

# **The Call Is Coming from Inside the House: How Queer Christians are Transforming their Faith**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The relationship between the queer and Christian communities in the United States is ever evolving and contains distinct overlap. In this overlap, queer Christians are transforming their faith communities by challenging the binary that is often presumed to exist between said communities and queer individuals. This challenging is evidenced through pushes for inclusion in the church and for queer understandings of Christian theology. This paper aims to demonstrate this transformative relationship and to show that it is rooted within church tradition. To accomplish these aims, this paper analyzes the published accounts of queer Christian individuals through the lenses of theory, Christian tradition, and biblical text. After presenting these accounts, this paper assesses the impact of this transformative relationship and its implications for the religious landscape.*

Within broad Western society the sacred and the profane are still seen as separate and incompatible spaces. In the United States, this perspective can be seen through the divides between the religious (sacred) and the secular (profane); the impact of this divide is that things which belong to one sphere are seen as being incompatible with the other. This divide is perhaps best illustrated by issues surrounding sexuality and most seen in the context of Western Christianity, as this religion has culturally influenced the United States to the extent that discussions of the religious and the secular often center on the concept of the Christian church and the state. Within this discourse, sex is seen as an aspect of the human condition, whether that be as a gift or a curse—a thing of the body and of earthly life. Due to this, within much of Christianity, sex has been turned into a taboo when it occurs outside of the boundaries of heteronormative marriage, which is seen as the only permissible outlet for sex.

Building on this understanding of sexual relations is the idea that sex is a desire of the flesh, and the flesh is sinful and not of God, a view that has been incorporated into the Christian religious history of the United States through the Puritans.<sup>1</sup> Within this mindset, therefore, sex should only be practiced in certain circumstances. Much of this belief can be understood as deriving from particular interpretations and implementations of Pauline epistles, which encourage marriage as an outlet for sexuality but can be understood as showing a disdain for sex and sexuality as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

As a result, Christianity as an institution has developed the reputation in the eyes of many as having a negative view on sex and as attempting to control it, only permitting sexual expression within very specific outlets.<sup>3</sup> As LGBTQ+ identities relate to sex, sexuality, and gender (and deviate from the permitted expressions) they are viewed as sinful themselves—as things of the world and thus incompatible with Christianity—by many who adhere to more theologically conservative sexual teachings. Thus, within this worldview, Christianity is sacred and the queer is profane. However, over the past several decades, an increasing number of Christian-identified queer people have begun challenging the binary that lies between sex (and by association, sexuality and transgender identity) and faith. In short, queer Christians are engaging in the work of queering their faith, of transforming it. This is not surprising because queer bodies are capable of queering the spaces in which they exist. Queering—a type of transformation that necessitates the breaking down of categories and all binaries in movement towards

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1. Kathleen Verduin, “‘Our Cursed Natures’: Sexuality and the Puritan Conscience,” *The New England Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (1983): 222-223.

2. 1 Cor. 7:6-9 NRSV

3. Gunter Runkel, “Sexual Morality of Christianity,” *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy* 24, no. 2 (1998): 106.

liberation<sup>4</sup>—can pose a threat to institutional power structures and thus can be interpreted by those who are supported by such power structures as something to be stopped and controlled.

These attempts at control present in and of themselves a different type of transformation. Christianity has often supported attempts to transform queer bodies away from queerness and into heteronormative power structures through means like conversion therapy. This reactionary response to queer bodies in religious spaces demonstrates the transformative power of queerness in religion; the reaction shows how queer presence has a strong potential for effecting transformation. When queer bodies exist in religious spaces, metamorphosis will occur. Today, we can see that much of Western Christianity is being transformed by the presence of queer members who are seeking to transform (queer) the church. This queering of the church is rooted in a rich Biblical and Christian tradition of figures who have sought to challenge the status quo, demonstrating that these changes are coming from within the Christian tradition itself and that the binary between Christian and proudly queer is demonstrably false.

### **Methods**

To examine the ways queer embodied experience is transforming Christianity, I will be looking at primarily qualitative data and interpreting it through the lens of theory. This qualitative data will primarily consist of stories told by individuals who self-describe as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. These stories narrate their experiences with the Christian faith as it presents in the United States as described by themselves, in this instance particularly in books and articles. The three theorists that I will primarily be using to highlight the importance of embodied and performed religious experience are Judith Butler and her theory on performance, Kimerer L. LaMothe's discussion on the body, and Mary Douglas's theory surrounding purity and dirt. Additionally, I will be contextualizing these experiences with Biblical literature, church tradition, and theology, such as in the work of Chris Glaser.

It is important to recognize that there are multiple different theoretical frameworks for approaching subjects of the body, religion, and queerness. One theoretical framework cannot fully encompass every expression of embodied, religious, or queer experience. Rather than attempting to act as a definitive work, this research stands in conversation with other experiences, analyses, and theories as a voice that is needed, but certainly not the only voice that is needed. Additionally, there are also people who have already previously engaged with the idea of connecting queer religious practices to

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4. Lisa Isherwood, "Queering Christ: Outrageous Acts and Theological Rebellions," *Literature and Theology* 15, no. 3 (2001): 252.

Christian history, tradition, and Scripture. For instance, in her article “Queer Nuns and Genderbending Saints: Genderf\*cking Notions of Normativity,” Jessi Knippel analyzes the ethnographic book *Queer Nuns: Religion, Activism, and Serious Parody* by Melissa Wilcox to draw connections between the drag parody group the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and gender non-conforming saints,<sup>5</sup> such as Wilgefortis, and also to Jesus Christ as a religious figure himself.<sup>6</sup> What differentiates my work from such analyses is the additional focus on how this queer spirituality transforms and “queers” the Christian community in the Western context.

### **Embodied Queer Prophecy**

In her autobiography, *A Gracious Heresy: The Queer Calling of an Unlikely Prophet*, Connie L. Tuttle describes the call to live what she terms a prophetic life and to call upon the church to move towards inclusion for LGBTQ Christians, to appeal “for the community to return to its source. To love God. To do justice.”<sup>7</sup> Here, Tuttle clearly channels imagery of prophets in the Hebrew Bible such as Amos, who proclaimed, “I will not listen to the melody of your hearts. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”<sup>8</sup> Prophets like Amos as depicted in their respective religious texts regularly called for their people to change, to align their actions and hearts with the will of God. Tuttle’s self-proclaimed prophetic identity clearly connects to the idea of queerness as a transformative force within religion and connects her experience as a queer Christian seeking to change the church to a rich lineage of Biblical prophets. Tuttle said of her call to both pastorhood and prophethood:

I wanted to hold the prophetic and the pastoral in dynamic tension. A prophet rises up from the community, stands outside its borders, and calls the people they love to repentance. Contemporary Christian prophets say hard things that need to be said while challenging the Church to be the radical community Christ called into being. I also wanted to be pastoral, to walk with those who were afraid to enter the uncharted territory of God’s grace.<sup>9</sup>

Tuttle attended college at the Presbyterian-affiliated Agnes Scott College in Georgia, and during this time she began to encounter the socially constructed binary between queer and Christian existence. Having primarily lived in progressive neighborhoods and spaces in the preceding years, Tuttle had not anticipated how

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5. Jessi Knippel, “Queer Nuns and Genderbending Saints: Genderf\*cking Notions of Normativity,” *CrossCurrents* 69, no. 4 (2019): 402.

6. Knippel, “Queer Nuns,” 410.

7. Connie L. Tuttle, *A Gracious Heresy: The Queer Calling of an Unlikely Prophet* (Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, 2018), chap. 1.

8. Am. 5:23-24 NRSV

9. Tuttle, *A Gracious Heresy*, chap. 26.

disturbing her presence as an open feminist and lesbian would be to many of her Christian classmates at the college. She was the only open lesbian at her college of which she knew,<sup>10</sup> and so, during this time, Tuttle connected with other lesbians and gay men in off campus environments. On one such occasion, Tuttle danced and flirted with a fellow lesbian and non-practicing Catholic who was surprised to find out that Tuttle desired to be a minister while still being comfortable with herself as a lesbian. She remarked to Tuttle, "...when I came out I figured I had two choices. I could choose to be myself and go to hell. Or not come out and die."<sup>11</sup> By simply existing as a Christian lesbian without attempting to hide either part of herself, Tuttle was defying the presumed binary categories to which many people expected her to conform.

This refusal to sacrifice one identity for the other proved to challenge many people's ideas of both Christianity and queer people. She was queering her faith. Her college classmates did not accept that a lesbian could have authentic Christian faith and felt challenged by Tuttle's presence in their classes.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, many of the queer people Tuttle was around struggled to comprehend someone who, rather than either rejecting the Christian faith of her upbringing or accepting said faith and suppressing herself, chose instead fully to embrace both and view them as non-exclusive identities.<sup>13</sup>

One way to analyze Tuttle's embrace of identities that appeared to others to be in opposition is through the lens of performance. Judith Butler wrote in her book, *Gender Trouble*, "identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its result."<sup>14</sup> Tuttle performed<sup>15</sup> her sexuality and her Christian identity during this time in a way that demonstrated that both categories were socially constructed, and this performance consciously or subconsciously worked to transform each category. Tuttle rejected the idea that she must express her lesbian identity by rejecting her faith or express her faith by rejecting her lesbian identity, as the girl she once danced with had believed.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Tuttle's experiences as a Christian lesbian function within and support the framework of Butler's theory of performativity as she contradicted common ideas about each category's mutual exclusivity and subsequently reshaped them in ways that showed they could be inclusive of each other.

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10. *Ibid.*, chap. 18.

11. *Ibid.*, chap. 19.

12. *Ibid.*, chap. 18.

13. *Ibid.*, chap. 19.

14. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 33.

15. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 173.

16. Tuttle, *A Gracious Heresy*, chap. 19.

In addition to transforming ideas of each identity, Tuttle also subverted larger systems at play by challenging long held, often institutionalized prejudices that sorted queer expression into what Mary Douglas refers to as *dirt*. As elaborated on by Mary Douglas, *dirt* refers to a taboo or pollution, and something being deemed as dirt often stems from a system that sorts things into that which is clean, or holy, and that which is dirty, unholy.<sup>17</sup> Tuttle's very existence challenged the concept that queerness is taboo to Christianity and exposed the falsehood of the idea that queerness was a type of dirt that must be kept from contaminating the church.

By existing as a queer Christian, Tuttle made it apparent that a disdain for queer sexuality and relationships did not necessarily result from Christianity and that being a lesbian did not necessarily result in a disdain for Christianity. Performing both in subversive ways allowed Tuttle to challenge what each of these identities fundamentally were in the eyes of many with whom she interacted and, further, demonstrated a need for re-evaluation of a system that labelled queerness as dirt within the church. And this was all done before she, like Amos, began the act of actively and consciously proclaiming her message through her embodied experience.

Following her experiences at Agnes Scott, Tuttle began attending seminary at Columbia during the fall of 1983 to pursue ministry; very early into her time there, she was called to the Dean of Admission's office under suspicion that she was gay. Rather than deny the suspicions, back down, and continue her education without this knowledge becoming confirmed to the university, Tuttle asserted her lesbian identity. When the dean pointed out that the Presbyterian Church did not ordain homosexuals, Tuttle responded by pointing out that she had been called to ministry by the spirit and felt ready to bring the issue before the denomination's series of course.<sup>18</sup> As knowledge of her queerness spread through campus, she began to deal with encounters from students proclaiming she would go to hell for acting in accordance with her sexuality. While Tuttle did use the "born this way" argument and cited her belief that LGBTQ+ people were made that way by God,<sup>19</sup> an argument many queer theorists have pointed out to be reductive and complacent with the oppressive rhetoric they attempt to combat,<sup>20</sup> she explicitly rebuked the call from her male classmates to be celibate through other rhetorical appeals as well:

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17. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 44.

18. Tuttle, *A Gracious Heresy*, chap. 22.

19. *Ibid*, chap. 25.

20. Karma Chávez, "Beyond Complicity: Coherence, Queer Theory, and the Rhetoric of the 'Gay Christian Movement,'" *Text and Performance Quarterly* 24, no. 3/4 (2004): 258.

“...do you assume that if someone is gay they are automatically called to celibacy? I can guarantee I have not been called to celibacy.”<sup>21</sup> Her language of calling again further places her lesbian identity and queer presence into the context of prophecy.

Additionally, while Tuttle was verbally proclaiming her prophecy at seminary, she was also embodying her prophecy. Many Biblical prophets embodied their prophecies, perhaps most well-known among them the prophet Hosea. Hosea took a wife who was unfaithful; this was to embody his prophecy that Israel had been unfaithful to God. Hosea embodied God, and his wife Gomer embodied Israel.<sup>22</sup> Despite adversity from the Presbyterian denomination, the administration of her school, and her classmates, Tuttle chose to make it known that she engaged in what might be considered lesbian, or queer, sexual and romantic acts. In this way, she intentionally embodied her lesbian identity.

While her classmates cited the Bible as proof that God disapproved of her lesbian identity and queer embodiment, Tuttle rebutted their arguments with experience. She still upheld the Bible, citing opposing scriptures to the ones her classmates presented to her, but she also drew on her own experience and call to defend her position.<sup>23</sup> In fields relating to religion and philosophy, bodily experience and reason have often been presented as opposing ends on their own dichotomy. Bodily experience holds the realm of those things which can be intuited, and reason holds the realm of things which can be analyzed and scientifically studied. This debate can be seen between scholars whose work has been impactful in the field of religious studies, such as Kant and Schleiermacher, and readings of their works by other, contemporary theorists,<sup>24</sup> a polarization elaborated on by Kimerer L. Lamothé in her book, *Between Dancing and Writing: The Practice of Religious Studies*.<sup>25</sup> However, this dichotomy does not necessarily exist in a binary state like other binaries that have been previously addressed. The issue between the two, and the issue that lies with their supposedly binary state, can also be seen within religious circles, showing up in debates like the one Tuttle had with her classmates.

By not drawing exclusively on one or the other, but on a combination of both bodily experience and religious text presumed to hold authority, Tuttle combatted the idea that reason and bodily experience are two opposing ends and that only one can be of value

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21. Tuttle, *A Gracious Heresy*, chap. 25.

22. Hos. 1:1-2 NRSV

23. Tuttle, *A Gracious Heresy*, chap. 25.

24. Kimerer L. LaMothe, “What Bodies Know about Religion and the Study of It,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 3 (2008): 576.

25. Kimerer LaMothe, “Chapter 1: The Rift in Religion: René Descartes and Immanuel Kant” and “Chapter 2: Recovering Experience: Friedrich Schleiermacher” in *Between Dancing and Writing: The Practice of Religious Studies* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 22-64.

to someone. In this situation, she combatted the idea that bodily experience and Biblical reason are two opposing concepts that are incompatible for authentic Christianity. She drew not only on Biblical text and interpretation, but also on her own understandings of topics such as love, consent, and her own refusal to accept the idea that her lesbian identity meant that she was being called to celibacy because such a claim did not match her lived experience and intuition.<sup>26</sup> Her queerness challenged the false binaries of queer versus Christian—and of reason versus bodily experience/knowledge—in a way consistent with the Hebrew prophets acknowledged by Christianity to have spoken God’s will to the people. This connected her queerness to Christian scripture and tradition even as she worked to transform her denomination fundamentally towards a more inclusive and queer understanding of sex and sexuality.

### **Queer Sacrament**

This experiential understanding of queer Christian faith and its connection to Christian tradition goes beyond merely the call to prophecy or call to pastorship some queer Christians may report experiencing. It also extends to other areas of Christianity, in particular the experience of the sacraments. According to the Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology, within the majority of Western Christianity (and in both Catholic and Protestant traditions) a sacrament is accepted as being something that both conveys and exhibits grace. Depending on the particular Christian denomination, the official sacraments may vary, but baptism and the Eucharist are almost always recognized.<sup>27</sup> For those brought up in the church, many of these sacraments additionally function as rites of passage. While some sacraments, such as communion, can occur multiple times throughout a person’s life, others do not (and one’s first communion may still be commemorated). For instance, the rite of baptism often occurs only once with potential rededications or confirmation ceremonies following. Moreover, a sacrament being observed on more than one occasion does not necessarily lessen its spiritual significance. For many queer Christians, typical queer rites of passage can function as a sacrament—an act through which divine grace is visibly conveyed, a sacred act of significance for the individual. By understanding how queer rites of passage can function as sacraments to queer Christians, we can see how queer Christians are transforming the concept of outward expressions of a relationship with the divine just as Christian thinkers have been doing throughout the history of the Church.

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26. Tuttle, *A Gracious Heresy*, chap. 25.

27. Ian A. MacFarland, ed., “Sacramentology,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 452-454.

In his book aptly titled *Coming Out as Sacrament*, Chris Glaser notes that the sacraments have not always totaled out in the two-to-seven range (depending on one's denomination, with common sacraments including the Eucharist, baptism, and confirmation), and that the early church may have had up to a hundred and fifty.<sup>28</sup> Glaser locates the sacraments as being part of an embodied experience: something that reminds those who partake in it that spirituality is an in-body or embodied rather than "out-of-body" experience.<sup>29</sup> Keeping these ideas about sacraments in mind, Glaser considers what he calls "unconventional sacraments" and how marginalized groups often have sacraments unique to their circumstances. These groups often have rituals or acts they partake in that are unique to their culture or circumstances and that allow them to embody their spirituality and acknowledge how their lives in and of themselves are expressions of the sacred and the grace of God.<sup>30</sup> Glaser goes on to argue that the rite of Coming Out acts as a sacrament for queer people, a "distinctive rite in which God was present, accessible, and experienced among [us]";<sup>31</sup> it is something that is unique and divine in its role in the lives of queer people.

An example of coming out as a sacrament can be found in the coming out story of Christian millennial Nikko Espina. In Espina's coming out narrative, he recalls realizing that God loved all of him, including his sexuality, but also how alienated he felt from his parents as he was unable to share a portion of his life with them. He wanted to come out to them in a way that showed how queerness can be healthy and beautiful. Thus, rather than directly coming out, he made the choice to take them on a Lady Gaga tour where she would be singing the song "Born this Way," a song that contains lyrics directly affirming LGBTQ+ identities and experiences that spoke to Espina's experiences. Espina writes of the concert, "Lady Gaga and her message of self-love and self-acceptance was the gift that God bestowed upon me to help me form a deeper love of myself."<sup>32</sup> Through coming out to himself by fully accepting his sexuality and indirectly coming out to his parents, Espina developed a deeper understanding of who he was and of God's love: that he did not need to fear parts of who he was because he was a creation of God. Specifically, Espina uses embodied language: "I am no longer afraid of what is in my blood... I remain standing and continue to strive daily for a cherished relationship with God. Though being

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28. Chris Glaser, *Coming Out as Sacrament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 4.

29. Glaser, *Coming Out as Sacrament*, 5.

30. *Ibid.*, 6.

31. *Ibid.*, 8.

32. Nikko Espina, "In My Blood: Born This Way and Worthy of Love," *Whosoever*, September 26, 2020.

gay was an obstacle for me to love myself, it was never one for the Lord.”<sup>33</sup> This embodied language relates Espina’s experience not only to Glaser’s work, but also to LaMothe’s discussion of experience and embodiment as well.

Espina’s religion is subjective as it is filled with experience, which is highly compatible with Kimerer L. LaMothe’s theories discussing how the scholar’s encounter with a phenomenon being studied is not objective but is filled with experience. LaMothe writes, “Scholars reflect on their *experience* of phenomena—never on the phenomenon ‘itself’; they experience what their intellectual training primes them to apprehend as ‘religion.’ There is no knowledge of ‘religion’ that can be purely objective (according to some standard of rationality) or wholly true to the phenomenon itself.”<sup>34</sup> By reading Espina’s experience in the framework of LaMothe’s theory, we can see that Espina’s religion is subjective as it is filled with experience. However, Espina is not alone in having a subjective experience of religion.

As LaMothe highlights in the previous quotation, there can be no purely objective experience of a religious thing, but rather all experience is subjective as all experience is bodily,<sup>35</sup> consequently, many elements of religion both communal and institutionalized are as subjective as individual experiences. This is perhaps most easily seen with the sacraments: they are an outward and visible sign of interior grace, an act of sacred and mysterious significance<sup>36</sup> that reflects the presence of God.<sup>37</sup> It is easy to see how Espina’s act of coming out to himself and to his family is sacramental when we recognize his own self reporting of the experience: his account that it brought him deeper into experiencing the presence of God and God’s grace. He experienced the sacred through community with his family and fellow queer people, and through Lady Gaga’s music. As he writes, “I needed to be at that conference so that I could understand God’s foundational love for me as both a believer and member of the LGBT community.”<sup>38</sup> The ability that coming out has to be experienced as a sacrament places many people’s queer experience firmly in the language and context of Christianity. This challenges the boundaries placed on Christian experience and sacrament and thus demonstrates that attempts to transform the church into a more inclusive, queered space (as Lady Gaga called for during the concert Espina attended<sup>39</sup>) are completely within the boundaries of Christian tradition.

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33. Ibid.

34. LaMothe, “What Bodies Know,” 578.

35. Ibid.

36. MacFarland, ed., “Sacramentology,” 452-454.

37. Glaser, *Coming Out as Sacrament*, 8.

38. Espina, “In My Blood.”

39. Ibid.

Considering Glaser's understanding of how coming out functions as a queer sacrament, I would also like to discuss transitioning as a sacrament for transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming individuals. Glaser remarks that coming out, like other sacraments such as baptism and communion, offers a "renewal of life."<sup>40</sup> The same can be said of transitioning. As Jennifer Hasler remarked of transition during her coming out story: "For me, my gender transition was part of God calling me, and throughout the path, God has always walked with me."<sup>41</sup> Transitioning, like coming out, baptism, or any other sacrament, can make one more aware of and more able to experience the presence of God.

Rev. Kalie, intern pastor at First Christian Church of Decatur in Decatur, Georgia, highlights how her transition and coming out transformed her in a spiritual sense and allowed her to further transform the Christian community. She writes:

Before my physicality ever began to change, my transition started with my thoughts and positions of understanding evolving. This caused me to recognize the inconsistencies in my own hermeneutics, especially in reference to the way gender non-conforming people fit into the Creation. When I let the Creation story speak for itself, I was finally able to see my identity as a trans woman, and the identities of every person similar to me: We're expressions of God's creativity and fully embraced in the Creation story.<sup>42</sup>

Not only was her personal understanding of herself transformed by this new understanding of God that transition brought her, but it also transformed how she approached tasks related to her ministry as a pastor, such as her hermeneutics.

Thus, coming out, transitioning, and other potential queer sacraments not explored here demand a response from the community. As Glaser notes, a sacrament is a reciprocal act involving both giving and receiving: the sacred found in the sacrament is given and received among those involved.<sup>43</sup> Thus, just as the individual coming out or transitioning is transformed through the presence of the sacred, so too is the community. When Nikko Espina brought his family to a Lady Gaga concert as a form of indirectly coming out, they experienced the concert and the affirming message delivered by the pop star just as their son did,<sup>44</sup> but they likely would not have received it without him. The importance of community and the individual's role in the community is something shared by both the church and the queer community, and Espina's experience shows a bridge through which these two communities can connect with one another.

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40. Glaser, *Coming Out as Sacrament*, 10.

41. Jennifer Hasler, "A Transgender Meditation on the Beatitudes," *Whosoever*, March 2, 2020.

42. Kalie, "A Transgender Journey Toward Pride: A Creation Theology," *Whosoever*, June 23, 2021.

43. Glaser, *Coming Out as Sacrament*, 10.

44. Espina, "In My Blood."

### **Conclusion**

Through the experiences of queer Christians Connie Tuttle, Nikko Espina, and Rev. Kalie, we see that there is more in common between queer experiences and Christian experiences than there is in conflict. In Galatians 3:28, Paul writes to an unspecified Christian church in Galatia, counseling them that there is no difference in the eyes of God between Jew or gentile, man or woman, enslaved or free person, as each member of the church has been transformed through Christ. The call for a transformation towards inclusivity from queer Christians echoes passages such as this one, reminding the church of the dangers that lie in binaries. The binary between queer and straight, Christian and profane, is slowly broken down with the message that the presence of Christ can dwell anywhere. As testimonies from many queer Christians demonstrate, this call towards inclusivity is not coming from outside. The call is coming from inside the house. This call harkens back and reminds us of past calls for change in the church, from the prophets to the writings of Paul to gender non-conforming saints.<sup>45</sup> And just as sacraments require action from the community,<sup>46</sup> the call for transformation in the church demands response from the church itself. Some congregations move into that call and others reject it, but each response creates a transformation with long-lasting effects for the church that impacts not only the broader community, but individual lives. This queering of the church is not only for abstract theological reasons. Homophobia in the church directly impacted Connie Tuttle's individual seminary experience, and the work by her and others to make her denomination more inclusive changed the landscape for queer Christians not only in the Presbyterian church, but also those wishing to enact change within their own denominations. The call for change has a direct effect on both theological beliefs and the lived-out experiences of those in Christianity.

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45. Knippel, "Queer Nuns," 410.

46. Glaser, *Coming Out as Sacrament*, 10.

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