

2011–present

Memoirs and Biographies

Compiled by Don Bell, Mike McCabe, and Carlos R. Fernandez

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

Alikpala, Raymond. *Of God and Men a Life in the Closet*. Dunboyne, Ireland: Maverick House, 2012.

“I am a gay man, a homosexual. I engage in sexual relations with the same sex. I have paid other men to have sex with me. I have never had sex with a woman. I have a husband.” *Of God and Men* is a beautifully written memoir of denial, love, hope, and eventual acceptance. Born in the Philippines, Raymond Alikpala was an over-achiever and super-competitive in everything he did. A devout Catholic, he attended a prestigious school and college, and later took a Master of Laws before deciding to train as a Jesuit priest, before being expelled for committing a homosexual act. Alikpala was gay though he denied it to himself and everyone else. Embarrassed and depressed, his expulsion forced him to travel to Cambodia, where he began working with refugees. It was here, in the unlikeliest of places, that he found himself and God.

Balboa, John T. *Christ-Centered Consciousness*. Balboa Pr, 2013.

Christ-Centered Consciousness is the work of a spiritually awakened gay man who was healed from a satanic possession by Jesus Christ through extraordinary spiritual phenomena. The core of his spiritual bondage was in a lack of acceptance of his sexuality and of his deepest core self. The healing of this self has led him to many spiritual discoveries, including an ability to discern the presence of Christ in his own consciousness. The goal of this book is to enable the readers to build a connection to God in their own consciousness and to discern the ways in which the enemy tries to block progress. Christ is truly the ultimate in healing and joy, and learning how to discern his presence and follow his lead in one's own life is the doorway to happiness in this life, and eternal joy in the next.

Barth, Kelly. *My Almost Certainly Real Imaginary Jesus: A Memoir*. Pasadena, CA: Arktoi, 2012.

The idea of Jesus as an imaginary friend who was tiny enough to live in her heart comforted Barth as a child and it would continue to do so throughout her life. His unqualified acceptance of her emerging sexuality so clashed with the fundamentalist church's stand on homosexuality that she wondered if she could trust his friendship. Instead of embracing her friend's encouragement, Barth found herself venturing into the very heart of enemy territory and the church's false promises of altar calls and sexual cures. For years, she lingered there until all Imaginary Jesus had been trying to tell her about herself and about life becomes too compelling to ignore. *My Almost Certainly Real*

Imaginary Jesus speaks to this disconnect between the radical and very human Jesus of history and the church's supernatural savior. At once heartbreaking and hilarious, this book gives voice to the many LGBT people who have searched for sanctuary in a church that has largely rejected them and, in so doing, departed from the teachings of the Jesus it claims to follow.

Battle, Michael. *Black Battle, White Knight: The Authorized Biography of Malcolm Boyd*. New York: Seabury, 2011.

Through unparalleled access to the personal recollections, writings, and archival records of Malcolm Boyd, Michael Battle chronicles one of America's most celebrated—and reviled—public religious figures. In the dialogue between Battle, a younger, black heterosexual priest, readers will gain a fresh perspective and appreciation for the older, white, gay man's Christian life of activism and ministry.

Bentley, Peter. *Not Straight Forward: The Disarmingly Candid Memoirs of a Gay Ex-Roman Catholic Priest*. Godfrey Durham, 2012.

This is a disarmingly candid portrayal of a vulnerable Englishman, who is a homosexual Roman Catholic Priest, and a Jungian analyst, who wonders if his life is a complete failure. Although he loved several times, he had two big loves. The first was his mother, and the other was Werner. His mother moved in elite circles. As a child, she was the playmate of the future Queen of Spain, her godmother was Princess Beatrice, the youngest child of Queen Victoria. However, her world of royal connections was not that of his father's and the marriage was rocky from the start. Peter's memories are littered with recognizable names. Peter is a highly intelligent man of letters and literary insights, but his life has been beset by emotional turmoil. He was an over enthusiastic Catholic convert and he rushed to confession incessantly. It was hardly surprising he joined the priesthood – and hardly surprising that he left it. Peter still tries to be a good Catholic, but was a feminine gay who struggled to contain his sexual desires at the Brompton Oratory in London where he was often vaguely in love with some fellow priest. After the Oratory, he went to the Jung institute in Zurich where he plunged into a language of dreams, of blinding lights and hallucinations of spiders, where he read and painted where he clung to his little dog as his best friend and he was lonely and marked out as different. Until, at last, aged 50, he met Werner.

Bork, Mark A. *Bursting Bubbles, Changing Gods*. Anmarc Entertainment LLC, 2014.

Raised in the Christian faith, Bork once described himself as "conservative, homophobic, and devoted student and employee of TV evangelist Pat Robertson". However, one night while watching the Tonight Show in 2005, Bork was touched by Jay Leno's tribute to the recently passed Johnny Carson. He saw the stark contrast between the love with which people spoke of Carson and his own "darkened state of bigotry and foolish doctrine". From there, Bork embraced his sense of conscience, radically changed his religious and cultural views, and finally awakened to a love deeper than he had ever known before. In *Bursting Bubbles, Changing Gods*, he uses humor and honesty to examine the dogmas

and cultures that can stifle questions, free thought, and doubt, and encourages readers to ask the hard questions about what they believe.

Brynteson, Paul. *The Bible Reconsidered: A Journey from Fundamentalism to Progressive Christianity*. Antero, 2013.

This book describes the journey of Paul Brynteson, a self-described fundamentalist, who accepted the Bible as the literal word of God and finally at the age of 45 gained the courage to begin critically examining his deeply held beliefs. It describes his 20 years of study, contemplation, and many painful internal conflicts between long held beliefs and challenges to those beliefs. He provides an explanation and rationale of his “letting go” of his former belief system and accepting a more progressive Christianity. The most critical part of this journey required a reconsideration of the Bible as the literal, inerrant, written word of God. This book is dedicated to those who might gain courage from his journey to begin or continue one of their own.

Bush, Ellen, and Mariam Weidner. *Bridging Worlds: A Love Story Beyond Boundaries*. Richard Mahler, 2013.

Author Ellen Bush describes her extraordinary relationship with soul mate Kathryn “Wooz” Stephens, who died from complications of leukemia in early 2005. Theirs is a remarkable partnership that began in friendship when both were Sisters living communally in a Catholic convent before advancing to intimacy despite formidable emotional obstacles and geographic separations. Soon after returning to the U.S. from a long-term assignment in Brazil, Ellen made a full commitment to Wooz. They began their journey together facing the many challenges of daily living, yet full of expectations for their future. At the same time, Wooz began to develop health issues, diagnosed in 2000 as a form of leukemia. As the disease progressed, roles shifted from Wooz introducing Ellen into the ways of the world to Ellen caring for her in the face of declining health. In her new role as caregiver, Ellen’s relationship with Wooz became even more intimate, and continued to expand following her soul mate’s transition. Readers will gain an enhanced appreciation of the deeply rewarding possibilities that exist between two loving companions, both in this life and beyond, as well as an expanded understanding of “conscious dying”. The gifts of wisdom imparted here by Ellen and Wooz are both powerful and compelling.

Buteau, Ray. *No Longer Lonely: A Gay Former Priest Journeys from His Secret to Freedom*. Balboa, 2012.

"Having entered into a relationship with the Roman Catholic Church as a priest, while not ‘owning my own truth’ and keeping it a secret, I was feeling alone, fearing for my security and acceptance; I became co-dependent. Yearning for a significant other who would also be my soul mate—and realizing this would never be allowed as a Catholic priest—created my experience of loneliness as one of sorrow and pain. When I went into the priesthood, I checked my own truth at the door. Well locked up, I forgot myself. After

having left the priesthood, I no longer feel lonely because I have changed my concept of God and began to own my own truth."

Clanton, Jann. *Changing Church: Stories of Liberating Ministers*. Eugene, Or.: Cascade, 2011.

Through the fascinating stories of pioneering ministers, this book reveals a unique picture of progressive changes occurring in the Christian tradition. Meeting challenges and overcoming obstacles, these twelve diverse ministers are changing the church as they take prophetic stands on gender, race, interfaith cooperation, ecology, sexual orientation, economic opportunity, and other social justice issues. Believing in the power of sacred symbolism to shape social reality and to provide a foundation for justice and freedom for all people, these ministers lead worship with inclusive language and imagery for humanity and divinity. They include multicultural female and male images of the Divine. Their stories affirm the connection between this expansive theology and an ethic of justice and equality in human relationships. In working from within to change the church, these ministers have risked censure by denominational authorities, loss of opportunities for promotion to larger congregations or prestigious denominational positions, and even loss of their jobs. They have found creative ways to balance advocating for change and working to support the church, using their positions as ordained clergy to bring liberating change to the church and the wider culture.

Clark, Martha Edens. *Coming Out Together: The Journey of a Gay Minister's Wife Through Love, Divorce, and Remarriage*. AuthorHouse, 2011.

This is the story of a young woman (the author) who knew next to nothing about homosexuality, and a young minister (Maurice) who suppressed his homosexuality for 55 years. It is about their friendship, love, marriage, and eventual revelation of his homosexuality. It is told in chapters that answer questions that the author has been asked as she began to tell others about her life, marriage, divorce, and re-marriage. The book is titled *Coming Out Together* because that is exactly what they did after Maurice revealed his homosexuality. They planned together how they would tell others and how they would prepare for their future lives. They even talked about how they would write this book together, but life intervened, and he finally said, "You will have to write it." He died in 2009.

Creech, Jimmy. *Adam's Gift: A Memoir of a Pastor's Calling to Defy the Church's Persecution of Lesbians and Gays*. Durham: Duke UP, 2011.

In 1984 United Methodist pastor, Jimmy Creech, was visited by longtime gay parishioner Adam, who was leaving the United Methodist Church because it had pronounced that "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" could not be ordained. Adam's visit prompted Creech to re-evaluate his belief that homosexuality was a sin, and to research the scriptural basis for the church's position. He determined that the church was mistaken, that scriptural translations and interpretations had been botched and dangerously distorted. As a Christian, Creech came to believe that discriminating against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people was morally wrong. *Adam's Gift* is a moving story and

an important chapter in the unfinished struggle for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender civil and human rights.

Daynes, David J. *Made This Way*. Balboa, 2012.

Come with me as I take you on an intimate and candid journey through my life. You may be wondering what makes my life so special that warrants you reading this book. Well, my life has been eventful thus far and I think it has been quite amazing. In addition, I am not just saying that because it has been my life. As I begin with my adoption, you might just shed a tear as you discover how I was chosen. It truly was an incredible culmination of Heavenly influence. You may find yourself laughing aloud as I share the best memories I had growing up and growing old. Count how many times I somehow managed to escape a variety of harrowing experiences unscathed. Not to spoil the plot, but it is because God has always been right by my side. Sit next to me when I was told I was adopted. See how I chose to react and you will be astonished at how God introduced me to my biological mother. Yes, God made it possible to meet her. How it happened is nothing short of mind-blowing. Look through my eyes and witness the power of God I have felt and how I know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that God is real. You will even get to find out what happened to my cat, Queso. However, my life was not always so great. Stroll with me as I re-live my nightmares and see how I dealt with everything life has thrown at me. Sit ringside as I duke it out and eventually come to terms with my sexuality - and my religion. You may even learn a thing or two as I give my perspective on what the Bible says about being gay and decide for yourself if I really was *Made This Way*.

Danilowitz, Jonathan. *Flying Colors*. CreateSpace, 2012.

The author was born into the privileged life of the ruling white class of South Africa, where discrimination was the name of the game. Being Jewish meant that he was the butt of anti-Semitic discrimination and his book reveals the anomaly of being on both sides of discrimination. His subsequent emigration to Israel was the result of the push from South Africa, with the pull towards Israel. For 33 years, he flew on two very different airlines as a flight attendant. His revealing tales mirror the experiences within the context of his struggle to release himself of the apartheid complex, South African anti-Semitism and the gay closet.

Davis, Becky A. *When Push Comes to Love: From Rejection to Rejoicing*. CreateSpace, 2014.

Love, is described in the bible as the greatest gift of all. We all want love and to be loved. It sounds like a simple thing to do yet loving unconditionally is one of the hardest things to do. You see, we all put conditions on our love, yet we do not often see the conditions we add to loving someone. When you think about your spouse or someone you love and have to describe why you love them, most people name things that they do like, “he is considerate,” “she supports me,” “he’s a good kid,” “she’s never given me any problems.”

Delano, Broxin. *Black Sparrow*. Balboa, 2011.

Does God really hate homosexuals? Do people really go to hell because they happen to love someone that society says is not the right sex? Would Steve have eaten the forbidden fruit? *Black Sparrow* is a candid autobiographical narrative that chronologically surveys the life and times of an internally conflicted black gay male. This book dissects the experience of growing up gay in a conservative Episcopalian church and family and the harrowing, self-destructive pursuit to find happiness, love, acceptance, and spiritual peace. *Black Sparrow* is written to inspire and to evoke laughter, tears, and deliberation.

Fagan, Kate. *The Reappearing Act: Coming Out on a College Basketball Team Filled with Born-Again Christians*. Skyhorse, 2014.

It's hard enough coming out, but playing basketball for a nationally ranked school and trying to figure out your sexual identity in the closeted and paranoid world of big-time college sports—that's a challenge. Kate Fagan's love for basketball and for her religious teammates at the University of Colorado was tested by the gut-wrenching realization that she could no longer ignore the feelings of otherness inside her. In trying to blend in, Kate had created a hilariously incongruous world for herself in Boulder. Her best friends were part of Colorado's Fellowship of Christian Athletes, where they ran weekly Bible studies and attended an Evangelical Free Church. For nearly a year, Kate joined them and learned all she could about Christianity—even holding their hands as they prayed for others "living a sinful lifestyle". Each time the issue of homosexuality arose, she felt as if a neon sign appeared over her head, with a giant arrow pointed downward. During these prayer sessions, she would often keep her eyes open, looking around the circle at the closed eyelids of her friends, listening to the earnestness of their words. Kate did not have a vocabulary for discussing who she really was and what she felt when she was younger; all she knew was that she had a secret. In *The Reappearing Act*, she brings the reader along for the ride as she slowly accepts her new reality and takes the first steps toward embracing her true self.

Farris, J. C. *Fundamentalism to Faith: Memoirs of a Recovering Free Will Baptist*. CreateSpace, 2013.

Both a spiritual memoir and a raw confession, this book may be one of the most honest books you will ever read. Intertwined with poetry, prose, and hymns, this narrative will surprise you repeatedly. Join the author as she recounts an unexpected journey from growing up trying to be good enough for God, to hating herself amid depression and fear, love and loss, life lessons, and discovery. This is a story of animated and sometimes angry discussions, between Human and Creator. It begs the question, "Why did you make me this way?" While she calls herself "one of God's most irritating children", the author will leave you with a new appreciation of how raw, painful honesty can lead you to experience grace and mercy in a way you never felt before. Once you have, you will want to share it with the rest of the world.

Frazier Jr., Samuel K. *Straight Like Me: The Journey of a Gay Priest in the Episcopal Church*. CreateSpace, 2013.

This is the author's story of faith, hope and love as he learns to understand that God loves him, a homosexual priest. It is not a memoir or autobiography, but rather it is the author's account of how over the years he has dealt with the fact that he is a homosexual who is afraid that it is not proper for a priest to be a queer. It takes him a long time to get over the fear. It took him a long time to learn to be honest about himself. He wonders why it took him so long to be honest about himself. In addition to answering these questions, the other purpose of the book is to attempt to help other gay and lesbian people who are wrestling with the same questions.

Fields, Michael. *The Thousand-Petaled Lotus: Growing Up Gay in the Southern Baptist Church*. Minneapolis: Publish Green, 2014.

The Thousand-Petaled Lotus: Growing Up Gay in the Southern Baptist Church is Michael Fields' poignant, thought-provoking and hilarious memoir, a story that starts on the first day of creation, leaps ahead quickly to Fields' childhood, and follows him through his high school years. Along the way, he shares stories of his sexual awakening and awareness, beginning with his first crush on a comic book hero called the "Martian Manhunter" when he was age four and continuing through an adolescence filled with anguished prayers that Jesus would cure him of homosexuality.

Frykholm, Amy Johnson. *See Me Naked: Stories of Sexual Exile in American Christianity*. Boston: Beacon, 2011.

Stories of sexual scandals in churches throughout the nation have been downright routine in recent years, suggesting to many Americans that a deeply rooted problem plagues American Christianity—and prompting some to abandon their congregations altogether. In *See Me Naked*, Amy Frykholm takes us beyond simple indictments of, or blind allegiance to, Christian cultures to explore the complex, intimate intersection of sexuality and spirituality as it affects the lives of ordinary Christians. Recounting with care and nuance the life histories of nine American Protestants, Frykholm shows us the harm done by the rules-based sexual ethic now dominant, which alternately denies and romanticizes sexuality. But she also points to how American Christians might otherwise access their spiritual tradition to heal the divide between religion and sexuality. One story examines the intricate relationship between a man's religious faith and his sexual addiction. In another, a man defines religion as a wall that kept him from the discovery that he was gay. One young woman uses sex to defy her devout parents, while another seeks to transcend her body by going without food. Nearly everyone interviewed in *See Me Naked* remains a Christian, with some further on their journey than others. Yet each of them is working to understand the connection between their desires and their faith. Ultimately, their stories—stories of pain and violence, perseverance and courage—attest to the healing power of struggling through the wild and uncertain experiences of life. *See Me Naked* explores the many ways that people work to recover from harmful beliefs and restores the notion that one of the key insights of Christianity is that the body, with all its

struggles, pains, and difficulties, is a vehicle of the holy and can lead us into a more full relationship with God.

Gary, Sally. *Loves God, Likes Girls: A Memoir*. Leafwood/ACU, 2013.

For many Christians who experience same-sex attraction, reconciling faith and homosexuality is a lonely and painful journey. *Loves God, Likes Girls: A Memoir*, is one woman's recollection of her journey, allowing faith to plunge her into deeper discovery of the truth about her sexuality. No other issue has been more divisive in families and in faith communities than homosexuality. Rather than providing "cookie-cutter" answers as to why someone experiences same-sex attraction and how to "make it go away," *Loves God, Likes Girls* simply explores one woman's perspective on the multitude of experiences over a lifetime that impact the development of sexuality. Sally Gary's story offers hope and redemption for families torn apart by this issue. Through stories, Sally shares some of the painful and confusing lies she grew up believing about herself that shaped her views of femininity and her ability to form healthy relationships with both men and women. The book emphasizes that those who experience same-sex attraction need safe places to explore questions, to find community, and to grow deeper in relationship with God.

Gentilini, Joseph. *Hounded by God: A Gay Man's Journey to Self-Acceptance, Love, and Relationship*. DogEar, 2013.

In *Hounded by God*, the author writes about his struggle to integrate his homosexuality with his personality and his Catholic-Christian spirituality. Born in 1948, he grew up in the '50s, '60s, and '70s when homosexuality was considered either a mental illness or a major sin. In 1968, he had his first homosexual experience. Feeling shame and trying to repress his feelings, he spent over six years in therapy. Raised a strict Roman Catholic, Joseph confessed his many "sins" to a priest and attended Mass daily. He felt hopeless in accepting his homosexuality and living happily as a gay man, repeating nightly, "If it gets too bad, I can always kill myself." By 1974, he knew that therapy was not changing his sexual orientation and felt desperate. Joseph experienced God as hounding him to accept his gay identity and to believe that God loves him as he is. His autobiographical journal reveals his gradual awakening to live his vocation, not only as a gay man in relationship with his partner and with God, but also as someone willing to share his journey with those who struggle with their homosexuality and their faith.

Gould, Mitchell, and Mitchell Drucker, eds. *Youth in Crisis: 40 Stories on Why Religion-Based Bigotry Against Gay People Must End Now*. Magnus, 2011.

What is it like to be called an abomination by your religious leaders? To live in fear of losing your family's love? To be afraid to go to school because of the torment that awaits you. To lie to everyone about whom you love. In *Youth in Crisis*, Mitchell Gold and Mindy Drucker asked forty LGBT Americans--from celebrities to youth-- to share their very personal answers to these difficult questions. Many discuss their long-buried feelings here for the first time. Several young adults opened up about suicide attempts,

depression, fear, and isolation that are still a part of growing up gay. Gold calls this a silent epidemic and a mental health crisis affecting millions of gay teens. And he emphasizes that this crisis can be solved, with compassion and fair-mindedness—and by getting those whose words and deeds cause harm to finally stop.

Giannone, Richard. *Hidden Reflections on Gay Life, AIDS, and Spiritual Desire*. New York: Fordham UP, 2012.

Richard Giannone's honest, richly insightful memoir-eloquently captures the author's transformation from a solitary gay academic to a dedicated caregiver as well as a sexually and spiritually committed man. Always alone, always fearful, he initially resisted the duty to look after his dying female relatives. But his mother's fall into dementia changed all that. Her vulnerability opened this middle-aged man to the love of another man, a former priest, and Jersey boy like himself. Together the two men saw the old woman to her death and did the same for Giannone's sister. In *Hidden*, Giannone uncovers how, ultimately, these experiences moved him closer to participating in the vitality he believed pulsed in the world but had always eluded him. The mothering life of this gay partnership evolved alongside the AIDS crisis, within and against Italian American culture that reflected the Catholic Church's discountenancing of homosexual love. Giannone vividly weaves his reflections on gay life in Greenwich Village and his spiritual journey as a gay man and Catholic into his experience of caring for the women of his family. In *Hidden* Giannone recounts a gripping religious conversion, drawing on the wisdom of the ancient desert mothers and fathers of Egypt and Palestine. Because he was raised a Catholic, the shift is not from nothing to something. Rather, it is away from the modeling power of institutional Christianity to the tempering influence of homosexuality on the Gospel. Gay or straight, so long as we remain hidden from ourselves, the true God remains hidden from us.

Giuliano, Neil G. *The Campaign Within: A Mayor's Private Journey to Public Leadership*. New York, NY: Magnus, 2012.

In *The Campaign Within*, Neil Giuliano shares in candid and revealing detail his long private journey from growing up a shy, self-doubting kid with a secret in an Italian-American Catholic family to making history as the first openly gay mayor of a U.S. city over 150,000 in population. In addition to his deeply personal story, Neil takes us behind the scenes of local and national politics. He discusses his elections and involvement with Senator John McCain's 2000 presidential primary campaign; the anti-gay mayoral recall vote that threatened to oust him from office; Co-Chairing a 2004 Presidential Debate; his decision to leave the Republican Party as it tilted further right; becoming a Democrat; and his considering a return to public office.

Gushee, David P. *Changing Our Mind: A Call from America's Leading Evangelical Ethics Scholar for Full Acceptance of LGBT Christians in the Church*. David Crumm Media, LLC, 2014.

"Every generation has its hot-button issue," writes David P. Gushee, "For us, it's the LGBT issue." In *Changing Our Mind*, Gushee takes the reader along his personal and theological journey as he changes his mind about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender inclusion in the Church. "For decades now, David Gushee has earned the reputation as America's leading evangelical ethicist. In this book, he admits that he has been wrong on the LGBT issue," writes Brian D. McLaren, author and theologian.

Hartzler, Aaron. *Rapture Practice: A True Story about Growing up Gay in an Evangelical Family : A Memoir*. Little Brown, 2014.

Hartzler grew up in an Evangelical Christian home, where he was taught that the Rapture might happen any minute. As he grew into his teen years, he began to question this belief and to be drawn to more worldly things-movies, rock music, plays, literature, and kissing. To a secular audience, Hartzler's parents' rules about whom he can befriend and how he can live his life may come across as draconian, but the author is open and fair about how they lived their beliefs and how they always loved him, even as their rules drove him away. Hartzler is honest about his sexual encounters with girls (and boys) and about underage drinking that happened at parties he attended. His memoir is appealing because of his honesty, and forthrightness. When writing about Evangelical Christians, he never takes on a condescending tone. He shows where his own questions led him, even as he shows how his parents saw things very differently than he did. His style is clear and lively, and he makes readers see how the questioning of his faith began, and how it grew. Readers will want to spend time with Hartzler to find out how he became true to himself and what choices he made on that journey.-Geri Diorio, Ridgefield Library, CTa(c)
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Hientzberger, Jerry. *My Disquiet Gene*. Ashgrey, 2012.

My Disquiet Gene is an autobiography dealing with social issues beginning with Jerry attending a Catholic grade school in the 1930s. There is speculation regarding his failure to become a fluent reader. Jerry's memories of a happy home life with six siblings are succinctly recalled through puberty and into adulthood while confronting his academic limitations. As a young adult in the 1950s, he faces being Gay in a society that is threatening to Gays. The significant others in his life include a physician who is an artist and an agnostic, who becomes his mentor for ten years. Liberation for Gays from society's corruption lessens with the development of organizations as the American Civil Liberties Union, The Machinate Society, and the Lambda Society. His partner of fifteen years, a Lutheran, is forced to retirement after an entrapment. Jerry takes issue with organized religion, especially the Vatican, and refers to himself as a "Spiritualist Humanist" while his cohort is a Mormon. Jerry believes that science research is aiding evolution and reflects growth in religion. Is it likely that Gays, with their strong intuition, are creating a social catharsis on our overly populated planet? This autobiography with many photos and over fifty quotations, both serious and humorous, reviews some social fabric of yesterday and critiques some present day attitudes.

Howard, David. *Touched by Grace: LGBT Stories in Community of Christ*. Independence, MO: John Whitmer, 2012.

Since 2008 and the publication of Bill Russell's "Homosexual Saints", *Community of Christ* has made significant strides toward full inclusion of its LGBT members. In this sequel, David Howard has gathered dozens and dozens of personal stories and testimonies that narrate the transformation of the LGBT experience in Community of Christ.

Johnson, Joshua Moon. *Beyond Surviving: From Religious Oppression to Queer Activism*. Palm Desert, CA: Purple, 2012.

Beyond Surviving vividly brings voice to the stories of Christian students in same-sex relationships as they encountered oppression, adolescence, first-love, and then a passion for social justice. Each of the students had early experiences related to family, religious, and educational socialization, which framed the ways in which they experienced their same-sex relationships as high school and college students. These stories are filled with attempts of suicide, physical and verbal abuse, isolation, loneliness, depression, and hospitalizations; moreover, they are also filled with triumph, self-realizations, community building, and the development of powerful queer leaders. These students turned their oppressive experiences into fuel for queer activism. Each student's story is unique, heart breaking, and charged with unrelenting perseverance. The conflicts described related to seeking family support, having to hide relationships, seeking community acceptance, deconstructing socialization, and doubting the morality of the relationship.

Johnson, Malcolm. *Diary of A Gay Priest the Tightrope Walker*. Lanham: John Hunt, 2013.

Malcolm Johnson has been an Anglican priest for fifty years working in the East End and in the City of London. Openly gay for most of this time, he has never been far from controversy. As rector of St Botolph Aldgate he was particularly involved with homelessness, HIV/AIDS and education. Because of his counselling and campaigning work for the LGBT community Rabbi Lionel Blue has described him as the Pink Bishop. *Diary of a Gay Priest* is full of anecdotes and amusing stories. His 44-year relationship with Robert has given him stability and security, but he considers the Church to be still a dangerous place for a gay priest. He remains in it by his eyelashes.

Johnson, Shari. *Above All Things the Journey of an Evangelical Christian Mother and Her Gay Daughter*. Cork: BookBaby, 2012.

Shari Johnson's world turned upside down the night her 37-year-old daughter called and told her that she was gay. This just could not be possible. Cholene had always been the hero-Air Force Academy graduate, second woman to fly the U-2 spy plane, captain for United Airlines - she cried, begged, pleaded with God to change Cholene, but he changed Shari instead. It seems that he was much more concerned about Shari's lack of love than he was about Cholene's homosexuality. This book is Shari's personal story.

Knapp, Jennifer. *Facing the Music: Discovering Real Life, Real Love, and Real Faith*. Howard, 2014.

Jennifer Knapp's meteoric rise in the Christian music industry ended abruptly when she walked away and came out publicly as a lesbian. This is her story—of coming to Christ, of building a career, of admitting who she is, and of how her faith remained strong through it all. At the top of her career in the Christian music industry, Jennifer Knapp quit. A few years later, she publicly revealed she is gay. A media frenzy ensued, and many of her former fans were angry at what they saw as turning her back on God. But through it all, she held on to the truth that had guided her from the beginning. In this memoir, she finally tells her story. She writes of her troubled childhood, the love of music that pulled her through, her dramatic conversion to Christianity, her rise to stardom, her abrupt departure from Christian Contemporary Music, her years of trying to come to terms with her sexual orientation, and her return to music and Nashville in 2010 when she came out publicly for the first time. She also talks about the importance of her faith, and despite the many who claim she can no longer call herself a believer, she maintains that she is both gay and a Christian. Now an advocate for LGBT issues in the church, Jennifer has witnessed heartbreaking struggles as churches wrestle with issues of homosexuality and faith. This engrossing, inspiring memoir will help people understand her story and to believe in their own stories, whatever they may be.

Kron, Keith, and Susan Gore. *Coming Out in Faith: LGBTQ Voices in Unitarian Universalism*. Skinner House, 2011.

This collection of poignant testimonials illuminates the lived experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Unitarian Universalists. *Coming Out in Faith* also helps to raise awareness of Unitarian Universalism's active role in promoting a vision of humanity that not only embraces LGBTQ people but also actively seeks to learn from the unique strengths they bring to questions of personal faith and organizational vitality.

Kurek, Timothy. *The Cross in the Closet: One Man's Abominable Quest to Find Jesus in the Margins*. Tacoma, WA: BlueHead, 2012.

Timothy Kurek, raised within the confines of a strict, conservative Christian denomination in the Bible Belt, Nashville, Tennessee, was taught the gospel of separation from a young age. But it wasn't long before Timothy's path and the outside world converged when a friend came out as a lesbian, and revealed she had been excommunicated by her family. Distraught and overcome with questions and doubts about his religious upbringing, Timothy decided the only way to empathize and understand her pain was to walk in the shoes of very people he had been taught to shun. He decided to come out as a gay man to everyone in his life, and to see for himself how the label of gay would influence his life. In the tradition of *Black Like Me*, *The Cross in the Closet* is a story about people, a story about faith, and about one man's "abominable" quest to find Jesus in the margins.

Lang, Bobbie. *Transgendered Christians in Chains*. CreateSpace, 2013.

Spanning six decades, this story is a graphic account of his struggle through gender confusion before finally surrendering and his transitioning to become a woman. Then, as a woman, Bobby became Bobbie and her intense determination to become a Godly woman and her search for God's place in her life became an enormous mountain to climb. Despite repeated church rejection and ultimately being prevented from seeing her daughter and grandchildren, Bobbie never lost her love and faith in God. Called to full time Christian service while in college, Bobbie focuses this book toward church leadership and pleads, for tolerance and discipleship for all people. In this narrative Bobbie illustrates how many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) are made to feel unwelcome and chained out of church discipleship and prayer and, therefore, unable to find God's plan for their lives. This is a spiritually uplifting book and should be recommended reading for church leadership and church membership alike.

Lee, Justin. *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians Debate*. New York: Jericho, 2012.

As a teenager and young man, Justin Lee felt deeply torn. Nicknamed "God Boy" by his peers, he knew that he was called to a life in the evangelical Christian ministry. However, Lee harbored a secret: He also knew that he was gay. In this groundbreaking book, Lee recalls the events--his coming out to his parents, his experiences with the "ex-gay" movement, and his in-depth study of the Bible--that led him, eventually, to self-acceptance. However, more than just a memoir, TORN provides insightful, practical guidance for all committed Christians who wonder how to relate to gay friends or family members--or who struggle with their own sexuality. Convinced that "in a culture that sees gays and Christians as enemies, gay Christians are in a unique position to bring peace," Lee demonstrates that people of faith on both sides of the debate can respect, learn from, and love one another.

Meier, Gary M. *Hidden Voices: Reflections of a Gay, Catholic Priest*. United States: Trafford, 2012.

Meier wrote this book to give voice to the thousands of voices in the Catholic Church that feel the way he does and to give hope, albeit just a little, to those who struggle with the Catholic Church's stance on homosexuality. What follows are some of his reflections on what it means to negotiate life as a gay priest in the Catholic Church, to struggle with self and hierarchy, and to move from silence and shame to hope and forgiveness.

McNaron, Toni A. H. *Into the Paradox Conservative Spirit, Feminist Politics*. Cork: BookBaby, 2013.

As a practicing Catholic and feminist scholar, Toni McNaron embraces the seemingly unresolvable and accepts the inherent paradox arising from her preference for conservative spiritual practices while remaining committed to radical politics. Residing patiently in this "uncomfortable mystery" has allowed her to explore the deeper spaces of her spirit—not insisting on consistency or certainty or even agreement as she strives to expand her connection with the God of her understanding in today's post-modern world

where paradox is often valued. McNaron's compelling and inspirational faith journey reveals that we need not harden into inflexible creeds or harsh judgments of other people's way of finding meaning. Rather, living in paradox can enliven our lives and ultimately open us to the wonder and joy of God's amazing creation in all its diversity.

Marcel, D. *Saved, Sanctified, & Same-gender Loving: A Story-journal to Spiritual Reconciliation*. Atlanta, Ga.: Trinity Learning Community, 2011.

African-American Same-Gender Loving (SGL) men are a group that has been historically marginalized by their own families, communities, and churches - shamed into suppressing their homoerotic desires and claiming "faux" deliverance, which has caused many to become oppressed, depressed, and voiceless! *Saved, Sanctified, and Same-Gender Loving* is not only a proclamation of reclamation for me, but for all African-American SGL men who have lived conflicted lives, tormented by indoctrinated fears of eternal damnation, terrified of being rejected by God and family, and driven to schizophrenic nihilism (feelings of lovelessness, hopelessness, and despair). In this book, I present stories that illustrate my struggle to reconcile my spiritual and sexual identities; I also challenge other African-American SGL men (whether openly gay, closeted, down low, or transgendered) to confront their own identity. The time has come for a paradigm shift in which African-American churches and communities reevaluate, reconsider, and reconceptualize their natural and spiritual perceptions of African-American SGL members. *Saved, Sanctified, and Same-Gender Loving* is the first in a series that will deal with issues pertinent to the African-American SGL community. It presents counter-narratives that give a different perspective into this segment of the SGL population and asks you (the reader) questions of reconciliation designed to foster transformation. Whether you are straight or same-gender loving, I challenge you to approach this book with an open mind and an open heart.

Martin, Bernard. *Following My Path: Growing up Gay in a Christian, Fundamentalist, Right - Wing, Conservative Family during the 1940's - 1960's*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012.

Imagine growing up in small Indiana towns in the 1940s in a very strict religious family and then realizing at the age of six that there was something sexually "wrong" with you. You had no name for it, and you did not really understand it, but you knew it all the same. By the time you were seven and eight years old, you heard adults talk about sexual perversion and teenagers using the terms "faggot" or "queer" as if they were describing the plague. However, you knew deep inside it was you they were talking about! Then skip forward a few years when you felt compelled to find someone else like you. You knew you could not be the only one, and you did not think you could survive on erotic dreams or daydreaming. Therefore, you began to sexually experiment with older men who called themselves queer, but you knew it did not describe you. Then, at age seventeen, you found yourself in your first small gay bar, where you finally discovered you were not the only one like you on this planet! However, when your mother discovered you had been invited to a gay party, she told you that you would burn in hell if you did not become heterosexual. In addition, that was just the beginning. Following

My Path is the true account of the author discovering who he was and all the things that happened along the way. Some of the things are serious, and some are funny, but all are interesting and vital to understanding what many gay people have had to endure.

Mobley, Ann. *If I Tell You I'm Gay, Will You Still Love Me?: One Mother's Journey to Truth and Grace*. CrossBooks, 2013.

The shocking revelation that her son was gay threw Ann Mobley into a lonely, emotional tailspin and triggered a decision to hide the appalling discovery from family and friends. As troubling questions continued to swirl in her mind, she launched a desperate search for personal and biblical answers. How did God see her son? Was homosexuality the worst of sins? How could her son be gay? In addition, would his homosexual lifestyle tear them apart? From her own search for answers, Mobley shares the mercy and faithfulness of God in providing answers, guidance, and daily grace for this unexpected journey. She addresses subjects such as learning to love God's way, letting the Bible clarify homosexual issues, development of same-sex attractions, understanding the damaging effects of sexual abuse, and if it is possible to change one's sexuality.

Monette, Maurice L. *Confessions of a Gay Married Priest: A Spiritual Journey*. Vallarta Institute, 2013.

A Roman Catholic priest struggles to remain committed to his vows, live authentically as a gay person and find intimacy. His social activism throws him into doubt about dogma and, after 30 years of church leadership, inspires a leap beyond the bounds of conventional religion and into the passionate embrace of a bigger God. This deeply personal story invites readers - spiritual seekers as well as those alienated from religion - into a sacred space to explore their own journeys and make sense of the human longing to trust in something beyond the self.

Moore, Zan. *Alarmageddon!: Growing Up Gay and Jehovah's Witness*. CreateSpace, 2012. Print.

Jehovah's Witnesses have been predicting the end of times (Armageddon) for the past 160 years. Imagine growing up as a third generation Witness, a faith where everyone you know and everything you have been taught tells you that the end of the world is going to happen at any moment. Imagine what having your life forever on hold feels like and then imagine you realize that you are GAY! This book explores the origins of Jehovah's Witnesses including the 5 key men who ran the organization and how one man grew up in this faith, coming to terms with the realization that he was gay and that this fact would forever separate him from his family, friends and life as he had known it from birth.

Olson, Loren A. *Finally Out: Letting Go of Living Straight: A Psychiatrist's Own Story*. Chicago: InGroup, 2011.

Dr. Loren A. Olson has frequently been asked two questions: How could you not know that you were gay until the age of forty? Was your marriage just a sham to protect

yourself at your wife's expense? *In Finally Out*, Dr. Olson vigorously answers both questions by telling the inspiring story of his evolving sexuality, into which he intelligently weaves psychological concepts and gay history. This book is a powerful exploration of human sexuality, particularly the sexuality of mature men who, like Dr. Olson, lived a large part of their lives as straight men - sometimes long after becoming aware of their same-sex attractions.

Patton, Johni. *Johni's Journal: One Person's Truth about God's Gay Children*. First Edition Design, 2015.

This journal is a chronological description of historical facts, painful moments and surprising revelations of Patton's life as a gay Christian, including the admission that God spoke directly to her many years ago. She portrayed the events from a uniquely personal perspective by expressing her commitment to God, an awareness of his sexual identity and her ultimate decision to live as God created her. She describes the pain of spiritual violence, the ache for acceptance, and the resulting anger towards the injustice of prejudice. She does not believe that God created opposition to homosexuality. Any more than she believes God caused the murder, persecution, and oppression of other faiths, minority races, or women for thousands of years. She believes the true cause originates from those who possess a strong desire to manipulate their surroundings so that their surroundings agree with their own understanding of God. In addition, she believes that God will always be on the side of the oppressed...not the oppressor.

Pesando, Tia Michelle. *Why God Doesn't Hate You*. Balboa Pr, 2014.

Due to the supposedly losing war that Christianity has fought against the decline of its values for the last one hundred years, Christians seem to have entered a sort of "siege mode"; they are afraid that acceptance of "liberal ideas" about women, homosexuals, and the transgender community are a part of the increasing moral decadence of our society. As a result, they have defensively shut their gates against such perceptions, leaving many of us out in the cold. Is this God's will? No. *Why God Doesn't Hate You* is the result of transgender Roman Catholic consecrated maiden Tia Michelle Pesando's extensive theological research, and it brings to light several startling truths. No longer should we feel the need to choose between science and faith, or between religion and our own understanding of what is right and wrong. The knowledge contained herein both reassures and provides an excellent defense for those minorities previously persecuted by Christians, as Tia Michelle knows from her own experience coming out after thirty years in the guise of a man. Recently, she walked into a Roman Catholic Church just before mass dressed as a woman, wearing the veil of the consecrated maiden, and approached the priest with the statement, "I have assembled a rock-solid argument in favor of homosexuality." The positive response she received alone shows that there is hope.

Porter, Karen. *One Such Child: A Gay Child's Journey through Christianity*. One Such Child, 2012.

She grew up in an Independent, Fundamental, Baptist, Bible-believing church. She attended Christian schools her entire life, from kindergarten all the way through college. She sang in the church choir, been a Christian schoolteacher and taught Sunday school. She has gone to Christian summer camps. She has been on missions trips. She has studied the Bible through and through and loved God with all her heart and soul. From the beginning, one thing has remained a constant, unchangeable reality. She is gay. This is the story of her journey as a gay kid growing up in the Christian community. She hopes that it will be a help to gay young people and their Christian families who are struggling to understand each other.

Robert-John, David. *Our Gay Son: A Christian Father's Search for Truth*. AuthorHouseUK, 2012.

Our Gay Son is a moving account of the struggle of a Christian father to uncover the truth about homosexuality following the discovery that his younger son was gay. This son, along with all other gay people, was accused and condemned in the courts of most branches of Christianity, without a fair trial. David Robert-John begins his quest by first seeking healing for his stricken son. As events unfold, however, his journey takes unexpected turns and the validity of the case against gay people is called into question along with the legitimacy of his own beliefs. David's wife and son then add their own revealing insights.

Roberts, Carlos C. *Rainbow and the Spirit: Spiritual Experiences of Some Same-sex Oriented Christians*. S.l.: Authorhouse, 2012.

By providing both theoretical and practical primary research data, this book gives a spiritual and theological voice to the religious experiences of persons whom many Christians ostracize as persons outside of God's blessings and salvation. This study provides that voice by listening respectfully to some LGBT Christians' stories of their spiritual experiences and allowing those narratives of their experiences of God in their lives to be heard, while letting them speak for themselves, alongside the theoretical-historical information. Through their experiences of God working in different ways in their lives, all four research participants were able to reconcile and integrate their faith with their sexual orientation, and to arrive at the point of believing that holiness or salvation and homosexuality are not mutually exclusive. This book treats the narratives of these same-sex oriented Christians as spiritually revelatory and thus a contemporary medium of God's revelation in our post-modern era. It can therefore help us all, homosexual and heterosexual Christians alike, including those who are struggling to reconcile their faith and their sexual orientation, to see that holiness or salvation and homosexuality are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Rodriguez, Richard. *Darling: A Spiritual Autobiography*. Viking Adult, 2013.

Paradox has always been at the heart of Rodriguez's brilliant personal essays. . . . Now he digs still deeper into all those contradictions, examining his continuing belief in God and in the Catholic Church in the context of his life as a gay man in the early years of the twenty-first century, years, he says, that have been defined by religious extremism, rising public atheism, and what he calls "digital distraction". Rodriguez continues to find meaning in both the desert and the idea of paradise, and while his wide-ranging, erudite, passionate, and thought-provoking essays range over a wealth of seemingly disparate topics . . . they all reflect his remarkable ability to penetrate the contradictions of our lives, reveling in them as much as understanding them. "We gather," he says of his congregation, "in belief of one big thing: that we matter, somehow." --Bill Ott

Roller, Erialou McDuffie, and Tex Sample. *On Thundering Wings: Homosexuality, Love & the Church on Trial*. Winterset, Ia.: Golden Tree Communications, 2010.

In 1999, Erialou Roller's life intersected with that of Greg Dell, a United Methodist minister put on trial by the church for performing union ceremonies for gay members of his congregation. As Dell's colleague, Roller began to examine her own personal trials. She had experienced love for a man outside her marriage, for a father she had never known, for a gay husband and three children (one of whom is gay), for God, and for the church - although she would challenge its failure to respect all of God's beloved community. Roller's intimate and moving account of her own life, juxtaposed with the dramatic records of Greg Dell's trial, advances the discussion of gays in the church and offers profound insights into acceptance, forgiveness, and love in all its forms.

Salazar, Lisa. *Transparently: Behind the Scenes of a Good Life*. Vancouver: Lisa Salazar, 2011.

After living the first forty eight years of life as Santiago, a married, heterosexual man and father of three children and devout Christian, Santiago was diagnosed with gender dysphoria, a term that describes the challenges, and opportunities, that some have with sexual identity. It would take almost ten more years to reconcile the diagnosis to his Christian faith before Santiago could decide to transition to womanhood. For someone who had been a husband and a father, it was the beginning an amazing new life. Having recently completed her medical and surgical transformation, Lisa is ready to share the story of her journey as a transwoman and Christian; written with tenderness, humility, sensitivity and complete transparency. A must read for anyone who struggles to understand their own gender identity, or a friend's or loved one's—especially when faith is pivotal in their life.

Schwartz, James. *The Literary Party: Growing up Gay and Amish in America*. Chicago, IL: InGroup, 2011.

This is a provocative and eye-opening account of growing up gay and Amish in America. Poet James Schwartz combines a mixture of poetry and short stories to describe family troubles, lost love, religion, and what it is like to take a horse-and-buggy to a gay nightclub. *The Literary Party* is an emotional, touching book with implications that extend to any religion or culture where intolerance is prevalent.

Scott, Vernal W. *God's Other Children - A London Memoir*. CreateSpace, 2013.

A black gay Londoner and former head of HIV services, his writing, like his distinctive story, is soulful, raw, and unashamedly human. Scott successfully reveals gay people as holistic and multi-racial, instead of the usual overtly sexual and Caucasian. However, there is much more to this emotional roller coaster. Following a profoundly informative prologue, this dramatic personal story starts out in happy but poor 1930s Jamaica. Scott's 'Windrush'-generation parents move to 1950s London, where the substance of this 530-page novel-like bio really begins, taking the reader up to the present day. Tragedies and taboo issues are frequent, and because there are no fictional characters or scenarios, you find yourself immersed in the authenticity of each chapter. Tragically and most powerfully, the reader walks in Scott's shoes through the truly horrific impact of AIDS on both heterosexual and gay communities in the 80s and 90s, where he finds himself at the forefront of the UK's response to the crisis; a period he describes as "a conveyor belt of death and dying". With 35 million deaths to date, the various named accounts make tearful, heartbreaking reading, especially when AIDS comes home... The latterly joy of gay fatherhood becomes a bitter high court battle, and compounded by an avalanche of deaths, a depressed Scott begins to play (sexual) Russian roulette with his life. However, will his Christian faith provide refuge, especially when he starts to question "inhumane" Bible scripture and the irrationality of blind religion?

Sentilles, Sarah. *Breaking up with God: A Love Story*. New York: HarperOne, 2011.

Sarah Sentilles's relationship with God was not casual. When it began to unravel, she was in the ordination process to become an Episcopal priest, a youth minister at a church, and a doctoral student in theology at Harvard. You might say they were engaged and that the wedding was all planned. Calling it off would be more than a little awkward. However, in studying the religion she had been both raised in and believed wholeheartedly in, one day she woke up and realized . . . it was over. In this powerful memoir of faith, Sentilles reveals how deep our ties to God can be, and how devastating they can be to break. Without God to mold herself to and without religion as her script, who was she and what was her purpose? Her relationship with God had been connected to everything—her family, her friends, her vocation, and the places she frequented the language she used, and her way of being in the world. Not unlike after a divorce, she had to reorient her life and face a future that felt darkly unfamiliar. However, this beautiful, brave book is surprisingly filled with hope, a coming-out story that lets others know it is safe to come out too, and that there is light on the other side.

Simpson, Ericka K. F. *Living With 3 Strikes Against Me: Life Through My Eyes As Black, Female and Gay*. CreateSpace, 2012.

Living With 3 Strikes Against Me is an eye-opening look into the life of author Ericka K. F. Simpson. She freely speaks her mind about what it was like growing up as a black gay female and how those experiences shaped her into the person she is today. She tells her story by boldly addressing controversial issues under specific topics including women,

love, religion, and the LGBT community. In this, her first nonfiction work, Author Ericka K. F. Simpson reveals the pain and struggles she has endured over the past 10 years and how she was able to grow from those experiences instead of allowing them to destroy her. This thought provoking work would cause you to take an inventory of your own prejudices and judgments of others. It also offers guidance and advice to anyone struggling with loving themselves regardless of their race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Smid, John J. *Ex'd Out: How I Fired the Shame Committee*. CreateSpace, 2012.

John Smid's amazing story reveals his authenticity as a true follower of Christ. However, the price of his freedom in Christ today meant first taking a very long journey through many seriously deep pitfalls along the way. Lacking confidence in himself at the outset, he believed and placed his hope in the teaching of apparently "good" but (as his story reveals) seriously misguided Christian people. John has carried out a merciless moral inventory of his own life and teaching, and publicly repented of all his mistakes and false teachings. "However well-intended, the 'ex-gay' efforts of the past four decades were always as ill-conceived, ineffective and counterproductive as were all those bygone secular efforts at sexual orientation change. Now, after years of entrapment in and endorsement of 'ex-gay' promises, John Smid tells of the painful desperation and disillusionment that drove him deeper into the Good News of God's grace and peace. Christians who continue to misunderstand and misadvise on gay issues need to take his hard-won testimony seriously."

Smoot, Lou Anne. *A Christian Coming Out: A Journal of the Darkest Period in My Life*. Pair of Docs, 2013.

A Christian Coming Out: A Journal of the Darkest Period in My Life is the brutally honest sharing of Lou Anne Smoot, a then 60-year-old lesbian who, as a young woman, sacrificed her happiness to do what she had been taught was the "right thing". She married and remained faithful to her husband for 37 years until she simply could not keep up the pretense any longer. At that time, she was teaching a women's Sunday school class at the First Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas - an area of Texas affectionately referred to as being behind the "Pine Curtain". This retired public school teacher, holder of two college degrees, mother of four, grandmother of six, and Baptist Sunday School teacher, courageously changed her life in the direction she felt God was "prodding" her to go. Despite the uncomfortableness of remaining a member of her Baptist church when she divorced and began "coming out," she remained faithful to God and to her church at a time when most homosexuals her age either remained "in the closet" or turned their backs on the churches that seemed to turn their backs on them.

Suddath, John. *Neither Here nor There*. CreateSpace, 2013.

This memoir details Suddath's seven-decade struggle against guilt and fear to accept himself as both gay and a Christian. It was a long journey with numerous detours and dead-ends, but in the end he gained some insight of what it means to be fully human and willing to take risks. *Neither Here Nor There* is a journey of self-exploration and

emotion. Guilt, fear, and self-image clash in a battle of decades of soul searching as the reader joins one man's insights into survival against the conflicts of the soul.

Taylor, Leigh Anne, and Joe Cobb. *Our Family Outing: A Memoir of Coming out and Coming through*. USA: Total and Media, 2011.

A truly unique love story, "Our family Outing" is riveting in its honesty and openness as a family faces its reality their husband/father is gay. Told in two eloquent voices - Joe, a husband, pastor, and father faces the truth about his sexuality and Leigh Anne, a wife, church musician, and mother who finds her way to acceptance and forgiveness. This is a story of breakthrough, love, redemption, and how individuals join together to create a new way of being family.

Terry, Scott M. *Cowboys, Armageddon, and the Truth: How a Gay Child Was Saved from Religion*. Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe, 2012.

Cowboys, Armageddon, and The Truth: How a Gay Child Was Saved from Religion offers an illuminating glimpse into a child's sequestered world of abuse, homophobia, and religious extremism. Scott Terry's memoir is a compelling, poignant and occasionally humorous look into the Jehovah's Witness faith—a religion that refers to itself as The Truth—and a brave account of Terry's successful escape from a troubled past. At the age of ten, Terry had embraced the Witnesses' prediction that the world will end in 1975 and was preparing for Armageddon. As an adolescent, he prayed for God to strip away his growing attraction to other young men. By adulthood, Terry found himself no longer believing in the promised apocalypse. Through a series of adventures and misadventures, he left the Witness religion behind and became a cowboy, riding bulls in the rodeo. He overcame the hurdles of parental abuse, religious extremism, and homophobia and learned that Truth is a concept of honesty rather than false righteousness, a means to live a life openly, for Terry as a gay man.

Theall, Michelle. *Teaching the Cat to Sit: A Memoir*. Gallery, 2014.

From the time she was born, Michelle Theall knew she was different. Coming of age in the Texas Bible Belt, a place where it was unacceptable to be gay. Theall found herself at odds with her strict Roman Catholic parents, bullied by her classmates, abandoned by her evangelical best friend whose mother spoke in tongues, and kicked out of Christian organizations that claimed to embrace her—all before she had ever held a girl's hand. Shame and her longing for her mother's acceptance led her to deny her feelings and eventually run away to a remote stretch of mountains in Colorado. There, she made her home on an elk migration path facing the Continental Divide, speaking to God every day, but rarely seeing another human being. At forty-three years of age and seemingly settled in her decision to live life openly as a gay woman, Theall and her partner attempt to have their son baptized into the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in the liberal town of Boulder, Colorado. Her quest to have her son accepted into the Church leads to a battle with Sacred Heart and with her mother that leaves her questioning everything; she thought she knew about the bonds of family and faith. Moreover, she realizes that in

order to be a good mother, she may have to be a bad daughter. *Teaching the Cat to Sit* examines the modern roles of motherhood and religion and demonstrates that our infinite capacity to love has the power to shape us all.

Tibbetts, Rhiannon. *Listening to God's Healing Love Song: As Heard by a Downhearted Transgender Woman in an Uplifting, (heavenly) Transgender Key*. CreateSpace, 2013.

In this memoir, Rhiannon Tibbetts has written about her spiritual healing experiences and her own transformative growth. It is told from the unique perspective of someone who is both a transgender woman and who is a Christian. This memoir is a journey of faith, hope, love, grieving, acceptance, and forgiveness. It is unified throughout by the themes of a special friendship and by the author's love of music. This, at times, moving autobiography has elements of Christian mysticism in it as well. Rhiannon Tibbetts has written a companion book to this memoir called: "A Sad Love Song to God". Both books are also available in paperback on Amazon. Enjoy some of her other intriguing books too, including her book of beautiful love poems and an exciting novella.

---. *A Sad Love Song to God: Sung in a Peaceful (heavenly) Transgender Key*. CreateSpace, 2012.

This is a personal account of a unique journey of faith, hope, love and trans-formative discovery. This journal chronicles the often moving and revealing journey of a Christian transgender woman. The last few pages of this memoir have been described as being mystical in nature. Strong faith, a love of music, and a special friendship were the sources of inspiration for this autobiography. Rhiannon Tibbetts has written a companion book to this memoir called: "Listening to God's Healing Love Song". Enjoy some of the author's other intriguing books including her beautiful book of love poetry.

Timbol, Emily. *Two Words: Why Hearing "I'm Gay" Changed My Straight, Christian Life*. CreateSpace, 2013.

When Chris said the two words that Emily never imagined she would hear, "I'm gay", her entire world was shaken. Raised in conservative Christianity, his being gay forced her to question everything she believed about homosexuality, and why. In order to try to find the answers to these questions, Emily spent three years talking to people in the LGBT community, listening to their stories, and experiencing things that challenged and stretched her. One of these experiences was collecting hundreds of postcards created by Christians, and passing them out at her local PRIDE festival. Another was getting involved with the fight to pass a city ordinance for LGBT protection, and suffering intense opposition from churches in her community.

Tripp, Paul B. *Choking on Silence: A Memoir*. CreateSpace, 2012.

Gay-themed memoirs have become more and more common, but this work stands out based on the unique circumstances surrounding the author's life. Tripp describes his childhood in Montana as a kind of war zone: "Growing up in an alcoholic home, I was

never sure where the beginning was or where on the path I would hit a landmine and have the evening explode in front of me." He eventually seeks refuge in the structure and discipline of the armed forces but incurs the psychological burden of having to hide his true nature. Tripp's inclusion of excerpts from his personnel file adds another layer to the narrative, underscoring his criticism of the massive amount of resources expended by the military in an effort to weed out homosexual service members. Amid the subterfuge, the author finds tender moments of human connection as a lonely teenager working in a nursing home, a sexually repressed young man living on a submarine and a decorated officer approaching retirement. In fact, a submarine is the ideal metaphor for Tripp's odyssey: He attempts to move undetected through largely hostile waters while facing potentially disastrous consequences if discovered. The author also has a knack for explaining decisions that lead him to pursue "reparative therapy", heterosexual marriage, and fatherhood. The only drawback is Tripp's fondness for well-worn or clunky similes, which will strike some readers as folksy or distracting. Regardless, this memoir is full of sharp insights will appeal to a wide audience--not only gay men, but also anyone who wants to understand better a loved one struggling with sexual orientation and identity.

Tushnet, Eve. *Gay and Catholic: Accepting My Sexuality, Finding Community, Living My Faith*. Ave Maria, 2014.

In this first book from an openly lesbian and celibate Catholic, widely published writer and blogger Eve Tushnet recounts her spiritual and intellectual journey from liberal atheism to faithful Catholicism and shows how gay Catholics can love and be loved while adhering to Church teaching. Eve Tushnet was among the unlikeliest of converts. The only child of two atheist academics, Tushnet was a typical Yale undergraduate until the day she went out to poke fun at a gathering of political conservatives, who happened also to be Catholic. Instead of enjoying mocking what she termed the "zoo animals," she found herself engaged in intellectual conversation with them and, in a move that surprised even her, she soon converted to Catholicism. Already self-identifying as a lesbian, Tushnet searched for a third way in the seeming two-option system available to gay Catholics: reject Church teaching on homosexuality or reject the truth of your sexuality. *Gay and Catholic: Accepting My Sexuality, Finding Community, Living My Faith* is the fruit of Tushnet's searching: what she learned in studying Christian history and theology and her articulation of how gay Catholics can pour their love and need for connection into friendships, community, service, and artistic creation.

Walker, May. *God Loves You Gay*. CreateSpace, 2013.

God Loves You Gay is one woman's spiritual, coming out journey to acceptance. In this memoir, author May Walker, takes us on a journey from her early childhood as a Roman Catholic, to her young adult years as an Episcopalian. It is through prayer, spiritual encounters, and in meditations that May is led deep into her spirituality. In the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, May learns what it means to be a follower of Christ. Throughout this journey, May discovers God's deep and abiding love for her and all of God's gay and lesbian children. God, who is both Mother and Father, guides May into new

understandings of what Christianity can and should be. Come and walk on water in this incredible spiritual journey of self- discovery, faith, and love.

Weekley, David E., and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott. *In from the Wilderness: She-r-man with Study Guide*. Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2011.

This is the story of a transgender man, a Christian, an ordained minister, a loving husband and father--a human being. It is his challenge to his denomination and to all Christians and spiritual seekers to consider the truth of gender identity and sexual orientation as God given gifts, to be celebrated and embraced among all other gifts.

Woodruff, Mary Ann, and Chris Glaser. *The Last of the Good Girls: Shedding Convention, Coming out Whole*. Bellevue, Wash.: Moon Day, 2013.

Mary Ann Woodruff's *Last of the Good Girls* is the compelling memoir of a child of the 1940s who followed all the rules--until she could not any more. Like many in her generation, she married Mr. Right, kept house, raised her children, joined a church, and volunteered in her community. Then, at midlife, she had to dismantle it all to find her true self. To her surprise, that included falling in love with another woman. It was a truth she had difficulty embracing. Woodruff had spent decades as a faithful church woman, serving as a Presbyterian elder and consulting with congregations and at every level in the denomination. When her church continued to insist on overtly restricting roles for gays and lesbians, she dared to speak out. To do so, she had to first face down the voices of homophobia clamoring in her own head--and all those forces that had compelled her to conform. A rigorous exploration of her emotional and spiritual interior led her to new understanding of herself. In lyrical, heartfelt prose, embellished with poetry, she tells how she was drawn to acknowledge a truth she did not welcome, how an unexpected love called her out of deep fear, and how her whole family reshaped itself into a new circle of support.

Williams, Marcy J. *Longing For Love: An African-American Christian Lesbian Speaks Out*. CreateSpace, 2014.

This is a riveting story of the impact of childhood abuse; rape, mental illness and rejection by her church that followed Marcy throughout her life, and left her with a longing to find a love that would restore and fulfill her dreams of being accepted.