



Square Peg in a Round Hole

Bruce H Joffe

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Life, in some ways, has been more complicated for those of us who are baby boomers . especially if we're "different" and grew up on that side of the Stonewall.

Come out? Why, most of us couldn't even join in.

Rather, we tried to deny ourselves, hoping the burdensome secret would soon depart.

It never did.

So, we turned to prescription drugs, self-inflicted voodoo, and pejorative prayer. Mostly, though, we married-expecting that wives, wedding rings, and children would add legitimacy to our lives and help keep the demons at bay.

None of that worked.

And, sadly, others were also hurt by the deception.

Though our options may be greater now, it's still challenging being one more offbeat member in a much-maligned cast.

Yet with each new voice that joins the chorus, we move another step closer toward embracing the inalienable and reclaiming souls lost.

Listen: I can't carry a tune but, please, let me sing!

When Sexual Orientation and Identity Conflict.

Men May Marry, Yet Carry-On Clandestinely with Other Men

Many middle-aged men are intimately involved with other men. Married or not, most of them tragically choose anonymity over acknowledging their true selves to others and, often, even themselves.

Why are these men so secretive and afraid of revealing their sexual orientation?

Because they grew up at a time when culture and society exorcised homosexuality, treating homosexual men and lesbians as lepers: sick, reprobate, reprehensible pariahs.

So their sexual behavior, orientation, and identity conflict and increasingly collide.

That's the thesis of Bruce H. Joffe, a college professor whose new tell-tale book is a memoir about myriad masked men supposedly "straight" but actually same-sex oriented.

Square Peg in a Round Hole follows the author's attempts to delude himself and loved ones, tracing his experiences rejecting, confronting, and ultimately embracing the man he now believes God meant him to be all along. For Joffe and many men like him, the challenge required reconciling religious beliefs with his innate predisposition.

An enigma within an enigma, Joffe is a Gay Jewish-Christian whose academic focus has been on Sexual Minority Studies for the past ten years. The connection enabled him to meet many men from the baby boom generation still struggling with their sexuality-online, in support groups, at churches, and through other social networks.

Married with children or still single, politicians, celebrities, sports figures, and even evangelical leaders are now coming out and confessing . or being forced to do so.

Dropping a political bombshell, former New Jersey Governor James McGreevey announced his resignation after revealing that he is gay and that he'd had an adulterous affair with another man. Spokane Mayor Jim West, Florida Congressman Mark Foley, and Idaho Senator Larry Craig similarly symbolized political anathema and personal grief when their suppressed sexuality became public fodder for the media frenzy. The Rev. Paul Barnes, senior pastor of Grace Chapel, an evangelical Colorado mega-church, resigned

following a phone call outing him to the church.

"I have struggled with homosexuality since I was a five-year-old boy," Barnes said, according to the Denver Post. "I can't tell you the number of nights I (had) cried myself to sleep, begging God to take this away."

His resignation came just a month after Colorado Springs pastor Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, was outed by a former male escort.

"Guilt, shame, and remorse can plague many homosexual men but, especially, those who are married and lead hypocritical or duplicitous lives while cringing in the closet," Joffe says.

"Denied equal rights, respect, and even their religion, how can people with same-sex orientations lead legitimate lives?"

All too o



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