

Faith & Sexuality in an Open-Source World

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HISTORY

"Never before in history had societies thought that such a set of high expectations about marriage was either realistic or desirable. ... [T]he adoption of these unprecedented goals for marriage had unanticipated and revolutionary consequences that have since come to threaten the stability of the entire institution." – Stephanie Coontz (*Marriage, A History*)

RESEARCH

A [Baptist] Conference on Sexuality & Covenant

- ✧ Not taking a stance on something **is** taking a stance on something
- ✧ It matters **how** we talk about sexuality
- ✧ Different spaces allow for different types of conversations to happen
- ✧ People will find creative and alternative ways to engage in dialogue

Survey on Faith & Sexuality Among Christians in the U.S.

About the Survey

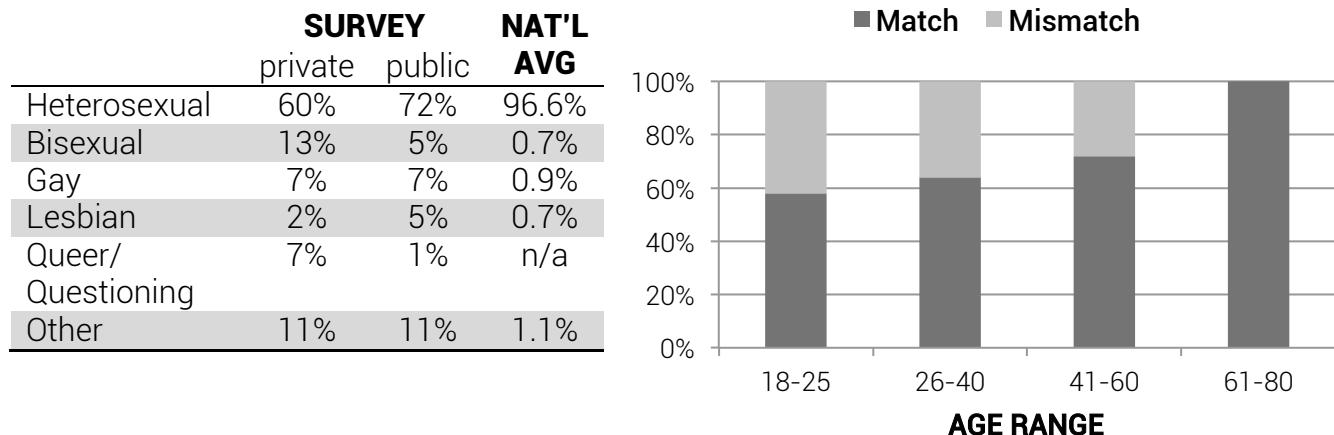
- ✧ Online, anonymous, nationwide
- ✧ 500+ responses so far
- ✧ About 180 responses from Baptists (current or former)
- ✧ Questions about faith background, sexual beliefs, sexual practices, church culture

By the Numbers

- ✧ Median age of first sexual activity: 16
- ✧ Median age of first sexual intercourse: 20
- ✧ Median number of sexual partners: 3
- ✧ 83% have used pornography before
- ✧ 23% never or almost never use STI/pregnancy prevention
- ✧ 27% have been unfaithful in a committed relationship
- ✧ 82% are satisfied in their current sexual relationship
- ✧ "I feel I am a person of worth" – 90% agree
- ✧ "There are many things I wish I could change about my body" – 71% agree
- ✧ "I'm satisfied with the way my body looks" – 52% agree

Sexual Identity

- Overall, 30% indicate a mismatch between their private and their public sexual identity



Forced Sexual Activity

- 40% report they have experienced forced sexual activity in their lifetime
- 47% among women, 70% among young adults (18-25)

RESOURCES

What kind of resource?	What does open-source mean?	What will be the 'point of view'?
Educational	Freely available	Represents diverse Baptist viewpoints
Online	Multiple sources of input	Focus on moral decision-making process
Multimedia	Multiple points of view Adaptable materials	Doesn't promote a particular moral standard Empower users learn, pray, and discuss

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How are conversations about sexuality happening in your faith communities, if they are happening at all? Consider who is involved, what topics are covered, and what is the nature of the conversation.
- How can each of the following stakeholders work to facilitate healthy and constructive discussions surrounding sexuality and faith: ministers, lay leaders, congregants, denominational leaders, and community members?
- What resources would be useful for facilitating conversations around faith and sexuality in your community? Consider how these resources might be developed and how these resources might be delivered.