

Introduction

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Bisexual, Christian, European: Lived Theologies

Christian theology has always been shaped by the lived experiences of believers. From the early church's testimonies to the writings of mystics, reformers and liberation theologians, the voices of those on the margins have repeatedly expanded the church's understanding of God, humanity and morality. This anthology, *Bisexual, Christian, European*, stands within that tradition. It gathers the testimonies of bisexual Christians from across Europe—voices rarely heard, often misunderstood and historically excluded from both queer and Christian discourse.

These stories are not simply autobiographical reflections. They are lived theologies: embodied interpretations of faith, identity and divine presence. They reveal how bisexual Christians navigate the tensions between doctrine and desire, tradition and authenticity, silence and proclamation. They expose the pastoral failures of churches that have too often ignored or erased bisexual experience, and they offer new theological insights born from the margins of both church and queer community.

This introduction situates the anthology within contemporary queer theology, bisexual studies and European Christian contexts. It identifies recurring themes across the chapters, articulates the theological significance of bisexual lived experience and argues for the necessity of bisexual-specific theological engagement. In doing so, it frames the book not only as a sociological contribution but as a theological intervention, one

that challenges the church to listen, repent of prejudice or wilful ignorance and be transformed.

Why Bisexuality? Why Christianity? Why Europe?

Across Europe and beyond, bisexuality remains the most common non-heterosexual identity. Yet bisexual Christians remain the least acknowledged, least researched and least pastorally supported group within churches. Contributors such as Andreas in Germany, Marilene in the Netherlands, Jaime in England and José in Spain testify to the profound loneliness that arises when one's identity is erased or misrepresented. Their stories reveal a consistent pattern: bisexuality is frequently misunderstood as promiscuity, indecision or a transitional phase. Within Christian contexts, these misconceptions are amplified by theological conservatism, purity culture and the persistent influence of monosexual norms. The result is a pervasive silence, a silence that communicates that bisexuality is unspeakable, unthinkable or incompatible with Christian life.

Europe provides a distinctive landscape for exploring bisexual Christian identities. Its deep Christian heritage, traditions including Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Free Church traditions, shapes the contributors' experiences in diverse ways. Catholic contexts inform the stories of Benedetta, Anna, Victoria, Luis and Marilene; Orthodox traditions shape Kamilla's journey from Russia; Evangelical and Free Church settings frame the experiences of Andreas, Cathy and José; and Lutheran and Anglican spaces become sites of refuge for Christelle, Daniela and Will. Migration also plays a significant role, with several contributors describing how moving across borders opened new possibilities for self-understanding and spiritual belonging.

The anthology format is itself a theological statement. Christianity is a tradition built on testimony, the testimonies of prophets, apostles, mystics, martyrs and ordinary believers. To gather bisexual Christian testimonies is to claim that these lives, too, belong within the story of God's people. At a time when queerphobia is resurgent in parts

of Europe, when churches remain divided on sexuality and when bisexual people continue to experience disproportionate mental-health challenges, these stories are both timely and necessary.

The Erasure of Bisexuality: A Quantification

Some may argue that bisexuality is not invisibilised, whether in Christian contexts or elsewhere. Yet invisibility is, by its nature, difficult to measure. To explore this phenomenon, we compared the cultural presence of terms related to homosexuality and bisexuality across three languages central to this anthology: English, German and Spanish. Two types of large-scale resources help illuminate these patterns: linguistic corpora and national library catalogues.

Linguistic corpora, that is, collections of texts designed to reflect language use considering decades, genres and registers, offer a useful starting point (O’Keeffe and McCarthy 2022).¹ For English, we consulted the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA);² for German, the Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache (DWDS);³ and for Spanish, the Corpus del Español del Siglo XXI (CORPES XXI).⁴ In each case, we searched for the roots *homosexual* and *bisexual*, adding a wildcard (e.g., *homosex**) to capture related forms such as *homosexuality*, *homosexuals* and *homosexually*. Although each language includes other terms with similar meanings, e.g. *gay* in English and Spanish, *schwul* in German, we deliberately excluded these because of their multiple, unrelated uses and because *gay* often functions as an umbrella term, complicating direct comparison.

Figure 1 shows the differences between the three corpora. Across all three corpora, the pattern is striking. In Spanish and German, terms re-

1 O’Keeffe, Anne, and Michael McCarthy. (2022) *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

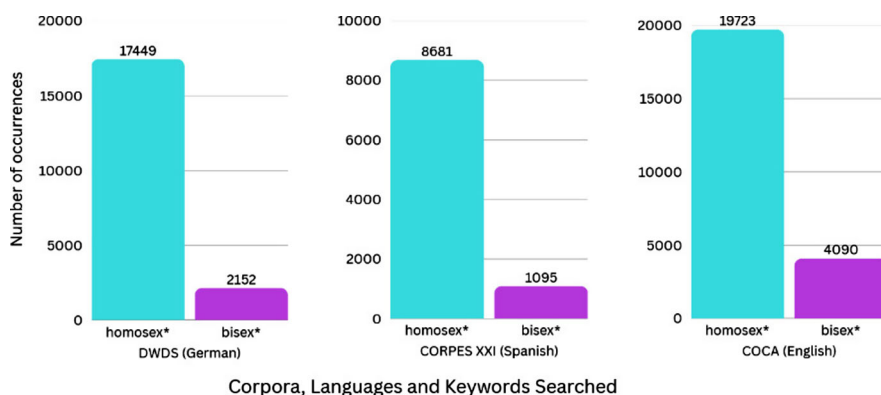
2 <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>

3 <https://www.dwds.de/>

4 <https://www.rae.es/corpes/>

lated to homosexuality appear around eight times more frequently than those related to bisexuality. In the English-American corpus, the ratio is approximately 5:1.

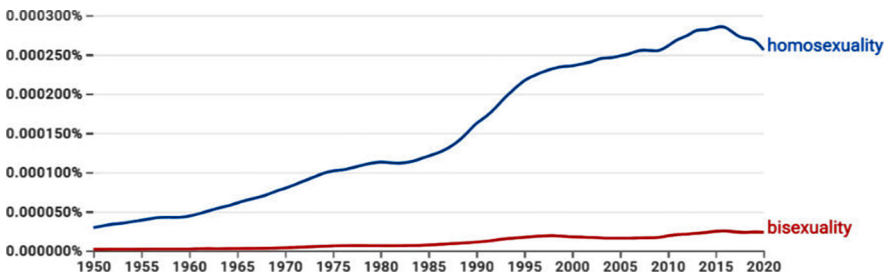
Figure 1: Number of Occurrences of Terms related to Homosexuality and Bisexuality in Linguistic Corpora in English, Spanish and German



To gain a historical perspective, we also examined Google's Books Ngram Viewer, which tracks the frequency of terms in digitised books over time. Because the tool does not support wildcards, we searched for *homosexuality* and *bisexuality* specifically. The results are consistent across English, Spanish and German: between 1950 and 2020, *homosexuality* appears at least twelve times more often than *bisexuality*.⁵ Figure 2 shows the distance of the frequency in the vertical axis with a historical overview with the year of publication in the horizontal axis.

5 https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=homosexuality%2Cbisexuality&year_start=1950&year_end=2022&corpus=en&smoothing=3

Figure 2: Development of Frequency of Homosexuality and Bisexuality in Google Ngram Viewer between 1950 and 2020



These findings rest on necessary simplifications. A more nuanced linguistic analysis would likely reveal an even greater disparity. In many contexts, discussions of homosexuality rely solely on the term *gay*, whereas no equivalent widely used term exists for bisexuality. Moreover, the meaning of *bisexuality* has shifted over time: before the 1990s, it was used primarily in biology to describe organisms with two sexes. Excluding these biological references would further reduce the apparent presence of bisexuality in historical texts.

A similar pattern emerges when examining the intersection of sexuality and Christian faith. Researchers in Digital Humanities increasingly use library catalogues to quantify the presence of particular topics in published works (Umerle et al. 2022).⁶ We searched the catalogues of three national libraries, namely the British Library (BL),⁷ the German National Library (DNB)⁸ and the Spanish National Library (BNE)⁹, for titles containing *homosex** or *bisex** alongside *christian** (*christlich** in German, *cristian** in Spanish). The results shown in Figure 3 reveal a stark im-

6 Umerle, Tomasz, Giovanni Colavizza, Elżbieta Herden, et al. (2022) *An Analysis of the Current Bibliographical Data Landscape in the Humanities. A Case for the Joint Bibliodata Agendas of Public Stakeholders*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6559857>.

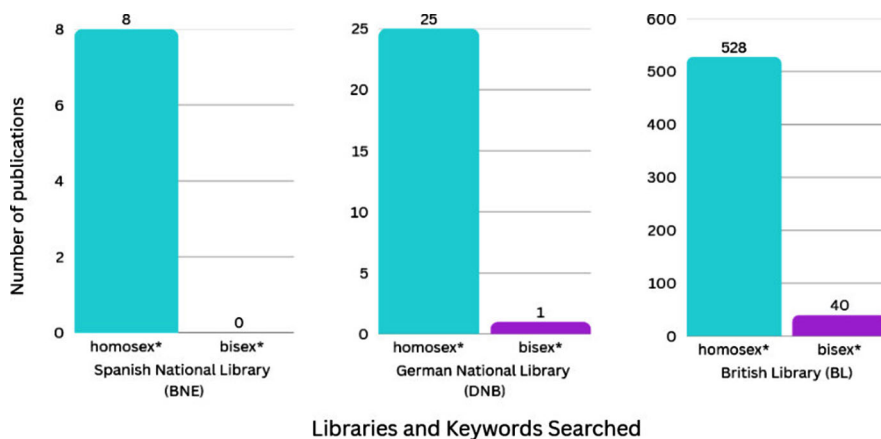
7 <https://catalogue.bl.uk/>

8 <https://portal.dnb.de/opac/showSearchForm>

9 <https://catalogo.bne.es/>

balance once again: the Spanish library lists no publications on bisexuality and Christianity; the German library lists one; and the British Library shows a ratio of thirteen publications on homosexuality and Christianity for every one on bisexuality and Christianity.

Figure 3: Number of Occurrences of Terms related to Homosexuality and Bisexuality and Christianity in the Library Catalogues of National Libraries of Spain, Germany and UK



These searches inevitably miss relevant works; for instance, a book titled *Bi People: A History in the Church* would not appear, nor would *Gay People: A History in the Church*. Our aim is not to identify every publication, but rather to illustrate the scale of invisibilisation by comparing the situation of bisexuality with that of homosexuality.

Across all measures, the conclusion is clear. Although demographic studies consistently show that bisexual people form a larger group than homosexual people, bisexuality remains significantly underrepresented, culturally, linguistically and theologically, and is often much less visible.

Theological Themes from the Narratives

Although each chapter is unique, several theological themes recur across the anthology, revealing how bisexual Christians are already doing theology, often implicitly, sometimes explicitly, through the very act of living faithfully in the face of erasure/invisibility.

The goodness of creation emerges as a central theme. Contributors describe rediscovering themselves as created good: Andreas's reflection on Genesis, Daniela's "joyful a-ha moment," and Victoria's revelation that God "dreamed her LGBTQI+" all affirm sexuality as part of God's good creation. These journeys challenge doctrines that frame bisexuality as disorder or instability, instead presenting it as a site of divine creativity and relational richness.

Silence as theological harm appears throughout the narratives. Many describe how ecclesial silence produced shame, fear and the sense of living a "double life." Jaime's mixed-orientation marriages, José's "wall of silence" and Cathy's experiences of religious trauma illustrate the spiritual cost of this silence, which functions as a denial of the Incarnation—the claim that God enters and sanctifies human experience.

Scripture and interpretation also play a significant role. Some contributors grew up with literalist readings that condemned queer identities; others encountered queer theology that affirmed gay and lesbian identities but erased bisexual possibilities. Their stories reveal a hunger for hermeneutics that recognise fluidity, complexity and multiplicity—a bisexual hermeneutic attentive to the porous boundaries of human affection.

Embodiment and authenticity surface as sites of divine encounter. Accepting one's bisexuality or gender identity often leads to a deeper sense of incarnation, as seen in Luis's transition, Oliver's deconstruction of gender and Kamilla's journey across faith traditions. These stories challenge theologies that separate body and soul, desire and discipleship.

Community and belonging emerge as sacramental. Many contributors describe exclusion from their churches of origin, followed by the discovery of more inclusive spaces: Lutheran congregations,

MCC churches, Anglican parishes, queer Christian groups and online communities. These communities mediate grace, affirm identity and embody the hospitality of Christ.

Bisexuality as Theological Gift

One of the anthology's most significant contributions is its reframing of bisexuality not as a problem to be solved but as a theological gift. Bisexuality destabilises binary thinking, a mode deeply embedded in Western theology, and opens new ways of understanding God, neighbour and self. Contributors such as Will, Oliver and Cathy articulate how bisexuality resonates with theological understandings of the Trinity, incarnation and grace as dynamic, relational and fluid.

Bisexuality also expands the church's relational imagination. Stories of mixed-orientation marriages, late-life authenticity and unconditional parenting challenge narrow definitions of family, marriage and vocation. And bisexual Christians' liminal position, marginalised within both church and queer communities, mirrors biblical patterns in which God speaks through those on the margins, generating insight, resilience and prophetic critique.

Structure of the Book

The anthology is organised into four thematic sections:

- a) Politics, Activism and the Church
- b) Complexities of Identity
- c) Mixed Orientation Marriage
- d) Navigating Different Cultures

Each chapter stands alone, yet together they form a mosaic of bisexual Christian life across Europe.

Toward a More Faithful Church

The stories in this anthology call the church to repentance and renewal. They reveal the harm caused by silence, the violence of erasure and the spiritual cost of theological rigidity. Yet they also reveal the possibility of transformation, for individuals, communities and institutions. A faithful church listens to bisexual Christians, educates itself about bisexuality, challenges monosexual assumptions, develops bisexual-specific pastoral resources and recognises bisexuality as part of God's diverse creation. This anthology is offered as a step toward that vision.

Conclusion: Testimony as Theology

To read these stories is to encounter theology in its most embodied form. These are not abstract arguments but lived articulations of grace, struggle, revelation and hope. They remind us that God speaks through the lives of believers, including those whose identities have been marginalised or misunderstood. *Bisexual, Christian, European* is therefore more than a collection of narratives: it is a theological text, a witness to the God who meets people in their complexity, delights in diversity and calls the church to a more expansive understanding of love.

With that in mind, we welcome you to our stories!