

Us Versus Us

Chapter 1: There is No They

- 86% of LGBTs were raised in a faith community from the ages of 0 to 18 (75% for all Americans)
- Top three religious affiliations LGBTs are raised in:
 - 19% Catholic, 17% Evangelical nondenominational, 9% Baptist
- Comparative Upbringing LGBT vs General Population

	LGBT	Gen Pop
Protestant	61%	51%
Catholic	26%	24%
Judaism	2.5%	2%
Islam	0.2%	0.6%

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Chapter 2: The Great Exodus

54% of LGBTs leave their religious community after the age of 18 (27% for general population)

Top three reasons LGBTs leave after age 18

- 24% Negative personal experiences
- 21% theological considerations
- 13% institutional misgivings

Top three reasons for general population leaving after 18

- 71% gradually drifted away
- 58% stopped believing in religion's teachings
- 46% unhappy with religion's teachings

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Chapter 3: The New Prodigals

- 76% of LGBTs are open to returning to their religious community and its practices (9% gen pop)
- 86% of LGBT people, just over 19 million LGBT people, were raised in a faith community
- 54%, almost 10.5 million LGBT people, subsequently left
- 36%, nearly 7 million LGBT people, are still in the faith community they were raised in
- 76%, nearly 8 million LGBT people, are open to making a return

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What would influence LGBT people to return?

Feeling loved (12%)

Given time (9%)

Faith community's change in theology (8%)

No attempts to change their sexual orientation (6%)

Authenticity (5%)

Support of family and friends (4%)

- In 2014 the Barna Group released research about how to connect with millennials (1980 - 2000). The top five factors were:
 - Make room for meaningful relationships.
 - Teach cultural discernment.
 - Create reverse mentoring opportunities.
 - Teach connection between vocation and discipleship.
 - Facilitate connection with Jesus.

Church needs to be

loving

patient

realistic

authentic

supportive

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Chapter 4: Faith in Exile

- 36% of LGBTs continue their faith practices after age 18 (47% general population)
- Why LGBT people decided to stay in their faith community
 - It's what I believe (33%)
 - Expression of my faith (26%)
 - Familiarity (9%)
 - Connection to a community (7%)
- The most meaningful connection opportunities
 - Discussion groups, non-Bible study (33%)
 - Volunteering for charitable outreach (21%)
 - Volunteering in the church (18% - two thirds of these specifically mentioned choir)
 - Sunday service/Mass (11%)

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Chapter 5: An Orientation of Prayer

80% of LGBT people pray regardless of religious affiliation (79% general population)

The LGBT community's views on prayer

- 65% believe they communicate directly with God
- 58% believe that God communicates directly with them
- 73% believe that their broader LGBT community views prayer as a normal act

Frequency of prayer for the 19% of LGBT people who pray regularly

- 7% pray at least once a month
- 8% pray once a week
- 22% pray several times a week
- 43% pray every day

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Chapter 6: Age Matters in the Culture War

Average age at which participants came out: 17

Average age of still-closeted participants: 32.5

96% of participants had prayed for God to make them straight when they first realized their LGBT orientation as a youth.

11% of respondents (180 persons) were still in the closet

Beliefs and Experiences of LGBTs in the Closet

97% were raised in a faith community

83% continued their faith practices after the age of 18

36% are happy with religion

62% have friends in the religious community

11% have friends in the LGBT community

31% go to LGBT establishments

87% are not comfortable with their sexuality