

## Unashamed: A Coming-Out Guide for LGBTQ Christians

**Amber Cantorna**

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For LGBTQ Christians, especially those in evangelical churches, the decision to come out can mean being shunned, dismissed from church leadership or service positions, and made to feel eternally excluded from God's love. Despite these risks, Amber Cantorna's *Unashamed* is here to say that coming out and being authentically yourself is worth it.

Cantorna is an LGBTQ Christian advocate, researcher, writer, and leader who knows first hand the deep pain of such losses. She grew up in a non-affirming, evangelical Christian home. Her father held a prominent position in Focus on the Family, a well-known conservative evangelical organization. Homeschooled by her mother and involved in church youth activities, it appeared she had the "perfect" Christian upbringing. "Life was scheduled, predictable, and safe," she writes. Coming out changed all that.

When Cantorna came out to her family at the age of twenty-seven, her parents severed all ties with her and took away her keys to the family home. Despite being hurt to her core, she knew that her life really began the day she came out—that she'd "never before felt so grounded in joy and authenticity." To others in a similar situation, she writes that "coming alive and being unashamed of who you are is one of the most liberating experiences you will ever have."

Cantorna's book gives directions for creating a "resource pack" that, though it cannot guarantee a pain-free experience, provides what's needed for the best possible outcome. Her advice is warm, wise, eminently practical, and given in love. She doesn't deny pain, rejection, loneliness, or even thoughts of suicide, but faces them and declares that they will pass; that help, friendship, community, and even churches are out there that will affirm, support, and embrace LGBTQ Christians.

With *Unashamed*, Amber Cantorna brings this encouraging message: "You are seen, you are heard, you are loved, and you are enough."

KRISTINE MORRIS (May/June 2019)

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