

**2011-present**

**Christian Traditions**

**Mormon Experiences**

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**Annotated by Carlos R. Fernandez, annotations adopted from Amazon.com**

Carmack, Brad. *Homosexuality: A Straight BYU Student's Perspective*. CreateSpace, 2011.

Brad has pulled together research and anecdotes, science and emotion, rational and religious arguments focusing on the causes and effects of homosexuality. He also addresses popular arguments for and against same-sex marriage (SSM), encouraging readers – especially Mormon readers – to set aside preconceived notions and consider different perspectives. Brad’s background in biology and law influence the book’s organization and discussions, usually positively. He has taken the time to review, summarize, and reference more than 30 studies that examine the causes of homosexual orientation (asking whether orientation is primarily biological or environmental). While he provides conclusions from the studies, he encourages readers to keep their own scores and come up with their own conclusions based on the research cited. He also points out places where more research could (and should) be done by the reader. He has also taken the time to discuss a number of arguments for and against same-sex marriage, using a similar approach - presenting the case and encouraging readers to draw their own conclusions - in addition to sharing his own opinion. The book itself is broken down into two major sections – the first dealing with homosexual orientation and the status of homosexuals in the LDS church; the second dealing with same-sex marriage issues. Brad concludes this way: "I anticipate that my views as expressed in this book will change over time as I learn more. Thus, all that I have written is tentative- merely a snapshot of my current thinking. In composing it, I hope that I have learned and come closer to truth- in reading it I hope you have as well. In addition to insights about SSM and homosexuality, I hope that you walk away from this book with one additional take-home: faithful members of the LDS church need not close their hearts nor remove their critical thinking caps to practice their religion."

Cook, Ray. *Reclaimed*. Balboa, 2013.

*Reclaimed* is a quest of personal reconciliation of a double life, a blend of dichotomous mishaps and redemptive insights. Resist the folly of conformity, empower yourself, dare to be you! *Reclaimed* offers hope that life is manageable and happiness is a choice.

Coyote, Fred. *That They Might Have Joy: One Man's Unplanned Journey from Mormonism to Spiritual Awakening*. CreateSpace, 2012.

Fred Coyote's Mormon upbringing leaves him feeling marred with a Big Secret that he could neither conquer nor share: Fred is sexually attracted to men. Fred's Mormon faith sees his sexual preference as evil and sinful, next only to murder. Confronting sexual abuse as a child, the horrible death of a brother and a family torn apart by sexual abuse and scandal, Fred remains faithful to his religion. He served as a Mormon missionary, he attended Brigham Young University; he got married in the Mormon temple, and he sang in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. However, his Big Secret continued to haunt him until he finally faced the agonizing process of leaving his wife and church in order to come out as a gay man. Following atheism for a time, Fred met and fell in love with Mark. Fred's own quest to find a deeper meaning in life brought him to a spiritual awakening, a new start to his spiritual path. Coping with sexual addiction and a complicated open relationship, Fred is finally driven to embrace of his "Sacred Sexuality", of life's challenges, and of the true freedom of a fully awakened life.

(Gay) Mormon Guy, *the Blog*. Lulu.com, 2011.

(Gay) Mormon Guy, *the Blog* is the real-life story of Mormon Guy - a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints who is also attracted to other men. This book, taken from his blog at [www.gaymormonguy.blogspot.com](http://www.gaymormonguy.blogspot.com), shows how Mormon Guy's faith brings him hope, peace, and happiness, even though life is definitely less than ideal. A must-read for Mormons, gays, and anyone who wants to better understand what it's like to be a (Gay) Mormon Guy.

Gordon, Pip. *The Orphan of God: A Memoir*. CreateSpace, 2013.

*The Orphan of God - A Single Women's Journey Towards Her Own Truth* Rich with splendid imagery and laser like detail, *The Orphan of God* is a tale of accommodation, dissonance, rebellion and personal redemption. It is a story of the power of Faith in Oneself. Played out in New Zealand under the dictates of Mormonism, Pip Gordon's childhood was cloaked in ritual, secrecy, and fear-based obedience. Temperamentally more suited to the vast openness of the landscape than the narrow confines of the faith of her family, she struggled mightily to be worthy. However, her efforts were no match for the strength of her inner voice. Fiercely bright, creative, and stubborn, she found no choice but to be true to herself no matter the fallout.

Harline, Craig. *Conversions: Two Family Stories from the Reformation and Modern America*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2011.

This powerful and innovative work by a gifted cultural historian explores the effects of religious conversion on family relationships, showing how the challenges of the Reformation can offer insight to families facing similarly divisive situations today. Craig Harline begins with the story of young Jacob Rolandus, the son of a Dutch Reformed preacher, who converted to Catholicism in 1654 and ran away from home, causing his family to disown him. In the companion story, Michael Sunbloom, a young American, leaves his family's religion in 1973 to convert to Mormonism, similarly upsetting his distraught parents. The modern twist to Michael's story is his realization that he is gay,

causing him to leave his new church, and upsetting his parents again—but this time the family reconciles. Recounting these stories in short, alternating chapters, Harline underscores the parallel aspects of the two far-flung families. Despite different outcomes and forms, their situations involve nearly identical dynamics and heart-wrenching choices. Through the author's deeply informed imagination, the experiences of a seventeenth-century European family are transformed into immediately recognizable terms.

Hood, Candi, and Kristin Beasle. *From Privilege to PRIDE: Love Is the Road*. Clarity of Thought Consulting, 2012.

After almost two decades of marriage to men, three children each, and years of friendship between them, two best friends living in the most conservative region of California realized they were lesbians and in love with each other. Having been raised Mormon, Candi married early and began having children right away. She was deeply entrenched in her religion when she met Kristin who was raised in Ventura, California, by permissive parents in a drug-infested environment where she spent more time at the beach surfing than she did attending school. As they jumped head first into a romantic relationship, Kristin and Candi had to navigate their way through a myriad of unfamiliar emotions that came with this intense and passionate love affair. They had everything to lose as they risked not only their own relationship but that of their children and husbands as well. This humorous and heart-wrenching story illustrates the difficulties of blending two families with six children along with the added complication of facing the homophobia and discrimination that comes from living openly as same-sex partners and parents. Having lived in both worlds, they clearly saw the distinct contrast between conforming to society's expectations and going against the norm. In the midst of the Proposition 8 battle for marriage equality and after living nearly forty years with heterosexual privilege, Kristin and Candi sacrificed their basic civil rights in exchange for true love, but in their struggle to rebuild their lives, they created a new normal where they lived life on their own terms.

Jones, Cindi. *Squirrel Cage: A Transgender Memoir*. CreateSpace, 2012. Print.

This is the story of David, born into the Mormon faith who faces the insurmountable to become Cindi. Her life crumbles before her as she is pushed into an untenable position. Her family is destroyed as well as her career. She manages to pull herself through these agonizing events to rebuild her life and reconnect with her family.

Kerby, Brent. *Gay Mormons? Latter-day Saint Experiences of Same-gender Attraction*. Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2011. Print.

What is it like to be a Mormon who is attracted to the same gender rather than the opposite gender? How does this fit into a culture and religion centered on heterosexual marriage? In this book, thirty-seven individuals share their personal experiences, offering

a window into these complex questions. The intense despair felt by gay and lesbian Mormon youth poses a significant challenge to their families, teachers, and ecclesiastical leaders who love them but who may be unaware of their difficulties or uncertain of how to help. These youth are often among the most devoted to their faith. While these issues continue to be surrounded by controversy, there is a growing need for understanding and respect for all involved. The accounts in this book offer hope and inspiration to those who wish to create a brighter future for their families and communities.

Lokey, Cathryn E. *The Perfect Daughter*. Langley, Washington: Many Rivers, 2012.

What happens when a devout Mormon realizes that she is gay? Cathryn Lokey grew up in the Mormon Church and gladly went down the expected path of mission work, marriage, and motherhood—until she met Amy. Her world was turned upside down. In *The Perfect Daughter*, she shares the very personal journey of self-discovery that followed, with all its love, loss, grief, and bewilderment. Ultimately, she finds the courage to accept herself as a lesbian in the face of bitter rejection. She forges a new path—one once literally beyond imagining—that brings her joy and fulfillment. A path worthy of a daughter of God.

Loneragan, Jared. *Happiest Misery: My Life as a Mormon*. CreateSpace, 2013.

Jared Lonergan bares his soul's quest for eternal fulfillment to achieve ultimate joy. Facing rampant roadblocks of turmoil, and heart-wrenching twists, Jared can't seem to win. But clusters of hunger drive him to seek it all. He chases, scrapes, cries, and silently pulls himself up a never-ending hill toward nothingness. *Happiest Misery: My Life as a Mormon* delivers a powerful and true representation of the visceral components of the Mormon Church. This is not at all a piece of anti-Mormon literature; to the contrary—Jared chronicles his soul's aching wish to find his true love and the joy promised to him if he follows the precepts of the Gospel. In doing so, he finds that his efforts fall short of the promises made to him by the leaders of his youth.