

We Believe in God, Too

The Power of "WE"

*"Hear more often things than beings, the voice of the fire listening, hear the voice of the water.
Hear in the wind the bushes sobbing, it is the sign of our forebears.*

Those who are dead are never gone: they are there in the thickening shadow.

The dead are not under the earth: they are in the tree that rustles, they are in the wood that groans, they are in the water that runs, they are in the water that sleeps, they are in the hut, they are in the crowd, the dead are not dead.

Those who are dead are never gone, they are in the breast of the woman, they are in the child who is wailing and in the firebrand that flames. The dead are not under the earth: they are in the fire that is dying, they are in the grasses that weep, they are in the whimpering rocks, they are in the forest, they are in the house, the dead are not dead".

-Birago Diop

Unity is the greatest form of strength...

Image 1

"Growing up I spent a lot of time in church because my father was a missionary who dedicated his life to serving children and grandmothers in the village that he came from. I had the opportunity to go on a mission trip to Uganda where one Sunday we were able to visit a church in a village called Kichuna. This church was one that I was not used to. There was no building, no laser beams that shot lyrics to the praise and worship songs, no mics, no pews, no piano. This church was a group of people coming together under a tree with homemade drums, and ready to praise the lord. There was no judgment of what each other was wearing or how much someone was able to give. We came together for community and to feel connected. This was the first time that I understood the purpose of church, and the feeling of being in that space was one that was indescribable".

Tumaini "Titi" Mporampora | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice

"When I was younger, I was still figuring out my identity and still was afraid to come out. Once I got to college and started taking psych/anthro religious classes, I learned that I had to start thinking for myself and what felt right spiritually. Who I chose to sleep with didn't matter in my new understanding of God and spirituality".

Kristen London | She/Her/They | Queer

Image 2

"I am a Black Gay man. I consider myself to be a spiritual person. I believe in a higher power (God), but my view of God is very open and changes at times. God to me can be lots of different things. God can be male, female, spirit, animal. God can be whatever you want God to be".

Tyrell Rae | He/She/They | Gay

Image 3

"On a daily basis my spiritual practices look like me enjoying contemporary gospel music on my drive into work and as I work at my desk. I also talk to God throughout my day in little spurts. I would consider them prayers, but they sound more like conversations. A "thank you God" here, or "I see what you did there" in a whisper. God shows his presence in my life daily and I try to recognize and show gratitude often. My daily goal is for people to see God in me before they see me, so my actions reflect that".

Jas Sherman | She/Her/They | Lesbian

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Image 4

"My relationship to God/a higher power is... complicated... I am a queer, Sundanese American, Ex-Jehovah's Witness who is unearthing and healing/recovering from growing up in organized religion, especially in a Queer Black Body. I am currently reclaiming my relationship with God and am curious about discovering who God is and what I want that relationship to look like".

Niyankor Ajuaj | She/Her/Hers | Queer

"If I could draw a picture of what my spiritual and religious journey has been, it would be me under a tree wearing white, but my outfit would be stained with dirt. I would have a bible in my hands, and I would be smiling but crying.

My arms would be stretched looking up to the sky. I would be wearing white because we are all brought into this world pure, but I would be dirty because my journey with faith has not always been perfect. I have had ups and downs and I would still be worshipping. Although I have had a rollercoaster of a journey with my faith, and the individuals in the church, I have had the ability to create my own relationship with God. That is what makes me feel connected to all that is around me. I will never be the perfect Christian or person, but I am committed to the journey".

Tumaini "Titi" Mporampora | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice

"I'd describe myself as an Afro-Indigenous, cisgender, heterosexual woman who navigates multiple identities and two worlds. Growing up as an outsider on the Navajo Reservation in Chinle, Arizona, has shaped my unique perspective on what it truly means to be accepted because I have never fit in. I value honesty, integrity, education, community and leading by example. I strive to leave situations better than I found them and to do what's right no matter the cost".

Nizhoni Elizabeth Smocks | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice

Image 5

"I'm a Black Nonbinary Bisexual nigga who knows (in the deepest sense of my mind, body, spirit, and senses, and have experienced the supernatural since childhood type of knowing) that God/God's/Spirit/Spirits/Ancestors exist. I grew up in Norf Philly and am an only child of a single mom. My maternal grandparents raised me from birth until 12.

I grew up as a church girl in the hood, so it was a complex experience. We mostly went to Pentecostal churches, and I've always been visibly queer (even when forced in femininity, it was sort of awkward and clear that I belonged in hoodies and jeans) but have also been visibly gifted (which is also complicated) in singing, preaching, teaching, and basically everything it takes to run a church. I was a rebellious kid, I asked questions, called adults out on their bullshit and so spent my childhood in power struggles with authority. I've always believed in standing up for myself and other people, but I let bad religion bully me. I was extremely judgmental, self-righteous, and full of shame that my life didn't look the way I thought it did. I felt shame for my sexual desires.

Lex Dunbar | They/Them/Theirs | Bisexual Queer

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Image 6

"God is me. Inside of me. All of the forces in this world and millions of other galaxies and all of its other creations--the stars, moon, suns-- mountains- ancestors- any and everything REAL that has been created is God. Powerful. I am God. I am myself. My own savior--mastering my world within myself and spreading love, wisdom and healing to those I touch and who touch me. Inspiring each other to do the same so we can carry out our divine missions".

Kristen London | She/Her/They | Queer

Image 7

"My relationship to being queer, Black, and being religious is I identify as a Black woman and as an ally to the queer community, all while being a Christian. The three interest me because being a Black woman, I am a part of an underrepresented group that faces hardships on daily bases so when I see amazing women that look like me and have life ten times as hard just because of who they love, it makes me feel a connection to the LGBTQIA+ community. It hurts me to see so many of my friends and family struggle to find acceptance with their place in this world and on earth. The church is a place where everyone should feel welcomed, protected, and safe to be themselves. Growing up I was taught that everyone should feel welcomed in the house of the lord".

Tumaini "Titi" Mporampora | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice

"In terms of what I believe in, I think about this quote from Octavia Butler, "The only lasting truth is Change. God is Change." That's what I believe in, change - day/night, life/death, seasons. God is not only change itself, but the space between".

Niyankor Ajuaj | She/Her/Hers | Queer

I am a praise dancer as well as a praise dance teacher. I grew up in Colorado and have been in church my entire life. I was raised Baptist, but now I am part of The Church In God In Christ (COGIC), domination also known as Pentecostal. I have been a part of this now for about 9 years and now have become the Wife of a pastor. My spiritual journey to the place that I am in now has been very challenging and different. I believe that God puts us through things in life to strengthen our faith in him. I believe in God".

KaResha Coburn | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice

It is so unfortunate but sometimes I feel like I can't be queer, Black, and religious. I think of a triangle. At different points in my life, I can be good at two but shy away from one. For example, at social events I most commonly wear my queerness and my blackness, but I don't represent my religious background at that time. Or when I am at a more religious event, I only represent my religious black side. The common thing that I can always do is be black, but I never feel like I can be Black, pansexual, and Christian at the same time.

Raven-Syamone Wattley (Raven) | She/Her/Hers | Pansexual

"As an Afro-Indigenous person, I feel more attune to the weight of the world as an empath. The recurring trauma, environmental issues and lack of hope is felt daily. As a Black woman, it feels as though I have become a monolith for healing others".

Nizhoni Elizabeth Smocks | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice