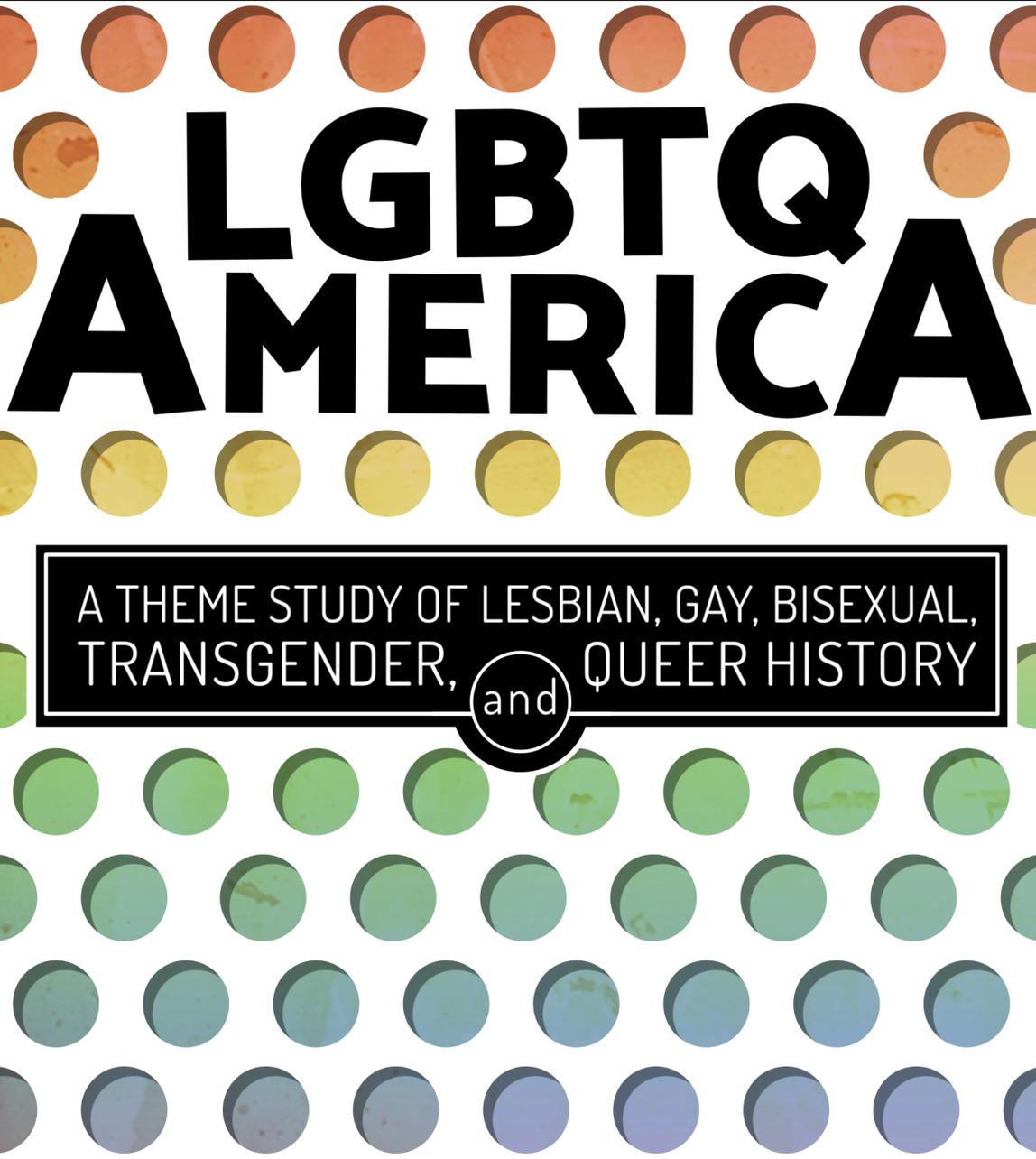


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LGBTQ AMERICA

A THEME STUDY OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL,
TRANSGENDER, and QUEER HISTORY

Edited by Megan E. Springate



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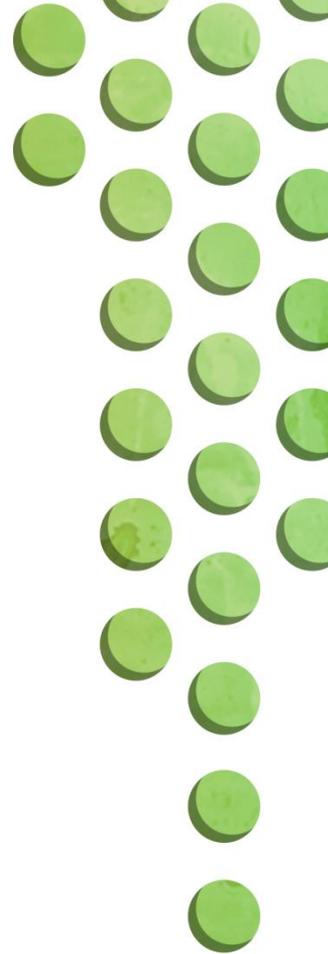
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THEMES

The chapters in this section take themes as their starting points. They explore different aspects of LGBTQ history and heritage, tying them to specific places across the country. They include examinations of LGBTQ community, civil rights, the law, health, art and artists, commerce, the military, sports and leisure, and sex, love, and relationships.

21 STRUGGLES IN BODY AND SPIRIT: RELIGION AND LGBTQ PEOPLE IN US HISTORY

Drew Bourn

Introduction

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once observed that eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in the United States.¹ But segregation goes beyond a separation between black churches and white churches. There is a tremendous variety of religious communities in the US - Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Pagans, and others. The history that led to this variety within the US, however, is not innocent.

¹ Joseph Barndt, *Becoming an Anti-Racist Church: Journeying Toward Wholeness* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 1. Dr. King had close connections with Black LGBTQ people, including Bayard Rustin and James Baldwin. See also *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*, dir. Nancy D. Kates and Bennett Singer (New York City: The American Documentary, 2003); and *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket*, dir. Karen Thorsen (New York: WNET/American Masters, 1989). The Bayard Rustin Residence in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City, New York was added to the NRHP on March 8, 2016.

Religious practices of contemporary Native American people are indelibly marked by the devastation of colonialism; the Black church grew out of a nightmarish legacy of mass kidnapping and enslavement; and myriad other forms of religious practice were brought to these shores by immigrants - some of whom left their homelands under duress and some of whom met with discrimination, humiliation, and violence upon arrival. The variety of religious communities that exists in the United States is inextricably bound up with the history of power and its abuses through such guises as colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and globalized capital.

LGBTQ people know something about power and its abuses. On the one hand, they have been systematically singled out and threatened or attacked when they have violated norms of gender and sexuality. But as the Combahee River Collective, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and other theorists of intersectionality remind us, many LGBTQ people have also simultaneously been on the other side of power for a range of reasons: having white skin, not being Native, being documented US citizens, being temporarily able-bodied, or moving through the world as male. Thus, the place of LGBTQ people in the United States is complicated—and religion provides an illustration of how those complications can play out.²

Certainly religion has been used in homophobic ways. One need only think of Anita Bryant's 1977 "Save Our Children" campaign, or of conservative preachers like Steven Anderson of the Faithful Word Baptist Church who rally for the mass executions of gay people, or the work of "ex-gay" campaigns both Christian (like Exodus International) and Jewish (like

² Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*, eds. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983), 210-218; Tisa M. Anders, "Combahee River Collective (1974-1980)," *BlackPast.org*, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/combahee-river-collective-1974-1980>; and Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139-167.

JONAH). Given these destructive realities, it is little wonder that many LGBTQ people have fled the religious communities in which they were raised.³

Yet homophobia does not tell the whole story of LGBTQ people and religion in the United States. There are many LGBTQ people who are drawn to religious communities and practices. Some remain resolutely within the traditions in which they were raised, and others enter into traditions different from the ones they knew—if they knew any—in childhood. However they arrive, the place of LGBTQ people in religious communities can be ambivalent. For a variety of reasons, some LGBTQ people seek nothing more than to survive and maintain low profiles within religious communities that can be virulently homophobic. But at other times, LGBTQ people demonstrate an amazing resourcefulness and creativity in transforming and creating forms of religious life that loudly proclaim their dignity and humanity.

This points to an important consideration when approaching the subject of LGBTQ people and religion—the question of authority and accountability. In the religious communities that are examined in this chapter, there is tremendous variation in terms of who determines the appropriate forms of religious life. Some LGBTQ people are committed to remain within religious communities in which they directly confront their co-religionists over questions about the authority to interpret LGBTQ experiences, while other LGBTQ people work within communities where

³ Ian Lekus, “Up They Come Again: The Rise of Family Values Politics,” *The Ultimate History Project*, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.ultimatehistoryproject.com/marriage-lgbt.html>; Tina Fetner, *How the Religious Right Shaped Lesbian and Gay Activism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Stevie St. John, “Pastor Calls for LGBT Holocaust to Eradicate AIDS By Christmas,” *Advocate*, December 3, 2014, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.advocate.com/politics/religion/2014/12/03/watch-pastor-calls-lgbt-holocaust-eradicate-aids-christmas>; Jeff Chu, “Let’s Do Something Different: The End of the World’s Leading ‘Ex-Gay’ Ministry,” *Atlantic*, June 20, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/06/lets-do-something-different-the-end-of-the-worlds-leading-ex-gay-ministry/277039>; Alexandra Levine, “Jury Decides Against JONAH in Landmark ‘Gay Conversion’ Therapy Case,” *Forward* June 25, 2015, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://forward.com/news/310914/jury-rules-against-jonah-in-landmark-gay-conversion-therapy-case>.

their authority is less contested. This chapter will focus on the work done in religious communities to affirm LGBTQ people and their lives.⁴

Early Organizing

Public advocacy for LGBTQ people in the United States has largely arisen in the period following World War II. Nearly every example discussed in this chapter deals with work done in the late 1960s or afterwards. However, a few earlier exceptions are worth noting.⁵

Former Roman Catholic seminarian George Augustine Hyde, along with John Augustine Kazantks, a former bishop in the Greek Orthodox Church who had been forced to leave Greece when he was “outed” as a gay man, established an independent church with a special outreach to gay people in 1946 in Atlanta, Georgia. The church initially convened at the Winecoff Hotel (Figure 1) and eventually took the



Figure 1: The Winecoff Hotel (now the Ellis Hotel), Atlanta, Georgia was the original home of the Orthodox Catholic Church of America. Photo by Eoghanacht, 2007.⁶

⁴ For broad overview treatments of religion and LGBTQ people, see Jeffrey S. Siker, *Homosexuality and Religion: An Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007); Randy P. Conner et al., *Cassell's Encyclopedia of Queer Myth, Symbol, and Spirit : Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Lore* (London: Cassell, 1997); Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry, “The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network”, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org>; and “Transfaith,” TransFaith Institute website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.transfaithonline.org>.

⁵ Heather Rachele White, “Proclaiming Liberation: The Historical Roots of LGBT Religious Organizing, 1946–1976,” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 11, no. 4 (May 2008): 102-119.

⁶ License: Public domain. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Winecoff-Hotel-Atlanta-01.jpg>

name “Orthodox Catholic Church of America.”⁷ The church counted over two hundred members by the end of the following year.⁸ Later, Hyde supported Rev. Robert Clement in New York City in establishing another church with a special outreach to gay people. Founded in 1969, the Eucharistic Catholic Church, with a local congregation known as the Church of the Beloved Disciple, later had as many as five hundred members.⁹

In 1964 in Mill Valley, California, Methodist minister Ted McIlvenna convened a conference of Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ clergy and local gay and lesbian leaders. The conference led to the founding of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, the purpose of which included advocacy for gay and lesbian people within religious communities.¹⁰ The council held a fundraising event on January 1, 1965 at California Hall in San Francisco which was raided by the police.¹¹ Seven ministers held a press conference the following day to express their outrage at the abuse of police power—an unprecedented public show of support by religious leaders for LGBTQ people.¹²

⁷ The Winecoff Hotel (now the Ellis Hotel) is located at 176 Peachtree Street NW, Atlanta, Georgia. It was listed on the NRHP on March 31, 2009.

⁸ “Profile: Rev. George Augustine Hyde,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=96>.

⁹ “Oral History: Robert Clement,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Interview.aspx?ID=12>; “Robert Clement Papers,” The New York Public Library Archives and Manuscripts, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://archives.nypl.org/mss/567>. The Church of the Beloved Disciple initially met at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles at 296 Ninth Avenue in New York City. This church building was listed on the NRHP on April 26, 1972. The Church of the Beloved Disciple then began to meet at the Moravian Church at 154 Lexington Avenue in New York City before moving to its own building at 348 West 14th Street in New York City.

¹⁰ The conference was held at the Ralston L. White Retreat Center, located at 2 El Capitan Ave, Mill Valley, California.

¹¹ California Hall is located at 625 Polk Street, San Francisco, California.

¹² “Exhibits: The Council on Religion and the Homosexual,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Exhibits/CRH/Exhibit.aspx>.

From the Late 1960s to the Present

Native American Religion

Native American history is addressed at length elsewhere in this study.¹³ Here it suffices to note the recent emergence of a pan-Indian identity based on same-sex desire or gender variation, which was galvanized with the founding of Gay American Indians (GAI) in San Francisco in 1975.¹⁴ Organizing around the country was further catalyzed when the term “two-spirit” (based on an Anishinaabemowin term) was coined at a Native conference in Winnipeg, Canada in 1990. Since then, Native organizing, informed by religious practices, has mobilized around two-spirit identity, resulting in a proliferation of local groups across the country. These include: the East Coast Two Spirit Society in New York City, the Tulsa Two Spirit Society, the City of Angels Two Spirit Society in Greater Los Angeles, the Two-Spirit Society of Denver, the Texas Two Spirit Society, and the Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (BAAITS) in Northern California.¹⁵

Christianity

Broadly speaking, world Christianity can be divided into three major streams—the Roman Catholic Church, Protestantism, and the Eastern Church.

¹³ See Roscoe (this volume).

¹⁴ Will Roscoe, *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 217. GAI was based at 1347 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, California.

¹⁵ “East Coast Two Spirit Society,” East Coast Two Spirit Society website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.ec2ss.net>; “Texas Two Spirit Society: Advocating Native American GLBTQ Tradition,” Texas Two Spirit Society website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://texastwospirits.com>; “BAAITS: Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits,” Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.baaits.org>.

Roman Catholicism

DignityUSA is an international nonprofit organization of LGBTQ Catholics and allies. It began in 1969 when a priest, Father Patrick Nidorf, began organizing meetings of LGBTQ Catholics for pastoral care in San Diego and Los Angeles. Nidorf called the project Dignity, and similar groups soon sprung up across the country. Members of local chapters provide each other support and advocate for change of church doctrine, which currently maintains that same-sex desire is “objectively disordered.”¹⁶ Offshoots include Defenders of Dignity, which formed in New York City in 1981 and now has additional chapters in San Francisco, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Dayton, Ohio, catering to members of the leather community; and the Conference for Catholic Lesbians, which formed in 1982. In 1986, the church’s doctrinal leadership issued “On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons,” which resulted in Dignity being barred from meeting on church property in many cities - a situation that continues to the present.¹⁷ Dignity has engaged in outreach specifically to LGBTQ Latino/as, including its Grupo Latino in Washington, DC.¹⁸

In 1976, with consent from the Vatican, Jesuit John McNeill published *The Church and the Homosexual*. In 1988, however, he was ordered by the Vatican to end his pastoral outreach to gay Catholics. He disobeyed the order, in spite of it resulting in his expulsion from the Jesuits.¹⁹

¹⁶ “Catechism of the Catholic Church: Part Three, Section Two, Chapter Two, Article Six,” The Holy See, accessed December 5, 2015,

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm#2357. Dignity Center is located at 721 Eighth Street SE, Washington, DC.

¹⁷ “Highlights of DignityUSA’s History,” DignityUSA website, accessed December 3, 2015, <https://www.dignityusa.org/history>; D.R. Loseke and J.C. Cavendish, “Producing Institutional Selves: Rhetorically Constructing the Dignity of Sexually Marginalized Catholics,” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 64 (2001): 347-362.

¹⁸ “Grupo Latino,” Dignity/Washington website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.dignitywashington.org/ministries/grupo-latino>. The Washington, DC chapter of Dignity has its headquarters at 721 Eighth Street SE, Washington, DC.

¹⁹ Thomas C. Fox, “‘Patron Saint’ of LGBT Catholics, John J. McNeill, 90, Dies,” *National Catholic Reporter*, September 24, 2015, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://ncronline.org/news/people/patron-saint-lgbt-catholics-john-j-mcneill-90-dies>; *Taking a Chance on God*, dir. Brendan Fray (Silence to Speech Films, 2011); “John McNeill, Memorial Remarks by Mary E. Hunt,” DignityUSA, accessed December 3, 2015, <https://www.dignityusa.org/article/john-mcneill-memorial-remarks-mary-e-hunt>; and Margalit Fox, “John McNeill, Priest Who Pushed Catholic Church

In 1977 in Washington, DC, a Catholic priest and nun, Father Robert Nugent and Sister Jeannine Gramick, established New Ways Ministry, a national advocacy and pastoral outreach program for LGBTQ Catholics based on workshops they had been conducting at the Quixote Center, a Catholic social justice organization in Maryland.²⁰ In 1999, Father Nugent, who had recently been ordered by the Vatican to discontinue pastoral outreach to LGBTQ Catholics, spoke out against religious homophobia at a public forum at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts alongside Surina Khan of Al-Fatiha and Rabbi Steve Greenberg.²¹

Mary Hunt, a Catholic theologian who supports Dignity and who, in 1983, co-founded the Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)—an ecumenical project to explore the possible confluences of feminism, religion, and social justice work—has focused her scholarship, in part, on bisexuals and religion.²²

In 2014, LGBTQ members of the Church of Saint Paul the Apostle in New York City launched a project to document their experiences and advocate for their fuller participation in the church. They have released a

to Welcome Gays, Dies at 90,” *New York Times*, September 25, 2015, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/26/nyregion/john-mcneill-priest-who-pushed-catholic-church-to-welcome-gays-dies-at-90.html>.

²⁰ Francis DeBernardo, “Ministering in New Ways to Gay and Lesbian Catholics and the Church: A Brief History of New Ways Ministry,” New Ways Ministry website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.newwaysministry.org/history.html>. The Quixote Center is located at 7307 Baltimore Avenue, College Park, Maryland. New Ways Ministry is located at 4012 Twenty-Ninth Street, Mount Rainier, Maryland.

²¹ Gustav Niebuhr, “Priest Rebuked by Vatican Resumes Public Speaking,” *New York Times*, September 5, 1999, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/09/05/us/priest-rebuked-by-vatican-resumes-public-speaking.html>. The event was held on August 31, 1999 in the Curry Student Center, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts.

²² “The Story of WATER,” WATER - Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.waterwomensalliance.org/history-and-mission>; “Collection Info: Dignity/USA,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network website, accessed May 1, 2015, <http://www.LGBTQran.org/Collection.aspx?ID=2>; “1992,” DignityUSA website, accessed June 6, 2015, <https://www.dignityusa.org/history/1163>; and Tom Yates, “Defenders LLC/Washington Celebrate 22nd Anniversary,” accessed June 6, 2015, <https://www.dignityusa.org/article/defenders-llc-washington-celebrate-22nd-anniversary>.

documentary, *Owning Our Faith*, which includes the testimony of transgender Catholics Hilary Howes and Mateo Williamson.²³

Protestantism

This includes a wide range of denominations, including Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Unitarians, and others. Their forms of organization and internal authority vary widely, as do their policies and doctrines regarding LGBTQ people.²⁴

i) Episcopalians

Integrity USA is a national nonprofit organization of LGBTQ Episcopalians and allies. In 1974, Episcopal layperson Louie Crew founded Integrity while on the faculty of Fort Valley State University, a historically black university in Georgia. Crew began publishing a newsletter that later led to a national convention in Chicago in 1975 and the establishing of a national headquarters in Georgia.²⁵ Also in 1975, Rev. Carter Heyward joined the faculty of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts; she would eventually spend many years teaching and publishing lesbian feminist theology, such as her 1989 book, *Speaking of Christ: A Lesbian Feminist Voice*.²⁶ In 1977, Ellen Barrett was the first openly lesbian minister ordained in the Episcopal Church.²⁷ That same year, Rev. Malcolm Boyd came out publicly as a gay man—a journey

²³ *LGBT Catholics: Owning Our Faith*, dir. Michael Tomae (2015). The Church of St. Paul the Apostle is located at 405 West 59th Street in New York City.

²⁴ Melissa M Wilcox, *Coming Out In Christianity: Religion, Identity, and Community* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003); Heather Rachel White, *Reforming Sodom: Protestants and the Rise of Gay Rights* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

²⁵ "A Brief History," *Integrity*, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.integrityusa.org/doc_download/10-integrity-a-brief-history-2013. The national headquarters of Integrity USA was at 701 Orange Street, Fort Valley, Georgia.

²⁶ Carter Heyward, *Speaking of Christ: A Lesbian Feminist Voice* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989); "Profile: Rev. Dr. Carter Heyward," The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, last modified October 26, 2012, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=100>.

²⁷ Louie Crew, "Changing the Church: Lessons Learned in the Struggle to Reduce Institutional Heterosexism in the Episcopal Church," in James T. Sears and Walter L. Williams, eds., *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 341-353. The Episcopal Divinity School is located at 99 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

he recounted with the publication the following year of his autobiographical work, *Take Off The Masks* and which he would revisit in his 1986 book, *Gay Priest: An Inner Journey*.²⁸ In 1989, Robert Williams was the first man to be ordained as an Episcopal priest who had been openly gay prior to ordination. That same year at All Saints Episcopal Parish in Hoboken, New Jersey, Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong began Oasis, an official ministry within the Episcopal Church for LGBTQ members; Rev. Robert Williams served as its first leader.²⁹ In 2003, Rev. Gene Robinson, an openly gay priest, was elected to serve as bishop of the Diocese of New Hampshire; he wore a bulletproof vest to the ceremony of his consecration (Figure 2). Six years later, he delivered the invocation at the inauguration of President Barack Obama.³⁰

In 2004, Integrity USA provided support for the creation of TransEpiscopal, an informal group of transgender Episcopalians. Together, Integrity USA and TransEpiscopal collaborated in the creation of the documentary “Voices of Witness: Out of the Box,” which was released in 2012.³¹

At the 2012 General Convention of the Episcopal Church, almost all of the resolutions proposed by Integrity were adopted as official church policy.³²

²⁸ Malcom Boyd, *Take Off The Masks* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978); Malcom Boyd, *Gay Priest: An Inner Journey* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986); and “Profile: Rev. Canon Malcolm Boyd,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=42>.

²⁹ All Saints Episcopal Parish is located at 707 Washington Street, Hoboken, New Jersey.

³⁰ Jerrald L. Townsend, “Profile: Rt. Rev. Gene Robinson,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, last modified September 4, 2007, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=189>; and *For the Bible Tells Me So*, dir. Daniel G. Karlslake (New York City: First Run Features, 2007). The Episcopal Diocese House is located at 63 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire. Gene Robinson was consecrated Bishop, amid high security, at the University of New Hampshire's Whittemore Center Arena in Durham.

³¹ Cameron Partridge, “Voices of Witness: Out of the Box,” *TransEpiscopal* (blog), June 4, 2012, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://blog.transepiscopal.com/2012/06/voices-of-witness-out-of-box.html>.

³² Jeffrey S. Stiker, *Homosexuality and Religion*, 108-112; “Our History,” Reconciling Ministries Network website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.rmnetwork.org/newrmn/who-we-are/history>; “Who We Are: Our History,” Transforming Congregations website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.transcong.org/1history.htm>; Louie Crew, *A Book of Revelations: Lesbian and Gay Episcopalians Tell Their Own Stories* (Washington, DC: Integrity, 1991).



Figure 2: The Whittemore Center Arena, University of New Hampshire, Durham where Gene Robinson was consecrated Bishop. Photo by John Phelan, 2013.³³

ii) Methodists

In Dallas, Texas in 1971, Rev. Gene Leggett came out as a gay man, and was subsequently defrocked. The following year at the United Methodist General Conference, Leggett met another openly gay minister, Rick Huskey, and the two began outreach to other gay Methodists. Together in Evanston, Illinois in 1975 they convened the United Methodist Gay Caucus, which was soon re-named the Gay United Methodists (GUM).³⁴ Following the 1976 United Methodist General Conference, GUM was re-named again as Affirmation; Peggy Harmon and Michael Collins were instrumental in establishing its national organizational structure.

³³ License: CC BY-SA 3.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Whittemore_Center_UNH_Durham_NH.jpg

³⁴ "Profile: Gene Leggett," The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, last modified June 2, 2014, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=236>.

In 1983, Affirmation launched Reconciling Congregations to encourage local congregations to support LGBTQ members. After the 1984 United Methodist General Conference prohibited the ordination of openly gay clergy, individual congregations began joining the Reconciling Congregations network in defiance. Affirmation and Reconciling Congregations split in 1989; the former continued to operate independently of the church while the latter was re-named Reconciling Ministries in 2000 and continued to act, in part, as a network of Methodist congregations, campus ministries, and others that affirmed LGBTQ people.

In 1992 at the University of California Los Angeles, the Wesley Foundation became the first Reconciling congregation on a college campus, drawing national attention to the ongoing work of Reconciling Congregations.³⁵ In 1996, *Open Hands*, the newsletter of Reconciling Congregations, released a special issue entitled “Transgender Realities.” United Methodists of color gathered in 2000 to address homophobia, which resulted in the founding of United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church (UMOC).³⁶ The following year, Union United Methodist Church in Boston, Massachusetts became the first predominantly African American UMC to become part of the network of Reconciling churches.³⁷ In 2007, the year after he disclosed that he was transgender, Rev. Drew Phoenix was confirmed to remain as pastor at Saint John’s UMC in Baltimore, Maryland.³⁸ United Methodist clergy who have been among the vocal advocates for LGBTQ Methodists include Rev. Frank Schaefer, Rev.

³⁵ The Wesley Foundation at the University of California, Los Angeles is located at 580 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

³⁶ “United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church,” Reconciling Ministries Network website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.rmnetwork.org/newrmn/connect/extension-ministries/unity-methodists-of-color-for-a-fully-inclusive-church-umoc>.

³⁷ “Our History,” Union United Methodist Church website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://unionboston.org/about/history>. Union United Methodist Church is located at 485 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts.

³⁸ “Rev. Drew Phoenix,” TransFaith website, accessed December 3, 2015, http://www.transfaithonline.org/explore/christian/traditions/protestant/drew_umc. Saint John’s United Methodist Church is located at 2640 Saint Paul Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

Struggles in Body and Spirit: Religion and LGBTQ People in US History

Jack Tuell, Rev. Jimmy Creech, Rev. Gregory Dell, and Rev. Jeanne Audrey Powers.³⁹

iii) Lutherans

ReconcilingWorks is a national nonprofit organization of LGBTQ members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and their allies. Rev. Jim Siefkes received a grant from the American Lutheran Church (which later joined other Lutheran bodies to form the ELCA) to convene a national gathering of gay and lesbian Lutherans. Siefkes gathered five people together in 1974 at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, leading to the founding of Lutherans Concerned for Gay People (LCGP).⁴⁰ Other chapters were subsequently established throughout the country. The first national meeting was held in 1978, where LCGP's name was changed to Lutherans Concerned.

The organization continued to grow, formally expanding its advocacy to bisexuals and transgender people in 2003 and changing its name again in 2012 to ReconcilingWorks. That same year an offshoot group from

³⁹ *An Act of Love*, dir. Scott Sheppard (Los Angeles: Chhibber Mann Productions, 2015); Steve Chawkins, "Jack Tuell Dies at 90; Bishop had Late-Life Change of Mind on Gay Ordination, Marriage" *Los Angeles Times*, January 13, 2014, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://articles.latimes.com/2014/jan/13/local/la-me-jack-tuell-20140114>; "Jimmy Creech," Faith in America website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.faithinamerica.org/about-fia/board-members/jimmy-creech>; "Gregory R. Dell," Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.umaffirm.org/corner/gregdell.html>; and Katrina Martin, "'The Journey' of Reverend Jeanne Audrey Powers' Papers at Duke," *The Devil's Tale: Dispatches from the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library* (blog) April 8, 2015, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2015/04/08/the-journey-of-reverend-jeanne-audrey-powers-papers-at-duke>. See also: Dorothy Lowe Williams, *The Church Studies Homosexuality: A Study for United Methodist Groups Using the Report of the Committee to Study Homosexuality* (Nashville: Cokesbury, 1994); Mary Jo Osterman, *Claiming the Promise: An Ecumenical Welcoming Bible Study Resource on Homosexuality* (Chicago: Reconciling Congregation Program, 1997); "A Brief History of Affirmation," Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.umaffirm.org/um/about-us/2-a-brief-history-of-affirmation>; "Our History," Reconciling Ministries Network website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.rmnetwork.org/newrnm/who-we-are/history>; and Betsy L. Halsey, "What Does the Lord Require of Us? Ministries to and with Gays and Lesbians," *Quarterly Review* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 181-195.

⁴⁰ The University of Minnesota is located at 100 Church Street SE, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Lutherans Concerned, TransLutherans, was founded.⁴¹ Also in 2012, Bishop Mark Hanson addressed a national gathering of Lutherans Concerned at Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington, DC; this marked the first time that a presiding bishop addressed the organization.⁴² The following year, Guy Erwin, a Native American of the Osage Nation, became the first openly gay bishop to serve the ELCA when he was elected to serve the Southwest California Synod.⁴³ ReconcilingWorks continues to advocate for LGBTQ people at the national institutional level while cultivating support at the level of local congregations through its Reconciling in Christ program.⁴⁴

iv) Presbyterians

More Light is a national nonprofit organization of LGBTQ members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and their allies. At the 1974 Presbyterian General Assembly in Louisville, Kentucky, David Bailey Sindt gathered other gay people and founded the Presbyterian Gay Caucus, which was later re-named Presbyterians for Gay Concerns, and then re-named again as Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (PLGC). The following year, Bill Silver, an openly gay man, became a candidate for ministry in New York City. Local Presbyterian ministers, uncertain of whether Silver's status as an openly gay man affected his eligibility for the ministry, appealed to the national General Assembly for guidance. The General

⁴¹ "TransLutherans Affinity Group Formed at ReconcilingWorks 2012," ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation, accessed December 3, 2015, <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/translutherans-affinity-group-formed-at-reconciling-works-2012>; and JamieAnn Meyers, "Lutherans for Full LGBT Participation," *Huffington Post*, July 16, 2012, accessed December 3, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jamieann-meyers/translutherans-for-full-lgbt-participation_b_1667018.html.

⁴² Chuck Colbert, "Lutheran Bishop Makes Pro-Gay History," *Windy City Times*, July 7, 2012, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Lutheran-bishop-makes-pro-gay-history/38602.html>. Luther Place Memorial Church is located at 1226 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC.

⁴³ Antonia Blumberg, "Bishop Comes Out as Gay After 'A Lifetime of Denying' The Truth," *Huffington Post*, July 30, 2015, accessed December 3, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/lutheran-bishop-comes-out-as-gay-after_55b6637ce4b0074ba5a54ac5. The Southwest California Synod (ECLA) has its offices at 1300 East Colorado Street, Glendale, California.

⁴⁴ Leslie F. Weber et al., *Talking Together As Christians About Homosexuality: A Guide for Congregations* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, 1999); and "A Brief History of Our Names and Amazing People," ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation, accessed December 3, 2015, <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/a-brief-history-of-our-names-and-amazing-people>.

Assembly formed a task force that subsequently declared that being openly gay should not disqualify a candidate for ministry. This decision resulted in a backlash. The 1978 General Assembly propounded a homophobic theology and denied ordination of openly gay clergy, which in turn resulted in some congregations taking action by publically welcoming gay members in defiance, starting in 1978 with the West Park Presbyterian Church in New York City.⁴⁵ This network of defiant congregations formed the More Light Churches Network (MLCN) in 1992. In 1998 this network combined with Presbyterians for Gay and Lesbian Concerns, forming More Light Presbyterians.



Figure 3: The Downtown United Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York. Photo by Jerrye & Roy Klotz, MD, 2008.⁴⁶

Presbyterians who advocate for LGBTQ people have also engaged in direct action to protest their denomination's policies. At the 1991 General Assembly in Baltimore, Maryland, at which homophobic policies were again reaffirmed, a major demonstration was held by a group calling itself Presbyterian ACT UP—an organization started by the openly gay Rev. Howard Warren that modeled its tactics on the direct action advocacy group, AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT UP). In

⁴⁵ West Park Presbyterian Church is located at 165 West 86th Street, New York City, New York.

⁴⁶ License: CC BY-SA 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BRICK_PRESBYTERIAN_CHURCH_COMPLEX,ROCHESTER,_MONROE_COUNTY.jpg

1993, the Downtown United Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York enlisted openly lesbian Rev. Janie Spahr to advocate for LGBTQ people within the Presbyterian Church; she traveled nationally in her outreach work (Figure 3).⁴⁷ Susan Halcomb Craig, retired pastor at United University Church on the University of Southern California campus, has been an outspoken advocate and writer whose work has included a focus on bisexuals.⁴⁸

v) Baptists

Perhaps the most visible organizing of LGBTQ Baptists has occurred within the denomination of the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA). In that denomination, American Baptists Concerned for Sexual Minorities was founded during the 1972 national American Baptist convention in Denver, Colorado. At the 1986 ABCUSA Biennial in Pittsburgh, ministers Howard Moody, David Bartlett, and Edwina Hunter were among those who formed “Professional Church Leaders Concerned” to work with American Baptists Concerned in advocating for LGBTQ members of the denomination.⁴⁹ At the 1991 ABCUSA Biennial in Charlestown, West Virginia, Rev. Michael Easterling facilitated a meeting of over fifty people to develop a network of pro-LGBTQ ABCUSA congregations. The following year, Nadean Bishop was called to serve as minister at the University Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota—possibly the first openly

⁴⁷ Janie Spahr, “Profile: Rev. Dr. Jane Adams Spahr,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, last modified November 6, 2015, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=1>. Downtown United Presbyterian Church is located at 121 North Fitzhugh Street, Rochester, New York. It was added to the NRHP as the Brick Presbyterian Church Complex on March 12, 1992.

⁴⁸ R.W. Holmen, *Queer Clergy: A History of Gay and Lesbian Ministry in American Protestantism* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2013); James D. Anderson, “The Lesbian and Gay Liberation Movement in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1974-1996,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 34, no. 2 (1997): 37-65; and Jane Adams Spahr, *Called Out: The Voices and Gifts of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Presbyterians* (Gaithersburg, MD: Chi Rho Press, 1995). United University Church is located at 817 West Thirty-Fourth Street, Los Angeles, California.

⁴⁹ “Howard R. Moody, Influential Minister-Activist, 91,” Judson Memorial Church website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.judson.org/Howard-Moody-Obituary>; David L. Bartlett, “A Biblical Perspective on Homosexuality,” in *Homosexuality and the Christian Faith: A Symposium*, ed. Harold L. Twiss (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978); and Edwina Hunter, “The Preacher as a Social Being in the Community of Faith,” *Religion Online*, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1084&C=1108>.

lesbian minister to serve a Baptist congregation.⁵⁰ In 1993, the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists was formed during the ABCUSA Biennial in San Jose, California. The two organizations merged in 2003.⁵¹

Beginning in 2002, local congregations that affirmed LGBTQ people but that were based in conservative regions of the American Baptist Convention were allowed to disavow membership within their region and instead apply for membership in other geographic regions of the church that were less conservative. This decision sometimes made the administration of local congregations in the context of the larger denomination complicated, but which appeared to offer compromise instead of schism. By 2015, one hundred Baptist congregations had affiliated with the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, including Old Cambridge Baptist in Cambridge, Massachusetts—which had declared itself welcoming to LGBTQ people as early as 1983.⁵²

vi) United Church of Christ

In 1972, members of the United Church of Christ (UCC) formed the Gay Caucus, later re-named the Open and Affirming Coalition. That same year, Rev. William R. Johnson was ordained to serve as minister at the Community UCC in San Carlos, California, becoming the first openly gay

⁵⁰ "Pastors," University Baptist Church website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.ubcmn.org/about-us/our-history/pastors>. University Baptist Church is located at 1219 University Avenue SE, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

⁵¹ Alliance of Baptists, Task Force on Human Sexuality, *A Clear Voice* (Washington, DC: The Alliance, 1999).

⁵² "About Us," Old Cambridge Baptist Church website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.oldcambridgebaptist.org/welcome/about-us>. Old Cambridge Baptist Church is located at 1151 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was listed on the NRHP on April 13, 1982. See also: Bill Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Judy Yates Siker, "American Baptist Churches USA," in *Homosexuality and Religion*, 56-58; American Baptists Concerned for Sexual Minorities, "Witch Hunts Begin in Earnest," *Voice of the Turtle: The Newsletter of American Baptists Concerned for Sexual Minorities* (Fall 1994); and "Welcoming and Affirming Baptist Timeline," Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.awab.org/history.html>.

UCC minister.⁵⁴ In 1977, Rev. Anne Holmes was ordained as the first openly lesbian UCC minister. The UCC's 1985 General Synod urged member congregations to welcome lesbian, gay, and bisexual members; a similar statement was later made regarding transgender members. The General Synod had no authority to require this of congregations, and the UCC's national office did not provide funding for support. In 1987, Rev. Ann Day and Donna Enberg spearheaded a program called Open and Affirming (ONA) to provide that support to congregations by raising money from individuals, congregations, and foundations. The first UCC church to be designated Open and Affirming was Riverside Church in New York City (Figure 4).⁵⁵ In 2004, openly transgender Rev. Malcolm Himschoot was ordained at Washington Park UCC in Denver, Colorado. The following year, the UCC produced a documentary about his life and career, "Call Me Malcolm."⁵⁶ Also in 2005, openly lesbian UCC minister Rev. Rebecca Voelkel became



Figure 4: Riverside Church, New York City. Photo by travellingcari, 2015.⁵³

⁵³ License: CC BY-NC 2.0 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/travellingcari/16677977385>

⁵⁴ "Exhibits: The Historic Ordination of William R. Johnson," The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Exhibits/Johnson/index.htm>; and Elliot Owen, "First Out UCC Minister Honored," *Bay Area Reporter*, June 21, 2012, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.ebar.com/news/article.php?sec=news&article=67817>. Community United Church of Christ is located at 1336 Arroyo Avenue, San Carlos, California.

⁵⁵ Riverside Church is located at 490 Riverside Drive, New York City, New York. It was listed on the NRHP on December 12, 2012.

⁵⁶ Electa Draper, "Church's Transgender Pastor Grateful for Life 'Beyond My Wildest Dreams,'" *Denver Post*, March 14 2011, accessed December 3, 2015, http://www.denverpost.com/ci_17608273; *Call Me Malcolm*, dir. Joseph Parlagreco (Warren, NJ: Passion River, 2005). Washington Park UCC is located at 400 South Williams Street, Denver, Colorado.

executive director of the Institute for Welcoming Resources (IWR), an ecumenical organization of LGBTQ-affirming congregations across many denominations that had been founded three years earlier. During Rev. Voelkel's tenure, IWR expanded its operations by affiliating with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the oldest national LGBTQ advocacy organization in the country.⁵⁷

vii) Protestant New Religious Movements

"New Religious Movements" within US Protestantism are relatively recent in their origin and frequently embrace forms of doctrine or practice that might appear unorthodox to more established denominations.

These movements have also given rise to LGBTQ-affirming organizing. One example is Affirmation, a group for gay and lesbian members and former members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as Mormons. Affirmation was founded in Salt Lake City in 1977 under the leadership of Stephan Zakharias. Although this founding group lasted only until 1978, Affirmation was resurrected in Los Angeles in 1980 under the leadership of Paul Mortensen. Other Affirmation groups were subsequently founded throughout the United States. Members of Affirmation continue to advocate for LGBTQ Mormons in opposition to the church's continuing condemnation of same-sex sexuality and relationships.⁵⁸ Emergence International formed after national

⁵⁷ "History of the Institute for Welcoming Resources," Institute for Welcoming Resources website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.welcomingresources.org/history.htm>; "Faith Transitions at National Gay and Lesbian Task Force," National LGBTQ Task Force website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.thetaskforce.org/faith-transitions-at-national-gay-and-lesbian-task-force>; and Rebecca Voelkel, "Profile: Rev. Rebecca Voelkel," The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=242>. See also: UCC Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns, Open and Affirming Program, *Open and Affirming, Yes, It Matters! : How this Spirited Movement for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Inclusion and Affirmation is Blessing and Transforming Individuals and Faith communities in the United Church of Christ* (Holden, MA: United Church of Christ, 2005); Christopher P. Scheitle, Stephen M. Marino, and Andrew Moore, "On the Varying Meaning of 'Open and Affirming,'" *Journal of Homosexuality* 57, no. 10 (2010): 1223-1236; and Gary David Comstock, "Aliens in the Promised Land," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 41, no. 3-4 (1987): 93-104.

⁵⁸ R. Phillips, *Conservative Christian Identity & Same-sex Orientation: The Case of Gay Mormons* (New York City, NY: Peter Lang, 2005); Ronald L. Schow and Wayne Schow, *Peculiar People : Mormons and*

conferences of Christian Scientists in Chicago in 1983 and 1985. In 1978, Craig Rodwell, who was also the founder and owner of the Oscar Wilde Bookshop, was a co-founder of Gay People in Christian Science (GPICS). Perhaps the largest group of LGBTQ Christian Scientists is the New York City Christian Science Group, which meets at New York's Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center.⁵⁹ Gay men in the Seventh-day Adventist Church met in 1976 in Palm Desert, California after posting an announcement in the gay news magazine, *The Advocate*. Adopting the name "Kinship," additional members soon enrolled from San Francisco.⁶⁰

viii) Anabaptists

In 1976, the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (BMC) was founded, and two years later, in 1978, the Rainbow Boulevard Mennonite Church of Kansas City, Kansas announced that it would welcome gay and lesbian couples as members. The BMC was initially invited to participate in a 1983 conference that brought together the two largest Mennonite bodies in North America (the General Conference Mennonite Church, or GC, and the Mennonites in North America, or the MC). The participation of the BMC was controversial, and in the years following, the GC and MC increasingly hardened their stance against lesbian and gay membership and leadership. The opposition to LGBTQ members and leaders has continued since the 2002 merger of the

Same-Sex Orientation (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1991); Richley H. Crapo, "Latter-Day Saint Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Spirituality," in *Gay Religion*, eds. Scott Thumma and Edward R Gray (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005): 99-114.

⁵⁹ Laura K. O'Keefe, Craig Rodwell Papers, 1940-1993, New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division, <http://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archivalcollections/pdf/rodwell.pdf>; Bruce Stores, *Christian Science: Its Encounter with Lesbian/Gay America* (New York: iUniversity, 2004); "About the Group," The New York City Christian Science Group website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.nycsgroup.com/about.php>. The New York City Christian Science Group meets at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center, located at 208 West 13th Street, New York City, New York.

⁶⁰ David Ferguson, Fritz Guy, and David R Larson, *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives* (Roseville, CA: Adventist Forum, 2008); René Drumm, "No Longer an Oxymoron: Integrating Gay and Lesbian Seventh-day Adventist Identities," in *Gay Religion*, 47-66. See also: Melissa Wilcox, "Same-Sex Eroticism and Gender Fluidity in New and Alternative Religions," in *Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America*, Volume I, eds. Eugene V. Gallagher and W. Michael Ashcraft (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006): 243-265.

two bodies into the Mennonite Church USA. Nevertheless, at the local level, some Mennonite congregations openly welcome LGBTQ members.⁶¹

iv) Quakers

LGBTQ members of the Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, began organizing in the 1970s as the “Friends Committee for Concern.” In August 1972, attendees at the Friends General Conference meeting, held at Ithaca College, drafted a formal statement on bisexuality. Published in the *Advocate*, this may be the first declaration by a religious group in the United States in support of bisexuals.⁶² The Friends Committee for Concern group was re-named Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) during a 2003



Figure 5: Ghost Ranch, Abiquiú, New Mexico. Photo by Ron Cogswell, 2013.⁶³

⁶¹ Michael A. King, *Fractured Dance: Gadamer and a Mennonite Conflict Over Homosexuality* (Telford, PA: Pandora Press, 2001); Ted Grimsrud and Mark Nation, *Reasoning Together: A Conversation on Homosexuality* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2008); and Jan Braun “Whose Law?: Queer Mennonites and Same-Sex Marriage,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 32 (2014): 97-113.

⁶² Robert A. Martin, Jr., “Quakers ‘Come Out’ at Conference,” *Advocate* August 2, 1972: 8. Ithaca College is located at 953 Danby Road, Ithaca, New York.

⁶³ License: CC BY 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/22711505@N05/9542784668>

meeting at the Ghost Ranch in Abiquiú, New Mexico, and has become national in scope (Figure 5).⁶⁴ Diane Pasta is a member of the Salmon Bay Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Seattle, Washington whose writing has included a focus on bisexuality and religion.⁶⁵

v) Unitarians

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has been one of the earliest and most vocal denominations to champion LGBTQ people. Rev. James Stoll, a Unitarian minister, may have become the first openly gay ordained minister when he came out during a conference in 1969 at the La Foret Conference Center and Retreat Center in Colorado.⁶⁶ Stoll was instrumental in the UUA's adoption of a gay rights resolution the following year. The UUA headquarters, located in Boston, established an "Office of Gay Affairs" in 1973—the first such agency within a national religious organization in the United States.⁶⁷ In 1984, the UUA adopted a resolution to perform commitment ceremonies for same-sex couples. The first openly transgender minister was ordained in 1988, and in 2002, the first transgender UU minister called to serve a congregation, Rev. Sean Dennison, began his ministry at the South Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, in Utah.⁶⁸ Rev. Ann Schranz, of the Monte Vista Unitarian

⁶⁴ The Ghost Ranch Education and Retreat Center is located at 280 Private Drive 1708, Abiquiú, New Mexico. Ghost Ranch was designated a National Natural Landscape in 1976 (a program similar to NHL, but for outstanding natural features. The NNL program is also administered by the NPS).

⁶⁵ David Blamires, *Pushing at the Frontiers of Change: A Memoir of Quaker Involvement with Homosexuality* (London: Quaker Books, 2012); Quaker Lesbian & Gay Fellowship, *Part of the Rainbow: A Plain Quaker Look at Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Lives* (Harrogate, York, UK: Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship, 2004); Debra Kolodny, *Blessed Bi Spirit: Bisexual People of Faith* (New York: Continuum, 2000); and "June 1972: The Ithaca Statement," *BiMedia.org: Bisexual News and Opinion*, accessed June 6, 2015, <http://bimedia.org/1984/june-1972-the-ithaca-statement>. Salmon Bay Friends Meeting meets at 6532 Phinney Avenue North, Seattle, Washington.

⁶⁶ The La Foret Conference and Retreat Center is located at 6145 Shoup Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Two structures on the La Foret property are listed on the NRHP: Ponderosa Lodge was listed on August 29, 2008 and the Taylor Memorial Chapel was listed on April 15, 1999.

⁶⁷ UUA headquarters was then located at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

⁶⁸ The South Valley Unitarian Universalist Society is located at 6876 South Highland Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Universalist Congregation in Monte Vista, California, has focused on bisexuals and religion in her writing.⁶⁹

vi) Metropolitan Community Church

The Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), also sometimes called the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, was established as a gay denomination. It began when Troy Perry, who had served as a pastor for Pentecostal congregations before coming out as a gay man, placed an announcement in *The Advocate* for a religious gathering of gays that led to a small meeting in his Huntington Park, CA home in 1968. Membership quickly grew, with Perry overseeing same-sex commitment ceremonies as early as 1970. The congregation met in a variety of locations before acquiring their first building in Los Angeles, California in 1971.⁷⁰ The second MCC church convened in San Francisco in 1970 in California Hall, where the Council on Religion and the Homosexual had held the New Year's Ball five years before; over eight hundred people participated at an inaugural service at which Troy Perry preached.⁷¹

In 1973, thirty-two people died in an arson attack at the UpStairs Lounge, a gay bar in New Orleans, Louisiana; the New Orleans MCC had previously conducted services in the building and many who were killed in the fire were members of the congregation, including MCC pastor Rev. Bill Larson and assistant pastor George Mitchell.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ann Schranz, "Coming Out in Faith," Monte Vista Unitarian Universalist Congregation website, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.montevistauu.org/minister/NewspaperColumns/2011_October_Daily_Bulletin_column.pdf. Monte Vista Unitarian Universalist Congregation is located at 9185 Monte Vista Avenue, Monte Vista, California. See also: Scott Alexander and Meg Riley, *The Welcoming Congregation Handbook: Resources for Affirming Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and/or Transgender People* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1999).

⁷⁰ The original MCC was located at 2201 South Union Avenue, Los Angeles, California. The building burned in 1973—possibly the result of arson.

⁷¹ "MCC San Francisco Timeline," Metropolitan Community Church San Francisco website, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://mccsf.org/timeline>. California Hall is located at 625 Polk Street, San Francisco, California.

⁷² Helen Freund, "UpStairs Lounge Fire Provokes Powerful Memories 40 Years Later," *Times-Picayune*, June 22, 2013, accessed December 3, 2015,

In spite of hostility, national interest in the church grew quickly, and the first national conference was held in 1970, drawing delegates from eight cities. The MCC has since continued to grow into an international denomination with over two hundred congregations. A Dallas MCC congregation commissioned openly gay architect Philip Johnson to design their building, and affiliated with the United Church of Christ in 2006. As the Cathedral of Hope, with roughly four thousand members, it is perhaps the largest liberal Christian congregation with a primary outreach to LGBTQ people (Figure 6).⁷⁴



Figure 6: Cathedral of Hope, Dallas, Texas. Photo by PTMurphus, 2015.⁷³

http://www.nola.com/traffic/index.ssf/2013/06/upstairs_lounge_fire_40_years.html; Erik Ose, "Gay Weddings and 32 Funerals: Remembering the UpStairs Lounge Fire," *Huffington Post*, July 11, 2008, accessed December 3, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/erik-ose/gay-weddings-and-32-funer_b_110084.html; "Exhibits: The UpStairs Lounge Fire," The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://exhibits.lgbtran.org/exhibits/show/upstairs-lounge-fire>; and *UpStairs Inferno*, dir. Robert L. Camina (Dallas, TX: Camina Entertainment, 2015). The UpStairs Lounge was located at 141 Chartres Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

⁷³ License: CC BY-NC 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/murphus/17513221388>

⁷⁴ Troy Perry and Thomas Swicegood, *Don't Be Afraid Anymore: The Story of Troy Perry and the Metropolitan Community Churches* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); Chris Glaser, *Troy Perry: Pastor and Prophet* (West Hollywood, CA: Metropolitan Community Churches, 2005); Krista McQueeney, "'We Are God's Children, Y'all': Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Lesbian- and Gay-Affirming Congregations," *Social Problems* 56, no. 1 (2009): 151-173; Jenell Williams Paris and Rory E. Anderson, "Faith-Based Queer Space in Washington, DC: The Metropolitan Community Church-DC and Mount Vernon Square," *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 8 (2001): 149-168; and Melissa Wilcox, "Of Markets and Missions: the Early History of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches," *Religion and American Culture* 11, no.1 (Winter 2001): 83-108. The Cathedral of Hope is located at 5910 Cedar Springs Road, Dallas, Texas. Architect Philip Johnson's Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut was listed on the NRHP and designated an NHL on February 18, 1997.

vii) The Black Church

Within Protestantism, “the Black Church” can refer to (a) historically African American denominations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, (b) predominantly African American congregations within otherwise largely white denominations such as the United Church of Christ, and (c) independent African American congregations that are not affiliated with any denomination. The affirmation of LGBTQ African Americans can be found in each of these parts of the Black Church, as well as in the work of independent Black theologians and scholars.⁷⁵

Union United Methodist Church is one of Boston’s oldest African American congregations.⁷⁶ Beginning in 2000 under the leadership of Rev. Theodore Lockhart, the church made an unprecedented move among

⁷⁵ Gary David Comstock, *A Whosoever Church: Welcoming Lesbians and Gay Men into African American Congregations* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); Todd C. Shaw and Eric L. McDaniel, “Whosoever Will’: Black Theology, Homosexuality, and the Black Political Church,” in *The Expanding Boundaries of Black Politics*, ed. Georgia Anne Persons (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 137-155; R. G. Blaxton, “‘Jesus Wept’: Reflections on HIV Disease and the Churches of Black Folk” in *Dangerous Liaisons: Blacks, Gays, and the Struggle for Equality*, ed. E. Brandt (New York City: The New Press, 1998), 102-141; Keith Boykin, “Bearing Witness: Faith in the Lives of Black Lesbians and Gays,” in *One More River to Cross: Black and Gay in America*, ed. Keith Boykin (New York: Anchor Books, 1996); Kelly Brown Douglass, “Black Church Homophobia: What to Do About It?,” *Reflections: A Magazine of Theological and Ethical Inquiry from Yale Divinity School*, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://reflections.yale.edu/article/sex-and-church/black-church-homophobia-what-do-about-it>; D. Constantine-Simms, ed., *The Greatest Taboo: Homosexuality in Black Communities* (Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 2000), 110-111; Aryana Bates, “Liberation in Truth: African American Lesbians Reflect on Religion, Spirituality, and Their Church” in *Gay Religion*, 221-238; Elijah G. Ward, “Homophobia, Hypermasculinity and the US Black Church,” *Culture, Health and Society* 7 (2005): 493-504; Horace Griffin, *Their Own Receive Them Not: African American Lesbians and Gays in Black Churches* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2006); Anthony Stanford, *Homophobia in the Black Church: How Faith, Politics, and Fear Divide the Black Community* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013); Yvette Flunder, *Where the Edge Gathers: Building a Community of Radical Inclusion* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2005); Ashton T. Crawley, “Circum-Religious Performance: Queer(ed) Black Bodies and the Black Church,” *Theology & Sexuality* 14, no. 2 (January 2008): 201-222; and Delano Squires, “Black Church Leaders Ask for Forgiveness From the LGBT Community,” *The Root*, March 3, 2011, accessed December 3, 2015, http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2011/03/black_church_leaders Seeking_forgiveness_from_the_lgbt_community.html.

⁷⁶ Union United Methodist Church is located at 485 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts.





Figure 7: City of Refuge, 1025 Howard Street, San Francisco, California. Photo by Cary Bass-Dechenes, 2010.⁷⁷

black Methodist congregations to unequivocally support LGBTQ members and offer support for those affected by HIV.⁷⁸

Bishop Yvette Flunder was raised within the Church of God In Christ (an historically African American Pentecostal denomination) and established the predominantly LGBTQ African American congregation City of Refuge in San Francisco in 1991. Services were held for a period at 1025 Howard Street in San Francisco (Figure 7) until the congregation re-located to Oakland in 2013. In 1995, City of Refuge formally became part of the United Church of Christ. City of Refuge gave rise to Transcendence, possibly the first transgender gospel choir.⁷⁹ Flunder, who is openly lesbian, also founded the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries in 2000, a

⁷⁷ License: CC BY-SA 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bastique/5102053237>

⁷⁸ Irene Monroe, "Guest Post: One LGBT-Inclusive Black Church in Boston Paves the Way," GLAAD website, February 27, 2012, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.glaad.org/blog/guest-post-one-lgbt-inclusive-black-church-boston-paves-way>.

⁷⁹ Rona Marech, "Singing the Gospel of Transcendence," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 18, 2004, accessed December 3, 2015, <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/SAN-FRANCISCO-Singing-the-gospel-of-2791956.php>; "Transcendence Gospel Choir," TransFaith website, accessed December 3, 2015, http://www.transfaithonline.org/explore/christian/traditions/black/transcendence_gospel_choir.

coalition of approximately forty congregations of different denominations, many of which are predominantly African American and/or led by LGBTQ ministers.⁸⁰

Carl Bean, an entertainer who attended the Metropolitan Community Church's Samaritan College, established the Unity Fellowship Church in 1982 in Los Angeles as a church for LGBTQ African Americans. Meetings were held in members' homes before holding public services at the Cockatoo Inn in Hawthorne, California, then at the Ebony Showcase Theater, and later at the Carl Bean Center, both in Los Angeles, California.⁸¹ The congregation has since expanded into the Unity Fellowship Church Movement with congregations throughout the country. Charlene Jacqueline Arcila-Ecks was a transgender activist who served as minister at Unity Fellowship of Christ Church in Philadelphia until her death in 2015.⁸²

In 2012, Pastor Romell Weekly co-founded The Sanctuary, a non-denominational church with connections to both the North American Baptist Conference and the Evangelical Free Church of America. Currently located in Kirkwood, Missouri, the mission of the church is to be a multi-racial, LGBTQ-affirming congregation.⁸³

⁸⁰ City of Refuge UCC is located at 8400 Enterprise Way, Oakland, California. "Oral History: Yvette Flunder," The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Interview.aspx?ID=25>; and "Our History," City of Refuge United Church of Christ website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://cityofrefugeucc.org/about/our-history>.

⁸¹ Cockatoo Inn was located at 11500 Acacia Avenue, Hawthorne, California. The Ebony Showcase Theater was at 4718 West Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles, California. The Carl Bean Center is located at 5149 West Jefferson Boulevard, Los Angeles, California.

⁸² Pamela Leong, "Religion, Flesh, and Blood: Re-creating Religious Culture in the Context of HIV/AIDS," *Sociology of Religion* 67, no. 3 (2006): 295-311; "History of UFCM," Unity Fellowship Church Movement website, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.unityfellowshipchurch.org/mainsite/?page_id=20; and Linda Rapp, "Bean, Carl (b. 1944)," The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.glbtcarchive.com/ssh/bean_c_S.pdf. The Unity Fellowship of Christ Church meets at the Arch Street Methodist Church, 55 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

⁸³ "About Our Church," The Sanctuary website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.thesanctuarystl.org/about-our-church>. The Sanctuary is located at 601 McKinley Avenue, Kirkwood, Missouri. "Profile: Charlene Jacqueline Arcila-Ecks," TransFaith, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.transfaithonline.org/display/article/profile-minister-charlene-jacqueline-arcila/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=1206.



Other LGBTQ-affirming African American congregations are not affiliated with a major denomination. One example is Faith Temple, founded by Pentecostal minister James Tinney in Washington, DC, in 1982.⁸⁴ Another example is Inner Light Ministries—also in Washington, DC. Founded by Rev. Kwabena Rainier Cheeks in 1993, it initially was part of the Unity Fellowship Church Movement before becoming independent in 2002.⁸⁵ Another example comes from the work of Alex D. Byrd, who conducted Bible study sessions with LGBTQ people before holding services as the Living Faith Church of the Full Covenant at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in Dallas, Texas in 2000. The church's name was later changed to Living Faith Covenant Church.⁸⁶

Other openly LGBTQ African American religious leaders have not always been the pastors of regular congregations. Rev. Peter Gomes served as minister at an American Baptist congregation in Plymouth, Massachusetts before being appointed in 1970 as senior pastor at Harvard University's non-denominational Memorial Church and a member of Harvard's faculty

⁸⁴ "Profile: Dr. James S. Tinney," The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=66>; and Joseph D. Whitaker, "James Tinney, Howard U. Professor, Dies," *Washington Post*, June 15, 1988, accessed December 5, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1988/06/15/james-tinney-howard-u-professor-dies/46b04f36-870f-4dd9-883c-3c2c5e2bbbb1>. Faith Temple is located at 1313 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC.

⁸⁵ Inner Light Ministries initially met at the First Congregational Church at Tenth and G Streets NW, Washington, DC. "About Us," Inner Light Ministries website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.innerlightministries.com/about-us>.

⁸⁶ Wyndham Garden Hotel is located at 2645 Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway, Dallas, Texas. "Church History," Living Faith Covenant Church website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.livingfaithdfw.org/AboutUs/ChurchHistory.aspx>.



Figure 8: Harvard Memorial Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Photo by Rian Castillo, 2009.⁸⁷

(Figure 8).⁸⁸ When he came out as a gay man in 1991, his position at Harvard gave him a national platform to advocate for LGBTQ people, which he did until his death in 2011. Rev. Irene Monroe, a PhD candidate at Harvard, served as pastor of a predominantly black Presbyterian church before becoming a syndicated religion columnist and contributing writer in the national media. Her writings regularly include a focus on the role of religion in the lives of LGBTQ African Americans.⁸⁹ Rev. Roland Stringfellow, an American Baptist minister, is director of ministerial outreach at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry and

⁸⁷ License: CC BY 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/digitizedchaos/3523667077>

⁸⁸ Robert D. McFadden, "Rev. Peter Gomes is Dead at 68; A Leading Voice Against Intolerance," *New York Times*, March 1, 2011, accessed December 5, 2015,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/02/us/02gomes.html>; Justin C. Worland, "Remembering Reverend Peter Gomes, Beloved Harvard Spiritual Leader," *The Harvard Crimson*, March 2, 2011, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2011/3/2/gomes-harvard-university-cox/?page=single>. Harvard University's Memorial Church is located at 1 Harvard Yard, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

⁸⁹ "Irene Monroe," *Huffington Post*, accessed December 5, 2015,

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/irene-monroe>; "Rev. Irene Monroe," Faith in America website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.faithinamerica.org/about-fia/board-members/irene-monroe>; Reverend Irene Monroe! website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.irenemonroe.com/home>.

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coordinator of the African American Roundtable at the Pacific School of Religion—an ecumenical seminary in Berkeley, California.⁹⁰ In addition to his writings in national media, Rev. Stringfellow has served as director of the Umoja Project, a project assisting African American pastors and church leaders in supporting LGBTQ congregants.⁹¹ Renee L. Hill has taught and been a consultant at a number of institutions, including Drew University in Madison, New Jersey and Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Chicago.⁹²

Other African American LGBTQ clergy and lay leaders have created online networks among Black Church members across denominational lines. These include Senior Minister Camarion D. Anderson, Pastor Raymond Walker II, Yeshua Aaron Holiday, Minister Felicia Harris, Minister Louis Mitchell, and Rev. Yunus Coldman, of the TransSaints network; and Rev. Cedric A. Harmon, Rev. Candy Holmes, Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey, and others involved in the Many Voices network.⁹³

Some pastors of black congregations do not necessarily identify as LGBTQ but have been strongly vocal in their support of LGBTQ people—sometimes losing significant numbers of members from their congregations as a result. These include Rev. Dennis Meredith of Tabernacle Baptist Church and Rev. Kenneth Samuel of Victory Church, both in the Atlanta, Georgia area.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Roland Stringfellow, “Soul Work: Developing a Black GLBT Liberation Theology,” in *Queer Religion* Vol. I, eds. Donald L Boisvert and Jay Emerson Johnson (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012): 113-126; “Rev. Roland Stringfellow,” Pacific School of Religion website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.psr.edu/portfolio/rev-roland-stringfellow>. The Pacific School of Religion is located at 1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley, California.

⁹¹ Roland Stringfellow, “Umoja Project Unites Black Faith Leaders around LGBT Equality,” *Huffington Post*, February 15, 2012, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-roland-stringfellow/umoja-project-brings-together-black-leaders-around-lgbt-equality>.

⁹² Renee L. Hill, “Who Are We for Each Other?” in *Black Theology: A Documentary History*, Volume II: 1980-1992, eds. James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 345-351.

⁹³ “About Us – TransSaints,” TransSaints website, accessed February 24, 2016, <http://www.trans saints.org/about-us.html>; “Organizational Background - Many Voices,” Many Voices website, accessed February 24, 2016, <http://www.manyvoices.org/about/background>.

⁹⁴ Neela Banerjee, “For Some Black Pastors, Accepting Gay Members Means Losing Others,” *New York Times*, March 27, 2007, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/27/us/27churches.html?ex=1.&r=0>.

Struggles in Body and Spirit: Religion and LGBTQ People in US History

Other major black public intellectuals have also been vocal in calling upon the Black Church to affirm its LGBTQ members, including scholars of religion Cornel West and Anthony Pinn, as well as sociologist Michael Eric Dyson, who is also an ordained Baptist minister.⁹⁵

viii) Latino/a Protestants

Many Latino/as in the United States are Catholic; as mentioned above, Dignity has been involved in outreach to LGBTQ Latino/as. But many Latino/as also come from Protestant—especially evangelical—backgrounds.⁹⁶

The Metropolitan Community Church has long engaged in outreach to LGBTQ Latino/as, including the creation of La Fundadora Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana in 1992 as part of Founders MCC in Los Angeles, California.⁹⁷ The MCC in San Antonio, Texas, began offering Spanish-language services in 2009.⁹⁸ The MCC of Washington, DC, has partnered with the local chapter of Dignity in doing outreach to LGBTQ Latino/as.⁹⁹ Pursuing a broader pro-active outreach among MCC

⁹⁵ Michel Martin, "Gay Marriage Divides Black Religions Leaders," *National Public Radio*, June 17, 2011, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104179946>; "Black Church Resource Provides Dialogue on Homosexuality," *Insights Into Religion*, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.religioninsights.org/articles/black-church-resource-provides-dialogue-homosexuality>; and Cornel West, *Race Matters* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 119-131. Other examples of LGBTQ-affirming Black churches can be found at "Affirming Churches," Operation Rebirth website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://operationrebirth.com/affirmingchurches.html>.

⁹⁶ Gastón Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda, "Hispanic Churches in American Public Life: Summary of Findings," Institute for Latino Studies, *University of Notre Dame Interim Reports 2* (January 2003), accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.hispanicchurchesusa.net/hcapl-rpt-1.pdf>; "Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion," Pew Research Center, April 25, 2007, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2007/04/25/changing-faiths-latinos-and-the-transformation-of-american-religion>.

⁹⁷ "Comunidad Latina (Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana)," Founders MCC website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.mccla.org/community/comunidad-latina-iglesia-de-la-comunidad-metropolitana>. The Founders MCC is located at 4607 Prospect Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

⁹⁸ "MCC to Initiate Sunday Services in Spanish," *Q San Antonio*, February 6, 2009, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.qsanantonio.com/mccsa.html>.

⁹⁹ Naima Pettigrew, "Metropolitan Community Church of Washington Offers Services in Spanish," *4 NBC Washington*, December 7, 2012, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.nbcwashington.com/on-air/community/Metropolitan-Community-Church-of-Washington-offers-services-in-Spanish-182589841.html>; and Latino GLBT History Project, "7th DC Latino Pride: La Misa," June 2, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015,



congregations was the focus of a 2014 conference at Resurrection MCC in Houston, Texas—a meeting that involved approximately thirty MCC leaders, including Rev. Dr. Nancy Wilson and Rev. Hector Gutierrez.¹⁰⁰

As with African Americans, there have been Latino/a religious leaders who advocated for LGBTQ Latino/as, including leaders who do not serve as pastors of regular congregations. Rev. Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre, a Southern Baptist minister who teaches at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, spoke out in favor of marriage equality.¹⁰¹ Rev. J. Manny Santiago, an American Baptist minister and former pastor of University Baptist Church in Seattle, has written in national media as an advocate of LGBTQ rights.¹⁰²

ix) Soulforce

Soulforce, a Texas-based interdenominational social action organization, was established in 1998 by Mel White, a former evangelical pastor who ghostwrote for conservative televangelists, including Jerry Falwell, before White came out as a gay man in 1994. White switched his affiliation to the MCC and devoted himself full-time to advocating for LGBTQ people—particularly in response to religious homophobia.

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.523256797734107.1073741832.159454620780995&type=1&l=0d74986b65>.

¹⁰⁰ Nancy Wilson, “Leaders of LGBT Inclusive Church to Expand Ministries in Hispanic Communities,” Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://ppmcc.org/devotional/leaders-of-lgbt-inclusive-church-to-expand-ministries-in-hispanic-communities>.

¹⁰¹ Dawn Wolfe Gutterman, “Miguel De La Torre: The New Face of Gay-Allied Activism,” *Pride Source*, June 23, 2005, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.pridesource.com/article.html?article=14766>. The Iliff School of Theology is located at 2323 East Iliff Avenue, Denver, Colorado.

¹⁰² Jahnabi Baroah, “African American And Latino Clergy On Obama's Gay Marriage Support,” *Huffington Post*, May 14, 2012, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/14/african-american-latino-clergy-obama-gay-marriage_n_1509852.html; and Dalia I. García, Jennifer Gray-Stanley, and Jesus Ramirez-Valles, “‘The Priest Obviously Doesn't Know That I'm Gay': The Religious and Spiritual Journeys of Latino Gay Men,” *Journal of Homosexuality*, 55 (2008): 411-436.

Soulforce's work has included campaigns to support LGBTQ members of Christian colleges and servicemembers in the US military.¹⁰³

The Eastern Church

The Eastern Church includes Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches, such as the Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, and Coptic Orthodox churches. Closely associated with these are Eastern Catholic churches in full communion with Rome, such as the Byzantine and Armenian Rites. Axios is an organization for LGBTQ persons affiliated with any of these Eastern Churches. It was founded in Los Angeles in 1980, and subsequently established chapters throughout the United States, including Boston, Washington, DC, and Chicago. Chapter members are laypersons who meet for support, research, and engagement with Eastern clergy.¹⁰⁴

Judaism

Among the major Jewish religious movements—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, and Renewal—recognition of and advocacy for LGBTQ members has varied widely.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Karma R. Chávez, "Beyond Complicity: Coherence, Queer Theory, and the Rhetoric of the 'Gay Christian Movement,'" *Text and Performance Quarterly* 24, no. 3-4 (2004): 255-275; Robin Reames, "Hermeneutical Rhetoric and the 2006 Soulforce Equality Ride at Wheaton College," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 126-144; and Mel White, *Stranger at the Gate: To be Gay and Christian in America* (New York: Plume, 1995).

¹⁰⁴ George Battelle, "Founding and Experience of Axios at Los Angeles, California," AXIOS – Eastern and Orthodox Gay and Lesbian Christians, accessed December 5, 2015,

http://www.axios.org/doku.php?id=st_seraphim_axios; and *Homosexuality and Religion*, 106-107.

¹⁰⁵ Steven Greenberg, *Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004); Yaakov Ariel, "Gay, Orthodox, and Trembling: The Rise of Jewish Orthodox Gay Consciousness, 1970s-2000s," *Journal of Homosexuality* 52 (2007): 91-109; Christie Balka and Andy Rose, *Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian, Gay, and Jewish* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); and Randal F. Schnoor, "Being Gay and Jewish: Negotiating Intersecting Identities," *Sociology of Religion* 67 (2006): 43-60.

Orthodox Rabbi Steven Greenberg came out as a gay man in 1999.¹⁰⁶ Two years later, Sandi Simcha DuBowski released his documentary *Trembling Before G-d*, which portrayed the lives of gay and lesbian Orthodox Jews.¹⁰⁷ These events elicited strong reactions from Orthodox Jews in the United States and Israel. In 2010, "Torah View on Homosexuality," a statement by a group of rabbis who serve as *roshei yeshiva* or deans of Yeshiva University in New York City, the most influential Orthodox seminary in the United States, broadly condemned gay sexual activity while cautiously extending limited accommodations to gays in Orthodox Jewish life.¹⁰⁸

Both in the United States and in Israel, some organizations have been created to provide support to LGBTQ Orthodox Jews, including two New York-based organizations: JQYouth, which began meeting in 2001, and Eshel, a broad-based advocacy and support organization for LGBTQ Orthodox Jews, which was established in 2012.¹⁰⁹ In 2010, Orthodox rabbis Nathaniel Helfgot, Aryeh Klapper, Yitzchak Blau and others drafted the "Statement of Principles on the Place of Jews with a Homosexual Orientation in Our Community," which was subsequently signed by many other Orthodox rabbis and educators in the United States and elsewhere. While not affirming same-sex desire nor relationships, it does call for the fullest possible inclusion of openly gay people in Orthodox life and discourages pressuring gay Orthodox Jews to enter into ostensibly

¹⁰⁶ "CLAL Faculty: Rabbi Steve Greenberg," The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership website, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.clal.org/clal_faculty_sg.html; and Steven Greenberg, "My Truth Isn't an Ugly One," *Guardian*, May 30, 2003, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/g2/story/0,3604,966771,00.html>.

¹⁰⁷ *Trembling Before G-d*, dir. Sandi Simcha DuBowski (Films That Change The World, 2001); and Debra Nussbaum Cohen, "The 'Trembling' Phenomenon: Film on Religious Gays Making Big Impact" *Jewish Week*, November 9, 2001, archive accessed December 5, 2015, <http://web.archive.org/web/20070207100052/http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/newscontent.php3?artid=5349>.

¹⁰⁸ "Torah View on Homosexuality," TorahWeb Foundation website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.torahweb.org/torah/special/2010/homosexuality.html>.

¹⁰⁹ "History," JQY website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.jqyouth.org/history.shtml>; and "Our History," Eshel website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.esheonline.org/about-new/our-history>.

heterosexual marriages.¹¹⁰ In the late 1990s, Israeli Beth Orens came to New York City to transition from male to female; she subsequently returned to Israel before moving back again to the United States, where she began the Dina email list for other transgender Orthodox Jews.¹¹¹ In 2008, Joy Ladin became the first openly transgender person to serve on the faculty of an Orthodox institution of higher learning, Stern College for Women of Yeshiva University in New York City.¹¹²

Conservative Judaism

In 2006, the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly (CJLS), which serves as the professional organization of Conservative rabbis, lifted most prohibitions on gay sexual activity. It also declared that openly lesbian, gay, and bisexual rabbis and cantors could be ordained and affirmed that same-sex unions could be recognized.¹¹³ Accordingly, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, a Conservative seminary, began admitting openly lesbian, gay, and bisexual rabbinical candidates the following year; and the celebration of same-sex

¹¹⁰ Janelle Eagle, "Incredible Orthodox Response to Homosexuality in Judaism," *Jewish Journal*, July 23, 2010, accessed December 5, 2015,

http://www.jewishjournal.com/oy_gay/item/incredible_orthodox_response_to_homosexuality_in_judaism_39100723; and Geoffrey Alderman, "This Line of Gay Jews is Quite Orthodox," *Guardian*, August 10, 2010, accessed December 5, 2015,

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/aug/10/gay-orthodox-judaism-rabbis>.

¹¹¹ Beth Orens, "Judaism and Gender Issues" in *Balancing on the Mechitza: Transgender in Jewish Community*, ed. Noach Dzmura (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010): 224-228; Charlie Anders, "Welcoming Transgendered [sic] Jews," *Tikkun*, August 10, 2005, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.starways.net/beth/tikkun20050810.html>; and "When Abba Becomes Ima: Transsexuals in the Orthodox World," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, December 26, 2006, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/2006/12/26/archive/when-abba-becomes-ima-transsexuals-in-the-orthodox-world>.

¹¹² Naomi Alderman, "A Transsexual at Yeshiva University," *Forward*, March 19, 2012, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://forward.com/culture/153010/a-transsexual-at-yeshiva-university>; "Faculty Directory: Joy Ladin," Yeshiva University website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.yu.edu/faculty/pages/Ladin-Joy>. Stern College for Women at Yeshiva University is located at 245 Lexington Avenue, New York City, New York.

¹¹³ Daniel S. Nevins, "Conservative Halakha and Homosexuality: An Insider's View of the 2006 CJLS Vote," My Jewish Learning website, December 20, 2006, accessed December 5, 2015,

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/conservative-halakhah-and-homosexuality>; and Laurie Goodstein, "Conservative Jews Allow Gay Rabbis and Unions," *New York Times*, December 7, 2006, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/07/us/07jews.html?pagewanted=all>.

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unions was established in 2012.¹¹⁴ In 2003, CJLS determined that sex reassignment surgery could officially change a person's gender under Jewish law.¹¹⁵

Reform Judaism

Beth Chayim Chadashim, a Reform synagogue, was founded in West Los Angeles in 1972 as the first synagogue specifically for lesbians and gay men.¹¹⁷ Three years later, in 1975, Congregation Or Chadash was



Figure 9: Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, San Francisco, California. Photo by Ed Blerman, 2010.¹¹⁶

founded in Chicago, a Reform synagogue for lesbians and gay men that began as a support group. The group began holding religious services in 1976, moving to share space with the Second Unitarian Universalist Church in 1977.¹¹⁸ Also in

¹¹⁴ Rachel Zöll, "As Seminary Chancellor, American Jewish Scholar Seeks to Renew Conservative Judaism," *Advocate*, September 13, 2007, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.advocate.com/news/2007/09/13/seminary-chancellor-american-jewish-scholar-seeks-renew-conservative-judaism>; and Ben Sales, "Conservative Rabbinic Group Issues Guidelines for Same-Sex Wedding Rituals," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, June 4, 2012, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/2012/06/04/life-religion/conservative-rabbinic-group-issues-guidelines-for-same-sex-wedding-rituals>. The Jewish Theological Seminary of America is located at 3080 Broadway, New York City, New York.

¹¹⁵ Mayer E. Rabinowitz, "Status of Transsexuals," Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://keshet.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Status-of-Transsexuals.pdf>.

¹¹⁶ License: CC BY 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/edbierman/4487893209>

¹¹⁷ "History," Beth Chayim Chadashim website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.bcc-la.org/about/history>. The congregation of Beth Chayim Chadashim bought its own building in 1977, located at 6000 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, California. This may have been the first synagogue owned by an LGBTQ congregation.

¹¹⁸ "History," Congregation Or Chadash website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.orchadash.org/about-us/our-history>. The Second Unitarian Universalist Church is located

1977, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), which is the national organization of Reform rabbis, determined that Reform organizations should actively oppose discrimination against gay and lesbian members.¹¹⁹ That same year, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav was founded in San Francisco as a Reform synagogue with a particular outreach to lesbians and gay men (Figure 9).¹²⁰

In 1990, the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the national body that supports Reform synagogues, determined that gay and lesbian Jews were fully members of the Reform community, and CCAR took the position that all rabbis should be treated equally regardless of sexual orientation. CCAR also declared in 1998 that rabbis could officiate at same-sex commitment ceremonies.¹²¹ The URJ extended these positions in 2003 to include bisexuals and transgender people, and made a stronger resolution to support transgender members of the congregation in 2015.¹²² In 2009, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav published a complete *siddur*, or prayer book—

at 656 West Barry Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. In 2003, Congregation Or Chadash moved to 5959 North Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois, which it shares with another synagogue.

¹¹⁹ "Resolution on Same Gender Officiation - Resolution adopted at the 111th Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, March, 2000," Central Conference of American Rabbis website, accessed December 5, 2015, <https://www.ccarnet.org/rabbis-speak/resolutions/2000/same-gender-officiation>.

¹²⁰ Aaron Cooper, "No Longer Invisible: Gay and Lesbian Jews Build a Movement" in *Homosexuality and Religion*, ed. Richard Hasbany (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1989): 83-97; and Dan Pine, "Sha'ar Zahav Celebrates 30 Years of Open Arms," *J Weekly*, May 11, 2007, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.jweekly.com/includes/print/32365/article/sha-ar-zahav-celebrates-30-years-of-open-arms>.

¹²¹ "Resolution on Same Gender Officiation - Resolution adopted at the 111th Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, March, 2000," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed December 5, 2015, <https://www.ccarnet.org/rabbis-speak/resolutions/2000/same-gender-officiation>.

¹²² Union for Reform Judaism, "Support for the Inclusion and Acceptance of the Transgender and Bisexual Communities," Berman Jewish Policy Archive at New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=7791>; Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, "Resolution on the Rights of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People," Union for Reform Judaism website, accessed December 5, 2015, <https://www.urj.org/what-we-believe/resolutions/resolution-rights-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-people>; Emma Green, "Reform Jews: Transgender People Are Welcome Here," *Atlantic*, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/reform-jews-transgender-people-are-welcome-here/414415>; and Bethany Rodgers, "Reform Jewish leaders pass sweeping transgender-rights resolution in Orlando," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 5, 2015, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/breaking-news/os-reform-judaism-transgender-resolution-20151105-story.html>.

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the first to address the lives and experiences of LGBTQ Jews.¹²³ In 2010 in Los Angeles, Reuben Zellman became the first openly transgender ordained Reform rabbi.¹²⁴ Denise Eger became the first openly lesbian rabbi to serve as president of CCAR in 2015.¹²⁵

Reconstructionist Judaism

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, Pennsylvania (Figure 10) is the only Reconstructionist rabbinical school.¹²⁷ Its administration determined in 1984 that the seminary would accept openly lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. This led the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (the national body of congregations) to declare full support of gay and lesbian rights.¹²⁸ In 1985,



Figure 10: Ziegelman Hall, the main building of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Wyncote, Pennsylvania. Photo by Ike9898, 2008.¹²⁶

¹²³ Stacey Palevsky, "The All-Inclusive Siddur: Sha'ar Zahav's New Prayerbook a Communal Effort," *J Weekly*, June 25, 2009, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/38465/the-all-inclusive-siddur-shaar-zahavs-new-prayerbook-a-communal-effort>. Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is located at 290 Dolores Street, San Francisco, California.

¹²⁴ Naomi Zeveloff, "Reuben Zellman's Rabbinical Classmates Were 'Unfailingly Supportive,'" *Forward*, July 15, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://forward.com/news/180228/reuben-zellmans-rabbinical-classmates-were-unfaili>.

¹²⁵ Associated Press, "Lesbian Rabbi Is to Become President of Reform Group," *New York Times*, March 15, 2015, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/16/us/lesbian-rabbi-is-to-become-president-of-reform-group.html>. See also: Jon R. Norman, "Congregational Culture and Identity Politics in a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Synagogue: Making Inclusiveness and Religious Practice One and the Same," *Journal of Religion & Society* 13 (2011): 1-19.

¹²⁶ License: CC BY-SA 3.0 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:RRC.JPG>

¹²⁷ Reconstructionist Rabbinical College is located at 1299 Church Road, Wyncote, Pennsylvania.

Deborah Brin may have become the first openly lesbian rabbi when she was ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.¹²⁹ That same year, Congregation Bet Haverim was established as a gay and lesbian Reconstructionist synagogue in Atlanta, Georgia.¹³⁰ Work by lay leaders, rabbis, and others resulted in the 1993 report “Homosexuality and Judaism: The Reconstructionist Position,” which was the basis for designating certain congregations as *kehilah mekabelet*, or officially welcoming of gay and lesbian people.¹³¹

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association elected Rabbi Toba Spitzer, an open lesbian, as president in 2007 and subsequently elected Rabbi Jason Klein, an openly gay man, as president in 2013.¹³² That same year, Rabbi Deborah Waxman, an open lesbian, was elected president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.¹³³ In 2015, openly transgender Jacob Lieberman graduated from the college; while a student, he collaborated with faculty member Rabbi Jacob Staub to create a transgender/genderqueer committee at the college, which has performed outreach and advocacy work with the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.¹³⁴ The scholarship of Rabbi Rebecca T. Alpert, former dean of

¹²⁸ Joshua Lesser, “History of Gay Marriage in the Reconstructionist Movement,” Keshet website, accessed December 5, 2015, http://keshet.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/HistoryofGayMarriageinReconstMvt_Lesser.pdf.

¹²⁹ Diane Schmidt, “Women of the Wall founding Rabbi Deborah Brin,” *New Mexico Jewish Link*, May 9, 2014, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.examiner.com/article/women-of-the-wall-founding-rabbi-deborah-brin>.

¹³⁰ Steve Goss, “Congregation Bet Haverim Celebrates Its ‘Silver Jewbilee,’” *National Public Radio WABE 90.1 FM*, 2010, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://news.wabe.org/post/congregation-bet-haverim-celebrates-its-silver-jewbilee>. Congregation Bet Haverim is located at 2074 Lavista Road, Atlanta, Georgia.

¹³¹ Joshua Lesser, “History of Gay Marriage in the Reconstructionist Movement,” Keshet website, accessed December 5, 2015, http://keshet.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/HistoryofGayMarriageinReconstMvt_Lesser.pdf.

¹³² “Rabbi Toba Spitzer,” Congregation Dorshei Tzedek website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://dorsheitzedek.org/rabbi-toba-spitzer>; and Josh Nathan-Kazis, “Jason Klein Tapped To Lead Group of Reconstructionist Rabbis,” *Forward*, March 11, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://forward.com/news/breaking-news/172693/jason-klein-tapped-to-lead-group-of-reconstruction>.

¹³³ Anne Cohen, “Trailblazing Reconstructionist Deborah Waxman Relishes Challenges of Judaism,” *Forward*, October 9, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://forward.com/news/185252/trailblazing-reconstructionist-deborah-waxman-reli>.

¹³⁴ Naomi Zeveloff, “Jacob Lieberman Wants to Change the Jewish World,” *Forward*, July 16, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://forward.com/news/180234/jacob-lieberman-wants-to-change-the-jewish-world>; and “Fighting For A Good Name,” Jewish Reconstructionist Communities website, accessed December 5, 2015, <https://jewishrecon.org/resource/fighting-good-name>.

students at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, has included a focus on the role of lesbians in Judaism.¹³⁵ In 2008 in Cotati, California, Congregation Ner Shalom invited Irwin Keller to serve as their rabbi.¹³⁶ Keller is a former attorney, AIDS activist, and founding member of the political comedy drag troupe, “The Kinsey Sicks.”¹³⁷

Renewal Judaism

Within the Jewish Renewal Movement, Fabrangen Havurah was founded in Washington, DC, in 1971 and would go on to become an LGBTQ-welcoming religious community.¹³⁸ Eli Cohen, who may have been the first openly gay Jewish Renewal rabbi, was ordained in 2005.¹³⁹ In 2011, openly bisexual Debra Kolodny was ordained. Bisexuality has been a focus of Kolodny’s writings and activism.¹⁴⁰

Other Jewish Congregations

Some LGBTQ-focused synagogues have been established without formal affiliation with any of the major movements in Judaism. Congregation Beit Simchat Torah was founded in New York City in 1973 and first met in the Church of the Holy Apostles, an Episcopal church. Since 1975, they have gathered at rented space in the Westbeth Artists Community in New York City. In 2011, the congregation purchased a

¹³⁵ Rebecca T. Alpert, *Like Bread on the Seder Plate: Jewish Lesbians and the Transformation of Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Rebecca T. Alpert, Ellen Sue Levi Elwell, and Shirley Idelson, *Lesbian Rabbis: The First Generation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

¹³⁶ Congregation Ner Shalom is located at 85 La Plaza, Cotati, California.

¹³⁷ Irwin Keller, “Reflections of a Retiring Drag Queen,” *Itzik’s Well* (blog), October 9, 2014, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://itzikswell.blogspot.com/2014/10/reflections-of-retiring-drag-queen.html>; and “About Us,” Congregation Ner Shalom website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.nershalom.org/about/rabbi.html>.

¹³⁸ “Key Dates in Fabrangen’s History,” Fabrangen website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.fabrangen.org/about-us/fabrangen-history>. The first meeting was held at 2158 Florida Avenue NW, Washington, DC.

¹³⁹ “Rabbi’s Corner,” Chadeish Yameinu website, accessed December 5, 2015, <https://sites.google.com/site/cysantacruzorg/rabbi>.

¹⁴⁰ Debra Kolodny, “Profile: Debra Kolodny,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, modified October 15, 2012, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=48>.

permanent home near Madison Square Gardens and have begun renovations in order to relocate there. Beit Simchat Torah claims to be the largest LGBTQ synagogue in the world.¹⁴¹ Bet Mishpachah was founded in Washington, DC, in 1975 as the Metropolitan Community Temple Mishpocheh. The following year, they hosted the First International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews. They spent their first years meeting in rented spaces around Washington, DC. In 1980, they adopted the name Beit Mishpachah and, at the Third International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews, they co-founded the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jews. In 1997, the congregation moved to the newly-restored Washington, DC Jewish Community Center.¹⁴²

Broad-based organizations have been created to advocate for LGBTQ Jews. In addition to the World Congress of Gay & Lesbian Jews (also sometimes called Keshet Ga'avah), these include Nehirim and Keshet (not to be confused with Keshet Ga'avah).¹⁴³

Islam

The Al-Fatiha Foundation was established in 1997 by Faisal Alam, a Pakistani-American. Also playing a leadership role was Daaylee Abdullah,

¹⁴¹ Henry Rabinowitz, "Talmud Class in a Gay Synagogue," *Judaism* 28, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 237-247; "Exhibits: Congregation Beit Simchat Torah," The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Exhibits/CBST/index.aspx>; Doug Chandler, "In a Move Freighted With Symbolism, CBST Purchases First Home," *Jewish Week*, July 26, 2011, accessed December 5, 2015,

http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/new_york/move_freighted_symbolism_cbst_purchases_first_home; Ayelet S. Cohen, *Changing Lives, Making History: Congregation Beit Simchat Torah: The First Forty Years* (New York: Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, 2014). The Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles is located at 296 Ninth Avenue, New York City, New York. It was listed on the NRHP on April 26, 1972. Beit Simchat Torah's address in Westbeth is 57 Bethune Street, New York City, New York. Westbeth was listed on the NRHP on December 8, 2009. The new location of Beit Simchat Torah will be 130 West 30th Street, New York City, New York.

¹⁴² "About Us: Our History," Bet Mishpachah website, accessed November 7, 2015, <http://www.betmish.org/index.php/about-us/who-we-are/our-history>. The DC Jewish Community Center is located at 1529 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, DC.

¹⁴³ "World Congress of GLBT Jews Celebrates 40 Years of Progress," Beth Chayim Chadashim, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.bcc-ia.org/world-congress-of-glbt-jews-celebrates-40-years-of-progress>; "About Nehirim," Nehirim, archived website accessed December 5, 2015, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150401062736/http://www.nehirim.org/gayjewishcommunity>; and "Our Story," Keshet, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.keshetonline.org/about/our-story>.

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an openly gay African American imam in Washington, DC. Multiple local chapters were founded and annual conferences were held until Alam stepped down in 2005 and the organization folded.¹⁴⁴

In 2007, Ani Zonneveld and Pamela Taylor founded Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV), based in Los Angeles.¹⁴⁶ Among its ten



Figure 11: The Flora Lamson Hewlett Library at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California. Photo by Betsian, 2009.¹⁴⁵

principles: “We endorse the human and civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) individuals.”¹⁴⁷ With support from the Human Rights Campaign (a national LGBTQ civil rights organization),

¹⁴⁴ Omar Minwalla et al., “Identity Experience Among Progressive Gay Muslims in North America: A Qualitative Study Within Al-Fatiha,” *Culture, Health & Sexuality: An International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care* 7, no. 2 (2005): 113-128; Joseph Andoni Massad, “Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World,” *Public Culture* 14, no. 2 (2002): 361-385; and Emily Wax, “Imam Daayiee Abdullah Welcomes Gay Muslims to Worship, Marry,” *Washington Post*, April 17, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/imam-daayiee-abdullah-welcomes-gay-muslims-to-worship-marry/2013/04/17/3ebcab3a-a5db-11e2-b029-8fb7e977ef71_story.html; Neil MacFarquhar, “Gay Muslims Find Freedom, of a Sort, in US,” *New York Times*, November 7, 2007, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/07/us/07gaymuslim.html?pagewanted=1>; Hannah Kreider, “Openly Gay Imams Serve as an Affirming Gleam of Hope in Muslim LGBT community,” GLAAD website, June 21, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.glaad.org/blog/openly-gay-imams-serve-affirming-gleam-hope-muslim-lgbt-community>; “Faisal Alam: Biography,” Hidden Voices website, accessed December 5, 2015; <http://www.hiddenvoices.info/biography>; and Sadiq Ali Sheraze, “The Progressive Muslim Movement,” *Outsmart*, October 1, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.outsmartmagazine.com/2013/10/the-progressive-muslim-movement>.

¹⁴⁵ License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/betsian/3701121867>

¹⁴⁶ Kari Huus, “Battling for Gay Rights, In Allah’s Name,” *MSNBC*, October 24, 2011, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/44993807/ns/us_news-life/t/battling-gay-rights-allahs-name/#.YmeW-7iDGkp.

¹⁴⁷ “About MPV: MPV Principles,” Muslims for Progressive Values website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.mpvusa.org/mpv-principles>.

MPV commissioned openly transgender Muslim Tynan Power to adapt material by Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle (a scholar of Islam who teaches at Emory University). The result was the 2010 document “Sexual Diversity in Islam: Is There Room for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Muslims?”¹⁴⁸ MPV has also partnered with Daayiee Abdullah to produce an online LGBTQ lecture series.¹⁴⁹

With support from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity (MASGD) was established at the 2013 Creating Change conference in Atlanta, Georgia.¹⁵⁰

Ibrahim Farajajé, who described himself as “a gay-identified bisexual Black theologian,” explored Islamic mysticism and taught about Islam at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California (Figure 11).¹⁵¹

Some LGBTQ Muslims have sought to portray their own lives through a variety of projects. *A Jihad for Love* is a 2007 documentary featuring LGBTQ Muslims in the United States and elsewhere. *Coming Out Muslim: Radical Acts of Love* is a play that premiered at the 2014 Fresh Fruit Festival in New York City.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, “Sexual Diversity in Islam: Is There Room in Islam for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Muslims?” Muslims for Progressive Values, created 2010, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.mpvusa.org/sexuality-diversity>; “Scott Kugle,” Emory College website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.mesas.emory.edu/home/people/faculty/kugle.html>.

¹⁴⁹ Muslims for Progressive Values, “Intro to LGBTQI Lecture Series,” YouTube video, published May 21, 2014, accessed December 5, 2015,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLE3saqAXcc3ahCLB4FWqyd7XAJ_Lh72IZ&v=xZagLCVhaDw.

¹⁵⁰ “About MASGD,” Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.muslimalliance.org/aboutmasgd>.

¹⁵¹ Elias Farajajé Jones, “Breaking Silence: Toward an In-The-Life Theology,” in *Black Theology: A Documentary History*, 139-159. Ibrahim Farajajé passed away in February 2016. The Graduate Theological Union is located at 2400 Ridge Road, Berkeley, California.

¹⁵² *A Jihad for Love*, dir. Parvez Sharma (New York, First Run Features, 2007); J Mase III, “Radically Queer Islam: An Interview with the Cast of Coming Out Muslim,” *Huffington Post*, July 2, 2014, accessed December 5, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/j-mase-iii/queering-islam-an-intervi_b_5549913.html. See also: Habib Samar, *Islam and Homosexuality* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010); Scott Alan Kugle, *Homosexuality in Islam: Critical Reflection on Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld, 2010); and Scott Alan Kugle, *Living Out Islam: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

Hinduism

There is little organized presence of LGBTQ Hindus in the United States. The Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association has existed in online formats since 2001, and includes members primarily from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and other Vaishnava traditions from the United States and abroad.¹⁵³

Trikone is a social organization for LGBTQ people of South Asian descent—including Hindus and Muslims—founded by Arvind Kumar and Suvir Das in Northern California in 1986. Other chapters have developed elsewhere in the country. A newsletter of the same name has published articles on religion in the lives of LGBTQ South Asians.¹⁵⁴

Buddhism

Buddhists in the United States are usually immigrants and their descendants who have brought Buddhist traditions from home countries, or converts. The latter are almost exclusively white people who refer to themselves as “Western Buddhists” and who, unlike Buddhist lay persons in Asia, tend to focus on meditation and doctrine.

Some LGBTQ Buddhists have emerged as teachers and leaders. Enkyō Pat O'Hara is an openly lesbian Soto (Japanese) Zen teacher in New York City.¹⁵⁵ Soeng Hyang is also openly lesbian, and is a Jogye (Korean) Zen teacher at the Kwan Um School of Zen in Cumberland, Rhode Island.¹⁵⁶ Caitriona Reed is a transgender woman and a Thiền (Vietnamese) Zen teacher based in Southern California. Sarika Dharma was an openly

¹⁵³ “GALVA-108,” Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association website, accessed May 1, 2015, <http://www.galva108.org>.

¹⁵⁴ “What is TriKone?” TriKone website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.trikone.org/index.php/about-us/trikone>; and *Homosexuality and Religion*, 9-10.

¹⁵⁵ “Roshi Enkyo O’Hara,” The Village Zendo website, accessed December 5, 2015, <https://villagezendo.org/teachers/roshi-enkyo-ohara>.

¹⁵⁶ The Kwan Um School is located at 99 Pound Road, Cumberland, Rhode Island.

lesbian monk of Vietnamese Zen and head of the International Buddhist Meditation Center in Los Angeles, California; she also oversaw a lesbian Buddhist group in Los Angeles.¹⁵⁸ Issan Dorsey was an openly gay man, Soto Zen teacher, and former abbot at the Hartford Street Zen Center in the Castro district of San Francisco (Figure 12). Dorsey also established in San Francisco the Maitri Hospice for people with AIDS.¹⁵⁹ Zenju Earthlyn Manuel is an openly bisexual African American Soto Zen teacher in East Oakland, California.¹⁶⁰



Figure 12: Hartford Street Zen Center, San Francisco, California. Photo by TalgenEtsudo, 2006.¹⁵⁷

Some forms of LGBTQ Buddhist organization have emerged, especially in the form of meditation practice groups. Examples include the Queer Dharma Meditation group at the Shambhala Meditation Center of New

¹⁵⁷ License: CC BY 2.0. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hartford_Street_Zen_Center.jpg

¹⁵⁸ Miriam Levering and Grace Jill Schireson, "Women and Zen Buddhism: Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, eds. Rosemary Skinner Keller, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and Marie Cantlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006): 639-646; "Rev. Sarika Dharma, Head Monk at Buddhist Center in LA," *Los Angeles Times*, August 29, 1996, accessed December 5, 2015, http://articles.latimes.com/1996-08-29/news/mn-38698_1_sarika-dharma. The International Buddhist Meditation Center is located at 928 South New Hampshire Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

¹⁵⁹ David Schneider, *Street Zen: the Life and Work of Issan Dorsey* (Boston: Shambhala, 1993); Ronald Y. Nakasone, "Illness and Compassion: AIDS in an American Zen Community," *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1995): 488-493; and "Our History," Maitri website, accessed December 5, 2015, archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20141101192540/http://maitrisf.org/care/index.php/history>. The Hartford Street Zen Center is located at 57 Hartford Street, San Francisco, California. The Maitri Hospice is located at 401 Duboce Avenue, San Francisco, California.

¹⁶⁰ Kimberly Winston, "Black, Bisexual, and Buddhist: Zenju Earthlyn Manuel Is Not Afraid to Embrace Who She Is," *Tricycle* website, August 15, 2015, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.tricycle.com/blog/black-bisexual-and-buddhist>.

York and the Gay Buddhist Fellowship in San Francisco.¹⁶¹ The East Bay Meditation Center in Oakland, California states that its mission involves intentionally creating a “welcoming environment for people of color, members of the LGBTQI community, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented communities.”¹⁶²

Some Western Buddhists practice “socially engaged Buddhism,” i.e., Buddhist teachings applied to community organizing and activism. *Turning Wheel*, a magazine dedicated to socially engaged Buddhism, ran a special issue in fall 1992 on LGBTQ activism.¹⁶³

Pagans and Wiccans

Leo Martello was a gay man and Wiccan in New York City who engaged in LGBTQ activism following the Stonewall riots in 1969. He wrote widely about witchcraft and Wicca in the LGBTQ press and about LGBTQ issues in the Pagan press. Like Leo Martello, Arthur Evans was a gay activist in New York. After moving to San Francisco, Evans published *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture* in 1978, claiming that gay men were among the victims of the witch hysteria in early modern Europe.¹⁶⁴

Two associates of Martello’s, Eddie Buczynski and Herman Slater, were a gay couple who founded The Warlock Shop, a New York City occult

¹⁶¹ “Queer Dharma,” Shambhala Meditation Center of New York website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://ny.shambhala.org/queer-dharma>; “About,” Gay Buddhist Fellowship website, accessed December 5, 2105, <http://gaybuddhist.org/v3-wp>. The Queer Dharma Group meets at the Shambhala Center at 118 West 22nd Street in New York City. The Gay Buddhist Fellowship meets at the San Francisco Buddhist Center at 37 Bartlett Street, San Francisco, California.

¹⁶² “Mission and History,” East Bay Meditation Center website, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.eastbaymeditation.org/index.php?s=12>. In 2007, The East Bay Meditation Center opened its first permanent location at 2147 Broadway, Oakland, California. In 2012, the Center re-located to 285 Seventeenth Street, Oakland, California.

¹⁶³ “Turning Wheel Media,” Buddhist Peace Fellowship website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.buddhistpeacefellowship.org/our-work/turning-wheel-media>. See also: Winston Leyland, *Queer Dharma: Voices of Gay Buddhists* (San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1998); and Winston Leyland, *Queer Dharma: Voices of Gay Buddhists*, Vol. II (San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 2000); Christopher S. Queen, *Engaged Buddhism in the West* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 271; Jonathan Alexander and Karen Yescavage, “Bi, Buddhist, Activist: Refusing Intolerance, But not Refusing Each Other,” *Journal of Bisexuality* 10, no. 1-2 (2010): 154-165.

¹⁶⁴ Arthur Evans, *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture: A Radical View of Western Civilization and Some of the People it has Tried to Destroy* (Boston: Fag Rag Books, 1978).

bookstore.¹⁶⁵ Buczynski also founded the Minoan Brotherhood in 1975, a group for gay and bisexual men interested in Wicca who may have felt excluded from the heterosexual assumptions of other established Wiccan traditions. Multiple groves, or groups, of the Brotherhood now exist in cities throughout the United States and internationally.¹⁶⁶

As gay men were developing new forms of community drawn from Pagan and Wiccan sources, so too were lesbians. Beginning in the 1970s, writers such as Margot Adler, Luisah Teish, Mary Daly, Judith Plaskow, and Carol P. Christ offered visions of feminist and/or Goddess-centered religion for women.¹⁶⁷ In this context, openly lesbian Z. Budapest developed female-only Dianic Wicca, starting with Susan B. Anthony Coven #1, founded in Venice, California in 1971.¹⁶⁸

Bisexuals and those attracted to multiple genders have also had a high profile in Pagan and Wiccan communities. Starhawk published the best-selling book *The Spiral Dance: a Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* in 1979; she was later involved in the founding Reclaiming (a Wiccan organization) and collaborated with the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS).¹⁶⁹ Shamanic practitioner Raven Kaldera is an intersex female-to-male activist, author, priest, and Pagan organizer in central Massachusetts. Sherry Marts is a feminist Wiccan who has been affiliated with the Open Hearth Foundation, a Pagan community center in

¹⁶⁵ The Warlock Shop was located at 300 Henry Street, Brooklyn Heights, New York City, New York.

¹⁶⁶ Michael G. Lloyd, *Bull of Heaven: The Mythic Life of Eddie Buczynski and the Rise of the New York Pagan* (Hubbardston, MA: Asphodel Press, 2012).

¹⁶⁷ Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986); Luisah Teish, *Jambalaya: The Natural Woman's Book of Personal Charms and Practical Rituals* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985); Mary Daly and Jane Caputi, *Websters' First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987); and Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ, *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989).

¹⁶⁸ Ruth Rhiannon Barrett, "Lesbian Rituals and Dianic Tradition," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 7, no. 2 (2003): 15-28; and Zsuzsanna Emese Budapest et al., *The Feminist Book of Lights and Shadows* (Venice, CA: Feminist Wicca, 1976).

¹⁶⁹ Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979); Starhawk's presentation at the National Conference Celebrating Bisexuality in Washington, DC, in 1993 was published as "The Sacredness of Pleasure" in *Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries, and Visions*, eds. John Dececco and Naomi S. Tucker (New York: Haworth Press, 1995): 325-329.

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Washington, DC.¹⁷⁰ Also based in Washington, DC, Wiccan Loraine Hutchins has focused her writing and teaching on sexuality and spirituality.¹⁷¹

Radical Faeries and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence

In 1979, three gay activists—Don Kilhefner, Mitch Walker, and Harry Hay—organized a “Spiritual Conference for Radical Fairies.” Held at the Sri Ram Ashram near Benson, Arizona over Labor Day weekend, the gathering drew approximately two hundred men. Similar to some earlier forms of gay Paganism and Wicca, participants envisioned a distinctively gay male spirituality that celebrated drag, sexuality, and nature. A second conference was held in 1980 at the town of Estes Park near Boulder, Colorado followed by the establishment of Radical Faerie rural communes throughout the United States. Although the focus has remained on cis-gender gay men, some Radical Faerie communes, events, and networks have come to include other genders and sexual orientations.¹⁷² Black

¹⁷⁰ The Open Hearth Foundation is located at 1502 Massachusetts Avenue SE, Washington, DC.

¹⁷¹ Helen Boyd, “Five Questions With... Raven Kaldera,” *En/Gender: Helen Boyd’s Journal of Gender & Trans Issues* (blog), October 12, 2005, accessed December 5, 2015,

<http://www.myhusbandbetty.com/2005/10/12/five-questions-with-raven-kaldera>; Raven Kaldera, “Profile: Raven Kaldera,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, last modified December 13, 2013, accessed December 5, 2015,

<http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=141>; Sherry Marts, “Harlot for the Queen of Heaven,” in *Blessed Bi Spirit*, eds. Debra R. Kolodny and Mary E. Hunt (New York: Continuum, 2000): 124-133; Loraine Hutchins, “Erotic Spiritualities,” in *Blessed Bi Spirit*, 203-217; and Loraine Hutchins, “Profile: Loraine Hutchins,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network, last modified January 28, 2004, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=51>.

See also: Susan Harper, “‘All Cool Women Should Be Bisexual’: Female Bisexual Identity in an American NeoPagan Community,” *Journal of Bisexuality* 10 no. 1-2 (2010): 79-107.

¹⁷² Jay Hasbrouck, “Utopian Imaginaries and Faerie Practice: Mapping Routes of Relational Agency” in *Gay Religion*, 239-258; Blackberri, “Searching for My Gay Spiritual Roots,” *BLK* (June 1990): 11; Gryphon Blackswan, “It’s a Shame We Don’t Have More People of Color Participating,” *Lavender Reader* 7, no. 1 (1992): 26-28; Henry Holmes, “Into The Woods: Radical Faerie Movement Combines Earthy Spirituality With Insurgent Politics,” *BLK* (June 1990): 7, 8, 10, 12, 13; Rosette Royale, “As a Matter of Fact... Musings on the First ‘Faeries of All Colors Together’ Gathering,” *RFD* 28, no. 2 (2001): 29, 47; Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); John A. Stover III, “When Pan Met Wendy: Gendered Membership Debates Among the Radical Faeries” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 2008 (11) 31-55; and Peter Hennen, “Fae Spirits and Gender Trouble: Resistance and Compliance Among the Radical Faeries” in Peter Hennen, ed., *Faeries, Bears, and Leathermen: Men in Community Queering the Masculine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008): 59-94. See also: Randy Conner, *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); Mark Thompson, *Gay Spirit: Myth and Meaning* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987); and Mark Thompson, Richard Neely,

Leather Wings was borne out of the Radical Faeries; those involved draw on the inspiration of Radical Faerie gatherings and rituals to explore leather sexuality.¹⁷³ The Billy Club is a gay men's group that is similar to the Radical Faeries but with less emphasis on drag and camp; the Billys held their first gathering in Northern California in 1988 and have remained concentrated in Northern California.¹⁷⁴



Figure 13: Sister Sistah, Sister Dana Van Iquity and Sister Kitty Catalyst O.C.P. at the NAMES Project office, 2362 Market Street, San Francisco, California working on the Nuns of The Above AIDS memorial quilt squares, honoring those Sisters who have died from AIDS. Photo by Rink Photo, ca. 1990s.¹⁷⁵

On Easter weekend in 1979, in an act of spontaneous public theater, gay activists Ken Bunch, Fred Brungard, and Baruch Golden donned nun's garb and, leaving the small home that they shared together, went on a

and Bo Young, *The Fire in Moonlight: Stories From the Radical Faeries, 1975-2010* (Maple Shade, NJ: White Crane Books, 2011).

¹⁷³ Mark Thompson, "Black Leather Wings: the Radical Faeries Host a Leather Gathering," *Drummer* 136 (January 1990): 6-8; and Andrea Sharon Dworkin, "Bisexual Histories in San Francisco in the 1970s and Early 1980s," *Journal of Bisexuality* 1, no.1 (2000): 87-119. See also: Mark Thompson, ed., *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice* (Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 2001).

¹⁷⁴ Ron Vanscoyk, "Beginnings: A Billy Story," The Billys website, accessed December 5, 2010, <http://thebillys.org/name.pdf>.

¹⁷⁵ License: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sister_Sew_and_Sew_and_Sew.jpg

spree through San Francisco.¹⁷⁶ They later made further public appearances dressed as nuns. Two other activists who became involved early on, Agnes de Garron and Bill Graham, had attended the 1979 Spiritual Conference for Radical Fairies, where they found more men drawn to the notion of an order of gay male nuns. Four of these early participants (Ken Bunch, Bill Graham, Fred Brungard, and Agnes de Garron) were among those involved in establishing the order as the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence with a mission to “promulgate universal joy and expiate stigmatic guilt.” The Sisters developed into an international organization for fundraising and community service with new “houses” established throughout the United States and abroad. Although the Sisters remain primarily comprised of cis-gender gay men, their ranks now include all genders and sexualities (Figure 13). The Sisters vary widely in terms of their religious convictions; some are Catholic, but others are Jewish, Sikh, Pagan, Wiccan, and atheist. As such, some Sisters have sometimes described their order as being non-religious.¹⁷⁷

Coda

This chapter has offered a brief overview of religious communities in which LGBTQ people have sought to affirm the value of their lives.

The differences in structure and organization among these communities is illustrated by the ways in which LGBTQ people sometimes clash with their co-religionists over the authority to interpret the meaning of LGBTQ lives. Chapters of Dignity, for example, are sometimes prohibited from meeting within the same Catholic churches where their members

¹⁷⁶ The home they shared was in the Mission District of San Francisco, California. Fred Brungard became Sister Missionary Position, now known as Sister Soami or simply as “Mish.” Ken Bunch originally took the name Sister Adhanarishvara, then Sister Vicious Power Hungry Bitch, and is now known as Sister Vish-Knew or “Vish.” Barouk (Bruce) Golden did not remain heavily involved in the order. A fourth founding member who joined them at their second manifestation is Agnes de Garron, known as Sister Hysterectoria. Later in 1979, these four moved to an apartment in San Francisco known as The Convent, located near the Panhandle of Golden Gate Park (Melissa Wilcox, personal communication).

¹⁷⁷ “A Sistory, Blow By Blow,” The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence website, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.thesisters.org/sistory>.

celebrate mass. Furthermore, Catholic priests and members of Catholic religious orders who advocate for LGBTQ people can face disciplinary action. In contrast, LGBTQ members of Unitarian congregations can expect that their relationships will be recognized and valued, and that the church will mobilize to confront forces that seek to demonize or diminish LGBTQ people.

In spite of the differences in the workings of authority from one community to another, and despite the variety of ritual, language, and religious meanings, there is a commonality to the work discussed in this chapter. In every instance, LGBTQ people have sought to re-work, re-imagine, and re-interpret the stories, symbols, rituals, and meanings that they have inherited, adopted, or invented. Although expressions vary from one religious community to another, they all seek to assert the dignity and humanity of LGBTQ people.