religious identity, those numbers are declining. Previous research has documented the fears Christians express about losing cultural influence. Clara Wilkins and Lerone Martin of Washington University in St. Louis report these findings in the *Journal for Personality and Social Psychology*.

**The 17th Annual Men Having Babies East Coast Surrogacy Conference & Gay Parenting Expo** was held in September in New York City. The event was for gay men who want to become parents by surrogacy. Among such male couples are to be found genuinely loving parents who obviously are quite intentionally interested in being good

parents. MHB educational conferences are opportunities to get curated information, expert advice and access to a wide range of relevant service providers from an unbiased non-profit organization.

**A 15-year-old boy in a skirt was charged with sexual battery and abduction of a girl**, another student, in a high school restroom in Virginia. When the girl's father complained to the School Board during a community meeting, he was very roughly arrested. The National School Board Association blamed this angry father, and, in a letter to The White House, exaggerated this father's protest into an example of "the immediate threat, equivalent to a form of domestic violence and hate-crimes".

The 15-year-old student was arrested and charged with sexual battery and abduction after scientific evidence was examined.

The arrested father says, "My wife and I are gay-and-lesbian-friendly, but not into this children-transgender stuff. The person that attacked our daughter is apparently bisexual and occasionally wears dresses because he likes them. So, this kid is technically not what the school board was fighting about. The point is, kids are using it as an advantage to get into the bathrooms."

The boy's mother says: "He's a 15-year-old boy that wanted to have sex in the bathroom with somebody that was willing." She says he is "pansexual" and is "trying to find himself". However, she does admit that, "he's deeply troubled".

**An alleged killer told police that he had lashed out after discovering the 40-year-old he met for sex was not a woman.** He'd met the person on Tinder. He's a freshman on Virginia Tech's football team and more than a dozen Hokie football players attended his first hearing. The man's attorney said: "Nobody deserves to die, but I don't mind saying, don't pretend you are something that you are not. Don't target or lure anyone under that perception. That's just wrong."

LGBTQ leaders, missing this attorney's *wise point*, called his comment *anti-LGBTQ discrimination*. Virginia's House and Senate had earlier approved a bill banning "gay panic" or "LGBTQ panic" defense. But, *male-to-female* trans victims of murder are virtually the

*only* trans murder victims. *Female-to-male* victims are extremely rare.

**DC Comics asked for police protection after fans protested Superman's son's recently coming out as bisexual** and getting into a romantic relationship with a "hacktivist". The DC writer who thought-up the twist says: "I've always said everyone needs heroes and everyone deserves to see themselves in their heroes."

**The Human Rights Campaign looks into its president Alphonso David's role in Andrew Cuomo's facing sexual accusations.** HRC hired a private law firm to conduct an internal investigation into whatever part David played in the matter after New York Attorney General Letitia James' report revealed that he aided Cuomo in responding to sexual harassment allegations. According to the AG's report, David provided Cuomo's office with an accuser's personnel file, worked to convince women to sign a statement praising the governor, participated in discussions to secretly record another accuser, and was among those Cuomo "actively consulted" in the aftermath of the allegations. David had served as Cuomo's top counsel, but was working for HRC at the time he helped the governor.

**Same-sex spouses are eligible for Social Security survivor's benefits.** The Social Security Administration and the Department of Justice announced that they were ending appeals after the U.S. district courts in Arizona and Washington State appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

**The US has issued its first passport with a non-binary "X" gender identification** for those who identify as neither only female nor only male. In 2015, Dana Zzyymm of Colorado sued after being denied a passport with "intersex" as Zzyymm's gender. Now 63, Zzyymm, reared in a military family, served in the Navy as a machinist's mate.

**GLAAD's Accelerating Acceptance Study** finds that many non-LGBTQQ+ folks seem confused about the LGBTQQ+ gamut. The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, in its 7<sup>th</sup> annual survey of Americans, finds that more than 80 percent of non-

LGBTQQ+ Americans say they expect to get more familiar with "trans and nonbinary" people, while 54 percent of non-LGBTQQ+ people believe that LGBTQQ+ people make expectations about gender very complicated. Another 45 percent of respondents say that they're confused about "how to describe" LGBTQQ+ people.

**When the former Soviet Republic of Georgia's LGBT folks faced violence in the streets**, the leader of the Evangelical-Baptist Church and a professor of theology and ethics, Malkhaz Songulashvili, told *Euronews*: "We have decided to side with the LGBT community in their struggles against injustice and unfairness, political, cultural and religious." In 2013 a mob of clergy attacked LGBT demonstrators. This was the attack that inspired Songulashvili to stand up in defense of LGBT. His support for LGBT rights is why his church was suspended by the European Baptist Federation. He says, "Some do not want to support us, but to be perfectly honest, we could not care less."

Songulashvili concludes that a monogamous same-sex relation based in mutual love and respect is fully acceptable from a theological and biblical viewpoint. He notes: "The Bible never speaks about sexual orientation. Jesus never spoke about it. The Apostles never spoke about it."

**Ghana's church leaders unite to denounce homosexuality as a "perversion"** and endorse legislation to impose some of the harshest anti-LGBTQ policies in Africa. In Nigeria, a major group of churches calls same-sex relationships, *evil that merits long prison sentences* under the law. In many African countries, bishops connected with worldwide Methodism are now separating, in order to keep their *refusal* to recognize same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBTQ clergy.

**China's broadcasters must "resolutely put an end to sissy men", i.e., "niang pao" or "girlie guns".** China's Communist dictatorship included this order in its latest rules to tighten control over business and society to enforce official Communist "morality". They must "resolutely put an end to sissy men and other abnormal aesthetics", according to the regulation – *no*

*more effeminate men — niang pao,*  
literally, "girlie guns."

**AND FINALLY:** In 1958, for one of  
Ralph Blair's creative writing assign-

ments in college, he took a common  
phrase, "That's what they say!", and  
mused over the question: "Who are  
*they?*" Times change. Check out this  
humorous little update clip on satire

website, *Babylon Bee* – You may skip  
the ads before the cartoon:  
<https://youtu.be/r00xvXvGBtw>