

# CREATED GAY

Queer News | Resources | Devotions

## Contents

- Forgiveness & Father's Day ...P 1
- Review-1794 Book of Prayer ..P 2
- Review-Gay Preacher's Wife .P 3
- Review-Jesus Calling..... P 4
- Morality ..... P 5
- Sex Positive Text ..... P 6
- Parenting & GSA Clubs ..... P 7
- Affirming Bible Text ..... P 7
- The Bible Belongs to You ..... P 8

## Forgiveness and Father's Day

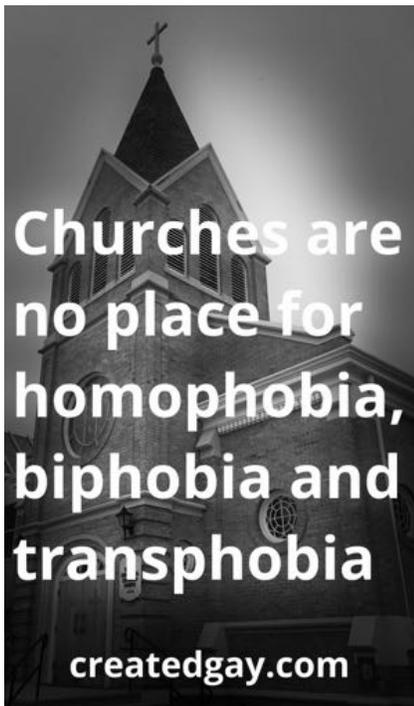
by Gary Simpson

**Genesis 18:1-15 (KJV)** And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

<sup>6</sup>And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

<sup>9</sup>And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.



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## Book Review: 1794 Book of Prayer

Title: *1794 Book of Prayer*

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2012.

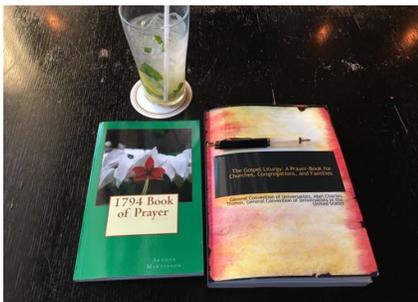
Available: [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca)

Some church denominations use a prayer book. There is an advantage in using prayer books, because ministers and worship leaders do not have to worry about writing liturgy. For people who need to craft liturgy, there can never be too many resource books in the library.

Those looking for fresh liturgy should not let the date on the prayer book scare them away. While the roots of the book date to 1794, much of the language was updated, so the liturgy has a fresh feel. The word Lord does not appear very often and gender neutral terms are usually used to refer to God.

There are liturgies for five morning and five evening services, so a different liturgy can be used each Sunday of the monthly cycle. The weekly liturgies are supplemented with liturgies for devotional prayer, communion and baptism.

Because of the fresh feel of this prayer book, the *1794 Book of Prayer* makes an excellent resource for ministers.



**Genesis 22:1-2** (KJV) And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Father's Day is a time of the year that I often dread, because like many men and women who do not have children I feel like a second class person on days when we celebrate mothers and fathers. I used to keep a very low profile in church on Father's Day. I would quietly try to get away from people when the flowers were given out. One Father's Day, I saw the ladies with the flowers headed my direction, so I quickly beat it across the church sanctuary to avoid the embarrassment. I almost made it to the room where I taught a Sunday School class to hear the loud voice of a friend booming across the sanctuary, "Look what I got that you can't have!"

While Father's Day has some negative experiences tied to it, I can share in the celebration of people who have different identities, different accomplishments, different occupations and different roles, even when it is not possible for me to be or do those things. In the body of Christ, we can celebrate the roles and the sacrifices of parents, without making the worth of people depend on raising children.

Today, on Father's Day, we are celebrating the roles of fathers. But we are celebrating a little more than fathers. We are celebrating the roles of people who identify as men, including uncles, brothers and sons, including all who might someday be a father and including all who have done stereotypical dad jobs.

The story of Abraham, Sarah and Isaac is complex, weaving itself through a few chapters of Genesis. We get some of the story of Abraham and his sons in the passage we just heard, but there is more to the story. I will give a thumb's nail view of the most important elements of the narrative, without attempting to keep everything in exact chronological order.

- Sarah is unable to have children, so she suggests that Abraham

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## Book Review: The Gay Preacher's Wife

Title: *The Gay Preacher's Wife: How My Gay Husband Deconstructed My Life and Reconstructed My Faith.*

Author: Lydia Meredith

Publisher: Gallery Books, 2016.

Available: [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)

For many years, my heart has gone out to the wives of gay men. Societal and religious homophobia create a toxic environment for gay and lesbian people, an environment that keeps many gays in the closet. The painful cost of homophobia is carried by gay men and women and by their straight partners.

*The Gay Preacher's Wife* is autobiographical, including stories of growing up in a devout Christian home, college life, and Lydia Meredith's romance and marriage to a powerful Christian minister. With time, Lydia starts to suspect that something is not right. Her husband comes out to her, and, later, leaves her for a man. One of her sons is gay. The presence of gay men in her family forces her to rebuild both her life and her faith.

There are interesting insights into Black American Christian culture in *The Gay Preacher's Wife*. The book could be a good gift for people who love biographies.

"All is grace, and  
grace is for all."

James Moffatt

in Grace in the New Testament

have children with her servant Hagar.<sup>1</sup>

- Hagar becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son Ishmael.
- Sarah was "despised by Hagar."<sup>2</sup> In one part of the narrative, the Bible describes Hagar as "mocking" Sarah.<sup>3</sup>
- The Lord visits Abraham and Sarah.<sup>4</sup>
- Abraham is told that God will make him the father of nations.<sup>5</sup>
- Sarah has a promised son.
- Eventually, Abraham and Sarah end up kicking out Hagar and Ishmael, Abraham and Hagar's son.
- Abraham is asked to sacrifice his son to God.
- God stops Abraham from killing his son as a sacrifice.

The story of Abraham and Sarah and their son Isaac is rich in shades of meaning, which can be important on Father's Day. From the story of Abraham and Sarah, we understand the need to not treat people who do not have children like they are second class citizens. The value of each person, from a Christian perspective, is based on being a creation of God and being redeemed by God. We also understand that the fathers and mothers of the faithful make mistakes and we get a sense of the need to forgive parental figures in our lives and to forgive ourselves when we make parenting mistakes.

The liturgical cycle is about the promise and the birth of Isaac. Abraham and Sarah were not young people. The King James translation paints a vivid picture of Abraham and Sarah, when it describes Sarah as being "well stricken in age".<sup>6</sup> As a person who has low levels of chronic pain, and, at times has mobility challenges, I find the phrase "stricken in age" powerfully descriptive. The thought of being a parent when you are stricken with age can be funny, as Sarah seems to have found it, and it can be a little sobering and frightening.

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 16:1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 16:4.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 21:9-15.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 18:1.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 17:6.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 18:11.

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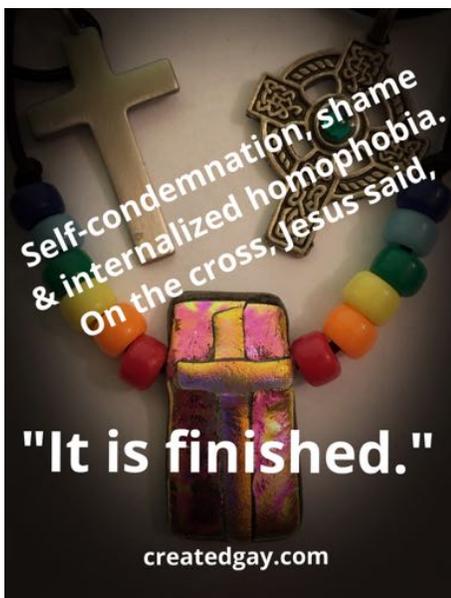
Devotions

## Book Review: Jesus Calling

Title: *Jesus Calling: Morning and Evening*  
 Author: Sarah Young  
 Publisher: Thomas Nelson, 2015.  
 Available: [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca)

*Jesus Calling* has two daily devotions, one for the morning and one for the evening.

In most cases, I am not a fan of daily devotional books. The content of most devotional books does not resonate for me. Instead of using a devotional book, I prefer a going through a morning or an evening liturgy from one of my favorite prayer books. *Jesus Calling* is an exception for me, because I enjoy reading the devotions and find that they are meaningful. Some of the devotions have a timeless quality to them, being the kind of devotions that can be fresh and relevant years from now. I can picture a person using the devotional book more than one year. There are times when one of the daily devotions helped provide ideas when developing liturgy and prayers for church services.



The Genesis text in the liturgical cycle struck me as odd. Talking about Abraham and the birth of Isaac on Father's Day struck me for an odd and challenging reason. People may have reason to question if Abraham was a good father. He set out to offer his son as a sacrifice to God. Some people would question his fitness as a father for doing that, especially given the fact that the Torah strongly condemns offering children as a sacrifice to the god Molech.<sup>7</sup> And Abraham is not the only parenting figure in the Abraham and Sarah narrative who makes mistakes. Hagar appears to have considered Sarah to be a second class person, because Hagar had a son before Sarah did. Both Abraham and Sarah made a mistake when they kicked out Hagar and Abraham's son Ishmael.<sup>8</sup> There is plenty of less than ideal parenting in this story.

I struggle with Abraham taking his son, Isaac, and offering Isaac as a sacrifice to God. Rabbi Harvey Fields, author of *A Torah Commentary for our Times*, states that some people believe Abraham had questions and doubts about what he believed God commanded him to do.<sup>9</sup> To our 21st Century ears, the story may strike us as a combination of child abuse and spiritual abuse. Because, in the ancient world, human sacrifices appear to have been offered to some gods, the ancients might not have found the story so shocking. For example, the Philistines seem to have offered human sacrifices to the god Molech.<sup>10</sup> According to the Biblical narrative, God did not allow Abraham to take the life of his own son. God does not want us to sacrifice our children to appease an angry, demanding understanding of God.

My next point is important at any time of the year, and is even more important when we are celebrating Father's Day during our Pride Festival. Some devout parents, who had good intentions, who thought they were being faithful to God's command, sacrificed

<sup>7</sup> Leviticus 18:21.

<sup>8</sup> The story can be found in Genesis 21:8-21.

<sup>9</sup> Harvey J. Fields. *A Torah Commentary for Our Times. Vol. 1: Genesis.* (New York: UAHC Press, 1990), 51.

<sup>10</sup> J. Vernon McGee. *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee.* (Pasadena, California: Thru the Bible Radio, 1998), ebook.

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## Morality

### Pride Parade

- You rage

### Hate Crimes Protection

- You rage

### Marriage Equality

- You rage

### GSA Clubs

- You rage

### Day of Silence

- You rage

### We want to go to church

- You rage

### We die

- You are silent

Your morality is showing and it is indecent.

### Pride Parade

- You rage

### Hate Crimes Protection

- You rage

### Marriage Equality

- You rage

### GSA Clubs

- You rage

### Day of Silence

- You rage

### We want to go to church

- You rage

### We die

- No rage

Your morality is showing and it is indecent.

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the well-being of their children on an altar to God, when they harshly attacked their children's sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity and when they kicked their children out of home. In a few cases, parents have sent their children to forms of counselling that attempt to change the sexual orientation of their children. These forms of therapy can be emotionally very damaging to children.

Points to ponder as children.

- When you were first born your father and mother knew almost infinitely more than you knew and they were almost all powerful compared to you. In reality, they might have been terrified of the task of parenting you and there was a lot they did not know.
- Forgiving people, by refusing to carry the burden of their issues for the rest of your life, is better done when a parent is alive than at a funeral home or a cemetery.

A few points about parenting.

- You are never an expert. No matter how many children you have, you are not an expert, because every child is different and needs slightly different parenting.
- Babies are not born with a user's manual. There is no series of YouTube videos on how to parent each child. As parents and as people who hold a few quasi parenting roles, we do the best we can and we hope and pray for the very best.
- Rarely do parents set out to make mistakes. Most fathers are really decent people who mean well.
- We cannot easily give what we did not receive. A senior citizen once commented that it was difficult for him to show love and to give love, because he never received love when he was a kid. Many fathers make mistakes, not because they want to make mistakes, but because they had few good role models of how to be a loving dad.
- I am not sure if a person is ever ready to be a good parent. I doubt that there would be many children born, if everybody waited to have children until they were ready financially and emotionally to raise children.
- The closer the nature of the relationship, the more potential there is for deep hurt. Because parenting relationships are both close relationships and are relationships with a person providing care, the potential for mistakes that are very painful is much more

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## A Sex Positive Text

**Deuteronomy 24:5** (KJV) *When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.*

This might be one of the more sex positive passages in the Bible and it is a text that helps demonstrate women's equality.

From this passage, we get the sense that God values sex enough to want a couple to spend a year learning how to give their partners sexual pleasure. Any God that gives this priority to sexual pleasure in relationships is not prudish. There is no need to worry that your sexual desires, that your same-gender sexual fantasies and that your sex life offends God.

During a time when women were generally not considered to be equal to men and when women tended to be viewed as property of their husbands, God takes the position that men are to take the time to learn how to please their wives. Enjoying sex was not to be the sole prerogative of men. In no way are men to place their sexual enjoyment over the sexual enjoyment of their partners.

In this passage, we also get a sense of a sexual ethic. Sex is to be mutually pleasurable. Having sex where the objective is for personal pleasure only is not supported by this Bible passage.

significant.

•Hindsight is not 20/20. All hindsight tells us is what did not work and what was a mistake. Sadly, hindsight does not tell us what would have worked and what we should have done.

•Congratulations, you are human. Nobody is perfect. Let God be perfect, because trying to be perfect is too demanding for us.

We can forgive our parents for the mistakes they made. When we forgive our parents, we no longer carry the burden of constantly reliving the pain and the anger that stemmed from their mistakes. We can let God, not our parents, be perfect.

Even though Abraham and Sarah may have made some serious mistakes as parents, they are viewed as the father and mother of the faithful. God chooses to treat humanity as though we are faithful and as though we have not made mistakes, some of which deeply hurt people. God calls us to be faithful, not to be perfect, not to never make mistakes. So for God's sake forgive your parents and for God's sake forgive yourself.



At Pride, carrying a Christian Pride Flag, with a cross in the upper left hand corner, and signs reading:

- God loves LGBT people. Be like God.
- Perfectly Queer.
- LGBT Lives Matter.

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## A Favorite Affirming Text

**John 12:32** And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all people unto me.

This Bible text is Jesus discussing His death on a cross. When the atoning ministry of Jesus is exalted, all people will be drawn to God. Two excellent, old Bible commentaries, Matthew Henry's *Complete Bible Commentary* and the Jamieson, Faussett and Brown *Whole Bible Commentary* point to the power of God to attract people to God. The JFB commentary says the verse shows the Holy Spirit's ability to attract "the wide world" and Matthew Henry indicates the verse shows the power of the cross of Christ to "draw souls to him."

The text does not state that Jesus will draw all straight, cisgender people. All people are drawn unto the Son and all includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, polysexual, asexual, Trans, gender fluid and queer people. No matter who you are, no matter how you describe yourself, you are drawn unto Christ. Straight people hold no monopoly on God's love, no monopoly on God's acceptance and no monopoly on salvation.

## Parenting & GSA Clubs

by Gary Simpson

While parenting is challenging, good parenting skills generally work very well for children of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The most important things to remember regarding raising LGBT+ children are best thought through early, preferably before you have children or before your children start school. But it is okay to reflect and to have the important parental discussions at any time.

When the home environment is one that is accepting and that is conducive to discussion of sexuality, children are much more likely to feel safe at home, and, if they are queer to be open and out at home. There are a few things parents can remember that will help them create an environment where they do not have to fear that a child is secretly LGBT+ or that a child might secretly be part of a school Gay Straight Alliance (GSA).

- Parents do not cause children to become gay, bisexual or transgender. Having an LGBT+ child is not a negative reflection on you or your parenting.
- Chances are very good that almost every extended family has at least one LGBT+ member, so having a queer child does not make you or your family bad or all virtually all extended families would be bad families.
- Relax. LGBT+ children are capable. Gender and sexual minority people are capable of professional success and of having loving, long-term relationships. With a little support, LGBT+ children can make you really proud.
- There is nothing wrong with being LGBT+ or being thought of as queer. And there is absolutely nothing wrong or embarrassing about having a gender or sexual minority child.
- Do not criticize people, because they are gay or Trans. Highly Vcritical comments can stick in a child's memory long after you forgot what you said.
- Do not use any terms that insult, denigrate or dehumanize gay, lesbian, asexual or Trans people. Homophobic comments made

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## The Bible Belongs to You

I lived for many years being afraid of the Bible. I no longer fear the Bible. As I studied the Bible more, I discovered both the depth of God's love for all humanity and that the texts which had been used against me did not actually condemn me and did not condemn any LGBT+ people. Understanding the word, casts out fear, because God's pure love, which can be discovered in the Bible, casts out fear.

When we understand the Biblical narratives, we find that the Bible is a book that belongs to the LGBTQ community. The Bible is a queer document, because it gives us insights into God, a being that is queer (different than humans), because the Bible is relevant to sexual and gender minority people, and because the Bible contains stories about sexual and gender minority people.

The Bible does not support those theologians who have white washed, straight washed and have cisgender washed the Scriptures. The Bible is a gift to all humanity and God gave the Bible to sexual and gender minority people too.



where your children can hear can cause an LGBT child significant pain and stress, especially when the child is considering coming out.

- Don't describe gay sex as gross. Consensual, mutually pleasurable sex between adults who love each other is beautiful.

- Be sex positive. Openly talk about sex in positive ways, letting your children know that you are willing to discuss sex with them at any time.

- And for God's sake don't condemn gays to hell and do not cite Bible tests that sound like gay and bisexual people are deserving of death. Spiritual trauma can be emotionally and spiritually devastating.

- Every time you see a good LGBT role model, point that out in front of your children. We need many role models for youth and gender sexuality minority role models can be difficult for some children to find.

- Be sure to tell your children, starting when they are toddlers, that some people are LGBT and I will love LGBT kids. These things will help kids feel safe to be out at home.

- Parents, the best GSA is your home. Make it a wonderful GSA, a place where your children will always feel safe and welcome.



Created Gay shirt and hat, with pride Christian flag.