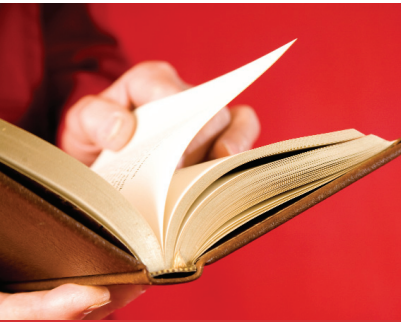




The issue:

FAITH

Unfortunately, some religions **use their doctrines to condemn** and discriminate against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.



damn facts

Up to 92% of Americans believe in God.⁹

More than 81% of Americans belong to a religious denomination.¹⁰

More than 78% of Americans estimate they attended religious service at least once a month at the age of 12.¹¹

Fifty-six percent of Protestant clergy say their denomination spends too much time talking about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues.¹²

Thirty-eight percent of Protestant clergy say they would lose too many members if they discussed gay equality issues.¹³

a project of



No Place for Hate in Faith: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FAITH!

For many of us, our faith is a core part of who we are. We live by its value systems and turn to it in times of crisis.

But some religions use their doctrines and sacred texts to condemn and discriminate against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Because of this, many gay and transgender Americans—people who were deeply rooted in their faith and faith communities—have had to question their faith and even been forced to leave their religions.

WHAT ROLE FAITH PLAYS IN THE U.S.!

Americans are a religious people: Up to 92% of Americans believe in God or a universal spirit, more than 81% belong to a religious denomination and more than 43% attend religious services at least once a month.¹

And in the U.S., faith and faith organizations play a large role in general life. Consider:

- Many Americans are raised in a religion—more than 78% estimate they attended religious services at least once a month at the age of 12.²
- Educational institutions affiliated with a faith organization can be found from nursery school all the way through the post-graduate level.
- Many faith organizations are at the forefront of charitable efforts—and 37% of Americans believe religious organizations do the best job of providing services to needy people.³
- Religious leaders and organizations have played an active role in politics.

Ultimately, Americans look to their faith and religious leaders and organizations not just for spiritual guidance but for support on an array of issues in their lives.

HOW FAITH FAILS GAY AND TRANSGENDER PEOPLE!

When so many Americans rely on their religion and their spiritual beliefs to guide their day-to-day lives, it can result in powerful consequences when a faith leader condemns an entire group of people for simply living honestly and openly.

Religion and religious texts have been used to:

- Condemn gay and transgender people as immoral
- Tell them they must change who they are
- Instruct them to be celibate
- Allow people of that faith to reject gay and transgender people

More than half of Protestant clergy say their congregations have difficulty talking openly about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues.

damn partner



HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN®

www.hrc.org

The Human Rights Campaign is the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization.

- Actively promote inequality and discrimination against gay and transgender people.

Even those faith leaders who want to do the right thing may resist truly embracing equality because of the difficulty of the task. According to a survey of senior clergy members across seven Protestant denominations, 55% said their congregations have difficulty talking openly about gay issues.⁴ And 38% said their congregation would lose many members if there were too much discourse on the issue.⁵

WHY THERE'S HOPE!

Most faiths, however, are built on such values as justice, fairness, love, hospitality and acceptance.⁶

And there's hope, because increasingly, clergy and faith leaders are calling on their congregations and followers to more actively follow these tenets. Certain faiths have openly welcomed gay and transgender people, and many have taken supportive stands on issues that affect gay and transgender people. For example:

- The United Church of Christ aired ads on national television welcoming gay couples into their faith
- Unitarian Universalist Churches bless same-sex unions

- The Episcopal Church has apologized for past discrimination
- Reform Judaism ordains openly gay clergy.⁷

Additionally, in the aforementioned survey of Protestant clergy, nearly all respondents said gay people are welcome in their churches, and 92% expressed openness to holding more conversations on gay equality if their congregations asked for them.⁸

ACCEPTANCE, NOT INTOLERANCE!

It's time to give a damn, because faith and religion are supposed to support and nurture people—not tear them down.

It's time to give a damn, because our religious leaders should be teaching love and acceptance—not intolerance and hate.

And it's time to give a damn, because people shouldn't have to choose between living honestly and living in their faith.

It's time for things to change.

WE GIVE A DAMN. DO YOU?

I GIVE A DAMN ABOUT FAITH! Now What?

- **JOIN THE GIVE A DAMN CAMPAIGN:** The Give A Damn Campaign is for everybody who cares about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality, especially all you straight people out there!
 - Register now at www.wegiveadamn.org
- **GET INFORMED:** Learn more about the issues.
 - Watch a Damn Video or read people's Personal Stories
 - Check out our Damn Blog, which is updated daily
- **GET INVOLVED:** Spread the word about equality to family and friends!
 - Share a Damn Video or tell us your Personal Story
 - Forward this PDF
- **VISIT OUR NON-PROFIT PARTNER'S WEBSITE**
 - Human Rights Campaign: www.hrc.org

www.wegiveadamn.org

1 The Central Intelligence Agency. "The World Fact Book: North America: United States," last updated March 4, 2010. The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey," 2008. The Association of Religion Data Archives. "National Study of Youth and Religion Wave 3 (2007–2008)."

2 The Association of Religion Data Archives. "National Study of Youth and Religion Wave 3 (2007–2008)."

3 The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. "Faith-Based Programs Still Popular, Less Visible," Nov. 16, 2009.

4–5 Briggs, David. "Taking sides in 30-year war over gay, lesbian issues," Ahead of the Trend (column), The Association of Religion Data Archives, July 8, 2009.

6 Human Rights Campaign. "Gender Identity and our Faith Communities: A Congregational Guide for Transgender Advocacy," 2010, and "For the Bible Tells Me So: A Study Guide and Advocacy Training Curriculum," 2010.

7 Human Rights Campaign. "Faith Positions," 2010. www.hrc.org

8 See 4–5.
9–10 See 1.
11 See 2.
12–13 See 4–5.