

Love at the Intersection:

Supporting the Faith Development of LGB Students of Faith at the University of Dayton

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Abstract

While the value of faith development in college is recognized, it is a painful topic for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students given religion's anti-LGB history. Yet many value their faith and seek developmental support. Given the dearth of research on this intersection, this qualitative study examined which forms of support LGB students of faith at the University of Dayton (UD) described as most beneficial to their faith development.

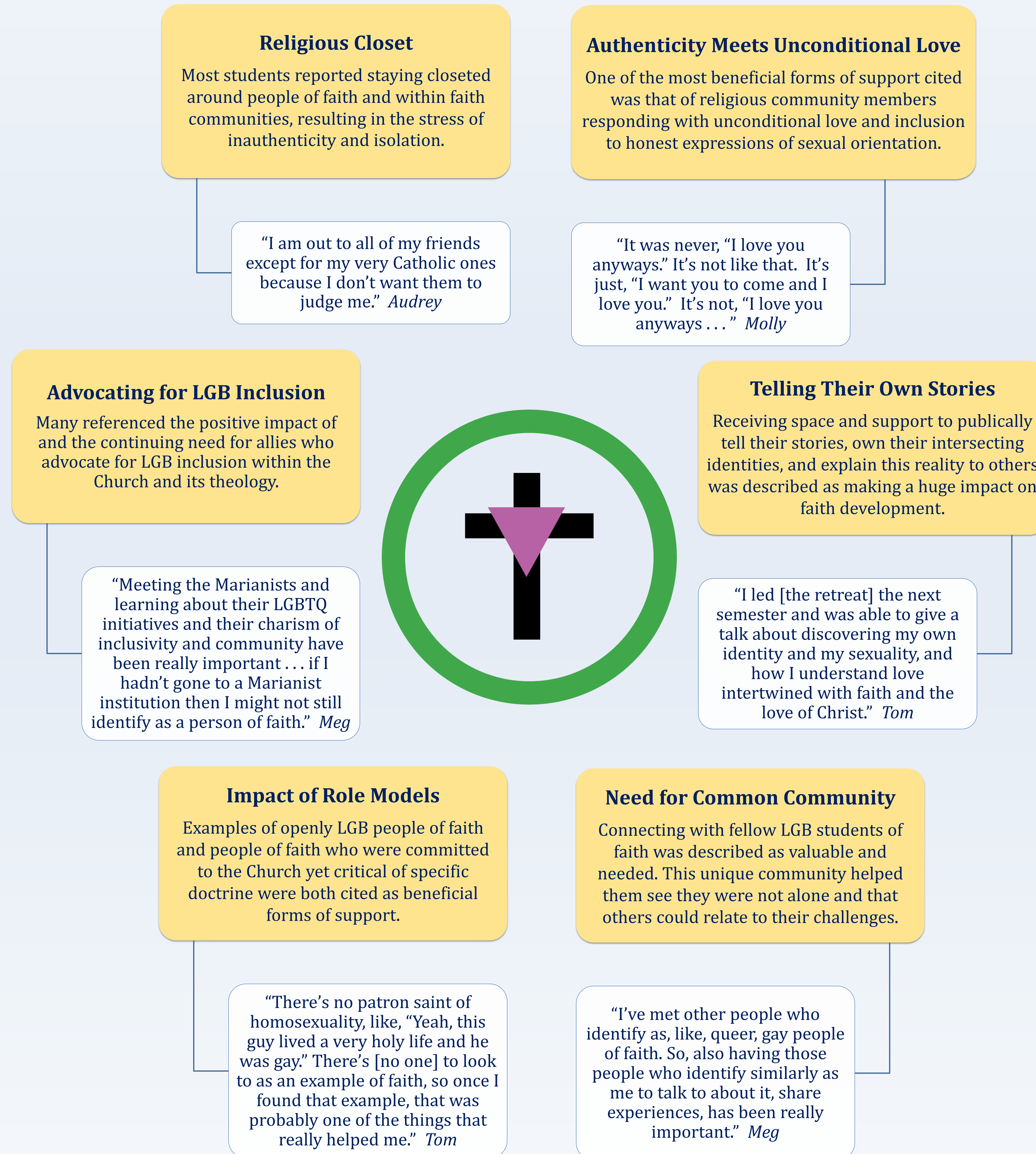
Research Questions

- What forms of support from campus professionals do undergraduate LGB students of Christian faith describe as most beneficial to their faith development?
- How do such forms of support specifically help them as LGB students of faith?
- Are there unique forms of support that they seek as LGB students of faith and, if so, what are they?

Methods

This study took a transcendental phenomenological approach, drawing significant statements and representative themes from the interviews of seven LGB students of faith at UD. A snowballing technique was utilized to identify participants through the referrals of campus professionals working with this population.

Findings



Implications

Based on this study, the most beneficial forms of support in faith development for LGB students could include: 1) fostering environments in which authentic identity is encouraged and met with unconditional love; 2) empowering LGB students of faith to share their stories; 3) providing LGB students of faith opportunities for mutual connection; 4) highlighting people whose lives reflect the challenges of this population; and 5) advocating for their inclusion within the Church. Future research should focus on LGB people of faith post-college to account for continued development.

Sample

Alias	Sexual Orientation	Faith Identity
Audrey	Bisexual	United Church of Christ
Harris	Gay	Catholic
Molly	Lesbian	Catholic / Pentecostal
Tom	Gay	Catholic
Hilary	Lesbian	Roman Catholic
Meg	Lesbian	Catholic
Phillip	Gay	Roman Catholic

Select References

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