

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 –

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, 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

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