

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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Jim Lucas and Cindy Stevens-Pino will guest keynote ConnECTION2023 – our 81st summer ConnECTION since 1980. (Some summers we had more than 1 ConnECTION.)

Jim grew up gay in homophobic Christian Reformed circles and now he does pastoral ministry with LGBT folks. Singer/songwriter Marsha Stevens-Pino's life partner, Cindy, does Christian mission work here and in Africa. EC's founder will, again, keynote.

With China's unprecedented surge of deadly new Covid-19 variants, its estimated 2 million new cases per day and Xi's reopening world travel for his citizens, and with our close overnight quarters on the mountain, we'll again have ConnECTION by Internet only. Our three 2023 keynotes will be posted at www.ecinc.org this summer.

2022 was the centennial of J. Gresham Machen's landmark alert, *Christianity and Liberalism* and the centennial of Martin H. Woudstra's birth. Machen left the faculty of Princeton Seminary to found the orthodox-centered Westminster Seminary, where Woudstra would earn the very first doctorate granted by Westminster. He then taught for many years at the Christian Reformed Church's Calvin Seminary, later chairing the NIV's OT translation committee. He was a president of the Evangelical Theological Society and an early and hearty supporter of Evangelicals Concerned. He died in 1991.

Calvin University again allows affirmation of same-sex relationship. Owned by the Christian Reformed Church, the school had an openly lesbian student body president in 2020-21's school year. But she had to cancel her keynote for EC's ConnECTION2022 after Calvin again cracked down on the issue under its CRC denominational demands.

“Woke” was “the most obnoxious word of 2022”, says national polling, regardless of party affiliation. No wonder! It's for “woke” sake that Planned Parenthood now advises “people who're pregnant”, CNN tweets medical advice to “individuals with a cervix”, and a gynecology clinic sells its services to “uterus-having folks”. *Time* reports that physical fitness is racist. “Woke” falls so sadly far short of yet another great *Awakening in Christ!*

The Cambridge Dictionary's latest edition has changed its definitions of “woman” and “man”. By woke doublespeak, a woman is now defined as “an adult who lives and identifies as female, though they may have been said to have a different sex at birth.” Also, by such woke doublespeak, a man is now defined as “an adult who lives and identifies as male, though they may have been said to have a different sex at birth.”

A non-binary professor at Old Dominion University pushes “MAP” as a preferred term for “minor attracted persons.” He finds, “it's less stigmatizing than ‘pedophile.’”

St. Louis' Memorial Presbyterian Church has voted to withdraw from the PCA, the Presbyterian Church in America, the 50-year-old denomination of evangelical Presbyterians. Its pastor, Greg Johnson, who used to be an atheist, is leaving with his evangelical congregation. Zondervan, in 2021, published Johnson's book, *Still Time to Care: What We Can Learn from the Church's Failed Attempt to Cure Homosexuality*. Johnson's book was reviewed in EC's Summer Review in 2021.

Their move out of the PCA was affirmed by 92% of Memorial's congregation. This latest decision comes, “with a mixture of sorrow and hope ... after fifteen months spent fasting, praying, waiting, consulting and listening.”

Memorial PCA's reason for leaving is the PCA denomination's ongoing attacks against its same-sex oriented members, even as *they're committed to celibacy*. The PCA egregiously attacks their *honest witness as evangelical Christians who are homosexually-oriented while being committed to lifetime celibacy*. Still, their gay *identification* drew same-sex-attracted folks to Memorial PCA.

Johnson clearly affirms: “There is no angry shaking of the dust off our feet. We will continue to support the PCA's RUF [Reformed University Fellowship] in every way, continue to support our MTW [Mission to the World] missionaries and send our students to Covenant College”, PCA's college, founded along with Covenant Seminary by Robert G. Rayburn, its first president. Johnson later graduated from Covenant Seminary.

Rayburn was the very first evangelical leader to be told by EC's founder of his plans to start EC. As Rayburn dined with Blair in New York City on November 2, 1975, Rayburn affirmed the idea and suggested that we officially launch EC at the very next convention of The National Association of Evangelicals, coming up in Washington, DC, in February, 1976. And that's what we *did*, much to NAE's chagrin and denial. With Jimmy Carter's election, *Newsweek* labeled 1976, “The Year of the Evangelicals” and Blair was invited to The White House to consult for their better Christian understanding of homosexuality.

A Roman Catholic priest in Germany is pushing porn-provoking masturbation for himself and his fellow priests. He justifies it as both a priest and a psychologist. But if he were better at these vocations, he'd know that holding oneself hostage to *sexuality fantasies can't truly* address anyone's real needs. Porn reinforces fantasies that addicts irrationally imagine they're missing out on, so this makes

them even *lonelier*. *Fantasies can't* address the human need that an imposed celibacy takes away from these priests.

Eighty-two percent of Catholic priests in the U.S. fear being *falsely* accused of sex abuse, according to researchers at the Catholic University of America. If *falsely* accused, 51 percent of priests think that their bishops would not support them. It's yet another argument against this *unbiblical* tradition of *required celibacy* for the priesthood!

The Vatican's aging main website has, yet again, been hacked, but the identity of the hackers is unknown. Priests worry over what's stored in those stolen documents.

188 priests were investigated by the Kansas' Bureau of investigation's Catholic Clergy Sexual Abuse Task Force on claims of sex abuse since 2018. More than 400 victims were interviewed. So far, no prosecutor has filed charges, mainly due to statute of limitations concerns.

Milo Yiannopoulos' new paperback and audio are titled, *Diabolical: How Pope Francis Has Betrayed Clerical Abuse Victims Like Me – and Why He Has to Go.*

After Milo's celebrity as a handsome, openly gay man with an over-the-top streak of boldly swishy playfulness, e.g., sheepishly calling Donald Trump, "Daddy", he now says he's chaste and he's dedicated to Christ and he wants to expose the Vatican's rampant unrighteousness under the leadership of its "Lavender Mafia" of Leftist gay bishops and priests. He says the leadership has become "shambolic and depraved". Still, of this *gay mafia*, he hasn't lost his "campy" wit, insisting that: "Their outfits are *fabulous!*"

Pope Francis unsurprisingly *defrocked* a *pro-life anti-abortion* priest for being *pro-life* and *anti-abortion*. Fr. Frank Pavone, this devout leader of "Priests for Life", responds to the pope's barbarity with brilliant truth: "Hi friends... So in every profession, including the priesthood, if you defend the [#unborn](#), you will be treated like them! The only difference is that when we are 'aborted', we continue to speak, loud and clear."

Russian dictator Vladimir Putin is using homophobia to distract from his brutal blunders, including his vicious invasions of Ukraine. Finding himself in still another embarrassing mess, he senselessly assaults LGBT "propaganda", matching imaginary "Russian collusion" with "queer collusion". As they say: "It's always *another's* fault!"

The U.S. cancelled an Indonesian trip by an LGBTQ envoy after the world's most populous Muslim nation's strong objections were voiced. The US Government was told: "We cannot accept guests whose purpose of coming here is to damage and mess up the noble values of our nation's religion and culture." It was a *deadly* threat.

It's now alleged that Jesus may have been *transgender*? In a clueless claim by a junior research fellow at Trinity, Cambridge, at evensong, he tried to prove his point by pointing to a *Medieval painting* of Jesus' crucified body with a *side* wound that, he said, looks like female genitalia. Such is the aftertaste of wokeness nowadays at Cambridge, where one can say *that* more readily than that, Jesus was *both God and a man in flesh!*

America's first openly trans Army officer is charged in a plot to give U.S. military medical information to Russia. A federal grand jury returned an indictment charging this husband and wife, both doctors, with conspiracy for the disclosure of *identifiable medical data* related to their efforts to assist Russia in its conflict against Ukraine.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit rules *against* four female athletes who were repeatedly deprived of opportunities to honestly compete at elite levels because the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference, in necessary wokeness, allows *males* who *identify* as females to compete in girls' athletic events.

The Biden Administration has fired a "gender fluid" official for two felony thefts. Sam Brinton, 35, uses "they/them" as "their" pronouns. Apparently, their one and only qualification for being hired was their woke-pleasing pose as "gender fluid", presenting in mustachioed and goateed babyface-framing lips of bright red

lipstick. They frequently pose online in glamorous gowns.

They're accused of stealing a pricey Vera Bradley suitcase with all its contents worth thousands of dollars. According to court documents and federal government records, Brinton never checked a bag *upon leaving* DC on a flight to Minneapolis. Yet, on arrival in Minneapolis, video shows Brinton at the luggage carousel, quickly removing a pricey bag's owner's tag and leaving with that luggage, "at a quick pace", to catch an Uber.

They're seen later on, using that very same bag and wearing its wardrobe on DC trips to work as deputy assistant secretary of the Office of Spent Fuel and Waste Disposition at the U. S. Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy.

Just weeks later, another felony warrant was issued on Brinton for stealing luggage worth up to \$5,000 from Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas back in July. Old video footage shows them wearing, in Nevada, a rainbow design atomic nuclear symbol t-shirt matching their clothing and their very image in the video captured at Minneapolis.

They say they were reared by abusive Southern Baptists and that they underwent years of "ex-gay" torture, punished "with extreme heat, ice and needles". But when *The Advocate's* veteran reporter, Wayne Besen, the gay expert on investigating "ex-gay" frauds, repeatedly tried to get, from Brinton, some details about this allegedly "ex-gay" experience, Brinton never would cooperate with the *name* of this nasty "ex-gay" guru or the *location* where they were supposedly "tortured with extreme heat, ice, and needles."

Back in 2000, it was Besen who photographed "ex-gay" leader, John Paulk, cruising "Mr. P's" gay bar in Washington, DC. Paulk fled when Besen caught him there. At that time, he led the widest "ex-gay" network of all, Exodus, International – now, long gone.

President Biden invited a foul-mouthed drag queen to The White House to help to celebrate a bill that duplicates same-sex marriage legalization. Sadly, this vulgar drag queen is famous for wisecracking taglines like: "Kids are out to sing and suck D!"

A Trevor Project's survey of 34,000 LGBTQ+ youth finds that their religion and spirituality is a comfort to them. However, this report of the study does not specify *what* religion or *what sort* of spirituality comforted them.

Isaiah 41:10 was the most shared and bookmarked Bible verse in 2022, as posted by the You Version's Bible App. This text gives the blessed assurance: "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Disney's latest release, "Strange World", alleged to be about a gay teen, totally bombed at the box office. It debuted over the long Thanksgiving Day weekend and it's heading to a loss of at least \$100 million. *Variety* predicts it will sink far *deeper* into that red ink. Some suggest that, maybe, it was *deliberately* awful so that Disney won't have to try again to cater to LGBTQ+ audiences and offend its much wider audience base.

Disney's great original "Bambi" debuted back in 1942. I was 3-years-old when my grandmother took me to see "Bambi", my very first time in a movie theater. As we sat waiting for Bambi, I recall that I kept looking back up the aisle for Bambi to enter as we'd entered. My grandmother kindly corrected me, redirecting my focus to the front of the auditorium, where, she told me, the curtain would open and Bambi would appear on a very big screen.

Now, by copyright law, "Bambi" has entered the public domain. So, things change. A filmmaker now brings us "Bambi, the Reckoning". In it, Bambi is a *vicious murderer*.

Evangelical Bible scholar Gordon Fee passed into Christ's nearer presence in late October. As an outstanding New Testament professor, Fee addressed biblical issues of "homosexuality" such as Paul's use of two odd Greek terms that antigay Christians say are rebukes to homosexuals today. But as Fee very well argued, these two terms are "difficult" to pin down. Of one, *arsenokoitai*, Fee wrote: "This is its first appearance in preserved literature, and subsequent authors are reluctant to use it, especially when describ-

ing homosexual activity." There is no warrant for antigay Fundamentalists to read loving same-sex partnership *into* it. Of *malakoi*, Fee admitted that, "one cannot be sure what it means in a list [as it is], where there is no further context to help."

In 2000 years, will "wise guys" be taken to have meant, "*men of very great wisdom?*"

Sadly, farcically, self-styled know-it-alls pay no attention to fine scholars such as Gordon Fee when the scholarship doesn't fit an agenda. Years ago, I was invited to California to participate in a round-table debate on homosexuality and Christian faith. Sponsored by a new evangelical Christian magazine that was to be launched soon, the debate panel was run by rabidly antigay Fundamentalist preacher, John MacArthur.

At one point in the debate, I was explaining that, as Gordon Fee and other evangelical New Testament scholars had well-reasoned, the NT Greek term, *arsenokoitai*, is now confusing as to what it may have meant in Paul's day. Another debater very quickly interrupted me and angrily demanded to know, "What was that word?!" Repeating this Greek term for him, I said "*arsenokoitai*". To this, he loudly shot back in hostility and supposed triumph: "That *sure does* mean homosexual! *Arse! Arse! They put the penis in the arse!*" Even his homophobic allies around the table cringed at his stupidity. I then informed him that he was mixing up British slang with ancient Greek. He'd made an "arse" of *himself*, right there in front of his fellow antigay debaters. Or, put more politely, as Paul did long ago: "Professing to be wise, they become fools." (Rom 1:22)

The panel's antigay sponsors decided that the *wrong side had won*, and the recording of this debate would never be made public. The magazine has cancelled. Later, on that day, one guy on the project, in private, "came out" to me to say, he was *gay, himself*.

A California judge ruled in favor of an artistic designer who declined to decorate a wedding cake for a lesbian couple since, as she explained, it would violate her Christian beliefs. So, she kindly referred them to another cake designer. Still, she was *sued*. But the judge ruled that her *American right to*

free speech and expression of religion fully permitted her decision, and so, she should not be *forced to violate her conscience*.

AOL Mail reports the case of "a conservative evangelical Christian who opposes same-sex marriage" and has a *website design* business in Colorado. She's reached out to the U.S. Supreme Court asking Justices to prevent her being sued for her stance under the First Amendment. Surprisingly, the overwhelming response on Left-leaning AOL is in strong support for *her*, with the "likes" for her, far outnumbering the "dislikes".

Twelve Republican Senators voted in the affirmative in the U.S. Senate and voted 62 to 37 to advance the "Respect for Marriage" bill protecting same-sex marriage and interracial marriage under Federal Law. The 12 Republicans were Blunt, Burr, Capito, Collins, Ernst, Lummis, Murkowski, Portman, Romney, Sullivan, Tillis and Young. But others warn that it will make conscientiously-held religious views on the topic, a matter of infringement of religious liberty, with punishing consequences.

This is all the more reason for antigay Fundamentalists to more closely study the Bible on both "homosexuality" and on "Golden Rule"-living. For many decades now, very well-educated evangelical Bible scholars have pointed out that these so-called "clobber passages" are, themselves, "clobbered" by those who read *into* them what's not there.

Fundamentalists, in their ignorance, need to recognize their habituated ignorance of homosexuality and their lack of love for folks who are just as involuntarily homosexual as heterosexuals are involuntarily heterosexual – and that what all have in common is a desire to meet their need for sexual intimacy with a beloved partner.

A heretical United Methodist minister defensively tells a Pittsburgh newspaper that he and his wife identify as "actively polyamorous but they regret having to live secretly without church affirmation." He says that, as a pastor, he hopes for the day when he might "openly have multiple sex partners of both sexes."

Mark Tooley, a Methodist layman, writer and president of the Institute on

Religion and Democracy, reports on this unorthodox arrangement at his *Juicy Ecumenism* website. Of this odd yearning for “sexual freedom”, Tooley laments: “That day may not be too far off. The 2019 United Methodist General Conference reaffirmed traditional sexual teachings. But 40% of delegates voted for the ‘simple plan’ to delete all sexual restrictions from the denominational law book. With many traditional congregations now exiting the denomination, it’s almost certain that some version of the ‘simple plan’ eventually will prevail. The polyamorous pastor and his wife can then operate openly.”

Meanwhile, the number of United Methodists sticking with the Bible keeps shrinking.

India’s National Medical Commission has decided against “conversion therapy” for homosexuality. An editorial in *The Hindu* notes that such “therapy” can mean “anything from psychiatric treatment, use of psychosomatic drugs, electroshock therapy, exorcism and violence. This can lead to trauma, manifesting in depression, anxiety, drug use, and even suicide.” So, “there should be clarity on what action will be taken against quacks, psychiatrists and doctors accused of offering reparative treatment and the punishment they will face. The groundwork has to be laid in education,” says N. Anand Venkatesh, Justice of the Madras High Court. Pending adequate legislation, he issued guidelines for police, social welfare ministries of the State and Centre, and the medical council for the protection of the community.

FIRE, the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, partnering with College Pulse, has released the 3rd annual College Free Speech Rankings on speech climates at 203 of the largest and most prestigious schools in the US. The University of Chicago ranks at the very top for its long history of freedom of speech while Columbia University ranks at the very bottom. Runners-up for the *best* at free speech are Kansas State, Perdue, Mississippi State and Oklahoma State. Runners-up for the *worst* for free speech are, not surprising, *elitist* schools such as Skidmore, Georgetown, Rensselaer Polytechnic and the University of Pennsylvania.

This significant research is needed because “so many students are self-silencing and silencing each other” and such “is an indictment of campus culture”, FIRE clarifies.

Dave Rubin of *The Rubin Report* objects to Joy Reid’s pitch to normalize drag queen story hours for kids. The openly gay Rubin mentions Reid’s *antigay* history while noting, now: “There’s a bizarre movement in mainstream media to normalize *drag queens with kids*.” He asks, quite pointedly: “Why don’t they do events with anyone else other than kids ... the actuaries, the accountants, the dentists, the shoe salesmen, whoever it might be? Why doesn’t the NBA bring in a bunch of drag queens to do team-building with the Knicks? Bizarre, right? It has to be with kids.”

Kirk Cameron, actor and devout Christian, has written a new children’s book, *As You Grow*. “I wanted to do a book reading at a public li-

brary”, he says. Despite his book’s wholesome subject matter – or, *because* of it – many libraries, showing that they were “woke” by hosting drag queen story hours, refused to allow Cameron to read from his book on “values of growing the fruit of the spirit, like love, joy, kindness, patience, gentleness and self-control.” Now, after these rejections were publicized, he’s received invitations to do his public readings in other libraries and thousands have attended.

Gays Against Groomers is a gay/lesbian group opposing sexual indoctrination of children, e.g., drag queen story hours and medicalized gender-transitioning for kids.

AND FINALLY:

“Sologamy”, at Dictionary.com, is defined as “the practice or state of marriage to oneself.” This term has been around for about a decade, but the fantasy overlooks the well-observed fact that, we’re drawn *sexually and romantically* to those whom we find *fascinatingly other* than our versions of ourselves. Yet this can lead to a disappointing link to *frustrating otherness and so, this needs to be understood* and we need to be prepared for it. Rationally working on such a marriage over the long haul takes this into *seriously patient* consideration. Working well together requires an awareness that can be rewarded in *fascinating otherness* and in a *cooperatively compromising otherness*.