

# Conservative Religion & Anti-LGBTQ+ Pseudoscience: 2 Intersections

## Conversion Therapy & “Ex-Gay” Movements

Pseudoscientific claims about LGBTQ+ identity as “curable” originate from conservative religious beliefs about the creation of humanity and the “complementarity” of binary sex and gender identities. These beliefs, transformed by the professionalization of psychological and psychiatric medicine and the pathologizing of LGBTQ+ identity in the 20th century, contributed to:

- The institutionalization of LGBTQ+ people.
- A religious counseling industry that both promised to convert LGBTQ+ people from LGBTQ+ to straight and/or cisgender.
- A movement of “ex-gay” individuals who claimed to no longer be part of the “gay lifestyle.”

## “Religious Liberty” A Right to Discriminate

The conservative Christian legal movement’s creation of the “religious liberty” framework for disputing LGBTQ rights pits the civil rights of LGBTQ people against the civil liberties of conservative Christians. The latter often claim that the “LGBTQ+ Agenda” is an attack on their rights to freely exercise their religious beliefs.

For a description of the terms: Reparative Therapy, Natural Family, Gender Complementarity, Biblical Binary, and Gay Lifestyle, see Conservative Christian Terms in the Pseudoscience Movement, in **LGBTQ+ Health care Buzzwords**.

This false dichotomy often plays out through legal challenges to nondiscrimination laws and challenges to conversion therapy bans brought by conservative Christian mental health professionals. In both cases, conservative Christian legal advocacy groups generally argue that bans on LGBTQ+ discrimination and conversion therapy amount to government coercion to affirm LGBTQ+ identities in violation of their clients’ beliefs.

- LGBTQ+ people are often characterized as un-religious by adherents of anti-LGBTQ+ and Christian nationalist ideologies for political gain.
- Most religious people in the United States support LGBTQ+ rights.
- Most LGBTQ+ people in the United States affiliate with a faith tradition. LGBTQ+ POC are more likely to consider faith an important part of their lives.
- Negative experiences with anti-LGBTQ+ theologies and discrimination within religious spaces contribute to religious disaffiliation among LGBTQ+ and young non-LGBTQ+ people.

## It’s Not a Sin to Be LGBTQ+

- Hundreds of religious groups and thousands of religious communities across the world welcome and affirm LGBTQ+ people.
- Human Rights Campaign Foundation, Faith Positions<sup>1</sup> and Religion & Faith Program<sup>2</sup> provide resources and information about affirming religious communities.
- Interfaith Alliance, Faith for Pride<sup>3</sup> provide resources and information about how religious communities are supporting LGBTQ+ rights and communities.

## References

- 1 [www.hrc.org/resources/faith-positions](http://www.hrc.org/resources/faith-positions)
- 2 [www.thehrcfoundation.org/about/religion-faith-program](http://www.thehrcfoundation.org/about/religion-faith-program)
- 3 [interfaithalliance.org/faith-for-pride-resources](http://interfaithalliance.org/faith-for-pride-resources)