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Atheism, the Bible and sexual orientation

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A recent article from Toronto regarding a United Church of Canada minister who came out as an atheist, will surely cause much controversy in the religious community. As a fellow atheist I fully understand her position and I would further suggest that Reverend Gretta Vosper is on side with sexual orientation as a non-religious issue.

The Christian Church with doctrine that looks upon sexuality, other than heterosexuality, as a sin is not about to change according to the Vatican and most other denominations. Vosper has a perfect opportunity to gather information regarding the LGBTQ community, and take the ongoing disapproval by religious hierarchies and mould this into an educational journey, assisting in taking the discrimination out of society.

As a clergy, therefore, a professional educator of religion, she is well versed in public speaking and so is a perfect candidate to help ease the pain and assist in alleviating teen suicides because of sexual orientation or gender identity. As the majority of world religions dominate society's rules for living the good life, chances are, and strong evidence exists, that domination does not work for a satisfied and happy existence.

If Vosper chooses to leave her position she would be able to garner the support needed to make huge changes by either establishing her independent organization, or indeed push for change within the church.

To be fair, the United Church of Canada has been a strong advocate for equality for members of the LGBTQ community, but understandably she cannot continue in her position as her beliefs are contrary to biblical teachings. That's what churches are all about. Most denominations are making an attempt to modernize and be inclusive. Until that happens on a world scale the discrimination continues and the oppression will magnify.

Pope Francis is a prime example of mouthing the words but falling shy of positive action as far as the LGBTQ community is concerned. I urge Gretta Vosper to take on the concerns of all, and through her atheism she is able to shine a light on the realities of this world and not through the teachings of a god, or gods, where true love seems non-existent.

I have always failed to understand how a so-called book of Christian love excludes those who do not fall into a human category, namely gays and lesbians. We are what we are by birth and one cannot come by a more normal life as a human being and become a responsible, loving and contributing member of society. World religions through their teachings denounce and judge this section of society in severe manners.

There is much evidence church pews are emptying because many are becoming less influenced by religious doctrine because of discrimination as well as non-belief in a non-real doctrine. I applaud Vosper for stepping out and not feel swayed by a religion that is not inclusive and decidedly outdated. It fosters exclusion, not inclusion. Atheism or religion; love or judging. The choice is ours to make, ours alone.

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Gerard Veldhoven is a longtime activist for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. His column appears Wednesdays in The News.

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