

**Subject: newsletter Update**

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**NEW BOOK PUBLISHED – "CALLING THE RAINBOW NATION HOME"**

**From Elaine Sundby** - GALIP Foundation - <http://www.gaychurch.org>

It is my honor to report that my 10 year labor of love is finally published!

"[Calling the Rainbow Nation Home](#)" is the first of a 3 part trilogy of books the Lord laid on my heart almost 10 years ago.

The book is one part personal journey, and two parts Biblical study into some of the key issues gay (GLBT) Christians face while coming to terms with their sexual orientation. Issues such as salvation, is homosexuality a sin, celibacy, the role of the Holy Spirit in all of this, how come our church leaders don't see the truth in this matter and much, much more. There is also an easy to understand chapter that does a thorough job of discussing the 8 "clobber" passages some use against homosexuals.

I tried to make the book as easy to read as possible. In addition, the book is sprinkled throughout with several stories to help illustrate various points. My experiences, and some of the experiences of my fellow ministers, stories from our church etc. are all woven together to keep the book interesting and 'alive'. My points are all solidly backed by Scripture. If you or a loved one are struggling with this issue, or minister to those who are, know someone who is, or is just plain curious what 'all the fuss is about', I encourage you to check out this book!

The book can be purchased through the publisher for the first few months, and then it will be available through all the major on-line book resellers (e.g. Amazon). At all times we'll have an up-to-date link to the best purchasing location on our web site. You will also find a good write up on the book there as well.

I hope this book blesses you!

For more information about this book, please go to [http://www.gaychurch.org/Book\\_store/by\\_author/sundby\\_et.htm](http://www.gaychurch.org/Book_store/by_author/sundby_et.htm)

The book is available for \$17.95 U.S. and there is also an e-book version from

Amazon.com for \$6.

*(Thanks Elaine! For any of you who don't know, Elaine is the person who has created the Directory of Welcoming Christian Churches for us – 3500 listings! WOW! What a labour of love! The link for this Directory can be found at <http://christiangays.com/links.shtml> )*

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### **FAMOUS GAYS' BIRTHDAYS** – Sept 15 – 30

September 17: actor **Roddy McDowall**, 1928

September 18: actress **Greta Garbo**, 1905

September 19: **Henry III**, King of France, 1551; Beatles manager **Brian Epstein**, 1934

September 22: punk-influenced guitarist and singer **Joan Jett**, 1960

September 23: singer and songwriter **Ani DiFranco**, 1970

September 26: **Louis XIII**, King of France, 1601; Anglo-American poet **T.S. Eliot**, 1888;

September 30: writer **Truman Capote**, 1924; singer **Johnny Mathis**, 1935

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### **NEW LINKS**

I have just added new links for a couple of great [Christian Personal Websites](#).

The first link added is for [Jen Austin](#), a radio personality and motivational speaker in Dallas, TX, and the author of a forthcoming autobiography in which she chronicles her struggles with homosexuality as it relates to Christianity. Jen gives opportunity for people to submit their testimony of how God has worked in your life. She also blogs really interesting stuff. All in all, a really nice clean, well-organized website.

The other link is right below Jen's for [Jeremy's Web Space](#) - an eclectic wealth of links for everything from Church Documents, Ancient Texts, Greek/Hebrew/Latin, Gay & Lesbian Studies, to Fun/Games, Human & Animal Rights, Neurology/Psychiatry and

Medical Ethics, Weather/Earthquakes and much, much more.

I highly recommend several very long visits to Jeramy's website. You will learn much!

See Jen and Jeramy's links at [http://christiangays.com/links/christian\\_personal.shtml](http://christiangays.com/links/christian_personal.shtml)

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**NEW ARTICLE ON GAY MARRIAGE** – MASSACHUSETTS - Marriage Ban Falls - Gay Marriage Supporters Celebrate!

Excerpt:

On Wednesday, lawmakers voted **157-39 (WOW!)** against the same amendment they had approved at the previous year's Constitutional Convention. The move halts the proposed amendment from going on a statewide ballot in 2006. The amendment was hammered out following a state Supreme Judicial Court opinion that legalized gay marriage last year.

Read the full article at <http://christiangays.com/marriage/boston2.shtml>

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**PAT ROBERTSON BLAMES HURRICANE ON CHOICE OF ELLEN DEGENERES TO HOST EMMYS** – Lesbian is New Orleans native

Well this would be hilarious if the Religious Right didn't take him seriously. Since they do, it can only be seen as really dangerous!

Excerpt:

Hollywood - Pat Robertson on Sunday said that Hurricane Katrina was God's way of expressing its anger at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for its selection of Ellen Degeneres to host this year's Emmy Awards. "By choosing an avowed lesbian for this national event, these Hollywood elites have clearly invited God's wrath," Robertson said on "The 700 Club" on Sunday. "Is it any surprise that the Almighty chose to strike at Miss Degeneres' hometown?"

Read the whole ridiculous article at <http://christiangays.com/articles/robertson.shtml>

*(Thanks PJ!)*

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## **GAYS FINALLY GET SOME GOOD NEWS FROM NEW ORLEANS**

(Houston, Texas) Gays and lesbians will be among the first people from New Orleans to be allowed back into the city. Mayor Ray Nagin announced Thursday that the heavily gay Garden district will reopen next week and the French Quarter the following week.

It is generally believed that about half of New Orleans LGBT community lives within the city.

The rest make their homes in the suburbs. When they will get the all clear to return is not yet known.

Read the article at <http://www.365gay.com/newscon05/09/091605nola.htm>

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## **THE BOOK OF ROMANS – some background and a little insight**

Most of us are painfully aware that two of the most-used verses against us are found in Romans, specifically Romans 1:26,27. Well I'm not going to get into a long dissertation about these verses in a Newsletter, but I feel it's important to know the truth, first for self-acceptance, and then to educate those who would use them against us, so here is a little background on the book of Romans.

Don't every shy away from the Bible just because it has been used against us. Pursue it until you know the truth!

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## **Paul – Author of the Book of Romans**

Paul was also known by his Jewish name Saul.

He was born in Tarsus, which was a major center for Greek education and culture. But

as a Jew, Paul also studied in Jerusalem with Gamaliel, a leading teacher of the Law of Moses. Paul was part of a religious group called the Pharisees, who believed that people could serve God best by strictly obeying the Law of Moses.

Saul did his best to try to destroy the movement that had become known as "The Lord's Way," but he was radically changed when the risen Christ appeared to him in a vision and chose him to be His follower and to spread the Good News to all people.

Paul spent about 15 years preaching and helping to create new groups of followers in Asia Minor and Greece.

Paul's name appears in the greeting of thirteen New Testament "letters" (nearly half of the books in the New Testament) but many scholars today believe that he did not actually write all of them. All agree that Paul wrote Romans.

Although Romans was written before Paul had ever been to Rome, he eventually did see Rome when he was taken there as a prisoner.

According to church tradition, the Emperor Nero had Paul killed around A.D 64.

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## **Rome**

Rome, the capital city of the Roman Empire in Paul's day, was a beautiful city located on the Tiber River and built on seven hills. It had many great buildings made of marble and was famous for its oval stadium (Coliseum), the Pantheon, great military arches, the Circus Maximus (a huge stadium that held 150,000 people), a theater that seated 40,000, and temples for the many Roman gods and goddesses. In Paul's day, Rome had at least thirteen synagogues as well as shrines for gods like Apollo, Mithra, and Isis.

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## **How is the Book of Romans Constructed?**

Romans is a letter written in the traditional Greek letter writing style of the first century A.D. Letter writers in Paul's day usually first identified who was sending the letter (1:1-6), then gave the names of the persons they were writing to (1:8). This was usually followed by a greeting. As in most of Paul's letters, a prayer of thanksgiving follows the greeting (1:8-15), and the letter closes with a final greeting and blessing (16:1-27).

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## **What's the Story Behind the Scene?**

A group of believers who trusted in Jesus Christ as God's Messiah existed in Rome long before Paul planned his trip there. By A.D. 40 or 50, Jews who were not Jesus' followers and this new group of Jesus' followers were fighting so much that the Roman Emperor Claudius made them all leave Rome (see Acts 18: 1-4).

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## **What Makes Romans Special?**

In the early church, Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians sometimes disagreed about what made a person acceptable to God and how the followers of Christ should live. In Romans, Paul boldly announces that the good news is "God's powerful way of saving all people who have faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles" (1:16)

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## **Why Was Romans Written?**

Paul wrote this letter about A.D. 55 – 56 to introduce himself to the followers of Christ at Rome, who likely included new Gentile Christians as well as Jewish Christians who had returned to Rome after being thrown out some years earlier. These Christians, as well as Christians in other parts of the Mediterranean world, had more than one way of understanding the good news. Jewish Christians in Rome and in Jerusalem continued to follow the Law of Moses, but Gentile Christians did not follow the Law. So, who was right? What place, if any, did the Law of Moses have for Gentile Christians? And how did the people of Israel fit into God's plan for sharing the good news?

Paul teaches in Romans that the good news was based in the beginning on God's promise to Israel's ancestor Abraham, whose faith made him acceptable to God (4:13). The Law, given later to Moses and the people of Israel, revealed how God's people were to live. Still later, God sent Jesus Christ to forgive sins and make people acceptable because of their faith, something which the Law on its own could not do (3:21-26). This did not mean the Law was useless or that the people who followed the Law (Israel) were no longer part of God's people. But now, Paul says, only those who have faith in Jesus Christ can become fully acceptable to God.

*(Information taken from The Learning Bible – English Contemporary Version – not verbatim)*

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**Now then, let's look at these two verses that have done so much damage to our community - Rom 1:26,27**

(Scripture verses are in *red italics*)

*Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

First, with regards to the above two verses, whenever a passage of scripture starts with "therefore" or in this case "Because of this", it behooves us to see what came before, since this is the consequence of the previous passage. We can't just take it out of context. We need to know "Because of **what????**" That's the question. Well the section that comes before this starts at Romans 1:18 and continues to the end of the chapter – verse 32. So let's see who Paul is addressing. Are these two verses directed at you? I don't think so.

*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven **against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness**, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.*

Are any of you godless or wicked? No? Then I guess you're not included in this sentence. Let's go on and see if Paul is including you in any of the other verses that surround those two damning verses, 26 and 27.

*For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

*For **although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.***

So do you glorify God and give thanks to Him? You do? Wonderful! Do you worship idols that look like man or birds or animals? You don't? Then I guess Paul is not talking to you in these sentences either.

*Therefore God gave them (WHO? Oh yes. We just covered that, didn't we. God gave **those who were godless and wicked, those who didn't glorify Him or give thanks to Him**) over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.*

Here we go again with that old topic of idol worship. This was a big problem of the new Christians, and one which is addressed often in scripture. The Jews and early Christians were surrounded by pagans, for whom idol worship was the norm, but God didn't want His chosen people to have anything to do with that. Our God is a jealous God!

***Because of this,** (There is is folks! "Because of this" – i.e. the reasons given above – godless, wicked, idol worshippers), *God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the **men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.****

Perversion is "deviation from the norm". Since Paul is speaking of "men abandoning 'natural' relations with women", then it seems obvious to me that Paul is speaking to straight men here, since it would be "unnatural" for a gay man to have sexual relations with women. Likewise for the women who were exchanging "natural" relations for unnatural ones. We're talking about straight women here folks – not we lovely lesbians for whom loving other women is "natural". We haven't "exchanged" anything!

*Furthermore, **since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.***

Would you be subscribed to ChristianGays.com Newsletters if you did not wish to retain the knowledge of God? Of course not! You are here to learn more about God, so I guess that Paul isn't speaking to you in this passage either.

*They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*  
(NIV)

Well there may be times that we might be somewhat greedy or disobey our parents. We might gossip occasionally or even boast now and then because we're human and not perfect, but this is not who we truly are, and we certainly don't fit into any of those other categories of God-haters, inventing evil, heartless, etc, and we certainly don't approve of those who practice them.

It seems pretty overwhelmingly evident to me, that Paul was not addressing we who love the Lord, but those folks who were getting involved in the pagan rituals of their neighbours. I have found that one overwhelming theme of scripture is God's jealousy for His people, and His intolerance for idolatry.

For more examples of idolatry, please read my article, "The Sin of Sodom was NOT Homosexuality" at <http://christiangays.com/articles/sodom.shtml>

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**FOR OUR OLDER CG FAMILY** – I can so relate to these ;-)

I've sure gotten old. I've had two bypass surgeries, a hip replacement, new knees. Fought prostate cancer and diabetes. I'm half blind, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded, and subject to blackouts. Have bouts with dementia. Have poor circulation; hardly feel my hands and feet anymore. Can't remember if I'm 85 or 92. Have lost all my friends. But, thank God, I still have my driver's license.

Reporters interviewing a 104-year-old woman: "And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?" the reporter asked. She simply replied, "No peer pressure."

Just before the funeral services, the undertaker came up to the very elderly widow and asked, "How old was your husband?" "98" she replied, "Two years older than me." "So you're 96", the undertaker commented. She responded, "Hardly worth going home, is it?"

My memory's not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.

It's scary when you start making the same noises as your coffee maker.

Don't think of it as getting hot flashes. Think of it as your inner child playing with matches.

Remember: You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.

THE SENILITY PRAYER: Grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.

Now, I think you're supposed to send this to 5 or 6, maybe 10 - Oh heck, send it to a bunch of your friends if you can remember who they are!

*(Thanks DJ via George!)*

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God bless,  
Mary

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