

# *We Believe in God, Too*

## *Allyship vs. Accomplice*

*“Allyship: Someone who advocates for groups or individuals who do not come from the same place or privilege as the ally. Being an ally is considered one of the first steps in race and social justice work”*

*“Accomplice: encompasses allyship but goes beyond advocacy. An accomplice uses their privilege to challenge existing conditions at the risk of their own comfort and well-being”.*

*- Annalee Schafranek*

In the matters of social justice and race work in today's society, the terms “ally” and “accomplice” are often used describing those who are coming from a variety of places of privilege. This privilege has been deemed by society and their relationships to marginalized groups and individuals (Schafranek, n.d.). What is your idea of progressive change? You'll soon see that these two terms are interchangeable. That they are in fact one of the same.

Here you will look upon individuals within the community that are redefining what it means to do the work. Who have an understanding that becoming an ally and accomplice cannot happen overnight. That there is indeed a process of self-awareness and work in the matters of unlearning social constructs. Walking in a multitude of identities, read upon their stories of activism, self-identity, and what it means to embody faith.

### **Image 1**

“I am a 31-year-old straight married father of 3, I grew up in the Holiness (Pentecostal Church) in the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). I am A 5th generation COGIC pastor. My family has led the Prince of Peace Temple COGIC for over 70 years in the Denver area. I believe in God, and I believe his word to be true and the absolute authority in the matters of life, I also believe God to be a male simply because he has referred to himself as Father, and giver of life. I am what I would like to consider a “Moderate” as I have moral values and ideals that come from both the conservative and progressive side. When it comes to human sexuality, and morals due to circumstances that happened in my own life, I have always seen as very fluid and beautiful simply because it is not just the physical action but a spiritual rite of passage and journey that much like our with Christ is deeply personal and unique, but should not have to be hidden. I say that because as followers of Christ we believe that God is a Spirit, and he is omnipresent, and omniscient meaning he sees all and knows all...why then would we have the need to hide anything when you are only hiding it out of the fear of other humans?

God should be our ONLY fear!”

**Tyler Coburn | He/Him/His | Ally & Accomplice**

### **Image 2**

“Since I was a small boy, God would spend much time with me as I did not have many friends, and I was socially awkward. It was through my quiet time with God that he began to reveal himself to me and to this day our relationship has only grown stronger, and he is able to bring the word alive to me and I can share the gospel with others just by living and never opening my mouth”.

**Tyler Coburn | He/Him/His | Ally & Accomplice**



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### **Image 3**

“Becoming a woman of God has changed my life because it taught me to keep faith alive and to never give up, no matter how hard life gets and what life may throw at me. It has taught me to keep my head held HIGH. It has also taught me to be obedient, and to love and be genuine.

**KaResha Coburn | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice**

### **Image 4**

“I do not consider myself an ally, in my opinion, allyship is passive. I am an accomplice, meaning that I step up and do the work knowing that I will not personally benefit from the impact. I do more than just support and accept that all people deserve the same rights and treatment, I am a part of the movement that ensures that all people receive the same rights and treatment regardless of their identities.

I realized that my presence is not always welcome, and it is questioned, as a cis, straight woman. I take up space for a cause that is not my own and must continuously prove that I can be trusted and must tread lightly in certain situations. Regardless, I show up daily willing and able out of respect and love for the community”.

**Nizhoni Elizabeth Smocks | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice**

### **Image 6**

“Many of my contradicting beliefs come from how people in the Christian faith view the LGBTQIA+ community. The reality is that many of the teachings in the Bible are outdated. Many of the leaders and followers in the church, choose to spread judgment instead of love and ultimately pick and choose what is acceptable and what is based on a poor interpretation and picking/choosing on how it's accepted in the house of the lord. The church is a place we're all welcomed no matter where they come from, their story and most importantly who they love.

Everyone should have the opportunity to come together in the house of God and worship. It seems as if the church has made decisions on what groups are allowed to be accepted in Christianity. The church is a place of love and no judgment. We are all working on ourselves, our spirituality and ultimately work to be more connected to God. That should be the focus and not on judging one another”.

**Tumaini “Titi” Mporampora | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice**

“At a Mormon church during my youth, I was separated from the other kids and was told that my cousins, brother and I are going to hell because we are Black. In that moment, I knew that any "God" who would not accept all beings as equals did not deserve my worship. I cannot say there is a singular "God", however I believe in the energy and interconnectedness of the universe that involves all life and interactions. "God" is part of all; therefore, we are all one”.

**Nizhoni Elizabeth Smocks | She/Her/Hers | Ally & Accomplice**