

Saint Paul University

Bisexual Women in the Christian Faith: Composing with a Complex Identity

M.A. Thesis

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Abstract

Research has shown that bisexual women of the Christian faith are faced with a quadruple minority status composed of first holding a non-heterosexual orientation; second by having a sexual attraction based on the person rather than their gender; third by being both a person of sexual minority and part of the Christian faith; and fourth being a woman in a patriarchal society. This grounded-theory based qualitative study aimed to clarify how this population composes with these multiple layers of oppression and with their complex identities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two Canadian Anglophone women between the ages of 18-50 who identify as bisexual and Christian. Results revealed seventeen emerging themes and three meaning units which inform the process by which these bisexual women have managed to compose with their complex identity comprised of being bisexual, Christian, and women. Based on these results of this study a model outlining the clinical dimensions to be considered for psychotherapy with this population was elaborated. These clinical dimensions include the consideration of their identity as fluid, their use of scripture, their use of safe spaces, their attachment style, and their spiritual coping strategies.

Introduction

Bisexual Invisibility and Stigmatization

Although the concept of bisexuality (i.e. the inclination to love and/or be intimately involved with a partner from either gender) as a distinct sexual orientation has existed for several decades with its first formal acknowledgement being the formation of the U.S. National Bisexual Liberation Front in 1972, it continues to be one of the most ignored sexual orientations and is often dismissed as an illegitimate form of sexuality by both scholars and the media (Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012; Siker, 2007; Wilcox, 2003). In fact, many bisexual individuals are concerned that their acknowledgement through the use of the new umbrella term Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer (LGBTQ) since 1989 (Hemmings, 1997) is merely a superficial act of political correctness and that researchers and other representatives of the LGBTQ movement still do not consider bisexuals (nor transsexuals) to be deserving of consideration equal to that provided to the lesbian and gay communities (Wilcox, 2003).

The invisibility of bisexuality in the literature is, however unintentional it may be, also maintained in another subtle way through the subsuming of the bisexual experience under other categories such as lesbian and gay (Barker, et al., 2012; Dodge & Sandfort, 2007; Kaestle & Holz Ivory, 2012). Accordingly, a survey on the presence of bisexuality in the medical literature conducted by Kaestle & Holtz Ivory (2012) revealed that out of a sample of 348 *PubMed* articles related to bisexual health, less than 20% had studied bisexual participants separately and the majority had combined their findings from this population with homosexual participants. This study also revealed that as little as one sixth of the articles analyzed considered bisexuality to be a legitimate sexual orientation. In other words, the authors of these studies believed that sexual orientation is defined by either being heterosexual or homosexual and considered bisexuality to be non-existent.

Dodge & Sandfort (2007) also demonstrated this point in their attempt to locate research from the North American, British, and Australian mental health literature that had addressed the bisexual population separately. A 2007 survey of peer-reviewed journal articles from PSYCH INFO revealed as few as five studies that had considered bisexual women and men as a population distinct from the lesbians and gay communities. Both the Dodge & Sandfort's (2007) and the Kaestle & Holtz Ivory's (2012) study findings strongly demonstrate the tendency in the literature to exclude discussions on the distinct characteristics and realities of the bisexual population thereby indicating an important need to further delineate their unique features. This need is slowly beginning to be fulfilled by the new peer-reviewed *Journal of Bisexuality* which has aimed to specifically address the differences between the bisexual and lesbian and gay populations since its inception in 2000 (Journal of Bisexuality, 2013). Nevertheless, as will be explored in further sections, much research is needed in order to continue the paradigm shift in the destigmatization of bisexuality and its understanding as a legitimate and distinct sexual orientation (Toft, 2009a; Toft, 2009b; Yip, 2010).

While some similarities between the gay, lesbian, and bisexual populations do exist with regards to violence and discrimination against same-sex practices for example (Dodge & Sandfort, 2007; Wilcox, 2003), it is of utmost importance to acknowledge the various differing stressors and identity negotiations that bisexual individuals must cope with (Bradford, 2006; Dodge & Sandfort, 2007). These include social isolation, biphobia from both the heterosexual and homosexual communities, being considered sexually immature, perverse, or promiscuous (as bisexuality is often confused with polyamory (Siker, 2007), carriers of HIV into the heterosexual population, incapable of a monogamous relationship or fidelity, undecided, and

treacherous (Davidson, Eadie, Hemmings, Kaloski, & Storr, 1997; Dillimore, 2001; Germon, 2008; Toft, 2009a; Toft, 2009b; Yip A. K., 2010).

These conditions of isolation and invisibility are hypothesized by many experts (Barker & Langdrisge, 2008; Bradford, 2006; Dodge & Sandfort, 2007; Firestein, 2007) to be at the root of the higher prevalence of mental illness in bisexual individuals who have been found to score higher than their lesbian and gay counterparts for "...anxiety, depression, negative affect, and suicidality; bisexuals [also] report more current adverse life events, greater childhood adversity, less positive support from family, more negative support from friends, [and] higher frequency of financial problems." (Dodge & Sandfort, 2007, p. 32). Fortunately, the psychological effects of this isolation and stigma on bisexual individuals is currently beginning to be addressed in the field of psychotherapy.

Bradford (2006) for instance has developed an affirmative psychotherapy model tailored to bisexual women (see Goetstouwers, 2006 for more information of affirmative psychotherapy with bisexual men) based on stages of bisexual development. In her model, Bradford (2006) considers both the overlap of issues of discrimination bisexual women share with other women (e.g. exposure to a patriarchal cultural context) as well as with lesbians, all the while acknowledging the great diversity that is found in the bisexual woman population. Moreover, Bradford (2006) considers the challenges specific to the this population that stem from their invisibility and the widespread absence of validation of their sexual orientation by society.

Though much variability exists within the bisexual community (Barker, et al., 2012), such challenges tend to include the formation of a bisexual identity due to the prevalence of dichotomous understanding of sexuality (e.g. homosexual-heterosexual, male-female, etc.), the difficulty in finding bisexual models, and the pathologization of bisexuality as a sexual

orientation (Bradford, 2006). Another challenge is the decision of coming-out as bisexual to their surroundings which may involve grief and loss, confusion and stigmatization from others, but also a sense of relief from the acknowledgment of their identity experience (Bradford, 2006).

As previously mentioned, facing discrimination, homophobia, external and sometimes internalized biphobia (Ochs, 2007), as well as having their bisexuality ignored or even fetishized and hypererotized (Firestein, 2007) is another set of important challenges they may encounter (Bradford, 2006). Being openly bisexual in the context of a romantic relationship can likewise be problematic if the partner is hurt by or does not understand the sexual orientation of their partner or even pressures the bisexual partner to self-label as lesbian (Bradford, 2006). Last but not least, often rejected by their social support system, including the lesbian and gay community, bisexual individuals find themselves without a bisexual community to go to as those who provide a full sense of belonging are few and far between (Bradford, 2006; Firestein, 2007).

The Minority Status of Bisexual Christian Women

In her work, Bradford (2006) points to another layer of discrimination specific to bisexual women, that of sexism. It is widely demonstrated that women in North-America, and in a number of different cultures, which according to Miller (2013) are still permeated by the “cultural underpinnings” of the Judaeo-Christian patriarchal culture of leadership (Miller, 2013, p. 212), experience sexist discrimination of various forms on a relatively regular basis (Brannon, 2002; Firestein, 2007; Friedman & Leaper, 2010). Forms of sexist discrimination faced by women today includes gender-stereotyping, sexual objectification, degrading comments, and harassment (Brannon, 2002; Firestein, 2007; Friedman & Leaper, 2010). Moreover, the literature has revealed that women of a sexual minority are vulnerable to further discrimination for not

upholding traditional gender roles in their relationships in addition to, in some cases, maintaining an appearance that does not conform to traditional gender norms (Friedman & Leaper, 2010).

In light of the above-mentioned findings, it is fair to state that bisexual women hold a triple minority status composed of, first being part of a non-heterosexual orientation, second being a minority within the non-heterosexual realm by choosing a non-monosexual or bisexual sexual orientation, and third being a woman. Given this status, bisexual women are likely to be more vulnerable to discrimination and mental health challenges than bisexual men, however this is not to say that the latter does not face discrimination due to their double minority status (Goetstouwers, 2006). Nonetheless, and despite this unique minority status, research pertaining to homosexuality and those few that have begun to address the bisexual population have mostly focused on the experience of men (Dodge & Sandfort, 2007; Wilcox, 2003) and according to Dodge & Sandfort (2007) social science research should particularly focus on women who identify as bisexual in order to gain a broader understanding of the bisexual population.

Keeping in mind the reality of bisexual women in secular culture as presented above, for bisexual Christian women there is yet another layer of minority status added to their reality by being a person of Christian faith. Christianity has undoubtedly had a long history of discrimination against sexual minorities and despite the recent progress in terms of acknowledging sexual diversity and upholding equality principles for the lesbian and gay communities, the Christian faith has remained criticised for struggling with this advancement (Yip, 2010).

The history and current state of resistance of some Christian denominations toward publicly accepting lesbian and gay people into their organisations have contributed to much of the homophobia and animosity towards sexual minorities that remain in society today (Lo Presti,

2005). This has unquestionably left a number of psychological wounds for Christian lesbians and gays and many have resorted to leaving their faith behind as a main coping mechanism (Lo Presti, 2005). The landscape is however slowly evolving for those who identify as lesbian or gay and wishing to continue living a religious life. For example, the United Church of Christ has been welcoming self-affirming gay men and women into the ministry since 1985 (Lo Presti, 2005) and the Metropolitan Community Church has been actively involved in the Lesbian Gay Christian Movement for a number of years (Toft, 2009a).

Nevertheless, as Yip (2010) highlights, Christian lesbian and gay people are in somewhat of a double-bind as they are a minority in the Church and are often rejected by their lesbian and gay counterparts with no religious affiliation because they chose to remain within a religious institution that tends to reject alternative sexualities (Yip, 2010). Moreover, in the case of individuals identifying as bisexual, not only are they faced with this double-bind, they also often face rejection from both the heterosexual and homosexual communities. They are, on the one hand, at times rejected by the heterosexual community for among other things engaging in same-sex fantasies and/or behaviors as well being potential bridges of HIV into the heterosexual community (Dillimore, 2001; Yip, 2010). On the other hand, they are at times rejected by the homosexual community for maintaining access to society's heterosexual privileges through their attraction to both genders (Hemmings, 1997; Keppel, 2006).

The challenging reality of bisexual individuals of faith is again compounded by the issue of gender in Christianity as it is in the secular realm. As has been put forth by Martin (2003) and many others (see McDougall, 2008 for an example), the patriarchal context of the Abrahamic religions greatly influences the way women experience their faith. For Christians, as Gourgues (2013) suggests, this patriarchy has been influenced by a prevalent subordination of women in

the New Testament. A phenomenon he attributes to an attempt on the part of scripture authors to incorporate within scripture the prevailing societal norms which existed at the time of the early Christians. Martin (2003) however sees in the New Testament a different message, a Bible theme which holds as its essence the notion that we are all one in Christ, regardless of status or gender: "Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman," (Gal 3:28) (Canadian Bible Society, 1995, p.322). However, she highlights that Christian religious practices do not always uphold this principle and "...education in faith throughout the church community frequently affirms this inappropriate anthropology which favours male over female." (Martin, 2003, p.77). It is therefore clear that the bisexual Christian woman of today is faced with many layers of discrimination as expressed in her quadruple minority status composed of first being part of a non-heterosexual orientation; second by adhering to a non-monosexual lifestyle whereby she does not consider gender as a barrier to love; third being a person of sexual minority and of Christian faith; and fourth being of the female gender.

According to Toft (2009) and Yip (2010), the phenomena of bisexuality and gender have been widely understudied from the perspective of the Christian faith, with the focus mostly being on the experience of homosexual men in the study of religious-affiliated LGBTQ communities. For this reason, the current study aimed to clarify the experience of bisexual Christian women and more specifically how they compose with their religious and sexual identities. While the lesbian and gay Christian communities have succeeded in reconciling these identities through a systematic reinterpretation and re-appropriation of the sacred texts and the spiritual life, a topic that has been widely covered in the literature over the past 20 years (Yip, 2010), there is an absence of such a theology for bisexual Christians to help in integrating what can seem to be

conflicting identities (Bernhardt-House, 2010; Lingwood, 2010). It is therefore vital that the experiences of this invisible and highly stigmatized population of faith be further explored in order to support them in the healthy and fruitful composition of their sexual and spiritual identities. Accordingly, as put forth by Hamblin & Gross (2014) and Munt (2010) having access to a safe spiritual space (i.e. a space in which there is acceptance and respect for diversity such as alternative sexualities) is of utmost importance for one's mental health. Thus, as this population becomes increasingly understood, spiritually-oriented mental health professionals will be better able to provide "...a safe space for individuals to explore a spirituality that reduces feelings of shame, guilt, and hopelessness, and renews a sense of wholeness." (Murr, 2013, p. 349) for bisexual Christian woman, as Livingstone (2010) and Murr (2013) have concluded from their study of Christian women of alternative sexualities.

Historical and Current Understanding of Bisexuality

The exploration of the experiences of bisexual Christian women begins with a brief investigation of the historical intricacies that lead to their quadruple minority status and that have influenced the current understanding of bisexuality in both the secular and Christian domains of the European and North-American cultures.

Scientific Understanding of Bisexuality

The first appearance of the term bisexual was in the field of evolutionary science when in 1866 Aleksandr Kovalevsky, a Russian embryologist used the term to describe the hermaphroditic characteristics of ascidians (a.k.a. sea squirts) that possessed both male and female sexes (Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012). Based on Kovalevsky's discovery, Darwin

used the notion of hermaphroditism in his theory of sexual selection to support the idea that as males and females of a species were on differing evolutionary tracks, a more evolved species would be characterized by highly differentiated genders, thereby making invertebrates such as the ascidian and all hermaphroditic species less advanced than vertebrates that are no longer 'bisexual' (Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012).

Soon after this discovery, came the theory of recapitulation posited by the German scientist Ernst Haeckel (Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012). In his theory it was hypothesized that "... 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny' or the embryological stages of a species repeat its evolutionary stages" (Haeckel, 1866, as cited in Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012, p.111). This theory emerged from his observations of human embryo development which begins in an undifferentiated bisexual phase to later become sexually differentiated thus supporting the evolution theory of the time (Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012).

Concurrently with the evolutionary sciences, the sexual sciences in the late 19th century were beginning to postulate that homosexual attractions were related to inadequate prenatal development of the fetus (Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012). As Havelock Ellis put forth "...every fetus started off 'bisexual', in fact it was attracted to men and women, just as it started off 'intersex', or hermaphroditic. The mature fetus reached its final destination as a complete male or female heterosexual person, whereas the immature fetus produced an adult bisexual" (Ellis, 1897 as cited in Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012, p.111). Evolutionary and sexual scientists alike therefore supported the view that in order for a person's sexual orientation to be considered fully matured, one had to be able to distinguish between sexes in their attractions such as heterosexuals and homosexuals did, thus rendering bisexual attractions immature and underdeveloped (Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012).

Staying with the postulate that bisexual attractions are immature, Sigmund Freud put forth a theory of bisexuality in which attractions to both sexes is a point of departure in human development rather than an actual adult sexual orientation category (Davidson P. , 1997). Freud (1933) considered bisexual behavior in adulthood to be an indication of regression back into the pre-Oedipus phase, marked by unresolved and non-integrated sexual desires (Davidson P. , 1997; Freud, 1933).

Following this work was Alfred Kinsey's development of a theory of bisexuality which attempted to normalize dual gender attractions in his 1948 publication entitled *Sexual Attraction in the Human Male* (Germon, 2008). According to Kinsey's findings, bisexuality was a foundational form of sexuality from which both same-sex and heterosexual desire derived (Germon, 2008). His essentialist view conceptualized bisexual behavior as natural and considered monosexuality a mere social construct (Germon, 2008). Moreover, by placing sexual desire under a taxonomy of degree rather than one of categories with his 7-point likert scale (i.e. scores of 0 and 6 being monosexual, with 0 indicating exclusive heterosexuality and 6 exclusive homosexuality; and scores 1-5 representing a range of bisexual attractions (Brannon, 2002; Germon, 2008), Kinsey attempted to side-step sexual identity categories rendering obsolete the notions of normality and the psychopathologisation of same-sex and dual gender desires (Germon, 2008).

Notably, in its very beginnings the gay-rights movement retained this concept of taxonomy of degree, nevertheless, they eventually abandoned it for the ethnic identity of a gay minority which held more political advantages at the time by fitting "...easily into the neoliberal dicours of modern Western societies, offered legitimacy to rights claims, and acted as a springboard for legal reform." (Gemon, 2008, p.250). The main result of these paradigm shifts, forward and then

back again, was that gender remained the dominant dimension on which society based its classification of sexual orientation categories making the concept of bisexuality invalid in a renewed binary system characterized by dualities such as homosexual-heterosexual and oppressed-oppressor (Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012).

The gay rights movement culminated in the creation of the Queer theory movement in the late 1990s, which consisted of a post-structuralist understanding of identity, sexuality and gender and which has put great emphasis on the deconstruction of identity categories (Alexander & Anderlini-D'Onofrio, 2012). Although it created grounds of great potential for the acknowledgment of bisexuality, it did not provide bisexuals with the shelter it offered to the sexually marginalized, including transgendered individuals (Germon, 2008). In fact, as Gemon (2008) argues, the Queer movement, through its identification with identity dualities, has also dismissed bisexuality as unimportant and tends to consider it "...as a primitive vehicle through which gendered and sexual identities come to materialize in the "civilized" individual." (Germon, 2008, p.251). Thus, through its denial of various forms, bisexuality is excluded from epistemological day light thus making the experiences of a bisexual invisible and inauthentic (Germon, 2008).

The debates, nonetheless, continue and bisexuality as a concept has been gaining ground in the field of psychology since the removal of homosexuality as a form of psychopathology from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual III* in 1973 (Fox, 2006). For instance, in 1995 the American Psychological Association (APA) expanded its committee on sexual minorities, the APA's Public Interest Directorate, to include the interests of bisexual individuals (Fox, 2006). In addition, in 2001, the APA published their psychotherapeutic guidelines for people of sexual minorities which included guidelines for bisexual individuals (Fox, 2006). These events have

helped significantly in the acknowledgement of bisexuality as a valid and non-pathological sexual orientation and continue to carry their weight in academia today (Fox, 2006).

One contemporary theory that simultaneously validates bisexuality and sheds light on the experience of bisexuals is Dynamical Systems Theory. Based on the notion that complex phenomena such as sexuality and identity change over time through a pattern of emergence, stabilization, transition, and re-stabilisation, this theory is considered ideal in understanding female sexuality due to its emphasis on change (Diamond, 2008; Dillimore, 2001; Toft, 2009). By placing change at the center of its understanding of sexuality, it defies traditional models that take for granted that sexual orientation becomes fixed in adolescence, and it in fact expects change to occur during the lifespan (Diamond, 2008).

Dynamical Systems Theory argues that development is never complete and that minor or major alterations are possible at any time, a notion that is referred to as emergence (Diamond, 2008). According to Diamond (2008) the term emergence "...refers to the coming-into-being of novel behaviors or experiences as a result of dynamic interactions between people and their environments." (Diamond, 2008, p.242). Thus, as sexuality is fluid, factors such as humour and intelligence, life events, and encounters may play a greater role in sexual attraction than gender (Toft, 2009). As such, this understanding of bisexuality has great potential in deepening the current comprehension of this sexual orientation outside of the dominant dichotomous conceptualisation of human sexuality and attraction that exists in society today.

Christian Theological Understanding of Bisexuality

The understanding of bisexuality from a theological perspective begins with the Christian lesbian and gay movement and Christianity's long history of condemning homosexuality and

homoerotic acts (Lo Presti, 2005). As Lo Presti (2005) puts forth, same-sex intimacy is judged rather punitively in both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. For example, the Book of Leviticus explicitly states that "...If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them." (Lev 20:13) (Clark, 1984). Moreover, in Paul's letter to the Romans, the only mention of female homoeroticism (Bernhardt-House, 2010), he states that "God let them follow their own evil desires. Women no longer wanted to have sex in a natural way, and they did things with each other that were not natural. Men behaved in the same way ...and what has happened to them is punishment for their foolish deeds." (Rom 1: 26-27) (Canadian Bible Society, 1995, p. 263). Needless to say that many conservative and orthodox Christian denominations refer to such passages to support their rejection of lesbians and gay individuals in their congregations by considering them to be closed to God's gift of children and engaging in sexual relationships that go against the unity between a man and woman symbolizing the union of Christ and Church (Lo Presti, 2005).

Conversely, since the 1960s gay liberation movement, the lesbian and gay community has gained much ground in reclaiming their spirituality within the Christian faith, a phenomenon which Yip (2010) attributes to four factors, the "...broader socio-cultural shifts that promoted sexual liberalism; progressive legislative reform; increasing sophistication and effectiveness of secular and religious/spiritual lesbian and gay politics; and proliferation of scholarly research, particularly in theology, scriptural studies, and the social sciences." (Yip, 2010, p.35-36). Of note, the scriptural and theological works of the movement have been particularly fruitful in helping them regain their footing in institutionilized Christianity (Yip, 2010).

According to Yip (1997), this lesbian and gay Christian theology has enabled their reappropriation of scripture in four movements (Toft, 2009a). The first, referred to by Yip (1997) as 'Attacking the Stigma' involves the questioning of conventionally used bible interpretations, a particular focus on Christian values outside of the realm of sexuality, and a process of recontextualizing the meanings of passages related to sexuality (Toft, 2009a). The second movement of 'Attacking the Stigmatizer' involves deconstructing the authority of the Church as holding the true word of God on this subject matter (Toft, 2009; Yip, 1997). The third movement which Yip (1997) names the 'Positive Personal Approaches', is comprised of questioning the Church's interpretation in matters of sexuality, but also affirming the lack of pertinence these erroneous interpretations have in the lives of lesbian and gay Christians (Toft, 2009a). Finally, in the fourth movement, there is the presence of an 'Ontogeneric Argument' in which God is the creator of all forms of sexuality, therefore sexual minorities and their lifestyles are of inherent value and intrinsically acceptable and accepted by God (Toft, 2009; Yip, 1997).

Accordingly, Wilcox (2003) has described the spirituality of many lesbian and gay Christians as a 'Bible Buffet' in which they selectively choose the scripture and theological literature that most appropriately represents their reality and forgoe those that they consider to be no longer relevant. This strategy has enabled the gay community to find solace in their faith and continue to rely on their spirituality as a significant resource in their life as is the case for many Christians regardless of sexual orientation (Yip, 2010). In fact, the literature has revealed that relying on spirituality is a significant psychological tool of resilience and is shown to be an important coping mechanism in times of crisis (Bade & Cook, 2008; Greenway, Phelan, Turnbull, & Milne, 2007; Pargament, 2007). For instance, Pargament (2007) mentions that for most people of faith, turning to their spiritual beliefs in times of trial is of great assistance by

providing meaning, a sense of purpose, emotional relief , and helping in the creation of relationships (Greenway, Phelan, Turnbull, & Milne, 2007; Pargament, 2007).

Conversely, the bisexual community has not been so fortunate in terms of relying on a theology that is adapted to their needs, as there is very little presence of a bisexual theology in the literature (Lingwood, 2010; Toft, 2009a). This has been hypothesized by Lingwood (2010) as being due to the dichotomous discourses that still underlies the lesbian and gay Christian theological perspective in which sexual identity is conceptualized based on the heterosexual-homosexual and male-female dualities. Lingwood (2010) highlights that even for the gay rights and theological movements:

...bisexuals effortlessly cross gender lines therefore calling into question the impenetrability and ontology of those lines. To live a life where gender (in some sense) does not matter is threatening to a world that has built its thinking on the premise that it does. Bisexuality threatens to transcend or transgress a rigid understanding of two mutually exclusive genders and sexual orientations. (Lingwood, 2010, p.32).

As many gay theologians still rely on essentialism, understanding homosexuality as an inborn characteristic of a person, they cannot conceive of a sexual orientation that implies choice and the crossing of orientation boundaries such as a bisexual orientation (Bernhardt-House, 2010).

The crossing of boundaries implied by bisexuality also puts into question the dualistic language implicit in Christian scripture (Bernhardt-House, 2010). A passage Bernhardt-House (2010) uses to illustrate this ingrained dichotomous language is that of Jesus' most popular statements: "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other." (Luke 16:13) (Canadian Bible Society, 1995). Therefore, the possibility of choosing either a same-sex or opposite sex relationship, as bisexuals do, is seen as an impossibility and undermines the gay theological movement's main argument

that their sexual identity and their same-sex desires are not a choice but an innate characteristic given to them by God (Bernhardt-House, 2010).

Despite such challenges, the bisexual religious community has made some preliminary attempts at developing a bisexual theology. In Koldny & Hunt's (2000) *Blessed Bi Spirit: Bisexual People of Faith*, one of the first important works which looks at the intersection of bisexuality and spirituality, many contributors evoke the figure of Jesus as God meeting all people where they stand without asking them to abandon their deepest selves (Udis-Kessler, 2000). Jesus, as described in the Gospels, is also inspiring to the bisexual community as one who breaks boundaries (e.g. ethnic, gender, and social status boundaries) thereby allowing the all-inclusive love of God to prevail (Udis-Kessler, 2000).

In addition, Lingwood (2010) has put forth the story of Moses in Exodus as a well-fitting theology of the oppressed, a liberation theological perspective of the systematically marginalized (Dykstra, 2000), for bisexuals of Christian faith. Lingwood (2010) recounts the story of Moses as one who could have easily decided to remain living with the privileges of an Egyptian prince and ignored the oppression of the people of Israel; however when God revealed the truth about his real identity as a Hebrew, Moses took the risk of helping to free his people from their oppression. Moses had spent much of his life trying to hide from his true identity, but God acted as a mirror and as Lingwood (2010) states "God shows you yourself, and what you are. God outs the faithful person because God is a revealer of truth, God is a light that will shine on every part of the self. Self-knowledge is a proven fruit of the life of faith." (Lingwood, 2010, p.41). Through his work, Lingwood (2010) presents a bisexual theology that can be based on the bisexual person living openly and according to her/his true identity; on the one hand to remain engaged in the

liberation of the oppressed who chooses a same-sex partnership, and on the other in order to uphold God's truth as revealed through their capacity to love across gender boundaries.

Though these are good first step attempts at a substantial bisexual theology, there is still a long way to go in order to achieve a destigmatization and acceptance of the bisexual lifestyle both in the secular and Christian academia domains. In light of this, Bernhart-House (2010) urges that the development of a bisexual theological perspective is of utmost importance in liberating bisexuals of faith from the injustice they face on a regular basis.

Current Study and Rationale

The current study aimed to clarify the experience of bisexual women of the Christian faith by exploring the means by which they succeed, or not, in composing with their sexual and spiritual identities. As previously mentioned, very few empirical studies in the literature have explicitly focused on the experience of bisexual individuals in the Christian faith or in any other systems of faith. The main work that has focused on this intersection for Christianity is from Toft (2009) and consisted of an exploratory study of 60 self-identified bisexual men and women which included the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The author's specific inquiries pertained to how bisexual Christians negotiated and defined their sexual orientation to comply with their religious identity as well as to their means to access the institutionalized terrain of the Christian faith (Toft, 2009). The study participants were residents of the United Kingdom, ranging in age from 18 to 64, and were from various Christian denominations (Toft, 2009). With his study, Toft (2009) has highlighted that bisexual Christians are forced to engage in identity negotiations in order to be able to identify as both Christian and bisexual and in a reassessment of the traditional perspective of sexuality held by their denominations.

By continuing the qualitative explorative work of Toft (2009), the current study contributes in various ways to the intersection of bisexuality and Christianity: first by continuing to give a voice to the experiences of bisexuals in general; second by further exploring the experiences of bisexuals in the Christian faith and on how they compose with these seemingly complex identities; third, by explicitly focusing on the experience of bisexual women in Christianity; and fourth, by being the first study of this kind to be conducted with the Canadian, Anglophone population as the focus so far has been on the U.K. population (Toft, 2009).

The objective of this study was to begin developing a theoretical perspective that comprehensively conceptualizes the experience of bisexual Christian women. More specifically, it aimed to; first outline their understanding and experience of both their spirituality and sexual orientation; secondly to clarify the existence and components of the process involved in composing¹ with these two identities in order to remain a self-identified bisexual Christian; and thirdly to highlight the particular aspects of their experience of being bisexual, Christian, and attempting to compose with their two identities, that relate to their being a woman. The insights gained from the fulfillment of each of these objectives were combined into a model outlining the clinical dimensions to be considered when practicing psychotherapy with bisexual Christian women.

Method

¹ The use of the neutral term ‘composing’ is intentional here. Although the literature suggests that these identities may be in conflict and therefore require negotiation and perhaps even reconciliation in order for the individual to properly integrate them into their identity, the author wishes to use a term that will capture the full experience of holding a bisexual Christian woman identity rather than narrowing the focus to only the conflicting components of their experience. As such, it is hypothesized that the neutral term ‘compose’ better fulfills the purpose of capturing the full spectrum of this study’s participants’ experience as compared to terms like negotiation and reconciliation.

First and foremost, the design, materials, and procedures used in this study were approved by Saint Paul University's Office of Research and Ethics prior to beginning the recruitment process (see Appendix A – Ethics Certificat, Research Ethics Board), and remained unmodified throughout the entire study process.

Design

The present study used a qualitative grounded-theory based approach which entails the generation of a theory informed by the phenomenological experiences of individuals who live a common phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). This approach was perfectly suited to the main objective of this study which is to begin developing a theoretical perspective that comprehensively conceptualizes the experience of bisexual Christian women. Grounded-theory studies generally collect data through the use of qualitative interviews until a saturation of themes is reached thereby allowing a theory to be developed based on these themes (Creswell, 2007). It is estimated that the limited number of participants (i.e. 2 Participants) in this study would not permit the author to achieve a full saturation of themes. Although this an important limitation of this study, it is hypothesized that due to the limited amount of research addressing this intersection of identities, this study does significantly contribute to understanding this population as it allows for an in-depth analyse of two individuals living this reality.

The first series of interviews were conducted individually and lasted approximately 1h 45 minutes for the Participant 1 and 1 h 35 minutes for Participant 2. Once the first set of interviews were conducted and audio-recorded they were transcribed verbatim. These verbatim transcripts were then analyzed using constant comparative methods in which they were reviewed by both the present author and her thesis advisor who independently identified initial emerging

themes from each of the interviews. These independently identified themes were then compared during subsequent regular meetings between the present author and advisor thereby following an iterative process that allowed for the creation of comprehensive descriptions of each of the interviews. Finally, meaning units stemming from the meanings derived from each emerging theme were formulated using the same iterative process.

Approximately three weeks after the first interview, a second individual interview was conducted with both participants, lasting approximately 35 minutes for each participant, in order to extract any changes in the previously identified themes or additional themes that may emerge. The audio-recordings from the final interviews were transcribed word for word and analyzed according to the same method employed for the first series of interview as described above. Once all the data was analyzed, it was combined to develop a theory which describes the experience of bisexual women in the Christian faith and how they compose with their sexual and spiritual identities.

Participants

Participants for this study included two women between the age of 18 and 50 years who identify as belonging to the Christian faith and who self-labelled as bisexual². Participants were recruited from two different United Churches of Canada in the Ottawa region. It was important that participants be within the age range of 18 to 50 years, a range that has been found to place a special interest on the relationship between sexuality and spirituality (Entrup & Firestein, 2007). Each participant completed two interviews with a three week interval.

Materials

² See analysis for on discussion how each participant uses self-labelling.

The study materials included a socio-demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A), the Brief Symptom Inventory- 18 (see Appendix B): a self-report symptom inventory designed to measure psychological distress (Derogatis, 2001) in medical and community populations. As its name indicates, it has 18 items divided among three clinical scales: six items on the Somatization scale, six on the Depression scale, and finally, 6 on the Anxiety scale. Transforming raw scores into T-scores allows to compare results from the clinical scales and to generate a General Severity Index (GSI) which takes into account results from the 3 clinical scales. A GSI of 63 and above, in terms of T-scores, is considered to be clinically significant.

Materials also included a semi-structured interview questionnaire (see Appendix C – Semi-Structure Research Questionnaires on the Experience of Bisexual Christian Women); a one-question Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire (see Appendix D) in which participants were asked to respond verbally to the following question: “On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being very low and 10 very high, how would you rate your present level of well-being?”; an audio-recorder to record the interview; as well as a Recruitment Notice (See Appendix E). The interview took place in a private room setting at Saint-Paul University in Ottawa and the participants were provided with transportation fees to get to the interview location.

Interview Questionnaire

The present study’s main semi-structure questionnaire (see Appendix C – Semi-Structure Research Questionnaires on the Experience of Bisexual Christian Women) is composed of Part 1: 3 sections of 6 questions each for a total of 18 questions open-ended questions (e.g. How do you understand your sexual orientation?), and Part 2: 2 open-ended questions (e.g. What are your impressions of our first meeting?). Using the participants self-definitions of bisexuality and

Christian spirituality as a trampoline for the interview, the interview questionnaire was designed to explore the topic of the study in as much depth as possible and develop a comprehensive narrative pertaining to the participants' experience of their sexual and spiritual identities. The common themes and meaning units found among the participants' narratives are the main targets of the analysis, however, due to the small number of participants, the author deems it important to also highlight key differences among these emerging themes and meaning units in order avoid an overgeneralization effect.

Procedure

Participants were recruited via the various liberal Christian churches (e.g. the United Church of Canada) and affiliated institutions and associations of various denominations in the Ottawa region including Saint Paul University. Notices (see Appendix E – Notice and Recruitment Script) explaining the purpose and contents of the study as well as the participant requirements were placed in key areas of these institutions. The notices indicated that participation is voluntary, that participants may choose to end their participation at any time, and that they may contact the present author if they had any questions about the study prior to agreeing to participate. The Church community leaders for the Churches in which the Recruitment Notices were posted were contacted via telephone in order to prompt the recruitment process (see Appendix E- Notice and Recruitment Script for a summary of the telephone conversation). During this phone conversation, the purpose of the study was explained and the Church leaders were requested to inform their church community of the study and to explain its purpose, that participation was completely voluntary and confidential, and

request interested participants to refer to the Recruitment Notice posted in strategic locations within the Church for the current author's contact information.

Participants were screened based on the following exclusion criteria: they had to be women from 18 to 50 years of age and self-identify as both Christian and bisexual. Once the selection process was completed and prior to their agreeing to take part in the study, participants were advised by the current author that prior to the interviews they would have one Consent Form, one Socio-demographic Questionnaire, and one Brief Symptom Inventory questionnaire to complete which would take approximately fifteen minutes. They were also informed that the first interview would consist of mostly open-ended questions regarding their experience as bisexual Christian women, would last approximately ninety minutes, and that a one-question Subjective Well-being Questionnaire would be administered at the end of the first interview. They were also informed that the second meeting would be approximately one month later, would begin with the administration of the Brief Symptom Inventory - 18 taking approximately five minutes, would continue with the second part of the interview which would take about forty five minutes, and would be followed by the one-question Subjective Well-being Questionnaire. Once these details were discussed and understood, an interview time for both the first and second interview was scheduled for the participants and the participants were informed that their transportation fees to get to the study location would be provided at the beginning of each interview.

On the day of the first interview, participants first met with the interviewer, the current author, who explained the general goals and purpose of the study (i.e. to collect data pertaining to the experiences of bisexual Christian women and more particularly how they compose with their sexual and spiritual identities). After this explanation of the content, confidentiality measures were thoroughly explained along with the fact that they may choose to opt-out of the

study at any time or chose not to answer a question if they felt they needed to. Participants were also informed that the interviews would be audio-recorded, that they would remain anonymous throughout the entire research process, that their identity would not be revealed, that the interviewer would be the only person to listen to the recordings of the interviews, and that these recordings would be erased once the data is transcribed.

Once the explanation of the interview process was complete, participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions or address any concerns with regards to the content of the study. Participants confirmed that they did not have any concerns or questions to voice. Participants then signed a consent form (see Appendix F – Consent Form) which contained all the information on confidentiality and volition that was previously provided verbally. Once the consent form was signed, the participant was requested to complete the Socio-Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A) and the Brief Symptom Inventory - 18 (see Appendix B) in order to obtain a baseline of emotional distress prior to the beginning of the interview process. Once these steps were completed, the first interview began. Upon completion of the first interview, the participant was requested to complete a one-question Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire (see Appendix D) in order to monitor how the interview had impacted their level of well-being based on the baseline established with the Brief Symptom Inventory-18.

The second interview took place approximately three weeks later for both participants and consisted of the same steps as the first interview, with the exception of the completion of the Socio-Demographic Questionnaire which was only completed prior to the first interview.

Interview

The interview included a series of open-ended questions and used closed-ended questions to lead into the open-questions and to provide context to the interview. The open-ended questions allowed the participant to describe their experience of being a bisexual Christian woman, in as much detail as possible, as they understand it, and in their own words.

To view a full copy of the questionnaires, refer to Appendix C – Semi-Structure Research Questionnaires on the Experience of Bisexual Christian Women. As previously mentioned, at the end of the interview, the participant was requested to complete the one-question Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire in order to measure the impact of the interview process on the her psychological well-being. In the case where, the result of this questionnaire were to the lead researcher to believe that some distress was caused from participating in the study, the participant would have been referred to the Saint-Paul University Counselling Center services for psychological support or to the Ottawa Distress Center if the participant was in acute distress.

Once the first and the second interviews were completed, the participants were thanked for their time and informed that they may obtain the results of the study if they desired to and arrangements were made to provide the results to the participants once they become available.

Results

Participant Socio-demographic Characteristics

Two women fulfilling the recruitment criteria for this study were recruited from the United Church of Canada. As seen in Table 1, participants are aged 30 and 40 respectively, both are English speaking women who identify as bisexual and currently live in Ottawa, Ontario. Each attends a different United Church of Canada in the Ottawa area, both of which belong to

the Affirm United movement aimed at supporting the inclusion of LGBTQ within the United Church (Affirm United - S'affirmer ensemble, 2014). Although both are currently in a same-sex relationship, Participant 1 (henceforth P1) currently lives in a common-law union with her partner whereas Participant 2 (henceforth P2) does not live with her current partner. P1 has lived longest in Toronto, Ontario, whereas P2 has lived in Ottawa her entire life. Both are from different ethno-cultural backgrounds; P1 being Irish-Canadian, and P2 of British, Scottish, and Ukrainian origin. Finally, participants have a different level of education; P1 is currently completing a Doctorate in Theology and P2 has completed a College Diploma and is now working.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participants	Age	First Language	Location lived in the longest	Civil Status	Highest Level of Education	Ethno-cultural Origins	Religion
1	40	English	Toronto, Ontario	Common-law	Doctoral candidate	Irish-Canadian	Oecumenical-United Church
2	30	English	Ottawa, Ontario	Single	College Diploma	British, Scottish, Ukrainian	Protestant-United Church

Brief Symptom Inventory & Well-Being Questionnaires

The Brief Symptom Inventory – 18 (BSI-18) was administered prior to each interview for each participant. The General Severity Indices (GSI) of both participants, in every administration of the BSI are below a T-score of 63 (P1, Interview 1: GSI=39, Interview 2: GSI = 33; P2, Interview 1: GSI=33, Interview 2: GSI=39), indicating that neither present with a clinical profile. Also, none of the clinical scales' T-scores are in the clinical range. In fact, T-Scores

are below average which strongly suggests participants were not in distress prior to the interviews.

On the Well-Being Questionnaire, P1's results revealed a score of 8.5/10 for both interviews, while P2 rated herself at 8/10 for the first interview and at 9/10 for the second. These results, along with those derived from the BSI-18, indicate not only that participants were not in distress prior to the interviews but that they also coped well with the challenges they identified during both of their interviews.

Participants' Life Context

The following provides an understanding of the differing life stories of each participant and is essential in order to contextualize the similarities and differences that appear in the emerging themes and corresponding meaning units revealed by the analysis of word for word interview transcripts.

Participant 1

P1 grew up in what she defines as the "Catholic Left" in which the value of going to Church, a liberal University Church environment, every Sunday, was upheld along with the importance of social activism. In her interviews, she shared a story of publically protesting the nuclear arms race with her mother, holding ashes and a candle in her hands as symbols of the Christian Ash Wednesday ritual, at the early age of eight. She protested against the ban on women's ordination in the Catholic Church as a young teenager in a catholic school after which she was reprimanded by one of the school nuns who did not agree with women's ordination. These events and attempts, among many others, to change the institution from the inside, were

accompanied by a sense of being personally rejected by the Catholic institution. At this point in her life, in spite of this sense of rejection, the catholic framework made sense to P1, an understanding of the teachings came naturally to her, she passionately participated in church activities and “(...) knew how to argue and disagree (...)” (Participant 1). Also, these events never took away from her intuition that spirituality and God are greater than the institution of the Catholic Church.

Moreover, throughout her childhood and teenage years, the messages she and her siblings received with regards to sexuality were contradictory. On the one hand, she describes her mother as having been sexually liberal for her time, upholding the need for contraception and supporting the importance of women joining the work force. On the other hand, her mother tended to use what P1 perceived as rigid and shaming language when speaking of sexuality. This contradictory environment still marks P1 and has left her feeling confronted by questions about sexuality and spirituality. To this day, it is still difficult for her to fully reconcile the traditional and liberal values she holds at once, and she continues to view sexuality as a sacred coming together of two people in what feels is “(...) a terrifying opportunity to make (herself) utterly vulnerable...” (Participant 1).

As a university student, P1 entered the oecumenical world via a group called the Student Christian Movement (SCM). One of her roles in this group was to obtain funding from social activist groups, an experience in which she faced having to negotiate the tension between the Christian and secular world:

“(...) so we were all connected to the activist world, and so we'd go into the Christian Church world to try and get funding for projects and downplay the activism, and then you would go into the activist world and would (mumble)... 'So what group are you from?' 'Oh, we're from the Student (mumble) Movement'... There was a lot of personal and interpersonal relationship to get those groups past the labels.” (Participant 1).

In the context of the SCM, P1 also participated in one of its sub-groups Sex & Spirit. This sub-group composed of people from all faith traditions, and identifying with a wide range of alternative sexualities such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual, had the main objective of exploring the intersection of sexuality and spirituality from all perspectives and to dig deep within its meaning. It was in this group that she met two individuals that particularly marked her; Sarah³, a transsexual woman whom she witnessed physically and spiritually transform from a man to a woman, and Thomas, a fellow liberal theologian, who has inspired P1 to live her spirituality in a socially just manner to this day. According to P1, this experience and time in her life “(...) radically affected (her) adult life (...)” opened up her perspective on spirituality, politics, and sexuality and allowed her to experience deep spiritual transformation.

She has lived ecumenically from this point on, and after her undergraduate studies, pursued her Master of Divinity in the United Church of Canada for ordained ministry while working as a catholic school teacher. Her experience working in the catholic school environment was similar to what she lived when a member of the Catholic Church; she faced discrimination and felt personally rejected by the institution. Among other things, her school board imposed a policy prohibiting all staff holding a non-heterosexual orientation from living an open lifestyle while supporting a policy of openness and non-discrimination against alternative sexualities for the students. This prohibited P1 from supporting the students who were questioning their sexual identity as she would have wished. Again, despite this dynamic, P1 took joy in helping her students think critically about their spirituality and religion and was greatly appreciated by her students because of this.

Now pursuing her Doctorate in Theology in a Catholic University institution, P1 continues to teach in a Catholic institution and to face discrimination against her lifestyle of

³ N.B. The names of individuals in this text have been modified in order to protect their right to confidentiality.

living in a same-sex family, and being the mother of a young child, her son. During the interviews she told a story of being asked to hide her pregnancy while teaching so that the school may not be reprimanded by its arch dioceses, which she proceeded to do. This not only brought a sense of rejection, but left her feeling disconnected from another pregnant woman in the class room and from her unborn child.

As for sexual orientation, P1, did not mention when she began identifying as queer⁴, but was identifying by the time she had entered the CSM Sex & Spirit group. She describes a significant monogamous romantic relationship with a man in her 20s in which the fact of openly identified as queer led, among other factors, to the end of the relationship. She is now in a same-sex monogamous relationship in which she is open about being queer and explains that because their relationship is more solid than her first significant relationship, this is not a problem. P1 and her partner are now raising their son together and have specifically chosen not to go to Catholic Church with him nor send him to a catholic school as they feel their family is not valued in these institutions.

Participant 2

The life context of P2 is characterized by a significantly different path as compared to P1. Having been raised in an atheist family, P2 was never exposed to education with regards to spirituality and religion until her late teenage years. Her first glimpse of a sense of spirituality began with her connection to nature. While growing up, her family spent much time camping and spending time in the wilderness, moments that gave her a sense of balance and connection. One significant spiritual event for P2 occurred at age 12 after the passing away of her grand-

⁴ A term she uses to refer to her sexual orientation as more than bisexual and incorporating the spiritual and political. This term will be further discussed in the analysis of emerging themes.

mother, a woman of great support for her during a time when she faced bullying at school. She had a difficult time accepting the loss of her grand-mother and found a way to reconnect with her by speaking to her through the stars every night, an idea she had based on an Ann Murray song she listened to when she was a child which stated that "...the stars are the windows to heaven where angels speak through." (Participant 2).

The loss of her grand-mother along with the bullying she experienced at school elicited the beginning of spiritual questioning for P2 and inquiries such as

"(...) Is there something else out there? Is there someone watching out for me? ...Is there more to life than just this? ...Why I am here? Or why am I a victim of this stuff? Why is my life going in this direction? What's the point of all of this?" (Participant 2).

At the age of 17, P2 walked into a Church in her neighbourhood with a friend requesting some answers to these questions from the Pastor and he provided information that made sense to her. The Christian idea of one God watching over her and everything in existence clicked for her and "felt like home" (Participant 2). Subsequent events and questions solidified her Christian faith such as feeling that her prayers were answered by God when she could not fall asleep at night, or that God created the tools for her to survive a lethal heart defect.

As of 18 years old, P2 had gone from atheist, to agnostic, to Christian, and joined the United Church of Canada which she has been part of ever since, a community that feels she naturally belongs to. She chose this church specifically because it is in line with her values of accepting everyone despite their sexual orientation or gender and expressed that "If they had been a Church that would have had a problem, my (her) membership of that Church would have been a question." and this would have led her to change to a church that does fit her values. This is a key element in P2's dynamic and will be discussed in further detail in the emerging themes of safe spaces and on the process of spiritual growth.

In terms of sexual orientation, P2 has recently entered a same-sex relationship for the first time, with a woman from South-America who is also Christian. Although she has always had a sense that she is not heterosexual, she did not explore this aspect of her identity until six months prior to the interview. She explained that having been severely bullied by both girls and boys in school resulted in her not wanting to be romantically close to anyone for a long time. When she did begin exploring the idea, she briefly participated in a support group for the LGBTQ and felt that she did not belong due the differences between her life, which was calm and surrounded by support, and theirs, which were full of turmoil, drug use and delinquency. After dating men for a few years, she felt a sense that something was missing, that she had to "...honor this part of myself (herself) and live this." (Participant 2). This opened the window for exploration again, resulting in entering a first same-sex relationship. Although she expresses being very much in love with her partner, during the interview P2 described a relationship in which the subject of bisexuality or her past with men is taboo, hurtful, and confusing to her partner:

"(...) it closes down conversation. And we always try to be honest with each other and open but there's this part of me that she has never, to my knowledge, been able to reconcile, this idea of me and her, and the idea of me with men." (Participant 2).

Despite what P2 describes as a stress on their relationship, she considers her partner to be committed to and present in the relationship thereby creating an environment of mutual support.

Finally, during the interview process, P2, expressed feeling confronted by her understanding of her sexual orientation as naturally occurring and coming from God which to her feels contradictory to her lack of ability to have children naturally with her same-sex partner.

This elicited many spiritually-based questions for her such as:

"If God created us this way then how do I answer this question, this basic human thing of, you know, sex leads to babies. And then how do I reconcile that with being in a same-sex relationship." (Participant 2).

Notwithstanding, the distress this causes for her, P2 relies on her partner and family to support her through these inquiries.

Emerging Themes

The iterative analysis process of all four interviews revealed seventeen (17) emerging themes common to both participants in composing with multiple identities of Christian, Woman, and Bisexual (Queer) and are listed in Table 2. For a detailed breakdown of each common and distinct emerging theme per interview, refer to Appendix G – Comparison of Emerging Themes. Note that Table 2 is a summary of the column entitled Characteristics of Commonalities between Common Emerging Themes from the table in Appendix G.

As seen in Table 2. The seventeen (17) emerging themes revealed during the analysis process are: 1) Definition of Sexual Orientation, 2) Label Qualifiers, 3) Definition of Spirituality, 4) Religious & Spiritual History, 5) Relationship with the Catholic Church, 6) Use of Themes from the Bible, 7) Safe Spaces, 8) Understanding of God & God Images, 9) Relationship with God, 10) Living in Canada in this Time, 11) Being Bisexual (Queer) & Christian, 12) The Process of Spiritual Growth, 13) Gender Identity, 14) Family of Origin & Current Family, 15) Identity Negotiation Process, 16) Composing with Multiple Identities, 17) Impact of First Interview.

Table 2. Common Emerging themes-Interview 1 & 2, Participants 1 & 2
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<i>Emerging Theme 1: Definition of Sexual Orientation</i>

Rejection of binaries

Sexual identity is not a choice

Emerging Theme 2: Label Qualifiers

Rejection of binaries

Labels are restrictive

Label must provide room for flexibility & change

Bisexual label can be scary to romantic partner.

Emerging Theme 3: Definition of Spirituality

Transcendent God

Relationship with God

Awareness reconnects to God

Emerging Themes 4: Religious & Spiritual History

Pathway to connect to God

Bible and Jesus-Christ make sense

Influenced by life events

Emerging Theme 5: Relationship with the Catholic Church

Catholic institution is problematic

Disagreement with its stance on homosexuality

Emerging Theme 6: Use of Themes from the Bible

Major themes from the Bible and Jesus Christ's teachings

Themes as response and solution to LGBTQ discrimination

Draw on themes

Emerging Theme 7: Safe Spaces

Safe spaces are essential

United Church - Affirm is a safe space

A spiritual community with similar values

Creating a safe space for others

Do not belong to a church that rejects homosexuality

Acceptance

Emerging Theme 8: Understanding of God & God Images

Non-literal Bible interpretation

Draw on themes in Jesus Christ's teachings

God is experienced through relationship

Emerging Theme 9: Relationship with God

Greater than Church institution

Movement

Emerging Theme 10: Living in Canada in this Time

Discrimination in Canada is lower

Discrimination in their generation is lower

Still some battles to fight in Canada

Emerging Theme 11: Being Bisexual (Queer) & Christian

Same-sex romantic relationship

No inner contradiction between bisexual and Christian

Struggles in romantic relationships

Canadian is a privileged position

Discrimination in world must change

Emerging Theme 12: The Process of Spiritual Growth.

Christian views shaped by diversity

Sexual orientation is not a choice

Misunderstanding of Bible leads to discrimination

Pathway to spiritual growth

Emerging Theme 13: Gender Identity

Chose United Church

Not part of Catholic Church

Emerging Theme 14: Family of Origin & Current Family

Influenced by the dynamics of their family of origin

Coping mechanisms in composing with multiple identities

Emerging Theme 15: Identity Negotiation Process

Choosing space and community

Identity in relationship with God

Identity not a choice

Emerging Theme 16: Composing with Multiple Identities

Found a way of composing with multiple identities

Honor every part of identity

Changes in identity are a part of life

Have assigned meaning to change

Emerging Theme 17: Impact of First Interview

Increased level of self-awareness

Prompted the seeking of support

Movement

1) Definition of Sexual Orientation

The major common sub-theme under each participant's definition of sexual orientation is the rejection of binaries. In this case, binaries refer to the use of dichotomous

language in order to classify sexual orientation (i.e. heterosexual-homosexual) based on the concept of gender (i.e. male-female) thereby invalidating the notion of a bisexual sexuality.

The rejection of this language implies that the participants of this study place the definition of their sexual orientation outside this language of binaries as it does not capture their experience of being attracted to a person and not a gender and results in denying parts of their identity. For example, P2's definition of sexual orientation is "...fluid...changing... and changeable...." (Participant 2) meaning that it can never be fixed in a dichotomy. P1 takes this idea even further by even refusing the term bisexual and replacing it with the term queer whom she feels is much more open and flexible:

"(...)I'm in a relationship with a woman as a bisexual, but then I sorta think bisexual doesn't adequately define me so then what I like about queer is that... It's like a fan, so with queer, you have a fan that opens, and you have the multiplicity that a fan provides. Whereas when the fan is closed you only have two sides, but when you open it up, there's all of this diversity. And so queer opens that diversity." (Participant 1).

Moreover, the term diversity in Participant 1's metaphor of a fan refers to an additional element that is particular to her definition of sexual orientation, a trinomial of sexuality, spirituality, and social justice politics:

"(...)that there's something more that I need to understand about myself...I've always talked about sexuality, spirituality, and politics in the same contexts. Ummm so if you're gonna have a social justice perspective on the world, then you want equal rights and you want people to have safe spaces to live in." (Participant 1).

All are aspects of her identity which she considers to be inseparable from one another and therefore are an integral part of her definition of sexual orientation.

In addition, another sub-theme that is common to both participants is their perception that their sexual orientation is not a choice:

"(...) just God loves us, God created us this way (with emphasis on 'this way') this is who we are(...)." (Participant 2);

“But it's very limited because then you get to someone who is bisexual, and then it's like, well so chose... Well... chose what? Choose who I fall in love with? Pretty much that doesn't happen. You know falling in love is a very funny thing.” (Participant 1).

2) *Label Qualifiers*

As mentioned in the previous section, each participant prefers a different label when speaking of their sexual orientation, P1 prefers the term “queer”, perceiving it to be the most inclusive of “...really important pieces of identity that are significant and need to be recognized... queer opens up the space for some sort of political conversation.” (Participant 1). Whereas, P2 prefers the term “bisexual”, but would be willing to change this label depending on context and who she is speaking with: “I don't feel like I fit in other people's idea of what the labels are. So I only really use the labels when it makes it easier to have a conversation with someone.” (Participant 2). Accordingly, for P2, labels are merely for practicality, but if she could she would withhold the use of a label altogether:

“I'm nothing, there's no label. And I guess it's because I've had a past with relationships with men, and now I'm in a relationship with a woman, it just bisexual was the label to go with. But I think as I was telling you last time, I really think it's more fluid than that...I can't really say how I identify because my identity is always changing.” (Participant 2).

Despite these difference, their use of and understanding of labels have many elements in common, such as the rejection of binaries (see discussion in emerging theme on the “Definition of Sexual Orientation”), the need for labels to “...provide room for flexibility....” (Participant 1 & 2) and the perception of labels as “restrictive.” (Participant 1 & 2) and “non-realistic”. In terms of label use, the rejection of binaries and need for labels to provide room for flexibility go hand-in-hand in that binary language is, according this study's participants, by definition non-flexible. Moreover, as both participants view their sexual orientation as ever changing and

flexible, it is of utmost importance that the label(s) they attribute to themselves also be flexible rendering any other labels too restrictive and non-representative of their reality.

Finally, both participants have experienced romantic relationships in which the bisexual label is scary to their partner due to a perception that it will lead to infidelity and giving their partner the impression that they will never be able to satisfy them completely in a monogamous relationship:

“Being bi put's me in this position of I know that my girlfriend has this fear somewhere deep inside her that one day I will say, you know : We can't have a family together, I'm going to go find myself a man (...).” (Participant 2).

Moreover, in a past relationship with a man, P1 reports the following:

“(...) it creates internal struggles, particularly if the one partner, if it matters enough to you, but the other partner can't get it. Which is what ultimately happened with my relationship... he couldn't reconcile that I was attracted to women because... I remember one of our fights was 'I can't be that for you so are you ever going to be satisfied in a relationship with me?’” (Participant 1).

3) Definition of Spirituality

The sense of awareness of the world that surrounds them is a central theme in the participants' definition of spirituality. It is this awareness that permits them to reconnect with something greater than themselves that they define as a transcendent God. Each participant, however, has a different way of connecting to their spirituality and to God. For P1, this connection is through social justice action:

“(...) my identity as a left winged political activist who understands my faith tradition as calling me to profound solidarity with the marginalized means something very deep about how I relate” (Participant 1).

In addition, social justice is a “lens” through which she views the world:

“(...) reading the newspaper is not a passive activity... one of the things that we always said in the SCM is that we have the newspaper in one hand and the Bible in the other. You know, and I would also say a particular interpretation of the Bible.” (Participant 1).

Conversely, for P2, this connection to something greater is experienced through nature:

“(…) it's the idea that there's something bigger...as I grew up, I started to understand more and more that I felt a very strong affinity and connection to nature, I feel more balanced and calmer when I'm out there... There's a sort of rhythm that moves and the idea that it's never the same (...).” (Participant 2).

Though both participants find connection to their spirituality through an awareness of the world around them, the different ways in which they connect lead to categorically different conclusions about how they are to live their spirituality. P1's pull toward the promoting of social justice requires action in the world and fighting against oppression, as is evident in the citation above about her calling to solidarity with the ostracized. Contrariwise, P2's affinity with nature calls for the acceptance of life's natural rhythm, which balances itself out and requires that everything just be what it is:

“(…) the whole world is bigger than us and it's so easy to just feel like we're here to take care of the world but actually the world does perfectly well on its own... And what we need to know is we're just part of the world. We're not the care takers of it.” (Participant 2).

4) Religious & Spiritual History

The differing religious and spiritual backgrounds of the participants in this study (as elaborated above in the section on Participants' Life Context) have culminated into differing pathways to connect to God (i.e. Social activism for P1 and nature for P2). These pathways to God are also inspired by key themes in the teachings of the Bible and of Jesus Christ, such as social justice for P1 and acceptance for P2. Moreover, though each participant's spirituality has been influenced by a series of life events as well as by their religious backgrounds, P1's experience of spirituality has been influenced by various role models, including Sarah, her transsexual friend from the Sex & Spirit SCM group and Thomas her liberal theologian friend:

“(...) the way he (Thomas) lives his life, the choices he makes, is far more radical and keeps himself grounded in the political and a spiritual in a way that I kind of loose track of. It's sort of a way that I aspire to be but I don't always manage to live.” (Participant 1).

Conversely, P2's experience of spirituality has been influenced by what appears to be a process of synchronicity of events, such as having her heart defect cured and feeling that her prayers were being answered by God:

“(...) one particular night when I said 'God, if you exist please just get me through tonight.' I was having trouble sleeping and getting to sleep. And after that I turned over and fell asleep. And it was little things like that that were starting to happen that fall.” (Participant 2).

Thus for P2, it was what she intuited as a synchronicity in the events of her life which she perceived as leading her to God and Christianity that provided her with a sense of spiritual meaning, whereas for P1, it was the process of digging deep within herself in the context of the Sex & Spirit group and learning from the role models that surrounded her that provided this sense of spiritual meaning:

“(...) but to do that work, that self-realization, that self-actualization, that process of digging, and to dig that deep. My God you have to become aware of every part of your being!!” (Participant 1).

5) Relationship with the Catholic Church

As described in the above section on Participants' Life Context, each participant has had a different life experience with the Catholic Church. P1 grew up in a politically left Catholic Church religious environment which according to her has widely affected her worldview;

“(...) I've been raised Catholic, and in many ways... I mean the funny thing about Catholicism, and I think this is true actually no matter what your childhood rooted tradition is, it permeates your worldview.” (Participant 1).

P2 grew up atheist, has never considered being part of the Catholic Church, and considers herself to be Protestant:

“It's like, no, no, that's (Catholicism) not me. I'm protestant, I'm not part of that world.” (Participant 2).

Despite these differences, both have come to believe that the Catholic Church institution is problematic in many ways, namely, in their consideration that homosexuality is a sin:

“That was one of the big things about Catholicism that really has always bothered me... Homosexuality is bad, bad, bad, bad!!.” (Participant 2).

“They're not, it's not a contradiction for me theologically. To me it's very clear that many of the Church's stances (including its stance on homosexuality) are wrong.” (Participant 1).

Both participants also believe the Catholic Church is problematic in what they perceive as a lack of importance accorded to woman:

“(...) it's part of being protestant for me...in my denomination, there aren't any doors closed by being a woman.” (Participant 2).

“(...) I'm a woman in a patriarchal system and I was raised in a Church that... created a doctrine to reject women and their potential leadership... I have an understanding of being a woman that demands the acting in the world. To change the world. Because the Church and the world are wrong about women.” (Participant 1).

P1 takes this idea further by deploring what she perceives as a lack of safe space allocated to intellectual and spiritual growth within the Catholic institution and a great need for it to evolve into the current time and understanding of human sexuality and equality:

“To me it's very clear that many of the Church's stances are wrong. I'm sorry you're wrong. It's quite clear to me, you've not done your work, you're wrong. When you figure yourself out get back to me, but until you do... go do your work...because that's still the position that you hold and you have no space to understand it outside of that.” (Participant 1).

One of the major differences among the participants with regards to the Catholic Church is that P2 has affirmed her identity as belonging to outside the Catholic institution, and clearly stated that she has rejected it as it does not fit her values;

“So it's like 'Well for starters I'm not Catholic (laughter).’” (Participant 2).

Whereas, P1 appears to experience ambivalence about the institution; on the one hand, she feels personally rejected by it

“(...) it was yet another sign of an institution that rejected me. And rejected my understanding of Church and the way Church could be, and frankly for me, should be (with emphasis)... mark... my relationship with the institution.” (Participant 1).

On the other she continues to participate in it in many ways through teaching, her studies, and abiding by their request to “hide parts of herself” to comply with the Catholic institution that does not agree with her lifestyle of being in a same sex relationship

“So I pretended for three days I wasn't pregnant. Even though my feet were swollen out to here and I was dying in the heat.” (Participant 1).

Hence, some of her actions point to the idea that she is attempting to change the Catholic Church from within:

“(...) I think one of my greatest challenges as a Catholic Teacher, I mean I was educated and articulated enough that I was able to even complicate the questions in a very subtle way for my students.” (Participant 1).

all the while continually being faced with a sense that her identity is rejected by this same institution:

“(...) I lived a contradiction as a Catholic School teacher. For 10 years. And what it meant was that this whole part of my life couldn't come into the class room.” (Participant 1).

6) Use of Themes from the Bible

Each participant uses scripture in a similar way, for example, neither relies on a literal interpretation of the Bible and teachings of Jesus Christ:

“I find scripture really hard... it's hard to get past the cultural and the period norms in order to really draw on scripture.” (Participant 1)

“(...) I think taking it literally is a problem because there's a lot of contradictions between those stories and if you take things literally, especially if you look at the Old Testament, there's a lot of nasty stuff there.” (Participant 2).

They instead draw on major themes which they use as both a response to and a solution for the abolishment of discrimination against the LGBTQ community:

“(...) the God I believe in was looking for a pretty just, equal, beautiful world. And until we get there, we've got work to do.” (Participant 1).

“When really if you look at the teachings of Jesus it's love and acceptance and you know God love's everyone. And one of the big one's when I was watching these protesters was 'Judge not lest you be judged'.” (Participant 2).

The themes on which they draw are however different and heavily based on their religious and spiritual backgrounds. On the one hand, P1 draws on the theme of social justice:

“And a fundamental theme that I feel is all the way through scripture is a theme of justice. And so for me as a Christian, that's what it comes down to, is that theme of justice. And I don't think it's just to say to a group of people: 'You can't be who you are'. I think it's wrong.” (Participant 1).

While P2 draws on that of acceptance:

“So as a Christian, it hurts so much to see people with such a narrow view and such a mean view. Like if you're not with us you're going to hell. When really if you look at the teachings of Jesus it's love and acceptance and you know God love's everyone.” (Participant 2).

Thus, the theme each participant draws transpire throughout their multiple identities thereby resulting in quite different ways of approaching the way they compose with these multiple identities (i.e. Bisexual, Christian and Woman), a topic that will further be addressed in the section on the emerging themes of the “Process of Spiritual Growth”, “Identity Negotiation Process”, and “Composing with Multiple Identities”.

7) Safe Spaces

For both participants, finding and creating safe spaces in which they may affirm sexual and spiritual identities is essential in their life:

“So one part is finding safe places, so it was really important...we actively looked for a Church community that would be a safe place for us...we only visited those (Affirming) United Churches.” (Participant 1).

“So for me it's not a question of safety or belonging (to the queer community), I already belong (to my Church).” (Participant 2).

Accordingly, it is of utmost importance that such safe spaces fit with their values of acceptance and inclusivity resulting in a rejection of any church institution that does not accept the LGBTQ community, as evident in the following citation:

“(...) one of the things I've said to our Minister is 'You know, one of the reasons I like coming here is that I don't get pissed-off, I don't leave Church mad, I really like not leaving Church mad. So thank you for everything you do'.” (Participant 1).

In the case of P2, the following citation demonstrates this point:

“And in this particular case, I believe so fundamentally that sexual orientation just is what it is and there shouldn't be any right or wrong to it, that it would be the religion that would have to be altered.” (Participant 2).

This safe space for both participants is, among others, the United Church of Canada, particularly churches that are part of the Affirm United movement:

“Actually my Church became part of the Affirm United movement a couple of years ago...It's a movement within the United Church of Canada where Churches get the label of being affirming. Being accepting of anyone of any sexual orientation, gender, you know, however people identify themselves. It's called Affirm United.” (Participant 2).

While each participant largely values safe spaces, their perception of and feelings about such safe spaces differ. Whereas, P2 feels proud to be part of her Church, an environment that “feels like home” to her:

“(...) I'm so happy to be in my Church where the Church itself, you know, made the commitment to openness and acceptance.” (Participant 2).

P1 tends to feel more protective of hers, perceiving it as a place that can easily become unsafe if her boundaries are crossed by the discrimination of others:

“(...) you can have a great community and you can have a Priest change and it can all go to hell...and then it can no longer be a safe place.” (Participant 1).

Another important difference in their use of safe spaces is that P1 feels it is important to use these spaces as an arena in which one may fight for equal rights and where differences may be explored thereby leading to spiritual growth (i.e. self-actualization), a concept that will be

further discussed with emerging theme of “The Process of Spiritual Growth”. This is, for example, how she used the SCM Sex & Spirit group:

“(…) we had spent a lot of years working through themes of spirituality and sexuality and had really explored quite deeply …you know when you've dug really deep with a group of people, you've fought hard you've loved deeply, you trust in a really profound way and so that group was able to create something unique and special.” (Participant 1).

Conversely, P2, refuses to fight those with differing opinions:

“We shouldn't have to have a pride week. We shouldn't have to have marches and fights for equality, and equal rights and all that stuff. We just should be ourselves.” (Participant 2).

Also, although she has awareness of individuals in her Church that do not share her values, she chooses to ignore them and concentrate on members who share her values:

“We're moving forward and this is part of moving forward.' So the people who aren't accepting of it, I don't really ummm, I don't really talk to them anyway because I find that… I'm drawn to people who have similar views.” (Participant 2).

Also, P2 emphasizes that not only has she chosen not to fight for equal rights, she has purposefully chosen a Church (i.e. United Church Affirm) who has done the fighting and the part of her identity negotiation for her and feels blessed that she did not have to be part of the struggles:

“…I've been blessed with growing up in the 80s and 90s where, you know, the hard battles were fought before I was born and not long after I was born.” (Participant 2).

Moreover, contrary to P1 who finds safe space within the LGBTQ community (e.g. In the SCM Sex & Spirit group, see quote in above paragraph), P2 does not feel the need to be part of this community due to already feeling safe within her Church:

“And some people gravitate to that (the LGBTQ) community because that's where they feel safe, that's where they feel a pull for them. But in my life I've never felt unwelcomed in the (United Church); I've never felt endangered, so I just continue to live my life (without the LGBTQ community).” (Participant 2).

In addition, P2 expresses that until she realized she did not fit into the LGBTQ community, she did not feel she had the appropriate support to explore her bisexual identity:

“I remember ummm going to, you know, a youth group you know for youth who identify as queer. Ummm and feeling like I didn't fit in there.” (Participant 2).

8) Understanding of God & God Images

As mentioned in the elements outlined in the emerging themes of “Definition of Spirituality”, “Religious and Spiritual History”, and “Use of Themes from the Bible”, both participants understand God as transcendent and rather than interpreting scripture literally, they draw on major themes from the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ such as acceptance and love in the case of P2, and social justice in the case of P1. Moreover, for both participants God is experienced through relationships:

“I think for me, I do profoundly believe in the spark of life as God's presence... we experience it in relationship... in the sparkle in the eye of another human being.” (Participant 1).

“But to experience God and to experience God's love for us, starts with loving one another, no matter who we are, how we identify, where we are, the communities we belong to.” (Participant 2).

In accordance with the differing themes they draw from scripture, the participants also have a differing God image. On the one hand, P1 has a natural pull to the traditional when reflecting on her God image

“So I think in moments despite myself I really struggle with the old white man with a beard... Despite everything I know, that image pops up. But it's the image that I relate least with.” (Participant 1).

Moreover, once she takes a step back to “crack open” the traditional, the images that bring meaning to here are “God as Creator”, “God as Wisdom”,

“(...) if God is this ever present life force, then it's in all we do, it's that transcendent, (God is) that spark of life....” (Participant 1).

P1 also understands God as one that requests her to fulfill what she perceives as her calling to fight social justice:

“(…) Jesus I follow is in the world. The God I believe in challenges us. And the Spirit moves. But the Spirit can only move if we move. The Spirit, you know, God needs us to be doing the things that we're called to. God's hand is in the world.” (Participant 1).

Although it is through this calling to fight for social justice that P1 finds her connection to God, it is a request from God that appears to be of high standards hence requiring her to be more than human as is evident in her use of the analogy of Lord Shiva from the Hindu religion:

“(…) reading the newspaper is not a passive activity. I mean one of the things that we always said in the SCM is that we have the newspaper in one hand and the Bible in the other. You know, and I would also say a particular interpretation of the Bible... you can almost become a Shiva because you need lots of hands for all the things that you're holding in your hands.” (Participant 1).

On the other hand, P2's considers herself

“(…) Christian because I follow Jesus.” (Participant 2).

Also, her image of God is one of Love, Creator and of a being that is difficult for humans to understand:

“(…) a being (that is) greater than us, I think bigger than anyone's understanding... We get glimpses of God... we are humans in this world and we are confined to the knowledge that we have of this world which is extremely limited.” (Participant 2).

Furthermore, P2's understanding of God is through the order found in nature's rhythm and balance:

“(…) if you look at the teachings of Jesus, there's this current of accepting everyone. Taking care of one other, everyone is equal. And it's kind of the same in nature... the world provides... Different animal kingdoms take care of themselves... there is no inequality in the natural world. There is chain, there's ummm predators and prey but there's a balance to it and everything fits in the circle... there's a certain similarity between that and the teachings of Jesus Christ. And also there's just a connection beyond myself, you know if I follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.” (Participant 2).

9) *Relationship with God*

In terms of the relationship they share with God, each participant experiences it being greater than the Church institution:

“(…)that never took away from a sense of call, a sense of understanding God and Spirit as something greater than this institution.” (Participant 1)

“I don't go to Church because that's my connection to God, or Jesus Christ or anything like that. I go to Church for the community... to be with other people who share similar beliefs and way of life.” (Participant 2).

Also, for both participants, spirituality involves movement. For P1 this change involves a movement of self-actualization which is accomplished by “digging deep” within herself, a process of “cracking open the rigid”, “facing the other” and growing from being exposed to diversity and differing perspectives (Participant 1). For P1, this process of spiritual transformation goes hand in hand with what she perceives to be her calling, a request from God to promote social justice in the world

“(…) understands my faith tradition as calling me to profound solidarity with the marginalized (…).” (Participant 1).

“The Spirit, you know, God needs us to be doing the things that we're called to. God's hand is in the world.” (Participant 1).

For P2, this movement is understood as naturally occurring and is analogous to the non-permanence of life, as seen in the natural world

“(…)There's a sort of rhythm that moves and the idea that it's never the same.” (Participant2)

and is also apparent in what she perceives as a synchronicity of events leading her to find God

“(…) And it was little things like that that were starting to happen that fall.” (Participant 2).

Moreover, P2's experiences God as one that answers' her prayers:

“One particular night when I said' 'God, if you exist please just get me through tonight.' I was having trouble sleeping and getting to sleep. And after that I turned over and fell asleep.” (Participant 2).

and as the Creator of nature, one that provides for her and all beings

“And it's kind of the same in nature, you know, they, the world provides, you know.” (Participant 2).

This perception of the relationship they share with God leads each participant to different conclusions about God's expectations of them. For P1, this calling to promote social justice is experienced as a great and difficult responsibility:

"It's a strength and it's a challenge. Sometimes it's less of a strength more of a weight (laughter). But I guess you have to have a certain strength to hold up a weight (laughter)." (Participant 1)

"And it's a Pandora's box. You know like once it's open (gestures a swirl coming out of a box)." (Participant 1).

Also, P1 expresses feeling that she is currently not meeting God's request to her:

"I guess on some level I don't feel like I'm really engaged in the world in ways that I would like to be.." (Participant 1).

Which is again evident in her use of the analogy of the White Picket Fence: "...we have a white picket fence kind of life in many ways..." (Participant 1).

Conversely, P2's perception of God is that she is unconditionally accepted, God expects her to be herself as she was created by God:

"(...) just God loves us, God created us this way (with emphasis on 'this way') this is who we are";

"(...) I need to honor this part of myself and live this." (Participant 2).

Also, as demonstrated above, as God provides, their relationship appears to be the reverse of P1's relationship with God, that is, for P1, God expects of her, whereas for P2, she expects from God.

10) Living in Canada in this Time

In discussing their multiple identities, both participants demonstrated an awareness of how living in Canada in this time has enhanced their ability to embrace their identities. For P1, in contrasting her experience in Canada to that of Uganda, a country she feels she will never be able to go to visit her friend as

“You know and I think that my partner and I we recognize how lucky we are... Because in Uganda 'Sous peine de mort' is what our relationship looks like.” (Participant 1).

For P2, it is through a sense of being blessed at not having to fight the battles:

“So for me growing up in Canada, I guess, I've been blessed with growing up in the 80s and 90s where, you know, the hard battles were fought before I was born and not long after I was born.” (Participant 2).

However, both participants still feel that some battles remain in Canada to this day:

“(...) I think that that homophobia still exists we just don't name it and pretend it's not there.” (Participant 1).

“And now as an adult, we still have some battles that have to be fought in Canada, but the first ones have already been won.” (Participant 2).

One of the key differences between the two participants of this study is found in their desire to continue fighting the battles that they both acknowledge still exist in Canada. Consistent with her calling and relationship with God, P1's main method of expressing her spirituality is through fighting for social justice: “...we've got work to do....” (Participant 1). Conversely, P2 categorically refuses to fight and feels it is unnatural to do so for an identity that was created by and is accepted by God:

“We shouldn't have to. We shouldn't have to have a pride week. We shouldn't have to have marches and fights for equality, and equal rights and all that stuff. We just should be ourselves.” (Participant 2).

Each participant also differs in their direct experience of discrimination. As discussed above in the emerging theme of “Relationship with the Catholic Church”, P1 has been directly discriminated against in the Catholic Church and in the Catholic Institution, but she has also experienced it in secular society:

“(...) walking down the street is always an issue. I can't remember if it was last summer or the summer before, my partner and I we walking up Bank Street and some asshole, there were 3 or 4 of them in the car, felt it acceptable to slow down, 'cat call' us, make some derogatory remark and drive off!! (scandalized).” (Participant 1).

Contrariwise, throughout both interviews, although she describes an occasion of being in a Gay Pride parade and overtly discriminatory comments from protestors on the perimeters:

“So as a Christian, it hurts so much to see people with such a narrow view and such a mean view. Like if you're not with us you're going to hell.” (Participant 2).

P2 never mentioned an instance in which she had felt discriminated against for being in a same-sex relationship which if we put into the context of her life, may possibly be a direct effect of having been in a 6 month-old same-sex relationship for the first time at the time of the interviews.

11) Being Bisexual (Queer) & Christian

The experience of being both bisexual (or queer in the case of P1) and Christian is not one of contradiction for neither participant:

“They're not, it's not a contradiction for me theologically.” (Participant 1).

“But to experience God and to experience God's love for us, starts with loving one another, no matter who we are, how we identify, where we are, the communities we belong to. And my sexual identity is not, and will not even be a barrier for me to that.” (Participant 2).

However, as demonstrated in the emerging themes of “Label Qualifiers” and “Living in Canada in this Time”, both participants are aware that these identities are perceived as contradictory by many.

Also, as demonstrated in the emerging theme of “Label Qualifiers”, the use of the bisexual, or queer, label can be problematic for their romantic relationship partner as society tends to misunderstand this label as leading to infidelity. This misunderstanding is also present in P2's experience of the lesbian community, a dynamic which P1 does not make mention of:

“I've heard that there's a lot of people in the lesbian community who look down on the people who identify as bisexual because they think it's sort of a way out.” (Participant 2).

Some important differences between the two participants with regards to how they address discrimination were revealed during the interviews. For example, P1 believes that, although within herself it is not a contradiction, being Christian and queer is a contradiction for others in society:

“(…) so within myself I'm Queer and Christian without contradiction. Absolutely. Within society, I don't think you can be queer without contradiction. Ummm and as an employee of a Catholic School Board, you can't be Queer and Catholic without contraction.” (Participant 1).

Yet, for P2, it is not:

Whether it be at Church or within the queer community. I'm on the outside of it. My life didn't change at all when I started identifying. For me the only thing that changed was instead of having a boyfriend I now have a girlfriend. (Participant 2).

Though, if she is faced with someone who disagrees with her point of view, whether in her congregation or not, she chooses to ignore them:

“So the people who aren't accepting of it, I don't really ummm, I don't really talk to them anyway....” (Participant 2).

This demonstrates another contrast which has been addressed in the emerging themes of “Safe Spaces” and “Living in Canada in this Time”, that P2 refuses to fight in order to be who she is, whereas P1 continues to fight for marginalized communities, such as the LGBTQ community, as this is how she understands her calling. Moreover, for P2, if a person is not accepting of her bisexual identity they are ignored and do not stop her from expressing her identity

“(…)I feel completely free to be able to say I'm Christian and I'm bi and I'm proud.” (Participant 2).

However P1, chooses when she exposes her identity:

“(…) holding your partner's hand is always a conscious choice and you choose carefully. A straight couple never thinks about that, ever, ever, ever..” (Participant 1).

P1 also feels that if one is not part of the hetero-normative society, one is ignored

“(...) Well...if you're not in the hetero norm then, you just don't exist.” (Participant 1).

Contrary to P2, who feels that nothing has changed in her life since she entered a same-sex relationship as demonstrated above. Accordingly, as mentioned in the emerging theme of “Living in Canada in this Time”, this difference may possibly be a direct effect of P2 having been in a same-sex relationship a short period of time in comparison to P1.

12) The Process of Spiritual Growth

The process of spiritual growth for both participants has been influenced by the existence of diversity in the world. For example, P1's calling brings her to face the other and grow from this:

“It's that 'othering' that happens and you come up against a wall and you're like 'oh that's not me' and so being ummm exposed to a group of people who have been raised in all kinds of backgrounds... I would say that time in my life radically affected my adult life.” (Participant 1).

This possibility of growing from exposure to difference, according to P1 should not be limited by differences such as sexual orientation or religious affiliation:

“Ya! There's no eligibility question. And that's the Spirit, that's when the Spirit moves (enthusiastic).” (Participant 1).

and is intimately linked to what she refers to as “the power of relationships.” (Participant1), another theme from the Bible that informs her calling:

“And there's you know people who work at countering the stuff like countering 'It was Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve.' Like that kind of bullshit, who say well it was neither Adam nor Eve it was Adham which is actually just creature. So it was two non-gendered creatures in a relationship. And so really it was about the power of relationship and the importance of relationship and not about sex bits.” (Participant 1).

Accordingly, P1 applied this principle of valuing the power of relationship and growing from it as a result many times during her interviews. For instance when speaking of her past relationship with a man:

“(…) but that's not about was he a man or a woman. It's about a past relationship that was good... and that pushed me to grow in lots, and lots, and lots of ways. And I think that's valuable in relationships.” (Participant 1).

as well as when speaking of her relationships in the SCM Sex & Spirit group:

“...we all just trusted each other so profoundly that we could open ourselves to really deep experiences.” (Participant 1).

Also, P2's spiritual identity has been shaped by her knowledge of the existence of people holding an alternative sexuality. For example, as her older brother identifies as gay, she refuses to be part of a Church that is discriminatory against homosexuality:

“So when it came time to choose a Church a big thing was I could never belong to a Church that didn't accept homosexuality.” (Participant 2).

Thus, both participants have chosen a pathway to God. P1 has chosen a middle path (i.e. the path between choosing to stay in the Church and choosing to leave it), which involves of understanding what she identifies as her “oppressor” and growing spiritually from these experiences. P2, conversely, has chosen to adapt her spiritual beliefs to her identity rather than adapting her identity to her spiritual beliefs. P2 also draws on the Bible themes of love and acceptance of self and others as a means for spiritual growth:

“And I was saying to her (P2's girlfriend) like we should go up to them and say: 'You look like you need a hug'. You know fight ignorance with love, that's the real Christian way.” (Participant 2).

In both cases however, and as mentioned in the emerging theme “Use of Themes from the Bible”, a large part of their spiritual growth process is based on their non-literal use of the Bible in order to avoid the discriminatory messages that would derive from it otherwise.

13) Gender Identity

The main sub-themes of gender identity that are common to both participant is that they have chosen the United Church in part due to their acceptance of women as equals and have rejected the Catholic Church due to its stance on women, as was mentioned in the emerging theme of “Relationship with the Catholic Church”. Some major differences between each participant were however revealed during the interview process. For instance, P1 identifies herself as a feminist:

“(…) my identity as a feminist, my identity as a feminist (intentionally repeated by participant), my identity as a left winged political activist… means something very deep about how I relate… implicitly, it informs everything.” (Participant 1).

Hence, P1 feels that the Catholic Church is wrong in their stance on women’s ordination and is part of the fight to make it change

“You’ve gotta be in solidarity with them (the marginalized). And so the tradition that I come from and what matters to me about theology is about how do we live it in the world.” (Participant 1).

When P1 faces this struggle however, it leaves her with a certain sense of defenceless:

“(…) as a queer woman. It’s (the world) a very, very vulnerable place to be. Like I think the reality as a queer woman… you have to dig out of a lot of bullshit. There’s a lot of layers of oppression.” (Participant 1).

Conversely, P2 choses to be part of a Church that fits her value of considering women as equal and does not identify with the struggle that exists in the Catholic Church:

“That’s (gender) not something I’ve actually been aware of, it’s not part of my awareness for my religion and my sexuality… it’s part of being Protestant for me.” (Participant 2).

P2’s main concern when it comes to gender and her spirituality relates to maternity. Throughout the interview process, P2 expressed having difficulty reconciling the idea that God created her as bisexual, an identity by which she fell in love with another woman, and also gave her the ability to have children naturally:

“And people who are loving devoted spouses and happen to be same-sex partners can't get pregnant on their own. It's just, where on earth does this make sense? (...) I feel like it's a cosmic joke!” (Participant 2).

Not only does she have difficulty reconciling this, but to P2 it is a frustration that leaves her with the sense that God has denied her of something:

“It's just the idea of the choice being taken away is just frustrating. It's like I don't even get to choose this. It's just you know if I want to be with the partner I have now, I don't get a choice, I have to either get sperm from someone else or help a child that is already in the world.” (Participant 2).

Contrary to P1, however, P2's struggle with these two identities does not lead to a sense of defencelessness but with a sense of comfort in the idea that she can rely on others, especially her partner, to get through this challenge:

“...we're facing questions together and it's really comforting to have someone doing that with me.” (Participant 2).

14) Family of Origin & Current Family

Both participants appear to have been influenced by their family of origin in their means of addressing their multiple identities. On the one hand, P1's family of origin environment contained many contradictory messages about sexuality in which a liberal point of view was lived but in the context of a traditionalistic articulation:

“It was almost she (her mother) could live it in a really flowing, fluid way, but her articulation of it was very rigid.” (Participant 1).

This dynamic still remains within P1 as is evident in her natural pull toward a traditional understanding of sexuality followed by a desire to transform it into a liberal one:

“(...) it's funny because when I hear the word sexuality it still gets narrowed to that (heterosexual norm) and then it's like 'Oh ya! pull back. Pull it away from that, you know, crack it open again.'” (Participant 1).

P1's understanding of sexuality also incorporates a contrasting of the words “terrifying” and “opportunity”:

“It's something very profound that is an opportunity and a terrifying opportunity to make yourself utterly vulnerable.” (Participant 1).

This is similar to the language she used when describing her spirituality in the emerging theme of “Understanding of God and God Images” when she compares her calling to both a “challenge”, a “weight”, and used the analogy of opening a “Pandora’s box.” (Participant 1). Moreover, the dynamic of being pulled to the traditional, as described above, is also found in her spirituality in her image of God, as previously presented in the emerging theme of “Understanding of God and God Image”.

In her current family, P1 also experience’s a struggle, as her new social roles of mother and Doctoral student come with responsibilities that leave her in a “survival mode” and keep her from engaging in the fight for social justice. This leaves her with the sense of not fully achieving her calling from God:

“I've gotten busy with life and stopped paying attention... I guess on some level I don't feel like I'm really engaged in the world in ways that I would like to be... very strange thing to go from always engaged in something to really having turned inward. I guess and there's value in that, I guess I sort of judge it as a problem, but I'm trying to figure out how to revalue it.” (Participant 1).

She also used the Bible story of the Good Samaritan as an analogy for where she stands in her new social roles

“But today, I identify with the Good Samaritan you know, with the Jewish leaders who walk on by (the marginalized).” (Participant 1).

In opposition to P1, P2 describes a family of origin and extended family that is supportive and accepting of her to this day:

“...they're like: ‘Great whatever, you're happy (laughter) when do we get to meet her?’.” (Participant 2).

Though expressing that her parents reacted in a protective manner when she announced her bisexuality due to their fear she may be discriminated against:

“My mom, when she found out that I'm bi, one of her reactions was: 'Don't tell people.'” (Participant 2).

P2, nevertheless, describes her family of origin as supportive in her childhood, as well as currently supportive of her sexual and religious identity. Moreover, although her current partner is fearful of her bisexual label, as mentioned in the emerging theme of “Label Qualifiers”, she takes comfort in her relationship and feels supported, for example, as demonstrated in her reliance on her partner to get through the challenge of maternity, as presented in the emerging theme of “Gender Identity”.

15) Identity Negotiation Process

Many elements of each participant’s identity negotiation process, or the means by which they continue to affirm their multiple identities, overlap. For instance, both perceive that their sexual identity is not a choice, but rather has been given to them by God, e.g. as demonstrated in the emerging theme of “Definition of Sexual Orientation”. Also, both consider the choosing of a safe space to live their spirituality to be an essential part of how they continue to affirm their identities (as demonstrated in the emerging theme of “Safe Spaces”). In addition, both have incorporated their experience of relationship with God into their identities thereby allowing them to create spiritual meaning out of the existence of their multiple identities. For example: P1’s calling is to promote social justice for the marginalized, who she also considers herself to be:

“(…) as a queer woman…There's a lot of layers of oppression.” (Participant 1).

Using this logic, she is able to continue affirming her multiple identities through the existence of the theme of social justice in the Bible acting like a message from God saying that she has the right to live justly, no matter what identities she holds.

P2 on the other hand, makes sense of her multiple identities by likening them to the ever changing rhythm of nature:

“(...) there's a sort of rhythm that moves and the idea that it's never the same (...).” (Participant 2).

This nature is created by God and does not discriminate against anyone:

“(...) if you look at the teachings of Jesus, there's this current of accepting everyone. Taking care of other, everyone is equal. And it's kind of the same in nature (...).” (Participant 2).

Therefore if her sexual identity is “fluid” then it is like nature, and as nature (or God) accepts everyone, she accept herself and believes she should also be accepted by everyone.

Finally, another major difference between each participant with regards to their identity negotiation process is that P1 has accomplished this negotiation on her own, for instance through the SCM and her calling, whereas P2 has done some of the negotiation by choosing the United Church, but has depended on her Church to do most of this for her:

“So they (her Church) sort of did the negotiation of the traditional perspective for you (...).” (Principal Researcher).

“Yup.” (Participant 2).

16) Composing with Multiple Identities

Derived from the notion of identity negotiation process, as presented in the previous emerging theme, each participant has found a way of composing⁵ with the identity of being a bisexual (or queer in the case of P1) Christian woman. Firstly, each participant considers it of utmost importance to “honor” all aspects of their identity:

“So I think there's really important pieces of identity that are significant and need to be recognized.” (Participant 1)

“(...) I need to actually go this way, I need to honor this part of myself and live this.” (Participant 2).

⁵ See page 18 for an definition of the word “compose” as it is understood in this study.

As they acknowledge all parts of their self, they are also acknowledging the intrinsic fluidity of their identity. Secondly, each participant has attributed spiritual meaning to the concept of fluidity and change. For P1, change in identity occurs through an attitude of “radical openness”, and leads to a process of “self-actualization” achieved through a “meeting up against the other” and her calling of promoting social justice (Participant 1). Whereas, as in the emerging theme of “Identity Negotiation Process”, for P2, change is naturally occurring as it does in nature which “is never the same”, therefore changes and fluidity in identity are natural, expected, and are to be accepted.

Likewise, P1’s understanding of identity change also implies the necessity of growing when faced with the differences of others:

“Like in a cracked open spirit of radical openness, where we all just trusted each other so profoundly that we could open ourselves to really deep experiences.” (Participant 1).

Conversely, P2’s understanding of change does not imply changing in the face of difference but rather an attitude of acceptance in the face of difference:

“We shouldn't have to have marches and fights for equality, and equal rights and all that stuff. We just should be ourselves.” (Participant 2).

17) Impact of First Interview

This last emerging theme speaks to how each participant experienced the act of speaking their multiple identities of bisexual (or queer in the case of P1) Christian woman in the first interview. For both participants there was an increase in their level of self and political awareness during the weeks following the first interview. P1’s awareness was renewed

“And it just kind of reminded to pay attention again... it made me open and aware. It was a 'consciountization'.” (Participant 1).

For P2’s there was a clear increase in awareness:

“I’m more aware of myself now... I started to really become aware of what it is to be outside of the norm in sexuality (...).” (Participant 2).

In each case, this increase in awareness prompted the seeking of support from others. For

P1 it was in the form of spiritual direction:

“(...) it would be good for me to get some spiritual direction... And so I spoke to our pastor...so starting in the fall we’re going to meet every two weeks. So that’ll be good to have a dialogue partner.” (Participant 1)

and for P2 it was seeking the support of her partner in her questions around maternity:

“(...) you know we’re facing questions together and it’s really comforting to have someone doing that with me.” (Participant 2).

Particularly for P2, the process of going through the first interview brought many questions, regarding her sexual orientation, her maternity, her place in the LGBTQ community, etc.:

Our first meeting kind of brought up a lot of thoughts that hadn’t been there before, you actually made me start thinking about things (laughter). So it was really interesting because you asked me questions that I hadn’t really dealt with yet. Because they just haven’t been in my consciousness yet (Participant 2).

In their reactions to the first interview, each participant was loyal to the essence of their multiple identities as they had presented them the first time: for P1 it is a process of “digging.” (Participant 1) within herself which she intends on continuing to do through spiritual direction, and for P2 it is through a naturally unfolding journey of self-discovery, as evident when she says that the questions raised in the first interview “...just haven’t been in my consciousness yet..” (Participant 2) thereby implying that they would have naturally surfaced with time. In each case, the impact of the first interview leads to movement and growth whereby they continue to construct a sense spiritual meaning through the exploration of their multiple identities.

Meaning Units

During the iterative analysis process of extracting the additional meaning from all seventeen (17) emerging themes, three (3) major meaning units common to both participants in composing with multiple identities of Christian, Woman, and Bisexual (Queer) were revealed. These meaning units are listed in Table 3. For a detailed breakdown of each common and distinct meaning unit and their relationship to each emerging theme, refer to Appendix H – Comparison of Meaning Units. Note that Table 3 is a summary of the column entitled Common Meaning Units Derived from Common Emerging Themes from the table in Appendix F.

As seen in Table 3 the 7 major meaning units revealed during the analysis process are: 1) Bisexual (Queer) Christian, Woman is Challenging, 2) Relationship with God, and 3) Fluid identity negotiation process.

<p>Table 3. Common Meaning Units-Interview 1 & 2, Participants 1 & 2</p>
<p><i>Meaning Unit 1: Being Bisexual (Queer) Christian Woman is Challenging</i></p> <p>The challenge of multiple identities</p>
<p><i>Meaning Unit 2: Relationship with God</i></p> <p>God image</p> <p>Understanding of God</p> <p>Teachings of Bible and Jesus Christ</p> <p>In the world</p>

Meaning Unit 3: Fluid Identity Negotiation Process

Schism

Inclusivity

Connection of identity to God

Safe Spaces as Vessel

Fluidity & Non-permanence

1) *Bisexual (Queer) Christian Woman is Challenging*

As is evident in the presentation of emerging theme “Gender Identity”, both participants experience the fact of being a bisexual (or queer in the case of P1) Christian woman as challenging. While P1 speaks to many layers of discrimination she faces in the Catholic Church institution and secular society she concludes that of belonging to all three identities is at times unsettling: “And as a queer woman. It's (the world) a very, very vulnerable place to be.” (Participant 1); and her calling, the means by which she finds meaning in her multiple identities (as discussed above in emerging themes fifteen (15): “Identity Negotiation Process” and sixteen (16): “Composing with Multiple Identities”) is experienced as a load that she can’t engage with: “Sometimes it's less of a strength more of a weight.” (Participant 1).

P2 also appears to experience belonging to these three identities as trying but in her case it is due to her difficulty in reconciling her sexual orientation and spiritual beliefs with her potential future maternity:

“(…)but not being able to make that choice of you know of making a family with my partner is just it's frustrating that I don't even have that option. So there's one door that's actually closed in my face.” (Participant 2).

2) *Relationship with God*

Also discussed in the presentation of emerging themes eight (8) (“Understanding of God and God Images”) and nine (9) (“Relationship with God”); both participants hold an image of God that is based on the themes that they draw on from the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ. For P1 it is the theme of social justice that transpires throughout her relationship with God, and by drawing on the elements of the relationship this has created, a more elaborate image of God was revealed for P1. God is a mentor that “challenges” her, God is also an important source of inspiration for P1 as she is pushed to “become” when “the spark of life moves” within her as is found in the Ash Wednesday ritual:

“(…) one of the rituals that I love is Ash Wednesday, and the very specific language of 'You are dust and onto dust you shall return.' Because there is something about that that I love. It's that simultaneous we are nothing and yet the earth... and we know it is only dust. Shaped in all kinds of different ways. It is but dust. And you are dust and you are only dust without the spark (God), but once that spark is there that's when that dust becomes.” (Participant 1).

However, for P1 God also has high expectations of her and in some ways is revealed to her in the form of a judge:

“(…) The God I believe in challenges us. But the Spirit can only move if we move. The Spirit, you know, God needs us to be doing the things that we're called to. God's hand is in the world.” (Participant 1)

a demand that she feels she is not currently living up to:

“(…) It's sort of a way that I aspire to be but I don't always manage to live... And I feel like in a lot of ways I don't have the political edge.” (Participant 1).

According to P1’s logic, by not living up to this calling of promoting political social justice in the world, she is not fulfilling her spiritual calling and therefor is not being moved by the spark of life which is God.

Contrariwise, the major theme from scripture that transpires throughout P2's relationship with God and God image is acceptance. God is a caretaker, who answers her prayers:

“God, if you exist please just get me through tonight.' I was having trouble sleeping and getting to sleep. And after that I turned over and fell asleep.” (Participant 2);

and provides for her like a reliable parent:

“(…) if you look at the teachings of Jesus, there's this current of excepting everyone. Taking care of other, everyone is equal. And it's kind of the same in nature, you know, they, the world provides, you know.” (Participant 2).

God is a source of rebalancing for P2 as demonstrated by the way she feels when in nature:

“It helps me rebalance myself. It helps me reconnect myself to the world.” (Participant 2).

Moreover, God is not one who has expectations of her such as in the case of P1, she experiences God as one she expects from, one that provides opportunities for choice, as can be seen in her frustration with maternity: “...not being able to make that choice...”(Participant 2).

Furthermore, P2 experiences her relationship with God through Christianity, which for her feels “natural”, “clicked”, feels “like everything is in its place”, and feels like “home.” (Participant 2). A position that is in opposition with P1's sense of being rejected by the Catholic institution she grew up in and feeling that safe spaces can be easily overcome by discrimination:

“(…) you can have a great community and you can have a Priest change and it can all go to hell...and then it can no longer be a safe place.” (Participant 1).

Finally, both participants views God as incarnated in the physical world in various forms. P1 envisions God as the “spark of life” which permits all living beings to come to life (“to become”) and for her translates itself into her calling for social justice (Participant 1). For P2, God is incarnated in the physical world in nature, she experiences the “rhythm of nature” as

parallel to the teachings of Jesus Christ in its non-permanence and unconditional acceptance (Participant 2).

3) *Fluid Identity Negotiation Process*

As discussed above in emerging theme fifteen (15) (“Identity Negotiation Process”), each participant has found a means to negotiation their identities. The extraction of the meaning of this emerging theme, the following was revealed: both participants in this study have devised a series of tools to answer to the existence of a schism, a split between how they experience their identity, especially their sexual orientation, and society’s perceptions of it. These tools are comprised of inclusivity, connecting their identity to God, the use of safe spaces as a vessel, all with the quality of fluidity and non-permanence.

First and foremost, as has been presented in emerging theme two (2) (“Label Qualifiers”), four (4) (“Religious & Spiritual History”), five (5) (“Relationship with the Catholic Church”), and eleven (11) (“Being Bisexual (Queer) & Christian”), there is a presence of a schism between how the participants experience their sexual identity (e.g. “Fluid”, “changing.” (Participant2), attraction to humans “not a gender.” (Participant 1 & 2)) and how both secular and religious society perceives it. In terms of secular society, the main reproach reported by both participants is that their sexual orientation will inevitably lead them to infidelity due to not being satisfied by being with only one gender:

“(…) I remember one of our fights was 'I can't be that for you so are you ever going to be satisfied in a relationship with me?'" (Participant 1).

“(…) there's is a lot of people in the lesbian community who look down on the people who identify as bisexual because they think it's sort of a way out... apparently some have the fear that you know maybe eventually we'll get tired of being with a woman and go back to a man, and maybe because our partners can't give us a family, you know, maybe eventually our biological clocks will be too strong we need to have families and we'll go back to men.” (Participant 2).

Moreover, P2, also reports that secular society, particularly the gay and lesbian communities, tend to perceive bisexuality as an invalid sexual orientation:

“No, no, no, you're really straight, you're just playing around with being gay, you're not actually seriously into women, 'cause if you were seriously into women why would you ever consider being with a man?.” (Participant 2).

Furthermore, while P2 doesn't explicitly mention experiencing this schism when it comes to the religious sphere of society, P1 does reports an invalidation of the bisexual (queer) sexual orientation in this sphere:

“But then if you look at the conversation in the U.S. that's the conversation. It's God's will, I can't do anything about it. And there is value to that, line of approach. But it's very limited because then you get to someone who is bisexual, and then it's like, well so chose... Well... chose what? Choose who I fall in love with? Pretty much that doesn't happen.” (Participant 1)

As mentioned above, one of the main tools both participants use in order to negotiate these schisms is the value of inclusivity and involves the rejection of binaries (see presentation of emerging theme two (2): “Label Qualifiers”) which by definition invalidate the notion of bisexuality (queer sexual identity), the use of “open” and “flexible” labels (Participant 1), thereby honoring every part of their identity. Accordingly, for P1 the queer label:

“(...) allows me that... maybe almost vagueness, so that all of these pieces can be more than explored... can be lived. It affords, if I need a label, it affords a flexibility that opens up the world.” (Participant 1).

and P2 does not favor the use of a label, changes her label depending on the occasion, and prefers to think of herself as “attracted to humans” (Participant 2). These strategies of rejecting binaries and using open and flexible labels allow both participants to retort in the face of this schism by creating a sense of inclusivity of all parts of self, allowing them to honor their full identity.

Another method of negotiating this schism that was revealed in the interviews is the connection of their identity to God through the affirmation that their identity is not a choice, but

stems from God who created them in this way (as presented in emerging theme one (1): “Definition of Sexual Orientation”), thereby providing a spiritual validation of their sexual orientation (as presented in emerging theme fifteen (15): “Identity Negotiation Process”). In this same vein, both participants, although they feel it is important to acknowledge and live their sexual identity, do not define their identity based on their sexual orientation. P1 for instance, defines her identity based on her calling as is revealed when she speaks of “becoming” with the “spark of life” that “moves” within her (Participant 1); and P2 often defined her identity with words such as “I am what I am” a self created by God and ever “changing” and not limited to a sexual identity (Participant 2). Accordingly, by asserting themselves as whole human beings, rather than viewing themselves in parts, they can summon the spiritual resources, such as a perception of God’s validation of their being, to address the schism.

Throughout the interview process, the theme of safe spaces was reoccurring and presented as an essential part of their spiritual life (see emerging theme seven (7): “Safe Spaces”, for an elaboration of this theme). Thus, the extraction of additional meaning of this theme revealed that safe spaces are a vessel through which both participants can promote inclusivity within their identity and connect this identity to God in order to resolve the schism they are faced with. Moreover, it is within this vessel that each participant can continue the process of identity negotiation in a fluid manner. For example, P1 is able to support a process of “facing the other”, growing from difference, continuing to “self-actualize” through her calling, and finding a means to “revalue” her current social roles through spiritual direction (Participant 1). For P2, by anchoring herself in her value of acceptance and relying on her Church, who is continually “moving forward.” (Participant 2) with progress, she continues to grow in her identity

questioning. In both cases, the identity negotiation process has a quality of movement, fluidity and non-permanence.

Discussion

The results of this study concur with many of the elements found in the literature regarding the minority status of bisexual women of the Christian faith and how they compose with their complex identities.

The minority status of bisexual Christian women

As evident in the literature and elaborated in the introduction of the present study, bisexual women of the Christian faith hold a quadruple minority status composed firstly by being part of a non-heterosexual orientation (Hemmings, 1997); secondly by adhering to a non-monosexual lifestyle (Ochs, 2007); thirdly by being a person of sexual minority and of Christian faith (Lo Presti, 2005); and finally by being a woman (Miller, 2013; Martin, 2003).

Accordingly, participants reported discrimination against both being non-heterosexual and bisexual within the Christian world, particularly from the Catholic Church but also from more conservative protestant denominations; P1 in particular reported on the difficulty of navigating the social activist world (upholding the rights of sexual minorities) as a Christian, facing judgment from the activist world for her religious affiliation; P2 explicitly reported on the discrimination that exists within the lesbian community with regards to bisexuality; and both participants spoke of the existence of discrimination against women in the Christian world. Moreover, as put forth by Bradford (2006) and many others, both participants have experienced a

sense of being invisible as a bisexual woman. In the case of P1 this is evident in her experience of marginalization due to belonging to an alternative sexuality (e.g. having to hide her pregnancy in order to work), and as for P2, this notion can be found in her difficulty in finding a community that she feels represents her in order to support her coming out process during adolescence. Their minority status is overlaid with their experience of a schism between their experience of sexual identity and how both the secular and religious spheres of society perceive it as one that implies infidelity (Bradford, 2006). Despite this, both participants have found creative ways to compose with their complex identity and navigate these layers of discrimination.

Composing with a complex identity

Sexual Identity

The means by which the participants of this study compose with their complex identity begins with how they define their sexual orientation. In keeping with the literature (Erickson-Schroth & Mitchell, 2012), they both chose to reject the language of binaries, that is, the use of dichotomous language commonly used in society in order to classify sexual orientation (i.e. Heterosexual-homosexual) based on the concept of gender (i.e. male-female) thereby invalidating the notion of a bisexual sexuality. Moreover, they have chosen labels that are “open” and “flexible” to describe what they and Diamond (2006) refer to as a “gender neutral orientation” thereby choosing not to use a label altogether (such as in the case of P2) or to use the “queer” label (such as in the case of P1) “...a term that is increasingly used to signify a form of sexuality that resists rigid categorizations.” (Diamond, 2006, p.187). The literature also suggests that the “queer” label is “...framed simultaneously as a political position, a theoretical approach, and a form of self-identification that refuses normative positions and power

structures.” (Giesecking, 2013, p. 60). This definition contains the elements found in P1’s trinomial definition of sexuality composed of sexuality, spirituality and social justice politics. Thus, although P1 does not go as far as Germon (2008) in stating that the term bisexuality is “primitive” and uncivilized, she does express feeling that it does not adequately define her experience as the term queer does.

Accompanying this use of labels, both participants have spoken to what Bradford (2006) refers to as the presence of a sense of relief after the process of coming out as bisexual (or queer in the case of P1) has been completed. Thus, both participants have spoken to the sense that something was missing in their life prior to coming out, a tension that led to “honor” their sexual orientation and “live more fully.” (Participant 1 & 2).

In addition, both participants can be situated in their respective bisexual developmental stages (Bradford, 2004 as cited in Bradford, 2006, p.16) composed of 1) a “questioning reality” in which a person only begins to become aware of her sexual orientation; 2) an “Inventing Identity” in which a person has fully acknowledged her sexual orientation and is attempting to find her unique means to express it; and 3) a “Maintaining Identity” in which her identity is established and she has found the means to express it, a step which differentiates bisexuals from lesbians and gays in that the expression of their orientation cannot be done through their partner choice (Bradford, 2006, p.16-17). In light of this, P2 appears to be in the second stage of inventing her identity. Although, she is fully identifying having an attraction which is not based on gender, as the exploration of this is new in her life, she is still attempting to find a way to express it that fits for her. This is particularly obvious when she herself “tripping over the labels” that exist in the LGBTQ community. Conversely, P1 expresses sexual orientation in an articulate and reflective manner, suggesting that she is in the third stage of

maintaining identity, in which she affirms her sexual identity through the concept of trinomial identity composed of sexuality, social justice politics, and spirituality.

Furthermore, both participants consider their sexuality to be “fluid”, “changing”, and “changeable.” (Participant 2), supporting what Diamond (2006) has found in her work on the sexual fluidity of women in which she conceptualizes women’s sexuality through the lens of dynamical systems theory: “...complex phenomena... emerge, stabilize, change, and restabilize over time, through individuals’ ongoing interactions with their changing environments.”(Diamond, 2006, p.236); thereby placing the notion of change at the center of sexual identity as both participants in this study have done.

Gender Identity

Another means by which they compose with their complex identity is found in how they navigate the Christian world as women, with an awareness of secular and religious patriarchy. Both participants are aware, and directly experienced by P1 in the Catholic Church, of the discrimination and undervaluing of women in the Christian world, as has been argued by Martin (2003). Although, P1 still struggles with some ambivalence with regards to her place in the Catholic Church, both participants have composed with their gender and spiritual identities by deliberately choosing to be part of a Church (i.e. The United Church of Canada) that values women as equal through many of their policies, including the allocation of leadership to women in the Church through ordination.

Spiritual Identity

Additionally, the way the participants of this study have defined their spirituality provides an added means for them to compose with their complex identities. For instance, both

have conceptualized God as incarnated (i.e. for P1 God is present in the world through social justice, and for P2 God is present in the world through nature). This notion is akin to Fromaget's (2012) ternary spiritual anthropology which understands spirituality as three-dimensional; composed of the "soul", "spirit", and "body", with the body acting the will of the soul in the world, whereby the soul is inspired by the spirit (i.e. the human connection for God) (Fromaget, 2012, p. 4). This spiritual acting in the world for P1 is seen in her calling of social justice action whereas in the case of P2 it is through the action of perpetuating acceptance, in the same way God, in her view, does through nature.

Moreover, their non-literal use of scripture as a response and solution to discrimination, a notion also put forth by Bernhardt-House, 2010 & Lingwood, 2010, points to what Yip (2010) has labelled the act of "Turning savage texts to texts of love and acceptance" (Yip, 2010, p.36), which is a four phase process that has been concisely summarized by Toft (2009) as:

1. 'Attacking the stigma' – as a scripture based religious Christianity places significance on the infallibility of the Holy Bible, therefore non-heterosexuals have to: (a) question traditional interpretations of the Bible; (b) focus upon other Christian values and teachings ahead of sexuality; and (c) challenge the context and compatibility of such passages.
2. 'Attacking the stigmatizer' – The focus here is the authority of the Church as messengers of the word of God, a general mistrust that the Church has got this issue wrong.
3. 'Positive Personal Approaches' – Questioning the Churches understanding of sexuality and denying the relevance to one's own life.
4. 'Ontogeneric argument' – Sexuality is created by God and therefore all sexualities are valid and as acceptable as each other (Toft, 2009, p.70).

This four phased process is found in both participants of the study in their non-traditional and non-literal use of the Bible; their acknowledgment of the impact of the cultural norms found in the Bible and their view that they are incompatible with current times; their focus on themes in the Bible; their view that some Church institutions, such as the Catholic Church, have misunderstood the Bible's message and that their understanding of sexuality is not coherent with

their own experience or understanding of it; and finally in their affirmation that their sexuality is valid as it has been given to them by God.

Moreover, this process of rewriting scripture is overlaid onto what is revealed as each participant's distinct celestial attachment styles as influenced by their terrestrial attachment styles (for an elaboration of the concepts of terrestrial and celestial attachment styles see Notes section). Accordingly, the results of this study revealed elements akin to celestial attachment styles in the participants, with P1 demonstrating a more preoccupied attachment style, and P2 a more secure one. These styles of attachment can be contextualized in a terrestrial attachment style with some of the elements each participant has shared about their family of origin and are evident in their experience of safe spaces, their respective God images, and in the relationship each share with God. For instance, P1 appears to have been raised by caretakers who were somewhat inconsistent in their messages, and inconsistent environments can become a precursor to the development of a preoccupied attachment style; on the one hand, P1 describes her mother as liberal and on the other as "rigid" and "shaming." (Participant 1). Whereas, P2 describes her family as supportive while growing up, and gave examples of them responding to her needs; an environment which can support the growth of a secure attachment style.

These differing family of origin environments provide the context to understanding their current celestial attachment styles. Notably, P1's interviews point to a possible preoccupied celestial attachment style in her experience of her spiritual safe space (i.e. a vessel to her connection to God) as a place that can easily become unsafe if her boundaries are crossed by the discrimination of others, which is contrary to P2 who views her spiritual safe space as a "home" in which she is unconditionally loved. Such elements of their attachment are also found in their God image and relationship with God. For example, for P1 God is both a challenger and a source

of inspiration, but also a judge with high expectations for her, and she expressed many times during the interviews that she feels as though she is failing at attaining such expectations. This, along with her idealization of one of her mentors Thomas (her friend from the SCM Sex and Spirit group – see participant life context section for more information) in his fulfillment of God’s expectations of him, is common in the preoccupied individual who tends to devalue themselves in the face of the divine and idealize others (Granqvist, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992; Malette & Guindon, In press; Rizzuto, 1979). Conversely, P2’s image of God is akin to a secure base, a good loving parent who provides comforting support in times of need and unconditional acceptance, all elements that are found in the secure celestial attachment style (Malette & Guindon, In press; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Composing with Sexual, Gender, and Spiritual Identities

The main factor that brings all three dimensions of the participants’ identity together in a fluid composition is the use of Yip’s (2010) “ontogeneric argument” in which they claim that God has created all aspects of their identity and as a result their complex identities are not a choice, but a gift from God (Yip, 2010, p. 40; Toft, 2009, p.69). Also, Gross & Yip (2010) have found that those who hold alternative sexualities and remain in a conservative Christian environment are able to cope by conceptualizing God as all-loving and drawing on a perception of Jesus Christ as a “...transgressive champion of social justice...” (Gross & Yip, 2010, p. 40). These findings correspond to what the participants expressed during their interviews. Thus, P1 draws specifically on the theme of social justice from scripture and uses Jesus Christ as a model for her calling to promote social justice for the marginalized. Moreover, P1 adds the notion of “alterity” to her understanding of social justice when she spoke of the importance of “facing the

other” for spiritual growth. As Martinez de Pison (2005) has highlighted, alterity is the ability to be with the other; and to discern this other as other, rather than as an extension of our own desires and self. It is in this spirit of alterity that P1 attempts to fulfill her calling as well as understand her oppressor, the Catholic Church among others, as a means to changing her oppressor from the inside out, a strategy not unknown to many social activists such as Nelson Mandela (Mandela, 1994).

Drawing a parallel between nature and the unconditional acceptance of God, P2 also draws specifically on the image of an all-loving God, available to support and accept her entirely. This is evident in her identification with God as Love and in the many times she speaks of God as a provider. In the case of P2, however, this conceptualization of God has led her to a very different conclusion than P1, that is, for her, as God is all loving and accepting of her, she refuses to fight for her right to be who she is, as opposed to P1 who has placed this fight at the center of her spirituality.

Notwithstanding the difference spiritual themes and symbols each participant uses to accomplish this, the means by which each participant composes with their complex identity (i.e. Bisexual Christian Woman) have fluidity at their base. P1 for example, uses her calling of social justice as a means for spiritual growth, and P2 uses an all loving God in order to validate an ever changing spiritual and sexual identity. This basic element of fluidity and growth goes hand in hand with what Pargament (2007) views as a spiritual coping accompanied by a natural maturation process in spiritual pathways:

...spiritual pathways grow and evolve in different directions as people mature, their needs change, and they encounter the occasional roadblocks to the sacred. Over the course of their lives, people...take on different spiritual perspectives... all in the effort to nurture and sustain their relationship with the sacred (Pargament, 2007, p. 89).

The element of growth is also visible in the participants' choice to explore their complex identities by participating in the study as well as in the awareness and questions which emerged within them following the first interview.

The first interview had, however, a different effect on each participant thereby indicating that they are at different points on their spiritual journey in the face of the challenge of composing with their various identities (i.e. Bisexual Christian Women). Whereas, in her second interview, P1 appeared to be in a stage of contemplation and what Pargament (2007) refers to as a "transformational spiritual coping" (Pargament, 2007, p. 111), P2 appeared to be in more of a "conservational spiritual coping" (Pargament, 2007, p. 94). In attempting to recognize how her current new social roles of being a new mother and a PhD student is limiting to her desire to the fulfillment of her calling as well as in her attempt to revalue her new roles, P1 is "recognizing the limitations of her past strivings" and "letting go of old values" (Pargament, 2007, p. 122) all the while attempting to "place the sacred at the center" of her life in a new way by seeking spiritual direction (Pargament, 2007, p.122). All of which are elements of a transformational spiritual coping as brought forth by Pargament (2007).

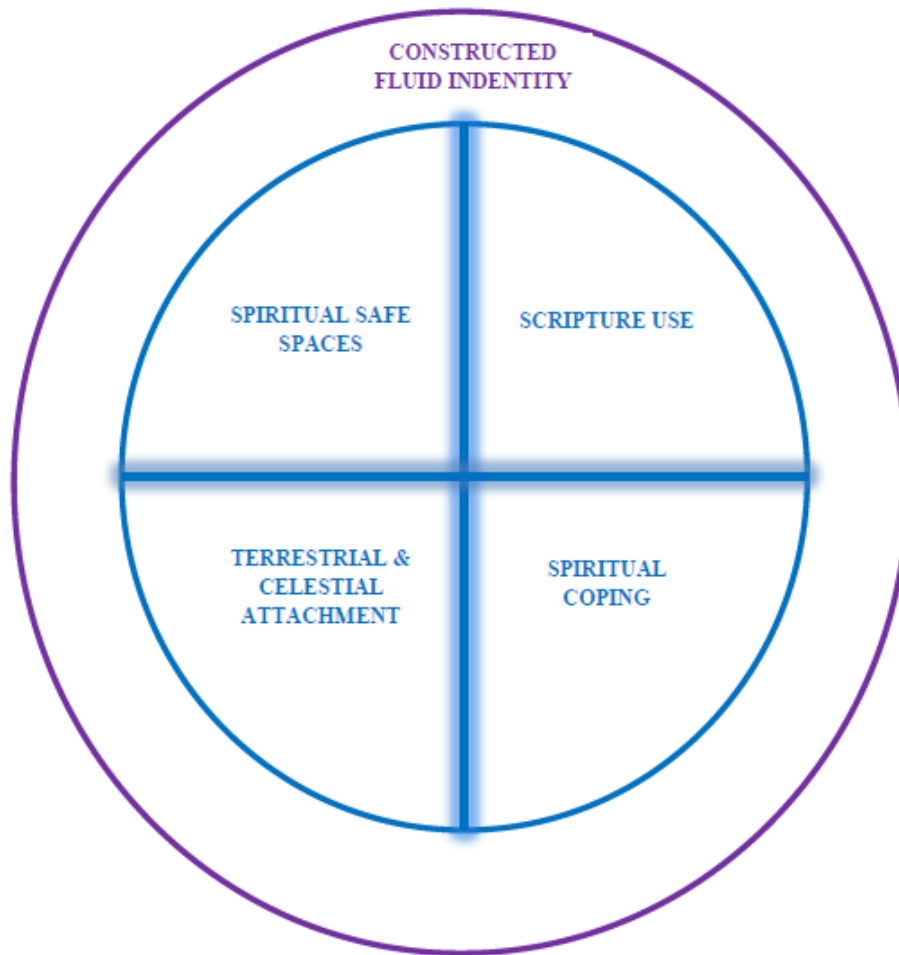
In her attempts to conserve the spiritual, an expression of her spiritual coping, it was evident in both the first and second interviews that P2 engaged in what Pargament (2007) refers to as "Benevolent spiritual reappraisals" by redefining her multiple identities (i.e. Bisexual, Christina, and Woman) in spiritual terms via the use of Yip's (2010) "ontogeneric argument", that is, through the belief that God created her and therefore accepts her this way (Pargament, 2007, p.100). She also demonstrates an attempt to conserve the spiritual through seeking a "partnership with the divine in problem solving" the frustration caused by the lack of opportunity to have children naturally with her same-sex partner (Pargament 2007, p. 100). This is

accomplished through her attempt to make meaning of what these needs which she feels are difficult to reconcile spiritually. These various elements of fluidity, change, and growth, as found in each participants sexual (i.e. a fluid sexual orientation) and spiritual identities (i.e. spiritual coping), come together to support the notion that the identities of both participants in this study have change at their center, a concept that is brought forth by dynamical systems theory (Diamond, 2006).

Implications for clinical practice

In order to adapt Bradford's (2006) Affirmative Psychotherapy with Bisexual Women to the findings of the current study on the experience of bisexual Christian women, a model conceptualizing the clinical sensitivities which, according to the current author, are required for clinicians in psychotherapy with individuals having the complex identity of bisexual Christian woman, has been elaborated in figure 1. This figure proposes the following five dimensions to be considered by therapists in this context: a Constructed and Fluid Identity; Use of Scripture; Use of Spiritual Safe Spaces; Terrestrial & Celestial Attachment Style; and Spiritual Coping.

Figure 1. Clinical Dimensions for Psychotherapy with Bisexual Christian Women



Prior to considering the dimensions of the proposed model, it is of utmost important that throughout psychotherapy, the therapist acknowledge their own biases, including homophobia and biphobia (Bradfort, 2006). Therapists should also keep the APA Guidelines for practicing psychology with the LGB population, which include the recognition of the unique experiences of bisexuals (APA, 2011). Moreover, the principles to avoid biases researching the bisexual population as put forth by Barker, et al. (2012, p.385-387), also apply in the context of psychotherapy with this same population. These principles include “assuming multiplicity”, that is, the need to consider the bisexual population as heterogeneous; “respect language use”, that is, the need to use the same language the person is using when refereeing to their identity

experience; and the need to familiarize themselves with bisexual communities prior to embarking in therapy with such an individual.

Accordingly, as the background circle of figure 1 proposes, it is first and foremost essential for clinicians to consider the person's identity as both anchored in their construction of it (i.e. how they have come to understand their identity as a bisexual Christian woman) as well as having the quality of fluidity. In order to accomplish this, as Bradford (2006) mentions, it is important not to make any assumptions about the person's sexual identity, rather inquire about how the person identifies and get an understanding of how they have constructed their identity. Otherwise, assumptions on the part of the therapist may result in the "...silencing and marginalizing and serve to further the invisibility of bisexuality and bisexual people." (Bradford, 2006, p.23). The concept of fluidity should also be informed by Bradford's (2006) stages of bisexual development as mentioned in the above discussion on sexual identity.

Secondly, as Bradford (2006) also mentions, it is important to acknowledge the culture of stigma that surrounds bisexual women, and as the current study has also demonstrated, also surrounds bisexual women of the Christian faith. Moreover, as Yip (2010) and Toft (2009) have suggested, the process of transforming scripture is helpful in negotiating the simultaneous identities of LGB and Christian, it may therefore be useful for the person consulting to explore their own use of scripture (this dimension is found in the upper right quarter of the inner circle of figure 1.) with the therapist as well as how they may want to use scripture to help them better negotiate their identities.

Thirdly, Bradford (2006) has also put forth the importance for the therapist to familiarize themselves with the resources that are available for bisexual women including communities, models, and information that may help them feel less isolated. As this study has found that safe

spiritual spaces are essential in how bisexual Christian women compose with their identities, it may be useful to explore the presence of spiritual safe spaces (this dimension is found in the upper left quarter of the inner circle in figure 1.) in their life and how they may use such spaces to enable them to better negotiate their identities. Such safe spaces may include Church communities, or bisexual communities, but may also include intellectual safe spaces such as literature (e.g. *The Queer God*, by Marcella Althaus-Reid; and *Blessed Bi Spirit: Bisexual People of Faith*, by Debra R. Kolodny), or even discussion groups such as P1's SCM Sex & Spirit group (Althaus-Reid, 2003; Kolodny, 2000).

Fourthly, Bradford (2006) proposes that therapists "take an affirmative approach" in order to "...counteract the shame and isolation that results from marginalization." (Bradford, 2006, p. 24). This is accomplished by supporting resiliency through obstacles and focusing on the growth gained from perseverance and exploration (Bradford, 2006). In terms of bisexual Christian women, this process may be supported through the exploration of terrestrial and celestial attachment style (this dimension is found in the lower left quarter of the inner circle in figure 1.), which may include working through the attachment and power dynamics in the therapeutic relationship itself (Livingstone, 2010), along with an exploration of person's spiritual coping as proposed by Pargament (2007) (this dimension is found in the lower right quarter of the inner circle of figure 1.)

Finally, as demonstrated by the gradation of the lines separating all four components of figure 1.'s inner circle (i.e. the Use of Scripture, Use of Safe Spiritual Spaces, Terrestrial & Celestial Attachment Style, and Spiritual Coping), these dimensions are elements of a person's life that both overlap, inter-influence each other, and evolve over the course of a lifetime. These components must therefore be considered to be interconnected and, as they are placed within the

greater circle labelled Constructed Fluid Identity, always be placed within the context of a self-constructed and constantly evolving identity process.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that this study has fulfilled its aims of continuing the work of Toft (2009) on the question of how bisexual women of the Christian faith negotiate their identities, this time accomplished in a new population such as that of Canadian Anglophones; to give a voice to the experiences of bisexuals in general; to further explore the experiences of bisexuals in the Christian faith and on how they compose with their complex identities; and to explicitly focus on the experience of bisexual women in Christianity. Moreover, this study has also contributed to a better understanding of how bisexual Christian women experience their identities and how they manage to compose with these identities through the construction of a fluid identity, the use of scripture, and the use of safe spaces. These three means are filtered through the influence of their terrestrial and celestial attachment styles as well as through their specific spiritual coping strategies. The insights from the findings of this study allowed for the formation of a model of clinical dimensions to be considered for psychotherapy with such a population.

Note

The notion of attachment styles stems from Bowlby and Ainsworth's research on the relationship of infants with their primary caretaker (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Research on attachment has argued that the way in which the child's taker responds to their child's needs will influence how the child will grow to understand him or herself, the other, and the relationship between self, other and the world, notions that will be internalized as "internal working models" (IWM) (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). For every child, these IWM translate into attachment styles, namely secure, insecure avoidant, or insecure anxious. A securely attached child will consider their caregiver as a reliable and secure home base in which they can turn to in times of distress, thereby leading them to understand that their needs as a child are important and allowing them to develop a coherent emotional experience (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Conversely, an insecurely attached child of the avoidant type responds to a generally unavailable parent by ignoring him or her in times of need and distress (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The avoidant child will, as a result of their caretaker's unavailability, conclude that his or her needs as a child are not important (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Whereas in the case of an insecurely attached child of the anxious type, the child will express a high level of anxiety in times of distress along with an ambivalence with regards to the use of their caretaker, whom is generally inconsistent and irregularly available in their caretaking, for soothing, and will also concluded that his or her needs are not important (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Further research has shown that such attachment styles in children persist in adulthood with the securely attached child becoming a secure adult, the insecure avoidant child becoming an avoidant adult, and the insecure anxious child becoming a preoccupied adult (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Adults with a secure attachment style tend to perceive themselves and others

positively, have little difficulty depending on others or having others depend on them (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Whereas, adults with an avoidant attachment style have a tendency to be uncomfortable being close to others, often report being afraid of being hurt if they must depend on others, tend not to reveal themselves much to others, and, as a result, tend to view themselves and others negatively (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Finally, adults with a preoccupied attachment style have been found to have a tendency to view themselves negatively which is contrasted by a highly positive, even idealized, view of others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Such individuals have a tendency to need much proximity in times of distress and are often preoccupied with the incompatibility of their proximity needs with those of others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Mikunlincer & Shaver (2007) have also affirmed that attachment styles may vary depending on context (e.g. a distressing situation may trigger preoccupied adaptation strategies of hyper-activation). Also, Paivo & Pascual-Leone (2010) have found that attachment style can change over time to become closer to a secure attachment style, for example, if a secure attachment is formed with one's therapist, such as a romantic partner, this may be transposed to other relationships in a person's life.

In light of this, many authors (see Granqvist, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992; Malette & Guindon, In press, Rizzuto, 1979) have asserted that attachment styles inherited in the terrestrial realm translate into celestial attachment styles, characterised by the IWM they have elaborated in their understanding of and relationship with the divine based on those elaborated during their upbringing in their families. In the case of a secure celestial attachment style, the divine is perceived as a "warm", "supportive", "comforting", "protective", "available" "good parent" all the while permitting one to commit errors . Contrariwise, individuals holding an avoidant celestial attachment style perceive the divine as "lacking love towards them", "distant",

“impersonal”, and “having little interest in their experiences” (Granqvist, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992; Malette & Guindon, In press; Rizzuto, 1979). Finally, those with a preoccupied celestial attachment style perceive the divine as “inconsistent”; at times “available” and “distant” at others, and although they believe there are loved by the divine; they sometimes question the quality of the divine’s love for them (Granqvist, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992; Malette & Guindon, In press; Rizzuto, 1979).

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Appendix A



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24-05-2013
dd-mm-yyyy

Bureau de la recherche et de la déontologie
Office of Research and Ethics

Certificat de déontologie Ethics Certificate
Comité de la déontologie Research Ethics Board

REB File Number: 1-1360.12/12

Principal Investigator / Thesis supervisor / Co-investigators / Student

Last name	Name	Affiliation	Role
Charron	Natalie	Faculty of Human Sciences	Student/Principal Investigator
Malette	Judith	Faculty of Human Sciences	Supervisor

Type of project: Thesis related research

Title: Bisexual Women in the Christian Faith: Articulating a Complex identity

Approval date	Expiry Date	Decision
24-05-2013	23-05-2014	1(approved)

Committee comments

The REB approved the project.
The researcher is invited to use the reference number 1-1360.12/12 when recruiting participants.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

In accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, the Saint Paul University Research Ethics Board has examined and approved the application for an ethics certificate for this project for the period indicated and subject to the conditions listed above.

The research protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB. This includes, among others, the extension of the research, additional recruitment for the inclusion of new participants, changes in location of the fieldwork, any stage where a research permit is required, such as work in schools. Minor administrative changes are allowed.

The REB must be notified of all changes or unanticipated circumstances that have a serious impact on the conduct of the research, that relate to the risk to participants and their safety. Modifications to the project, information, consent and recruitment documentation must be submitted to the Office of Research and Ethics for approval by the REB.

The investigator must submit a report four weeks prior to the expiry date of the certificate stated above requesting an extension or that the file be closed.

Documents relating to publicity, recruitment and consent of participants should bear the file number of the certificate. They must also indicate the coordinates of the investigator should participants have questions related to the research project. In which case, the documents will refer to the Chair of the REB and provide the coordinates of the Office of Research and Ethics.

Signature:

Richard Feist
Chair
Research Ethics Board

1/1

Appendix B



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Socio-Demographic Questionnaire

The following questions are intended to help us get a better understanding of who you are, and they will not allow us to identify you in any way. Please checkmark and/or answer the questions as appropriate.

1. **Sex:**
 Female
 Male

2. **Age:** _____ years

3. **First Language:**
 English
 French
 Other; Please specify : _____

4. **Language used most frequently :**
 English
 French
 Other; Please specify: _____

5. **In which location have you spent the longest part of your life?**
 City or village : _____
 Province : _____
 Country : _____

6. **Civil Status: Are you... ?**
 Single
 Married
 Divorced or Separated
 In a common-law relationship
 Widowed
 Other; Please specify : _____

7. **Highest level of Education :**
 High School
 College Diploma
 University Degree – Undergraduate
 University Degree– Masters
 University Degree – Doctorate
 Other; Please specify : _____



8. **Ethno-cultural origins :** _____

9. **Indicate you religion affiliation(s) and/or denomination(s)?**

- _____ Catholicism;
 - _____ Protestantism;
 - _____ Judaism;
 - _____ Islam;
 - _____ Buddhism;
 - _____ Hinduism;
 - _____ Other; Please specify : _____
-

10. **How often do you practice your religion(s) :**

- _____ Very often (daily)
- _____ Frequently (weekly)
- _____ Once a month
- _____ A few times a year
- _____ Once a year
- _____ Rarely

11. **Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual person?**

- _____ Yes; Specify with which domain you identify the most :
 - _____ The religious (identified tradition (s))
 - _____ The cosmic (philosophical apprehensions, scientifique, artistique or fictional)
 - _____ The I, (the sum of life experiences)
 - _____ The self, (presence, light, force of the human heart)
 - _____ The social (humanistic values)
 - _____ Other; Please specify : _____
-

_____ No

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

Appendix C



Semi-Structure Research Questionnaires on the Experience of Bisexual Christian Women (QEBCW)

Interview Information

Participant's Name: _____

First Interview

Second Interview

Date: _____

Location: _____

Duration: _____

First Interview - Semi-Structured Questionnaire

Section 1: Participants experience and understanding of their spirituality and sexual orientation:

1. How do you understand or define your sexual orientation?

2. How do you experience your sexual orientation? Has this changed over time?

3. What is your understanding of spirituality? How do you define or characterize your spirituality?

4. What is your experience of spirituality? Has this changed over time?

5. What is your understanding and experience of spirituality as it specifically relates to your Christian religious orientation?

Section 2: The process and components of articulating a bisexual Christian identity:

1. How have you managed to articulate being both a self-identified bisexual and Christian? Have the means by which you do so changed over time?

2. What have been your greatest challenges and successes in articulating these two components of your identity within the secular or non-religious spheres of society? Have these changed over time?

3. What have been your greatest challenges and success in articulating these two identities in your religious community? Have these changed over time?

4. What have been your greatest challenges and successes in articulating these two identities in the sexual minority community (both religious and secular)? Have these changed over time?

5. How does your sexual identity shape your Christian theological understanding?

6. How does your spiritual/religious identity shape your sexual identity?

Section 3: The process and components of articulating a bisexual Christian identity as a woman:

1. How has being a woman influenced the way you articulate your sexual and spiritual/religious identities? Has this changed over time?

2. What have been your greatest challenges and successes with regards to your gender when articulating your sexual and spiritual/religious identities in the context of secular society? Have these changed over time?

Appendix D



Subjective Well-being Questionnaire

Interview Information

Participant's Name: _____

First Interview

Second Interview

Date: _____

Location: _____

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = very low and 10 = very high), how would you rate your present level of well-being?

Appendix E

Recruitment Script

The principal researcher will contact the United Church community leaders via telephone in order to prompt the recruitment process. The principle researcher will follow the subsequent script during her conversation with the church leaders:

“Hello, my name is Natalie Charron and I am currently a student enrolled in the masters of Counselling and Spirituality at Saint-Paul’s University. I am currently conducting a study on the experience of bisexual Christian women in the context of my masters thesis. The purpose of my study is to provide a voice to bisexual women of the christian community and to help clinicians better understand the experience and challenges of bieng bisexual, christian, and a woman in today’s society. I would like to request your permission to post some of my recruitment notices in the locations of your institution allocated for this purpose. If once the notices are posted, there are any questions regarding the study, please let the individual know that they may contact me via telephone or e-mail as indicated on the notice, and I will be happy to answer any inquiries. Thank you for your time !”

Appendix F



Consent Form

Study Title: Bisexual Women in the Christian Faith: Articulating a Complex Identity

Researchers: **Natalie Charron**
*Lead researcher, M.A candidate,
Counseling and Spirituality
Saint Paul University, 223 Main Street,*



Dr. Judith Malette
*Professor/Thesis Director, Faculty of
Counselling, Psychotherapy and Spirituality
Saint Paul University, 223 Main Street,
Ottawa K1S 1C4*



- 1. Invitation to participate:** You are invited to participate in the current study entitled *Bisexual Women in the Christian Faith: Articulating a Complex Identity*, by Natalie Charron and Dr. Judith Malette, to be conducted in the context of Ms. Charron's master's thesis.
- 2. Purpose of the study:** The study aims to clarify the experience of bisexual women of the Christian faith by exploring the means by which they succeed, or not, in articulating their sexual and spiritual identities. It also aims to give a voice to bisexual women in the Christian community and help clinicians better understand the experience and challenges of being bisexual, Christian, and a woman in today's society.
- 3. Participation:** If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete 4 questionnaires (the current Consent Form, a Socio-demographic Questionnaire, the Brief Symptom Inventory-18, the Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire), as well as participate in a first semi-structured interview lasting approximately 90 minutes and a second interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. Willing participants may schedule a time to meet with the lead researcher, Natalie Charron, at Saint-Paul University, 223 Main St, Ottawa, Ontario, in order to complete the questionnaires and participate in the interviews.
- 4. Benefits:** Your participation in this study will help in continuing to give a voice to the experiences of bisexuals in general and will enable the exploration of the experiences of bisexual women in the Christian faith in the Anglophone Canadian population.

- 5. Risks:** It is important to understand that reflecting on your sexual and spiritual identities may cause you to feel sad or distressed. Please rest assured that this risk will be minimized through the following safety measure:
- You may stop participating in the study at any time;
 - You may refuse to fill in any items or answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with;
 - You may, at any point in time, ask questions about the study;
 - Finally, the lead researcher will refer you to Saint Paul University's Counselling Center or the Ottawa Distress Center if it is determined that participation in this study has caused you any psychological distress.
- 6. Confidentiality:** Please be assured that all the identifying information you will be sharing will remain strictly confidential. It is important to understand that the all the collected data will be used for Natalie Charron's master's thesis only and that the results may be published in a journal or presented at a conference (while retaining confidentiality of all identifying information). In this process, the researcher will protect my confidentiality by
- Not using my real name or any identifying information
 - Respecting the Code of Ethics for Research and Publications of the Canadian Counselling Association (see <http://www.ccacc.c/documents/ECOEAPR07.pdf>)
- 7. Anonymity:** Your participation and all your identifying information will remain anonymous throughout the entire study.
- 8. Conservation of data:** All data collected will be kept in a locked cabinet in the research laboratory of thesis director, Dr. Judith Malette, Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario. Only Dr. Malette and Natalie Charron will have access to the data. The data will be kept for 7 years (until 2020), after which it will all be destroyed.
- 9. Voluntary participation:** Your participation in this study is purely voluntary. Please note that you may withdraw from any part of the study at any time or refuse to answer any questions without worrying about negative consequences. If you choose to do so, all information you have provided in the context of this study will be destroyed.
- 10. Acceptance:** I, _____, have been informed of all the information above by the lead researcher for this study and agree to participate in the above-mentioned study conducted by Natalie Charron (M.A candidate, Counseling and Spirituality at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario) and thesis director Dr. Judith Malette, (Faculty of Counselling, Psychotherapy and Spirituality, Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario).

Please note that you may contact the lead researcher if you have any questions regarding the study. For any additional information regarding your rights as a study participant, please contact Ms. Claire Bélanger, Director of Research Services, Saint Paul University at cbelanger@ustpaul.ca.

Participant's signature: _____

Date: (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Researcher's signature: _____





Date: (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Appendix G

Comparison of Emerging themes – Interviews 1 & 2, Participants 1 & 2

Common Emerging Themes

**Read from extremities to center.*



Emerging Themes Participant 1	Sub-themes of Emerging Themes Participant 1	Characteristics of Commonalities between Common Emerging Themes	Characteristics of Distinctions between Common Emerging Themes	Sub-themes of Emerging Themes Participant 2	Emerging Themes Participant 2
<p>1) Definition of sexual orientation</p> 	<p>1.a) Queer woman;</p> <p>1.b) Something more;</p> <p>1.c) Binaries & bisexual set an untrue binary;</p> <p>1.d) Sexuality, politics, and spirituality;</p> <p>1.e) Related to equal rights and social justice.</p>	<p>1.a) Rejection of binaries (see theme 2, P2);</p> <p>1.b) Sexual identity is not a choice.</p>	<p>1.a) P1 uses Queer; P2 uses Bisexual;</p> <p>1.b) P2 focuses on change, fluidity;</p> <p>1.c) P1 focuses on trinomial (sex, spirit and politics) & on equal rights.</p>	<p>1.a) Attraction changes;</p> <p>1.b) Attraction to the person, not a gender;</p> <p>1.c) It's fluid; changing and changeable;</p> <p>1.d) Middle of spectrum has more movement;</p> <p>1.e) Not a choice.</p>	<p>1) Definition of sexual orientation</p> 
<p>2) Label Qualifiers</p> 	<p>2.a) Problematic of binaries;</p> <p>2.b) Queer opens and provides space for diversity & multiplicity (<i>Use of fan metaphor</i>);</p> <p>2.c) Queer provides vagueness, flexibility, to explore and live;</p> <p>2.d) pieces of identity need to be recognized;</p>	<p>2.a) Rejection of binaries;</p> <p>2.b) Labels are restrictive and don't fit the reality;</p> <p>2.c) Label must provide room (in reference to themes of space and inclusivity) for</p>	<p>2.a) P2 uses labels for mere practicality;</p> <p>2.b) P2 trips over labels; -Whereas P1 has chosen an flexible label to work with;</p> <p>2.c) P1 views inclusive labels as an important way to acknowledge important pieces of identity.</p>	<p>2.a) Don't fit into labels;</p> <p>2.b) Can't fit herself in a box as it will change;</p> <p>2.c) Uses labels for conversation ease;</p> <p>2.d) You are who you are, in the hetero world we don't use labels;</p> <p>2.e) Trips over label because LGBTQ</p>	<p>2) Label Qualifiers</p> 

	<p>2.e)Lesbian label can be a perpetuation of the norm;</p> <p>2.f)Queer is not the ‘New Normal’;</p> <p>2.g) Non-ecumenical Labels are not useful and do not acknowledge important pieces of identity.</p>	<p>flexibility (see theme 1 from P2) & change.</p> <p>2.d)Bisexual label can be scary to other in romantic relationship (see P1 theme 8).</p>		<p>world is new;</p> <p>2.f)Bisexual label is a challenge in relationship, it is scary to partner.</p>	
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<p>3)Definition of spirituality</p> <p>→</p>	<p>3.a)Spirituality has element of personal but cannot be reduced to an individual;</p> <p>3.b)Draws out the transcendent from within;</p> <p>3.c)How you live it depends on understanding of dynamic with the transcendent;</p> <p>3.d)Spirit moves with inclusivity;</p> <p>3.e)We are but dust and we become with the spark (a.k.a. the Spirit); (<i>Use of the Ash Wednesday ritual as metaphor for calling</i>)</p> <p>3.f)God needs us to fulfill our calling in the world.</p>	<p>3.a)Both experience God as transcendent;</p> <p>3.b)Both experience a relationship or connection with God (for P1 also see theme 5);</p> <p>3.c)Noticing and awareness of the world around them reconnects them to God (for P1 see theme 9);</p>	<p>3.a)For P1 God requires action in the world whereas for P2 everything just is as it is;</p> <p>3.b)For P2 a connection with God should be natural whereas for P2 relationship requires social justice action and is <u>conditional</u> (Relates to themes of re-evaluating current life & Shiva analogy) to this involvement;</p> <p>3.c)For P2 connection to God is through nature whereas for P1 it is through social justice action.</p>	<p>3.a)A connection to something greater than herself;</p> <p>3.b)The world takes care of itself on its own;</p> <p>3.c)A connection to the world around her;</p> <p>3.d)There’s a rhythm and an order in nature;</p> <p>3.e)Easy to forget and noticing this rhythm connects her back;</p> <p>3.f) The Christian idea of a powerful being watching over us clicks and feels like home.</p>	<p>3)Definition of spirituality</p> <p>←</p>
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<p>4)Religious & Spiritual History</p> <p>→</p>	<p>4.a)Grew up in Catholic left and it has permeated her worldview;</p> <p>4.b)University’s Catholic Church allowed for more space to experiment;</p> <p>4.c)Catholic framework made sense to</p>	<p>4.a)Both have a pathway that connects them to God (nature for P2 and activism for P1);</p> <p>4.b)The teachings in the Bible and of Jesus-</p>	<p>4.a)P1 grew up in Catholic left; P2 in atheism;</p> <p>4.b)P1 was involved in Church her whole life; P2 for the last 12 years;</p>	<p>4.a)Parents are atheists;</p> <p>4.b)Was completely ignorant of religion as a child, then was agnostic as teenager, to Christian as an adult;</p> <p>4.c)Found on her own as she grew</p>	<p>4)Religious & Spiritual History</p> <p>←</p>
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	<p>her – knew how argue;</p> <p>4.d)Many signs of institution rejecting her (e.g. Morning prayer incident);</p> <p>4.e)Ecumenical movement (SCM, Sex & Spirit group) opened her eyes in many ways;</p> <p>4.f)Process of digging deeply is self-realization work (e.g. Sarah);</p> <p>4.g)Some are far more radical than she is (e.g. Thomas);</p> <p>4.h)Was as teacher of French & Religion in a Catholic School;</p> <p>4.i)Was pursuing her Masters of Divinity to become ordained in the United Church.</p>	<p>Christ make sense to them;</p> <p>4.c)Have been influenced by a series of life events and experiences.</p>	<p>4.c)P1 connected to God through activism and P2 through nature;</p> <p>4.d)P1 feels rejected by the Catholic Church institution (and wants to change it from the inside) whereas P2 rejects it (see P2 theme 7);</p> <p>4.e)For P1 it was the process of digging that gave her spiritual meaning whereas for P2 it was a process of intuitive synchronicity of events;</p> <p>4.f)P1’s spirituality was influenced by models (e.g. Sarah, Thomas, Catholic School principal, etc.) whereas P2’s was influenced by her connection to nature.</p>	<p>up;</p> <p>4.d)The teachings of Jesus Christ really appeal to her and make sense;</p> <p>4.e)Parents were and still are accepting of religious choices;</p> <p>4.f)Was not aware of spirituality growing up;</p> <p>4.g)Felt a strong affinity and connection with nature.</p>	
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<p>5) Relationship with Catholic Church</p> 	<p>5.a)Church is a political institution;</p> <p>5.b)Catholic Church is maintaining problematic power structures;</p> <p>5.c)Has profound disagreements with what the Popes have said;</p> <p>5.d)Views the Church’s stances as wrong and feels they have not done their work;</p>	<p>5.a)Catholic institution is problematic;</p> <p>5.b)Have disagreements with its stance on homosexuality.</p>	<p>5.a)P2 rejects Catholic Church whereas P1 feels rejected by it and wants to change it from the inside;</p> <p>5.b)P1 is very ambivalent about the Catholic Church whereas P2’s stance is clear;</p> <p>5.c)P1 feels they still have evolving and work to do;</p>	<p>5.a)I’m not Catholic;</p> <p>5.b)Rejection of Homophobia has always bothered her;</p> <p>5.c)She is not part of that (i.e. Catholic) world, she is Protestant.</p>	<p>5) Relationship with Catholic Church</p> 
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5.e)They are wrong and have no space for understanding outside of stance.

5.d)P1 feels they lack the intellectual space needed for growth.

6) Use of Themes from the Bible

6.a)Finds it hard to draw from scripture due to historical and culture norms, but draws inspiration from fundamental theme of justice;

6.b)Discrimination goes against this theme of justice.

6.a)Both draw on major themes from the Bible and Jesus Christ’s teachings;

6.b)Both use these themes as a response and solution to abolish discrimination against the LGBTQ community;

6.c)Both do not draw specifically on scripture but on themes (for P2 see interview 1 theme 9).

6.a)Pride protestors (and those who discriminate against LGBTQ or Christians) are missing the point of Love and Acceptance in Jesus’ message;

6.b)Wants to fight ignorance the Christian way, with Love and Acceptance.

6)Use of themes from the Bible (Applying the message of Jesus Christ) (repeated in both interviews)

7)Safe Spaces (Her Church & the Ecumenical World)

7.a)Finding outwardly safe place (e.g. Affirm United);

7.b)Spirituality is enriched by community;

7.c)Safe places can be contaminated and this creates much anger in her;

7.d)Helped create safe space for others (e.g. her students);

7.e)Far prefers Ecumenical world;

7.a)Having a safe space is essential;

7.b)United Church - Affirm is their safe place;

7.c)A spiritual community who shares their values is essential;

7.d)Creating a safe space for others is

7.a)Fighting for equal rights is primordial to fulfilling P1’s calling whereas P2 refuses to fight;

7.b)Safe spaces can easily be contaminated for P1 creating a high level of distress (whereas P2 turns her attention to people who share her values and ignores those who don’t. Despite these members it still feels like

7.a)She goes to church for the community;



7.b)Her church must fit with the morals and ethics she already has;

7.c)She could never belong to a church that doesn’t accept homosexuality;

7.d)The United Church – Affirm, feels right, everything fits, feels like home;

7)Safe Spaces (her Church & the Queer Community)

	<p>7.f)The Student Christian Movement (SCM), Sex & Spirit discussion group, opened her eyes and radically affect her adult life;</p> <p>7.g)It is a coming up against the other;</p> <p>7.h)Everyone is eligible;</p> <p>7.i)Trust allowed an opening to deep experiences.</p>	<p>important (for P2 see theme 9 on acceptance);</p> <p>7.e)Purposely do not belong to a church that does not accept homosexuality;</p> <p>7.f)Acceptance and inclusivity are essential;</p>	<p>home to her (<i>style</i>);</p> <p>7.c)P1 uses difference for exploration and self-realization (see P2 theme 11) whereas P2 accepts difference but avoid the struggle;</p> <p>7.d)P2 feels proud of church; P1 feels protective of church.</p>	<p>7.e)My church did the negotiation for me; it is inclusive;</p> <p>7.f)Hasn't had any challenges fitting in;</p> <p>7.g)Question of acceptance has changed over time; most are accepting and others are not);</p> <p>7.h)They don't talk about sexual orientation; it's not important to them;</p> <p>7.i)Proud to be part of an accepting Church;</p> <p>7.j)She is not involved nor very aware of the queer community;</p> <p>7.k)She is thankful that they are there to fight for their rights;</p> <p>7.l)She doesn't feel they should have to fight;</p> <p>7.m)Feels blessed that she did not have to be part of the struggles;</p> <p>7.n)Doesn't feel the need to be part of the queer community;</p> <p>7.o)Doesn't feel endangered and already has a safe space (i.e. Church).</p>	
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<p>8)Understanding of God & God Image</p> 	<p>8.a)Experiences a natural pull to the traditional (e.g. Old White Man image);</p> <p>8.b)God is an ephemeral, non-entity that had an impact; God is Wisdom, Creator. The spark of life is God's presence;</p> <p>8.c)There is a loving transcendent God with who we all have relationship;</p> <p>8.d)The Jesus she follows is in the world and challenges us;</p> <p>8.e)We must be challenged to make the world a better place;</p> <p>8.f)Sometimes the challenge is just too hard and she feels she must become superhuman (<i>Use of Lord Shiva analogy</i>) to handle the responsibility.</p>	<p>8.a)Do not interpret Bible literally;</p> <p>8.b)Draw on themes in Jesus Christ's teachings (acceptance, equality, inclusivity, etc.);</p> <p>8.c)God is experienced through relationship (see theme 3 for P1);</p>	<p>8.a)P1 is pulled toward traditional in her God image;</p> <p>8.b)P2 particularly draws on theme of acceptance whereas P1 draws on theme of social justice;</p> <p>8.c)P2 draws parallel between theme of acceptance and nature or the natural order of things;</p> <p>8.d)P1 draws parallels between theme of social justice and her purpose in life;</p> <p>8.e)For P2 we experience God through love whereas for P1 we experience God through social justice action;</p> <p>8.f) For P1 God's challenge for action can be a burden and feels impossible (<i>style</i>) whereas for P2's prayers are answered by God (<i>style</i>).</p>	<p>8.a)Christianity feels like home;</p> <p>8.b)Does not interpret Bible literally and views it as a collection of stories of people's experiences of Jesus Christ and of God;</p> <p>8.c)A literal interpretation is a problem due to contradictions and the presence of non-loving, non-forgiving content;</p> <p>8.d)Cannot wrap her mind around Jesus literally being the son of God, and she doesn't think it matters;</p> <p>8.e)Much of the original meaning has been lost in translations;</p> <p>8.f)It's the lessons that come from Jesus that are important;</p> <p>8.g)Jesus' teachings have a theme of accepting everyone, and equality;</p> <p>8.h)Sees similarity in Jesus' teachings and in nature which involves balance, equality, everything fitting together;</p> <p>8.i)Acceptance is key and this is how she wants to live her life;</p> <p>8.j)Gravitates towards people who share her values;</p>	<p>8)Understanding of God & God Image</p> 
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<p>8.k) To experience God's love begins with loving one another in acceptance and inclusivity;</p> <p>8.l) Her sexual identity not a barrier.</p>	
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<p>9) Relationship with God (Understanding of her Calling)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p>	<p>9.a) The Spirit can only move if we move; God's hand is in the world;</p> <p>9.b) The God she believes in challenges us;</p> <p>9.c) Understands her faith tradition as calling her to make the world a better place and profound solidarity with the marginalized;</p> <p>9.d) Views God and Spirit as greater than the Church institution;</p> <p>9.e) She aspires to stay grounded in the political and spiritual but doesn't always manage to live it (e.g. inspired by Thomas⁷);</p> <p>9.f) She must choose how she wants to be and how she wants to bring it into the world;</p> <p>9.g) Faith involves digging deep,</p>
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<p>9.a) God and their relationship with God is greater than the Church institution (for P2 see themes 9);</p> <p>9.b) Spirituality involves movement (i.e. movement) (analogous to the movement in sexual identity in P2 definition of sexuality as changing and changeable).</p>	<p>9.a) P2's prayers are answered by God whereas God challenges and requires action for P1;</p> <p>9.b) P2 experienced events of synchronicity leading her to her faith whereas P1 has been connected to her faith since a young age through activism;</p> <p>9.c) To P1 Christianity feels like home whereas P2 struggles to fulfill her calling to make the world a better place;</p> <p>9.d) P1 experiences calling as an impossible (see Shiva metaphor theme 9) burden (<i>Pandora's box metaphor</i>) whereas for P2 it is a comfort;</p>
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<p>9.a) Many moments influenced her spiritual journey and experience of God (e.g. loss of grand-mother, being bullied as a child and adolescent, Ann Murray song, significant encounter with friend and Pastor, the book 'Evidence that demands a verdict', and a congenital heart defect that was cured);</p> <p>9.b) The Christian idea of this all powerful being looking over everything felt like home, it clicked;</p> <p>9.c) A prayer to God that was answered.</p>	<p>9) Relationship with God</p> <p style="text-align: left;">←</p>
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⁷ N.B. The names of individuals in this text have been modified in order to protect their right to confidentiality.

fighting hard, and acting in the world out of a place of faith;

9.h)Awareness of oppression is like opening a Pandora’s box, and there’s no going back;

9.i)Calling is a strength and a challenge. Feels like it requires superhuman abilities;

9.j)Lives a traditional life in many ways.

9.e)P1 does not live her calling in many ways (*white picket fence life metaphor*);
-For P1 compliance to her calling is a choice whereas for P2 everything, including herself, just are what they are.

10)Living in Canada in this Time

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10.a)Is aware of discrimination against Queer communities in other countries;

10.b)Travelled with her male partner without any problems of discrimination;

10.c)Would never be able to visit her friend if the latter moves to Uganda;

10.d)Is aware of hidden homophobia that is ignored in Canada;

10.e)Has experienced discrimination in Canada on many occasions (e.g. In Catholic School Board and while holding hands with same-sex partner on the street).

10.a)Both are aware that the level of discrimination in Canada is lower than in other countries;

10.b)Both are aware that level of discrimination is lower in their generation (for P1 see interview 2 theme 6);

10.c)Both believe there are still some battles to fight in Canada.

10.a)This passage is the only time P1 associates herself with a fight or a struggle (does it twice in same passage);

10.b)P1 has experienced discrimination in Canada whereas P2 doesn’t seem to have experienced it here.




10.a)Growing up in Canada’s environment is a blessing to her;


10.b)In Canada she can be part of the voices fighting for equality;



10.c)Still have some battles to fight in Canada but the bigger battles have been one before my generation.

10)Living in Canada in this Time

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<p>11)Being Queer & Christian</p> 	<p>11.a)Within self she is Queer and Christian without contradiction;</p> <p>11.b)Cannot be Queer and Christian without contradiction in society;</p> <p>11.c)Cannot be Queer and Catholic;</p> <p>11.d)Holding her same-sex partner's hand is always a conscious choice;</p> <p>11.e)Can and has create struggles in past heterosexual romantic relationship due to partner not understanding;</p> <p>11.f)She is conscious of the restrictions that come from discrimination (e.g. best friend moving to Uganda);</p> <p>11.g)Feels that when you're not in hetero-norm you don't exist (<i>use of the New Normal analogy</i>).</p>	<p>11.a)Both are in a romantic relationship with a woman;</p> <p>11.b)Within themselves there is no contradiction between bisexuality (a.k.a. queer) and Christian;</p> <p>11.c)It can create important struggles in romantic relationships;</p> <p>11.d)Both acknowledge that being in Canada is a privileged position;</p> <p>11.e)Both are aware of the presence of discrimination in different countries and agree it needs to change;</p>	<p>11.a)For P2 if you're not gay friendly you are ignored whereas for P1 if you're not part of the hetero-norm you do not exist;</p> <p>11.b)P2 doesn't want to hide whereas P1 chooses when she exposes her queer identity (due to experiences of discrimination);</p> <p>11.c)P1 believes it is a contradiction in society and church but for P2 it is never a challenge;</p> <p>11.d)P1 chooses to fight against the struggle whereas P2 refuses to;</p> <p>11.e)For P1 discrimination brings loss of relationship whereas for P2 it does not lead to loss</p>	<p>11.a)Feels free to say she is Christian, Bisexual, and proud;</p> <p>11.b)Everyone should be able to be who they are;</p> <p>11.c)This is who she is;</p> <p>11.d)Being Christian and Bisexual isn't a challenge;</p> <p>11.e)She is in privileged position to be in Canada, in these times, in a United Church;</p> <p>11.f)Views herself as little naïve about discrimination in other countries;</p> <p>11.g)Believes she and the community shouldn't have to fight to be accepted;</p> <p>11.h)Being gay in the Christian world is fine, God create them this way;</p> <p>11.i)Her voice joins a community that is accepting.</p>	<p>11)Being Bisexual & Christian</p> 
<p>12)The Process of Spiritual Growth</p> 	<p>12.a)An othering happens when she is exposed to a group of people of differing backgrounds;</p>	<p>12.a)Both have had their Christian views shaped by the existence of diversity and non-</p>	<p>12.a)For P1 spiritual growth comes from alterity whereas P2 avoids people who do not share her views and spiritual</p>	<p>12.a)The existence of non-heterosexual people has shaped her Christian views;</p>	<p>12)The Process of Spiritual Growth</p>

	<p>12.b)Participating in digging deeply with the other forces her to understand herself in a deeper way and the lens with which she views the world grows.</p>	<p>heterosexual people;</p> <p>12.b)Both believe that they did not choose their sexual orientation;</p> <p>12.c)Both believe that discrimination derives from a misunderstanding of the teachings in the Bible and from erroneous translations of the Bible;</p> <p>12.d)Both have identified a pathway to spiritual growth.</p>	<p>growth comes from acceptance;</p> <p>12.b)P1 has taken the middle path of understanding her oppressor (facing the other in alterity) whereas P2 has adapted her spiritual beliefs to her identity not her identity to her spiritual beliefs.</p>	<p>12.b)God created her this way, it cannot be wrong;</p> <p>12.c)God loves us this way, we are who we are;</p> <p>12.d)There's no need to change to fit someone else idea of what God wants;</p> <p>12.e)Discrimination is about other people's ideas not about God;</p> <p>12.f)Not a question of safety as she already belongs;</p> <p>12.g)Sexual identity shapes Christian life. Church must be accepting of her and others' sexual orientation;</p> <p>12.h)Religious and spiritual identity must fit into the rest of her identity, not the other way around;</p> <p>12.i)Her sexual identity is what it is, it is not right nor wrong;</p> <p>12.j)If this were a problem the religion would have to be altered.</p>	
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<p>13)Gender Identity</p> 	<p>13.a)Being a woman adds a layer of oppression;</p> <p>13.b)The Catholic institution rejects woman (i.e. Related to the rejection of Woman's ordination);</p>	<p>13.a)Both have chosen the United Church in part due to acceptance of women as equal and not only because it is open to the LGBTQ</p>	<p>13.a)P2 has rejected the Catholic Church whereas P1 feels rejected by it;</p> <p>13.b)For P2 the question of maternity is a challenge in a</p>	<p>13.a)Her gender has no effect on her spirituality;</p> <p>13.b)Everyone should be accepted;</p> <p>13.c)It's another part of being in the</p>	<p>13)Gender Identity</p> 
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	<p>13.c)Her values on woman’s ordination are rejected even by the women in her Church (Refers to the “Morning Prayer Incident”);</p> <p>13.d)The church and world are wrong about women;</p> <p>13.e)Her understanding of being a woman demands seeking social justice in the world and she believes world has to change its view on women;</p> <p>13.f)Her feminist identity deeply affects her spirituality; it is a vulnerable place to be.</p>	<p>community;</p> <p>13.b)Both are not part of Catholic Church due to women not being equal in this institution.</p>	<p>same-sex relationship but feels there are ways around it;</p> <p>13.c)P2 feels that the choice of maternity has been taken away from her (cannot reconcile sexual identity and maternity);</p> <p>13.d)P2’s partner fears she will leave her for a man in order to have children naturally;</p> <p>13.e)P1 feels the Catholic Church must change its views on women whereas P1 gravitates towards church that is congruent with her values;</p> <p>13.f)P1’s feminist identity deeply affects her spirituality (e.g. Choice of Church and worldview);</p> <p>13.g)For P1 being a Christian Queer woman is a very vulnerable place to be (<i>style</i>) whereas for P2 her gender has no effect on her spirituality (<i>style</i>).</p>	<p>United Church for her;</p> <p>13.d)Not being able to get her girlfriend pregnant is a challenge for her;</p> <p>13.e)Clash between being a bisexual woman and her view of maternity;</p> <p>13.f)Feels that the choice of maternity has been taken away from her;</p> <p>13.g)This door is closed to her and it is frustrating;</p> <p>13.h)Girlfriend fears she will leave her for a man when she’ll want children;</p> <p>13.i)It’s a challenge but she feels there are ways around it.</p>	
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14)Family of Origin & Current Family 14.a)Mother’s messages about sexuality were contradictory (rigid and

14.a)Both were influenced by the

14.a)P1 family appears to be a secure environment (*style*)

14.a)Her mother felt protective of her when she did her coming out;

14)Family of Origin



flexible at once);

14.b)There was an ambiance of shaming around sexuality in her family of origin;

14.c)Mother was both a political activist and lead a very traditional life in many ways (heterosexual marriage, stay-at home mother, with five children, etc);

14.d) Still trying to re-value her current social roles (mother & PhD student) despite not being in the activist world (*see New Normal analogy and White Picket Fence life metaphor*);

14.e) Continues to live her Queer identity in her current family (i.e. same-sex relationship with a child).

dynamics of their family of origin;

14.b)This influence is apparent in coping mechanisms for composing with multiple identity;

whereas P2 family of origin appears to have had mixte messages and at times have been a shaming environment ();

14.b)P1 identity is in a period of stability (“I am who I am.”) whereas P2 is in a period of transition and reflection to find meaning in her new identities.

14.b)The rest of her family is happy for her as long as she is happy.

15)Identity negotiation process (an identity in motion)

15.a)One negotiation for space was for her and her partner to go to United Church – Affirm (*repeated in both interviews*);

15.b)She cannot choose who she falls in love with, God made her this way;

15.c)Thinks Catholic Church contradictory stance is stupid (*repeated in both interviews*);

15.d)We must live who are called to

15.a)The choosing of space & community are important essential parts of negotiation;

15.b)Both associate their identity to their relationship with God (for P1 it is her calling; for P2 it is how God made her, see interview 1, theme 11);

15.a)P1 identity is directly associated with calling whereas P2 identity is associated with a long journey of self-discovery;

15.b)The rejection of the Catholic Church is part of P1’s identity;

15.c)P2 doesn’t want to label herself whereas, P1 wants to label herself as Queer;



15a)There’s no label to define her;

15.b)Sexuality is fluid, changing, and changeable (*repeated in both interviews*);



15.c)Sexual identity is based on her partner or her attraction (*repeated in both interviews*);

15.d)After a long time of trying to figure out who she is she has become aware of who she is;

	<p>be by God;</p> <p>15.e)Keeps living Queer identity through awareness with their son.</p>	<p>15.c)Both perceive that their sexual identity is not a question of choice (<i>repeated in both interviews for both participants</i>) (see P2 interview 1, theme 11) but is how God made them.</p>	<p>15.d)P2 doesn't feel need to the part of community and feels different from it whereas P1 looks for ways to live her Queer identity every day.</p>	<p>15.e)Support of Church was key in this self-discovery;</p> <p>15.f)There was a contrast between what she experienced internally and what her LGBTQ peers were experiencing;</p> <p>15.g)Doesn't feel the need to be part of LGBTQ community nor the need to label herself (<i>repeated in both interviews</i>);</p> <p>15.h)Developed a life in which people like and understand her and doesn't need the Queer community (<i>repeated in both interviews</i>).</p>	
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<p>16) Composing with Multiple Identities</p> 	<p>16.a)Queer allows vagueness, a flexibility to explore and live in the world;</p> <p>16.b)A spirit of radical openness opens her to deep spiritual experiences;</p> <p>16.c)Exploring and digging deeply creates something unique and special in relationship;</p> <p>16.d)You realize you are other when you dig deeply which in turn forces</p>	<p>16.a)Both have found a way of composing with their multiple identities;</p> <p>16.b)Both want to honor every part of themselves (relates to theme of inclusivity);</p> <p>16.c)Both believe that changes in identity (whether spiritual or sexual orientation) are a part of life;</p>	<p>16.a)P1 main coping mechanism in composing with her multiple identities is radical openness whereas P2 is acceptance;</p> <p>16.b)P2 doesn't feel the need to change for others and believes change will naturally occur whereas for P1 change involves a struggle and a process of digging deeply within the self and results in self-</p>	<p>16.a)This is who she is;</p> <p>16.b)My sexual orientation doesn't matter in my church;</p> <p>16.c)Her bisexuality is a challenge in her romantic relationship because it scares my partner;</p> <p>16.d)God created me this way;</p> <p>16.e)She needs to honor this part of herself and live it;</p>	<p>16) Composing with Multiple Identities</p> 
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	<p>you to understand yourself in a deeper way;</p> <p>16.e)Self-realization and actualization require becoming aware of every part of yourself.</p>	<p>16.d)Both have identified the mechanism by which they believe change in their identity occurs (have assigned meaning to change).</p>	<p>realization.</p>	<p>16.f)We don't need to change to fit others' views of what God wants;</p> <p>16.g)Her life is what it is and she doesn't need the queer community to be happy.</p>	
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<p>17)Impact of first interview</p> 	<p>17.a)Got her thinking about own spiritual practice;</p> <p>17.b)Got her thinking about how to be more present in her own life;</p> <p>17.c)Reminded her to "...pay attention again.";</p> <p>17.d)Made her open and aware;</p> <p>17.e)It was a realization for her;</p> <p>17.f)PhD and interview will and has inevitably changed her;</p> <p>17.g)Feels it would be good to have spiritual direction;</p> <p>17.h)Has begun spiritual direction to have a dialogue partner;</p> <p>17.h)Spiritual direction was something she had thought about but she made plans to begin since first interview.</p>	<p>17.a)First interview increased level of self-awareness;</p> <p>17.b)First interview prompted the seeking of support;</p> <p>17.c)Increased awareness comes with movement (P1 theme of change & P2 theme of movement); and this has an impact on spirituality and sense meaning.</p>	<p>17.a)P1 used action for support (seeking spiritual direction) whereas P2 recognized the support she already has in her life (<i>repeated in both interviews</i>);</p> <p>17.b)P2 became more aware of the politics of her sexual orientation whereas P1 had a renewed awareness of these;</p> <p>17.c)P2 felt confronted by questions of maternity; Felt that option was taken away from her and could not reconcile her sexual orientation and desire to have children naturally (who for her are two natural occurrences yet appears contradictory for her for the moment).</p>	<p>17.a)Brought up questions and thoughts she had never contemplated before;</p> <p>17.b)These questions continue to be part of her;</p> <p>17.c)A lot of questioning and movement;</p> <p>17.d)Feels more aware of herself now;</p> <p>17.e)Of what it is to be outside the norm;</p> <p>17.f)Of how sheltered and easy her life has been;</p> <p>17.g)Of battles that have been fought for her and those to come in her life;</p> <p>17.h)Of the option of natural conception having been taken away from her (<i>repeated in both interviews</i>);</p> <p>17.i)Of much movement and is</p>	<p>17)Impact of first interview (increased awareness of self)</p> 
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				comforted to have support of her partner, family, and church (<i>repeated in both interviews</i>).	
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Appendix H

Comparison of Meaning Units – Interviews 1 & 2, Participants 1 & 2

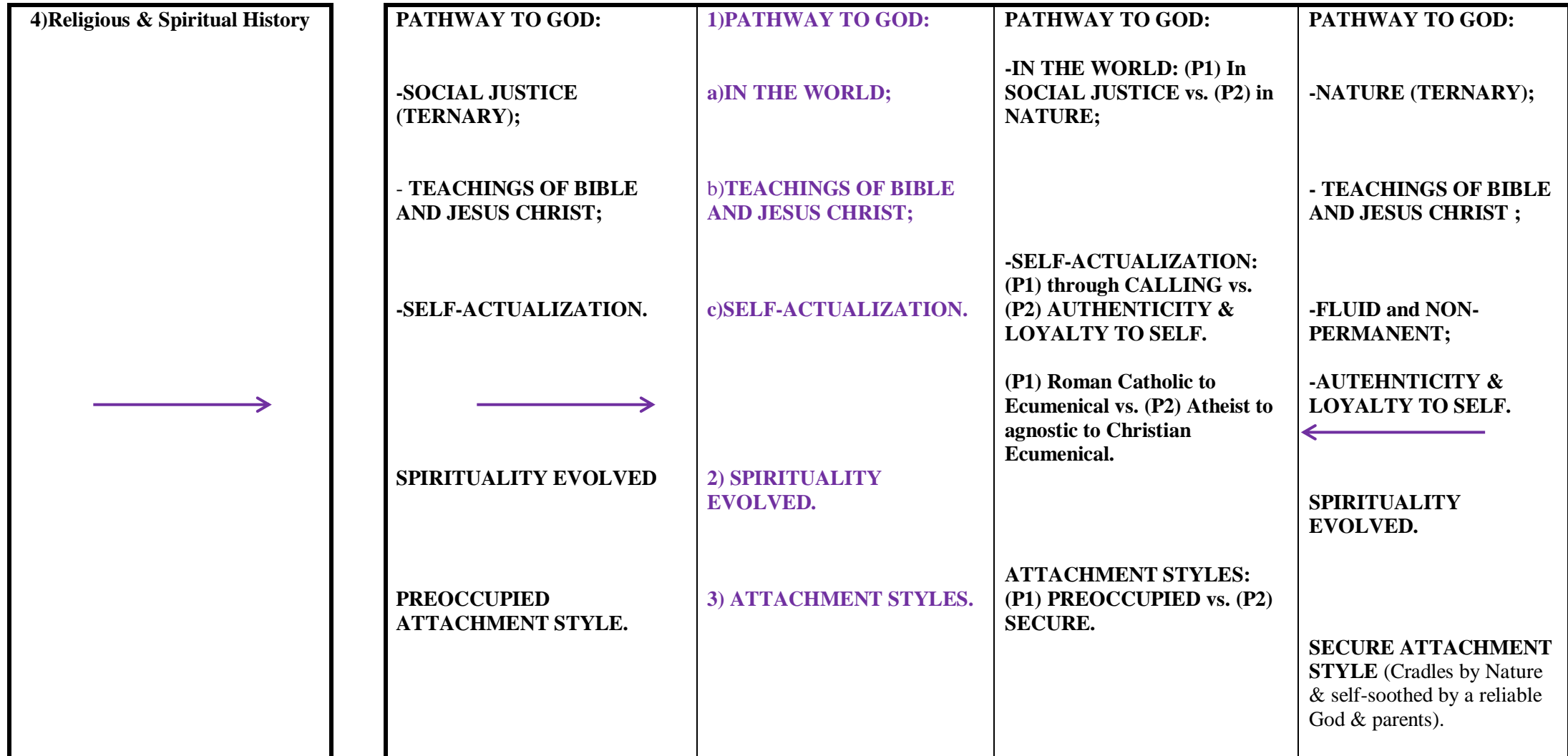
Meaning Units Derived from Common Emerging Themes

*Read from the extremities to center.

Emerging Themes Participant1 & 2	Meaning Units Participant 1	Common Meaning Units Derived from Common Emerging Themes	Distinct Meaning Units Derived from Common Emerging Themes	Meaning Units Participant 2
<p>1)Definition of sexual orientation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>-Sexual identity is NOT A CHOICE;</p> <p>-REJECTION OF BINARIES (SCHISM)</p> <p>- Identity change is through SELF-ACTUALIZATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p> <p>-Sexual identity is TRINOMIAL (Sexuality, Spirituality & Politics).</p>	<p>1)Sexual identity is NOT A CHOICE;</p> <p>2)REJECTION OF BINARIES (SCHISM)</p> <p>3)INTENTY IS FULD & NON-PERMANENT;</p>	<p>-IDENTITY FLUIDITY: (P1) SELF-ACTUALIZATION vs. (P2) AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF</p> <p>- (P1) TRINOMIAL (sexuality, spirituality, and politics).</p>	<p>-Sexual identity is NOT A CHOICE;</p> <p>-REJECTION OF BINARIES (SCHISM)</p> <p>-Identity change is through AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">←</p>
<p>2)Label Qualifiers</p>	<p>-REJECTION OF BINARIES (SCHISM);</p> <p>-QUEER LABEL: OPENNESS,</p>	<p>1)REJECTION OF BINARIES (SCHISM);</p> <p>2)LABEL HAS A FUNCTION;</p>	<p>-LABEL: (P1) IDENTITY</p>	<p>-REJECTION OF BINARIES (SCHISM);</p> <p>-LABELS are</p>

	<p>SPACE, INCLUSIVITY, ECUMENICAL, POLITICALLY AVANT-GARD;</p>  <p>-INCLUSIVITY: OTHER-ORIENTED (ALTERITY);</p> <p>- Identity change is through SELF-ACTUALIZATION;</p> <p>-Identity: DIFFERENT than non-queer.</p>	<p>3)Chose ECUMENICAL world and UNITED CHURCH AFFIRM;</p> <p>4)INCLUSIVITY: FLEXIBILITY & OPENNESS;</p> <p>5) IDENTITY IS FULD & NON-PERMAMENT.</p>	<p>PROCESS vs. (P2) PRAGRAMTIC;</p> <p>-POLITICAL: (P1) ESSENTIAL vs. (P2) REFUSED;</p> <p>-INCLUSIVITY: (P1) OTHER-ORIENTED (ALTERITY) vs. (P2) SELF-ORIENTED (CONGRUENCE)</p> <p>-IDENTITY FLUIDITIY: (P1) SELF-ACTUALIZATION vs. (P2) AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF</p> <p>-Identity: (P1) DIFFERENT vs. (P2) NON-DIFFERENT.</p>	<p>PRAGMATIC</p> <p>-Chose ECUMENICAL world and UNITED CHURCH AFFIRM;</p>  <p>-REFUSAL of the POLITICAL;</p> <p>-INCLUSIVITY: SELF-ORIENTED (CONGRUENCE with her values)</p> <p>-Identity change is through AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF</p> <p>-Identity: NON-DIFFERENT than everyone.</p>
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<p>3)Definition of spirituality</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>SPIRITUALITY as IDENTITY PROCESS through CALLING:</p> <p>-CHOSEN (and BURDENSOME);</p> <p>-SOCIAL JUSTICE; (TERNARY)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p> <p>-In TEACHINGS OF BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST;</p> <p>-SELF-ACTUALIZATION;</p> <p>PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT: - BURDENSOME CALLING.</p>	<p>1) SPIRITUALITY as IDENTITY PROCESS:</p> <p>a)CHOSEN;</p> <p>b)IN THE WORLD;</p> <p>c)In TEACHINGS OF BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST;</p> <p>d)SELF-ACTUALIZATION;</p> <p>2) ATTACHMENT STYLES.</p>	<p>SPIRITUALITY as IDENTITY PROCESS:</p> <p>-CHOSEN: (P1) BURDENSOME vs. (P2) NATURAL;</p> <p>-IN THE WORLD: (P1) In SOCIAL JUSTICE vs. (P2) in NATURE;</p> <p>-SELF-ACTUALIZATION: (P1) through CALLING vs. (P2) AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF;</p> <p>ATTACHMENT STYLES: (P1) PREOCCUPIED vs. (P2) SECURE.</p>	<p>SPIRITUALITY as IDENTITY PROCESS:</p> <p>-NATURAL;</p> <p>-NATURE’S RHYTHM (TERNARY);</p> <p>-In TEACHINGS OF BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST;</p> <p>- AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF made by God;</p> <p>SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE: -Cradling (Rhythm) God & NATURE.</p>
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<p>5) Relationship with Catholic Church</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>DISAGREES with CATHOLIC CHURCH:</p> <p>-DISCRIMINATORY SCRIPTURE TRANSLATIONS;</p> <p>-Place in CATHOLIC CHURCH is AMBIVALENT.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>1)DISAGREES with CATHOLIC CHURCH:</p> <p>a)DISCRIMINATORY SCRIPTURE TRANSLATIONS.</p>	<p>(P1) Place in CATHOLIC CHURCH is AMBIVALENT vs. (P2) in OPPOSITION.</p>	<p>DISAGREES with CATHOLIC CHURCH</p> <p>-IDENTITY in OPPOSITION to CATHOLIC CHURCH.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">←</p>
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<p>6) Use of Themes from the Bible</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>SCRIPTURE USE:</p> <p>-PROBLEMATIC CULTURAL NORMS;</p> <p>-SOCIAL JUSTICE (CALLING, TERNARY, ALTERITY);</p> <p>INCLUSIVITY.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>1)SCRIPTURE USE:</p> <p>a)THEMES of BIBLE and in the TEACHINGS of JESUS CHRIST;</p> <p>b)NON-LITERAL INTERPRETATION;</p> <p>2) INCLUSIVITY.</p>	<p>-Draw on different themes from Bible and teachings of Jesus Christ: (P1) SOCIAL JUSTICE vs. (P2) ACCEPTANCE.</p> <p>-INCLUSIVITY: (P1) is OTHER-ORIENTED vs. (P2) SELF-ORIENTED.</p>	<p>SCRIPTURE USE:</p> <p>-NON-LITERAL INTERPRETATION;</p> <p>-ACCEPTANCE.</p> <p>INCLUSIVITY:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">←</p> <p>-AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF (others must fit her values, not the other way around.)</p>
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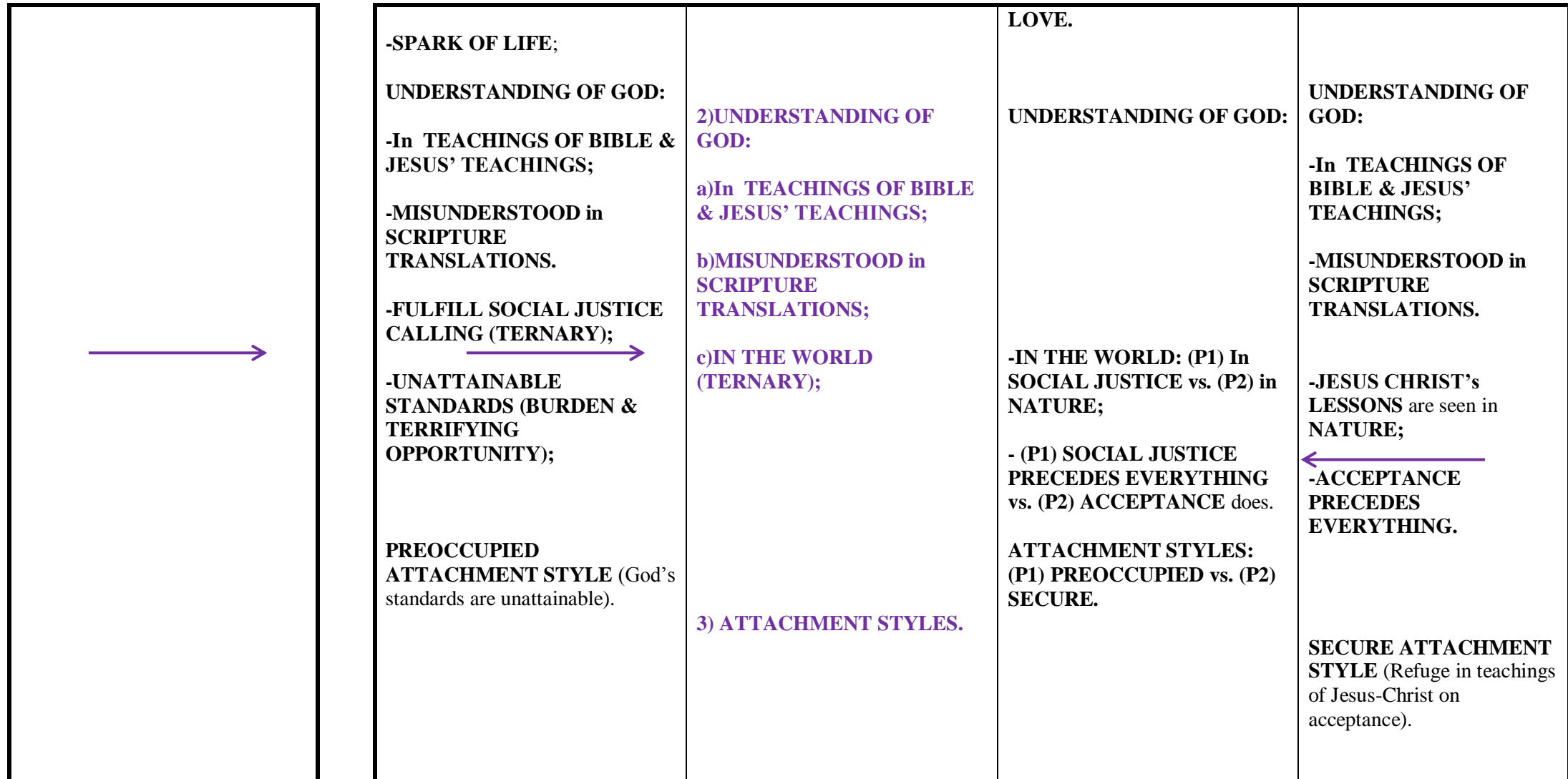
7)Safe Spaces



<p>SAFE SPACES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -UNITED CHURCH – AFFIRM -ECUMENICAL WORLD -ACCEPTANCE & INCLUSIVITY -Easily CONTAMINATED; <p>-ALTERITY is essential for spiritual growth.</p>  <p>PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE: -SAFE SPACES are easily CONTAMINATED.</p>	<p>1)SAFE SPACES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a)UNITED CHURCH – AFFIRM b)ECUMENICAL WORLD c)ACCEPTANCE & INCLUSIVITY <p>2) ATTACHMENT STYLES.</p>	<p>-SAFE SPACES: (P1) easily CONTAMINATED vs. (P2) feel like HOME;</p> <p>(P1) For ALTERITY vs. (P2) For CONGRUENCE</p> <p>ATTACHMENT STYLES: (P1) PREOCCUPIED vs. (P2) SECURE.</p>	<p>SAFE SPACES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -UNITED CHURCH – AFFIRM -ECUMENICAL WORLD -ACCEPTANCE & INCLUSIVITY -Feel like HOME <p>Her NATURAL RIGHT</p>  <p>SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE: -SAFE SPACES feel like HOME.</p>
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8)Understanding of God & God Image

<p>GOD IMAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -NATURAL PULL TOWARDS TRADITIONAL; 	<p>1) GOD IMAGE.</p>	<p>GOD IMAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (P1)TRADITIONAL & SPARK of LIFE vs. (P2) 	<p>GOD IMAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -GOD is LOVE
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<p>9) Relationship with God</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>GOD IMAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -MENTOR; -JUDGE; -SOURCE of INSPIRATION; -CHALLENGER; -HIGH EXPECTATIONS. <p>RELATIONSHIP with GOD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -IN THE WORLD (TERNARY); <li style="text-align: center;">→ -SELF-ACTUALIZATION; -SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION (CALLING); - TEACHINGS OF BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST; -BURDENSOME at times. <p>PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE (God</p>	<p>1) Presence of GOD IMAGE</p> <p>2) RELATIONSHIP with GOD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) IN THE WORLD b) SELF-ACTUALIZATION; c) TEACHINGS OF BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST; <p>3) ATTACHMENT STYLES.</p>	<p>GOD IMAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (P1) Must PLEASE GOD vs. (P2) GOD must PLEASE HER. <p>RELATIONSHIP with GOD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -TERNARY: (P1) SOCIAL JUSTICE vs. (P2) NATURE; -SELF-ACTUALIZATION: (P1) through CALLING vs. (P2) AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF; -(P1) BURDENSOME vs. (P2) HOME & NATURAL; <p>ATTACHMENT STYLES: (P1) PREOCCUPIED vs. (P2) SECURE.</p>	<p>GOD IMAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -CARETAKER; -PROVIDER; -NO EXPECTATIONS; -REBALANCES; <p>RELATIONSHIP with GOD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In NATURE (TERNARY); <li style="text-align: center;">← -FLUID & NON-PERMENT; - AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF; - TEACHINGS OF BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST; -CHRISTIANITY: HOME, CLICKED, & NATURAL.
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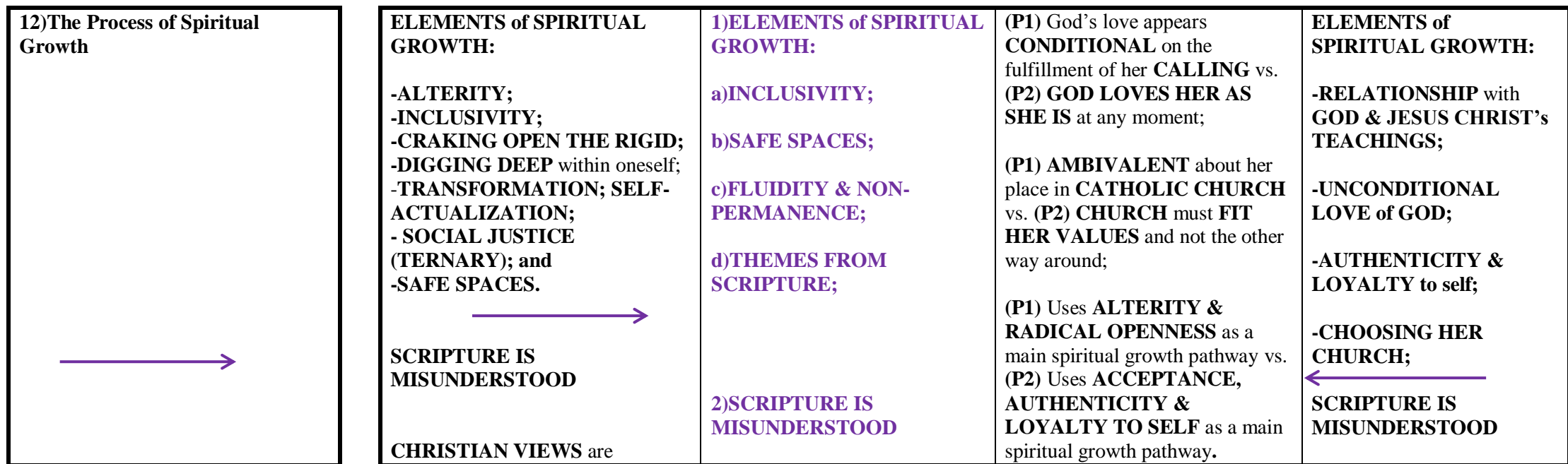
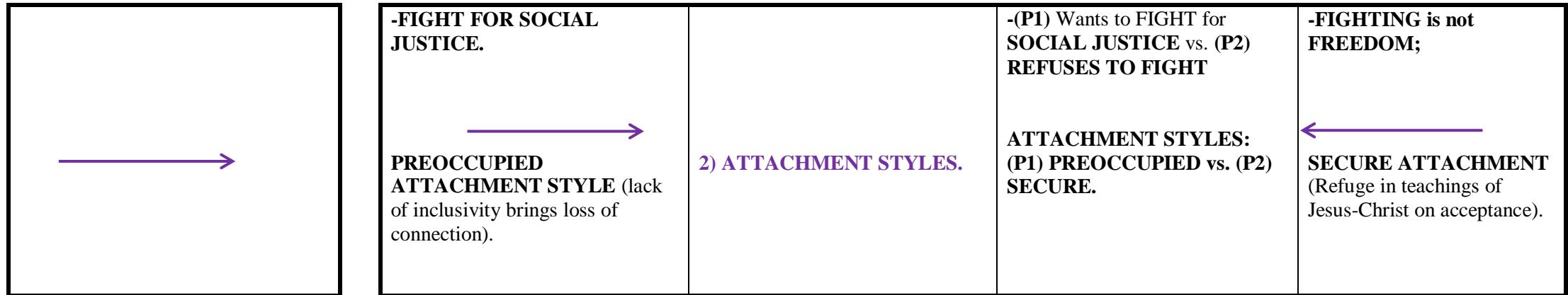
asks too much of her – burdensome).			SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE (Cradles by Nature & self-soothed by a reliable God).
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10) Living in Canada in this Time

<p>LIVING IN CANADA</p> <p>-REQUIRES MORE SOCIAL JUSTICE;</p> <p>-IS A PRIVILEGE;</p> <p>-FIGHTS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE.</p>	<p>1)LIVING IN CANADA:</p> <p>a)REQUIRES MORE SOCIAL JUSTICE;</p> <p>b)IS A PRIVILEGE.</p>	<p>Both support Social Justice in word: (P1) Wants to FIGHT for SOCIAL JUSTICE vs. (P2) REFUSES TO FIGHT for it.</p>	<p>LIVING IS CANADA:</p> <p>-REQUIRES MORE SOCIAL JUSTICE;</p> <p>-IS A PRIVILEGE;</p> <p>-POSITIVE VOICE for LGBTQ in her daily life;</p> <p>-REFUSES TO FIGHT.</p>
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11) Being Bisexual (Queer) & Christian

<p>NON-ACCPTANCE OF INTOLERANCE:</p> <p>-NO INNER SCHISM;</p> <p>-SCHISM between inner experience of sexual identity and society's;</p> <p>-INCLUSIVITY;</p>	<p>1)NON-ACCEPTANCE OF INTOLERANCE:</p> <p>a)NO INNER SCHISM;</p> <p>b)SCHISM;</p> <p>c)INCLUSIVITY.</p>	<p>NON-ACCPTANCE OF INTOLERANCE:</p>	<p>NON-ACCPTANCE OF INTOLERANCE:</p> <p>-NO INNER SCHISM;</p> <p>-SCHISM between inner experience of sexual identity and society's;</p> <p>-ACCEPTANCE & INCLUSIVITY</p>
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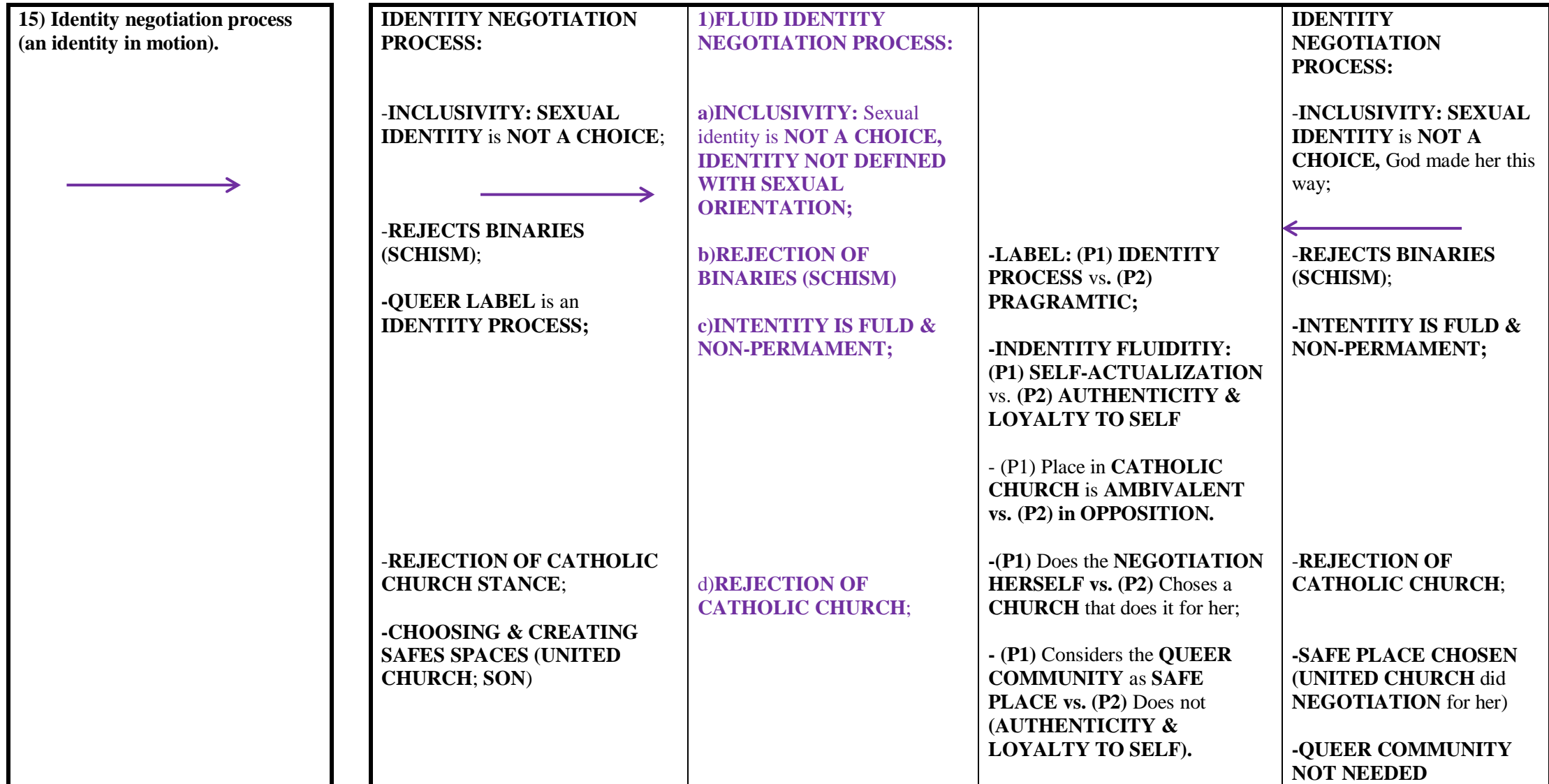


	<p>SHAPED by DIVERSITY;</p> <p>PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE (Growth is through her calling which is burdensome at times).</p>	<p>3) CHRISTIAN VIEWS are SHAPED by DIVERSITY.</p> <p>4) ATTACHMENT STYLES.</p>	<p>ATTACHMENT STYLES: (P1) PREOCCUPIED vs. (P2) SECURE.</p>	<p>CHRISTIAN VIEWS are SHAPED by DIVERSITY;</p> <p>SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE (Considers God's love unconditional).</p>
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<p>13) Gender Identity</p> <p>→</p>	<p>ACCEPTANCE:</p> <p>-CHURCH SHOULD ACCEPT EVERYONE;</p> <p>-FEMINIST IDENTITY;</p> <p>-GENDER PERMATES ALL IDENTITIES;</p> <p>-DISAGREES with CATHOLIC CHURCH about women;</p> <p>QUEER WOMAN is VULNERABLE →</p>	<p>1)ACCEPTANCE:</p> <p>a)CHURCH SHOULD ACCEPT EVERYONE;</p> <p>b)DISAGREES with CATHOLIC CHURCH about women.</p> <p>2)BEING A BISEXUAL (QUEER) CHRISTIAN WOMAN is CHALLENGING</p>	<p>ACCEPTANCE:</p> <p>(P1)Place in CATHOLIC CHURCH is AMBIVALENT vs. (P2) CHURCH must FIT HER VALUES and not the other way around</p> <p>(P1) Confronted by BEING A QUEER CHRISTIAN WOMAN vs. (P2) Is confronted by question of NATURE & MATERNITY.</p>	<p>ACCEPTANCE:</p> <p>-CHURCH SHOULD ACCEPT EVERYONE;</p> <p>-DISAGREES with CATHOLIC CHURCH about women;</p> <p>-CHURCH must FIT HER VALUES and not the other way around.</p> <p>←</p> <p>CONFRONTED by NATURE and MATERNITY</p>
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	<p>PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE.</p>	<p>3) ATTACHMENT STYLES.</p>	<p>ATTACHMENT STYLES: (P1) PREOCCUPIED vs. (P2) SECURE.</p>	<p>SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE (reacts to confrontation by relying on support from loved ones).</p>
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<p>14) Family of Origin & Current Family</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>SPIRITUAL CONTEMPLATION & TRANSFORMATION:</p> <p>-REVALUING her SOCIAL ROLES;</p> <p>-LETTING GO OF FORMER VALUES.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p> <p>PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE (Difficulty finding value in new roles).</p>	<p>1) Use of SPIRITUAL COPING;</p> <p>2) ATTACHMENT STYLES.</p>	<p>(P1) is in a PERIOD OF SPIRITUAL CONTEMPLATION vs. (P2) is in a PERIOD OF SPIRITUAL CONSERVATION.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">←</p> <p>ATTACHMENT STYLES: (P1) PREOCCUPIED vs. (P2) SECURE.</p>	<p>SPIRITUAL CONSERVATION:</p> <p>-REMAINS IN SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS;</p> <p>-SEEKING SUPPORT from the SPIRITUAL.</p> <p>SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE (receives & relies on support from family).</p>
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	<p>-THIRD PATH: UNDERSTANDING HER OPPRESSOR (ALTERITY);</p> <p>-CALLING (SOCIAL JUSTICE), SELF-ACTUALIZATION;</p> <p>PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE (negotiation process involves a burdensome calling).</p>	<p>e)means to RESOLVE SCHISM;</p> <p>2) ATTACHMENT STYLES.</p>	<p>-Means to RESOLVE SCHISM is through (P1) CALLING, ALTERITY vs. (P2) ACCEPTANCE of SELF & OTHER;</p> <p>ATTACHMENT STYLES: (P1) PREOCCUPIED vs. (P2) SECURE.</p>	<p>(AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF)</p> <p>-ACCEPTANCE of SELF & OTHER (SCHISM)</p> <p>SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE (Chose her Church, Identity with support of God and loved ones).</p>
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<p>16) Composing with Multiple Identities</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>TOOLS FOR COMPOSING WITH MULTIPLE IDENTITIES:</p> <p>-TEACHINGS OF BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p> <p>-SELF-ACUTALIZATION (CRACKING OPEN THE RIGID);</p> <p>-CHOOSING SAFE SPACES;</p> <p>-INCLUSIVITY, OPENNESS, ECUMENICAL; VAGUE FRAMEWORK;</p> <p>-CALLING (SOCIAL JUSTICE), ALTERITY;</p>	<p>1) TOOLS FOR COMPOSING WITH MULTIPLE IDENTITIES:</p> <p>a) TEACHINGS OF BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST;</p> <p>b) IDENTITY FLUIDITY & NON-PERMANENCE</p> <p>c) CHOOSING SAFE SPACES</p> <p>d) INCLUSIVITY.</p>	<p>TOOLS FOR COMPOSING WITH MULTIPLE IDENTITIES:</p> <p>-IDENTITY FLUIDITY: (P1) SELF-ACTUALIZATION vs. (P2) AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF;</p> <p>SAFES SPACES (P1) CHURCH is EASILY CONTAMINATED vs. (P2) CHURCH feels like HOME;</p> <p>-INCLUSIVITY: (P1) OTHER- ORIENTED (ALTERITY) vs. (P2) SELF-ORIENTED (CONGRUENCE);</p> <p>-DRAW on BIBLE THEMES of (P1) SOCIAL JUSTICE vs. (P2) ACCEPTANCE;</p> <p>ATTACHMENT STYLES: (P1) PREOCCUPIED vs. (P2)</p>	<p>TOOLS FOR COMPOSING WITH MULTIPLE IDENTITIES:</p> <p>- TEACHINGS OF BIBLE AND JESUS CHRIST;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">←</p> <p>-IDENTITY FLUIDITY & NON-PERMANENCE;</p> <p>-CHOOSING SAFE SPACES (CHURCH);</p> <p>-INCLUSIVITY;</p> <p>-ACCEPTANCE,</p>
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	<p>-PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE (Fights in order to compose with multiple identities).</p>	<p>2) ATTACHMENT STYLES.</p>	<p>SECURE.</p>	<p>AUTHENTICITY & LOYALTY TO SELF;</p> <p>SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE (uses acceptance to compose with multiple identities).</p>
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<p>17)Impact of first interview</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p>	<p>AWARENESS:</p> <p>-INCREASED LEVEL OF SELF-AWARENESS</p> <p>-RENEWED POLITICAL AWARENESS;</p> <p>-SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p> <p>PROMPTED SEEKING OF SUPPORT;</p> <p>-WOMAN of ACTION</p> <p>CREATED QUESTIONS:</p> <p>-REVALUING NEW SOCIAL ROLES;</p>	<p>1)AWARENESS:</p> <p>a)IMPACT on SELF-AWARENESS</p> <p>b)IMPACT on POLITICAL AWARENESS;</p> <p>c)SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION:</p> <p>2)PROMPTED SEEKING OF SUPPORT;</p> <p>3) CREATED QUESTIONS.</p>	<p>-(P1) seeks the POWER OF RELATIONSHIP in SPIRITUAL DIRECTION & ALTERITY & as she understands her CALLING;</p> <p>(P2)CONFRONTED by FRAMEWORK of NATURE with question of MATERNITY;</p> <p>- First interview created QUESTIONS: (P1) REVALUING NEW SOCIAL ROLES vs. (P2) Making sense of MATERNITY & CONGRUENCE;</p> <p>ATTACHMENT STYLES: (P1) PREOCCUPIED vs. (P2) SECURE.</p>	<p>AWARENESS:</p> <p>-INCREASED SELF-AWARENESS</p> <p>-INCREASED POLITICAL AWARENESS;</p> <p>- SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">←</p> <p>PROMPTED SEEKING OF SUPPORT;</p> <p>-FROM GOD & PARTNER</p> <p>CREATED QUESTIONS:</p> <p>- CONFRONTED by NATURE & MATERNITY;</p>
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	PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE (Unsure if new roles have spiritual value).	4) ATTACHMENT STYLES.		SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE (Relies on current support).
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